

**Public Comments regarding
Public Access at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve**
Received as of May 13, 2021

Comment #1

From: Susanne Cumming
To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards
Subject: Ballona Wetlands Resolution
Date: Thursday, April 29, 2021 9:32:35 PM

Dr. Guangyu Wang
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Dear Dr. Wang,

I am writing to respectfully request that the resolution you and your staff are drafting with regard to access to the Ballona Wetlands be focused on finding ways to enhance ecologically-sensitive access for outdoor education and stewardship, especially in Area A. This is where hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent to facilitate such access. Please do not present a draft that simply echoes factually unsupported justifications for continuing to delay equitable access to this natural resource. Limited, managed access is good for the community – especially now during this pandemic - and also good for the ecological reserve as nature lovers with binoculars help reduce illicit activity such as illegal dumping and fires. We all would benefit greatly.

Thank you for your careful and thoughtful consideration.

Susanne Cumming

Susanne L. Cumming, Esq.
CA State Bar #137426
CalRE #01901754
13428 Maxella Ave., #304
Marina del Rey, California 90292
Cell/Text: (310)962-3341
cumming@earthlink.net
www.linkedin.com/in/susannecumming

Comment #2

From: Miriam Faugno
To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards
Subject: Please
Date: Friday, April 30, 2021 6:13:50 PM

Dear Dr. Wang,

I am writing to you to request that the resolution you and your staff are drafting with regard to access to the Ballona Wetlands be focused on finding ways to enhance ecologically-sensitive access for outdoor education and stewardship, especially in Area A, where hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent to facilitate such access. Please do not present a draft that simply echoes factually unsupported justifications for continuing to delay equitable access to this natural resource. Limited, managed access is good for the community and also good for the ecological reserve as nature lovers with binoculars help reduce illicit activity such as illegal dumping and fires.

We ALL appreciate the special environment we share with each other and with wildlife.

Thank you,

Miriam Faugno
Playa del Rey
member of the Sierra Club

Comment #3

From: Kathy Knight
To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards
Subject: Ballona Access Resolution Request
Date: Monday, May 3, 2021 3:52:51 PM

May 3, 2021

To Dr. Guangyu Wang, Deputy Director
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Dear Dr. Wang:

The Ballona Ecosystem Education Project requests that the resolution you and your staff are drafting regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve focuses on finding ways to enhance ecologically-sensitive access for outdoor education and stewardship, especially in Area A.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent to facilitate such access there.

Please don't submit a draft that simply echos factually unsupported justifications for continuing to delay equitable access to this wonderful natural resource that so many citizens worked hard to acquire.

Limited, managed access is good for the community and also good for the ecological reserve as nature lovers with binoculars help reduce illicit activity such as illegal dumping and fires.

We want to help with the stewardship of this wonderful ecological reserve, and help save some costs for the California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

That is why we have been urging this resolution be presented to the SMBRC.

Thank you very much,

Kathy Knight, Project Manager
Ballona Ecosystem Education Project
kathyknight66@gmail.com
310-450-5961, 310-613-1175

Comment #4

From: Miriam Cutler
To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards
Subject: SMBRC Draft Resolution on Ballona Wetlands Access
Date: Thursday, May 6, 2021 2:33:13 PM

Dear Dr. Wang,

I support a resolution by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands that reaffirms SMBRC's previous goal of opening the Fiji Way access gate to facilitate wildlife-sensitive access for outdoor education, nature appreciation, and gentle stewardship, such as trash removal. The public has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to help facilitate such access, and there is broad consensus in the community of the importance of such access, especially to young students throughout the Los Angeles area. I understand that the resolution will be advisory in nature, and not binding on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. However, as the state agency created by the legislature to coordinate and advise projects affecting the Santa Monica Bay watershed, the SMBRC's position will be influential.

Thank you,

Miriam Cutler
mircut2@me.com
www.miriamcutler.com

Los Angeles 90066

Comment #5

From: Ingrid Mueller

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: Public Access to Ballona Wetlands

Date: Thursday, May 6, 2021 3:38:40 PM

Dear Dr. Wang,

As a retiree, my life gets ever simpler.

