



Friends of Ballona Wetlands

<http://www.ballonafriends.org>

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Friends of Ballona Wetlands Celebrate "Watershed Warriors" Cynthia Ruiz and Terry O'Day at Downtown L.A. Event April 29th

City National Plaza party for 250 recognizes environmental champions for their efforts on behalf of regional water quality, wetlands work and more

Playa del Rey (April 16, 2010)—Two regional environmental activists, Cynthia Ruiz of the City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works, and Terry O'Day of Environment Now, will be honored April 29, from 5 to 8 p.m., with the first-ever "Passionate Pickleweed Awards" from the Friends of Ballona Wetlands.

The event, to be held at the 51st floor of City National Plaza, 515 S. Flower Street, is a fundraiser for the Friends, and is supported by dozens of business and individual sponsors from Venice's G2 Gallery, to Malcolm Pirnie, to Playa Vista, to Southern California Edison, to Nancy and Sid Ganis, to Stephen Groner Associates. (For a constantly updated list of sponsors, please visit <http://www.ballonafriends.org/aga/spnsr/index.html>.)

"We're literally recreating the Ballona Wetlands in downtown L.A. on the 51st floor of the City National Plaza, in order to celebrate our Ballona Watershed Warriors, Cynthia Ruiz and Terry O'Day, said Lisa Fimiani, co-executive director of the Friends.

"It's our pleasure to honor Cynthia and Terry with the Passionate Pickleweed Award for their incredible work on urban and coastal water quality and other environmental issues (like trash reduction) that directly affect the health of the Ballona Watershed and the Wetlands," added Catherine Tyrrell, president of the Friends board of directors."

According to the citation that will accompany the awards, the Friends are honoring Ruiz and O'Day because, "Just as wetlands need hardy, salty, adaptable, highly functioning champions like pickleweed as part of the rich web of life, as food, as habitat, so does Los Angeles need hardy, salty, adaptable humans, who remain steadfast in vision and purpose, as political administrations come and go like tidal surges—one year fresh, the next salty, the third fresh again."

Environmentalist and community activist Cynthia M. Ruiz was unanimously confirmed by the Los Angeles City Council to a seat on the Board of Public Works on July 19, 2005 and serves as its president.

As a Board commissioner, Ruiz brings more than two decades of community involvement and experience to a team that ensures quality and efficient delivery of key City services to the public, including, maintenance of wastewater treatment plants.

She has also partnered with LAUSD School Board Member Monica Garcia to start Latinas Lighting the Way, a youth mentorship program.

Commissioner Ruiz received the "2006 Top Leader Award" from the American Public Works Association Southern California Chapter and is a graduate of California State University, Los Angeles, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in counseling and Chicano Studies and a Master of Science degree in counseling. She also holds a certificate in Federal Mediation Training.

Terry O'Day is Executive Director of Environment Now, a foundation known as a strategic, entrepreneurial, activist leader in California, having founded more than a dozen lasting, successful organizations like the Waterkeepers in California and Mexico, Sequoia ForestKeeper, and Energy Independence Now.

Prior to his work with Environment Now, he helped found the pioneering car rental firm, EV Rental Cars, and before that, Terry was a senior analyst in business development and strategic planning for Edison Enterprises, a subsidiary of Edison International.

He holds an MBA from The UCLA Anderson School of Management, was a Coro Public Affairs Fellows Program in Los Angeles in 1996. He received a Bachelor of Arts with honors in Public Policy at Stanford University.

Terry lives in Santa Monica, where he has served as Chair of the city's planning commission and member of the Sustainable City Task Force and Solar Santa Monica, and was recently appointed to the City Council.

"The Friends promise great company, great food, a complementary wine bar, great music, great views, and well-deserved awards to Cynthia and Terry," Fiminian said. "We can't say EVERYONE worth knowing will be there, but trust us, our Host Committee alone rocks, and our sponsors verge on awesome. Find more information at <http://www.ballonafriends.org/aga/invite/index.htm>."

Tickets, available at <http://www.ballonafriends.org/aga/>, range in price from a multi-benefit sponsor package at \$10,000, to a special student/activist rate of \$250.

Ballona's 600 acres are a remnant of an estuarine wetlands system that once covered more than 2,000 acres. Friends of Ballona Wetlands was formed in 1978 to protect and defend the wetlands, which are part of the Pacific Flyway, and which provide crucial habitat for hundreds of species of birds and other wildlife.

The Friends of Ballona Wetlands works in partnership with the California Coastal Conservancy, the California Department of Fish & Game, and the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority, which have authority over the State-owned Ecological Reserve. FBW programs have served the greater Los Angeles area by providing hands-on restoration opportunities to more than 65,000 volunteers since 1994. It brings more than 2,500 hundred students a year to the wetlands, many of those from underserved communities all over L.A.

The mission of the thirty-two year-old non-profit is to champion the restoration and protection of the wetlands, and to involve and educate the public as advocates and stewards.

For more information, visit <http://www.ballonafriends.org>.

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