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**S. Mark Taper Foundation Awards \$25,000 Capacity  
Grant  
to Friends of Ballona Wetlands**

*Ecological Reserve Continues to Heal as Funds Strengthen Organization*

**Playa del Rey, CA** (April 6, 2009) – Friends of Ballona Wetlands announced that they received a \$25,000 capacity grant from S. Mark Taper Foundation to help the organization continue to grow. “Our support of a grassroots organization like Friends of Ballona Wetlands in an important demonstration of the S. Mark Taper Foundation’s commitment to environmental quality in Los Angeles”, said Raymond Reisler, Executive Director for the foundation. The grant will enable the organization to expand its technological resources, including upkeep of its website, board development and increase its organizational infrastructure to ensure the stewardship and protection of the Ballona Wetlands, thereby enhancing continued growth of community education programs.

“Friends of Ballona Wetlands has emerged as one of the foremost spokesperson for the Wetlands and is excited that the S. Mark Taper Foundation is affirming our organizational impact by coming in as a funder”, said Otella Wruck, Executive Director. “The Foundation took a great deal of time to get to know our organization and understands the urgent need to restore native habitat to the Ballona Ecological Reserve because of its impact on both marine and land based wild life as well as interfacing with the Ballona Creek and the Santa Monica Bay.”

The Ballona Wetlands, located in Playa del Rey, are the last remaining wetlands in Los Angeles, a remnant of an estuary originally spanning more than 2,000 acres. The Friends was

formed in 1978 to protect and defend the remaining wetlands, crucial to hundreds of species of birds and other wildlife. The Friends works in tandem with the California Coastal Conservancy and the California Department of Fish and Game, who have authority over this State-owned Ecological Reserve.

S. Mark Taper Foundation, founded in 1989, is a private family foundation dedicated to enhancing the quality of people's lives by supporting nonprofit organizations and their work in our communities.

Founded in 1978, Friends of Ballona Wetlands is a non profit organization that has been protecting and restoring the Ballona Wetlands for over 30 years with the help of more than 65,000 volunteers. Their mission is to champion the restoration and protection of the Wetlands, involving and educating the public as advocates and stewards. The Friends host over 6,000 members of the community for interpretive wetlands tours and hands-on dunes restoration each year.