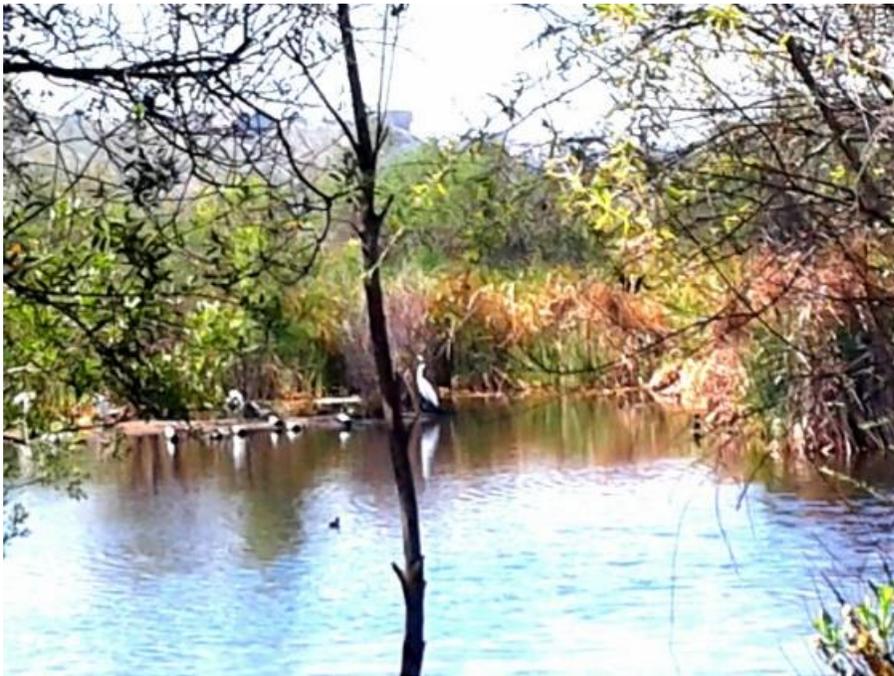
After more than ten years of protest to Not "Bulldoze Ballona", it is uber-high time to revisit and -wonder and pass on to my grandkids this precious ecological gem!

Please use your powerful voice to keep nature in tact.

Appreciatively,

Ingrid Mueller

In Venice since 1988



Comment #6

From: Susan Polka

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: SMBRC Draft Resolution on Ballona Wetlands Access

Date: Thursday, May 6, 2021 4:36:22 PM

Dear Dr. Wang,

I support a resolution by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands that reaffirms SMBRC's previous goal of opening the Fiji Way access gate to facilitate wildlife-sensitive access for outdoor education, nature appreciation, and gentle stewardship, such as trash removal. The public has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to help facilitate such access, and there is broad consensus in the community of the importance of such access, especially to young students throughout the Los Angeles area. I understand that the resolution will be advisory in nature, and not binding on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. However, as the state agency created by the legislature to coordinate and advise projects affecting the Santa Monica Bay watershed, the SMBRC's position will be influential.

Thank you,

Susan Polka

Comment #7

From: Lisa Farris

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: SMBRC Draft Resolution on Ballona Wetlands Access!

Date: Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:27:01 PM

Dear Dr. Wang,

I support a resolution by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands that reaffirms SMBRC's previous goal of opening the Fiji Way access gate to facilitate wildlife-sensitive access for outdoor education, nature appreciation, and gentle stewardship, such as trash removal. The public has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to help facilitate such access, and there is broad consensus in the community of the importance of such access, especially to young students throughout the Los Angeles area. I understand that the resolution will be advisory in nature, and not binding on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. However, as the state agency created by the legislature to coordinate and advise projects affecting the Santa Monica Bay watershed, the SMBRC's position will be influential.

