



Friends of Ballona Wetlands

<http://www.ballonafriends.org>

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Friends of Ballona Wetlands Host an International Earth Day Clean-up Event April 24th at Ballona Wetlands

Annual Earth Day event brings as many as 200 members of the public to wetlands to clean up debris and plant natives to replace invasive plants. This year's event features representatives from Malta and South Africa, as well as an art exhibit made from debris collected in the watershed

Playa del Rey, CA (April 19, 2010) – This Saturday, from 9:30 until 12:30, the Friends of Ballona Wetlands will host its INTERNATIONAL Earth Day Action Extravaganza, featuring as many as 200 community volunteers, along with **Riaz Simjee**, of the Lenasia Muslim School in South Africa, and **Franklin Calleja**, a director for a Malta NGO (non-government organization) called Prisms that serves young people.

Our international representatives are hosted by Kim Ngoc Le, Senior Program Officer of the International Visitors Council of Los Angeles, and John Zins, U.S. State Department English Language Officer.

"As we continue to restore and educate people about the Ballona Wetlands, we find that they are drawing international interest as a destination for people interested in successful ecological restoration," said Kelly Rose, Education/Programs Director of the 32-year-old Playa del Rey-based non-profit. The Friends are the only Playa del Rey-based organization with a state permit to

bring volunteers onto the wetlands for restoration.

The Friends annual Ballona Earth Day celebration is a volunteer event focused on community education and action. Early arrivals will get an opportunity to meet our international guests, enjoy some fresh coffee, view a special art installation by artist-activist **Anne Shackman (A.K.A. Deb Ris)**, learn about marine debris, and take a peek at the salt marsh or the native Ki-ish, our Tongva dwelling replica.

"We start the program with a brief introduction about Ballona Wetlands, then volunteers work in teams to remove invasive introduced plants from the dunes and clean up Ballona Creek," Rose added. Group reservations are required, and email reservations can be sent to <Kellyr@ballonafriends.org>.

Details:

- The main parking lot is behind Gordon's Market in Playa del Rey: 303 Culver Blvd. Alternate parking is available, however carpooling is recommended.

- All are welcome, however this activity is recommended for age 7 and up.

- This is an outdoor volunteer activity. Wear long pants, solid shoes, and sunscreen.

- Friends of Ballona will provide gloves and tools.

- Volunteers are requested to download the release form (waiver) from http://www.ballonafriends.org/visit_programs.html, sign it, and bring it to

the event.

- Children 14 and under must be accompanied by an adult, and minors must have a parent/guardian sign the release on their behalf.

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.

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>.