Thank you,

Lisa Farris
Sent from my iPhone

Comment #8

From: Dave Dichner

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: Ballona Wetlands

Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 3:12:00 PM

Dr. Wang

I would like to add my voice to those asking that the SMBRC recommend to Calif Fish & Game a limited opening of the Ballona Wetlands to school groups, nature walks led by informed leader (i.e. not just opening it up to anyone anytime to walk thru). This will not only help maintain and generate public awareness and support: the presence of these activities will help discourage (other things being equal) use of the wetlands by those whose presence will be harmful to it.

(I understand there are some homeless there. I occasionally hand food out as I am on the Culver Blvd offramp from the Marina Freeway. I see them all around me. Our society needs to help them. But not by living in an already devastated wetlands we are trying to restore)

I understand that access needs to be limited, and should be done in such a way as to not further damage the already damaged wetlands. It seems to me that should be doable. Having some limited

David Dichner, CPA
7514 Whitlock Ave
Playa del Rey, CA 90293

P.S. From 4 years old to 21, I lived a block and a half from Ballona Creek, and just west of Overland. Until the banks were cemented, I used to catch polywogs and frogs there. And bring them home of course. I remember annual barracuda runs in Santa Monica Bay, etc. I know restoring the wetlands by itself will not clean up the water nor restore SM Bay to the fishery it used to be, but restoration will help somewhat.

Comment #9

From: Wendy Zacuto

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: Comment on La Ballona for May 20, 2021 meeting of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 6:39:26 PM

I wish to comment in advance of the upcoming meeting of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission regarding La Ballona Wetlands.

I sincerely request that a draft resolution created by the Commission address a multitude of issues.

I request that it should include:

- specific discussion of Area A and the Fiji Way gate with regard to the history of public investment in access there;
- identification of potential issues;
- identification of potential solutions to any identified issues;
- affirmation of SMBRC's prior position of support for opening the Fiji Way gate for low-intensity, wildlife friendly access; or
- clearly explains any reversal of that position with documented facts.

Thank you so much for your kind consideration.

Wendy Zacuto

Educational Consultant

www.wendyzacuto.com

Creating a safe and loving world ...

Writing from the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Tongva People.

Comment #10

From: Jane Velez-Mitchell

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: SMBRC upcoming meeting and item 2 (d) iii on Ballona Wetlands

Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 7:27:05 PM

Dear Sir,

As a concerned citizen who has lived for 30 years near the Ballona Wetlands, I urge you, in regard to the May 20th Santa Monica Bay Restoration Committee Meeting's item 2 (d) iii) Consideration of Adoption of Resolution regarding Public Access at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, to please present a draft resolution that includes a focus on Area A, the Fiji Way Gate and the public investment that's already been made in public access there, which also affirms the preference for gentle solutions to any issues and which acknowledges and affirms SMBRC's previously stated SUPPORT for opening the Fiji Way gate to mindful public access that respects wildlife. Any potential reversal of that position to accommodate business/fossil fuel interests needs to be transparently addressed with back-up documentation, given that destruction is NOT restoration and that public access can and should be provided now, not after a decade of destructive bulldozing.

Thank you!

Jane Velez-Mitchell

Marina Del Rey

Comment #11

From: MB Trautwein

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: Agenda Item 2(d)iii Meeting May 20, 2021

Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 2:53:56 PM

Mr. Wang,

I am writing to urge staff to move forward with a Resolution regarding Public Access at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve.

In the Resolution it is important to include the history of the public investment for the public access to Area A and the Fiji Way gate.

It is important that the Resolution affirms SMBRC's prior position of support for opening the Fiji Way gate for low intensity, wildlife friendly access. If SMBRC does not support this position any longer then please clearly explain the reversal of that position with documented facts and identify alternate solutions.

Thoughtful access to Area A is very important to me. I am a former educator and I know that first hand experiences within nature are important for the conservation and preservation of our natural areas. Ballona Wetlands are so close to so many schools that it is an ideal field trip destination and easy for families on a biking outing to enjoy.

Thank you,

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Mary Beth Trautwein

cell: 310-740-0253

Comment #12

From: Susanne Cumming

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: May - Item 2)(d)(iii) Public Access to Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve

Date: Monday, May 10, 2021 12:47:13 PM

Dear Commissioner Wang,

RE: May 20, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Item 2)(d)(iii) Public Access to Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve

Thank you and your staff for your work supporting public access to the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve.

So much can be done for the public now, building on the good work that already is there.

As an individual, a member of Sierra Club and Defend Ballona, I am requesting that a draft Resolution:

- Included specific discussion of Area A and the Fiji Way gate and the history of public investment in access there;
- Identifies potential issues and identifies potential solutions to any identified issues;
- Affirms SMBRC's prior position of support for opening the Fiji Way gate for low intensity, wildlife friendly access or clearly explains any reversal of that position with documented facts.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Susanne Cumming

Susanne L. Cumming, Esq.
CA State Bar #137426
cumming@earthlink.net

www.linkedin.com/in/susannecumming

Comment #13

From: Courtney Lamb
To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards
Subject: SMBRC Draft Resolution on Ballona Wetlands Access
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 12:14:43 PM

Dear Dr. Wang,

I support a resolution by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands. Public access that emphasis the ecological importance of the wetlands, especially in the face of rising sea levels, is crucial in educating the public as to how to protect them. As a state agency, SMBRC should be working with environmental groups to ensure access to this area, especially for school groups.

Thank you,

Courtney Lamb
Culver City

Comment #14

From: Kathleen Jacecko

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards

Subject: Please open the Fiji Way access gate to Ballona Wetlands!

Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 11:40:00 AM

Dear Dr. Wang,

I support a resolution by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands that reaffirms SMBRC's previous goal of opening the Fiji Way access gate to facilitate wildlife-sensitive access for outdoor education, nature appreciation, and gentle stewardship, such as trash removal. The public has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to help facilitate such access, and there is broad consensus in the community of the importance of such access, especially to young students throughout the Los Angeles area. I understand that the resolution will be advisory in nature, and not binding on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. However, as the state agency created by the legislature to coordinate and advise projects affecting the Santa Monica Bay watershed, the SMBRC's position will be influential.

Thank you,

Kathleen Jacecko

Comment #15

From: Cindy Hardin <cindyhardin@laudubon.org>

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 5:04 PM

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards <Guangyu.Wang@waterboards.ca.gov>

Subject: Access to Area A

Dear SMBRC-

I continue to hope that the Board sees and acts upon the myriad opportunities for recreation and environmental education for the public at Area A.

Beautiful gates would welcome visitors, parking is available and trails are already in place. These enhancements were paid for by taxpayer funds, and it is a shame to see them continue to not be utilized as they were intended.

In the past, several non-profits have hosted events at the site, with great success. Please take action that would allow people to learn more about Ballona and its varied habitats, and open up those gates.

Sincerely,

Cindy Hardin

Comment #16

From: Wendy-Sue Rosen <rosenfree@aol.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 5:05 AM

To: Wang, Guangyu@Waterboards <Guangyu.Wang@waterboards.ca.gov>

Cc: tlippman@bos.lacounty.gov

Subject: Resolution on Access to Ballona Wetlands

Dr. Wang:

It is my understanding that you and your staff are currently working on a draft, non-binding resolution regarding access to the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, which will be considered by the full Commission's Governing Board in June. Public access to natural areas, when properly balanced with a strong focus on habitat and species protection, has been shown to be extremely beneficial to communities, especially disadvantaged kids. Research in child development shows there are tremendous benefits of connecting children to nature. Children who spend quality time outside develop stronger immune systems and healthy emotional coping skills; learning about nature teaches empathy, pattern recognition, social skills and scientific curiosity; and fostering connection to nature is one of the best ways to spark concern for the planet. I urge those drafting the resolution to consider the urgency and need for public access, the substantial investment of funds that have already been spent to assure access to areas of the ecological reserve north of Ballona Creek, and also the Commission's previous support for opening the gate at Fiji Way. I look forward to reviewing the resolution when it becomes available.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration,

Wendy-Sue Rosen, Co-founder

