



# Friends of Ballona Wetlands

<http://www.ballonafriends.org>

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## **Friends of Ballona Wetlands Launch Five-Day-a-Week "Ballona Blog" April 12<sup>th</sup> at <http://www.ballonafriends.org/blog>**

*New blog to educate public about wetlands and watershed through local, national and international news, renowned writers and photographers, a local history column, and more*

**Playa del Rey, CA** (April 12, 2010) – The Friends of Ballona Wetlands, the area's preeminent wetlands education and restoration group, announced today the inaugural post on <http://www.ballonafriends.org/blog>, its "Ballona Blog," designed to bring the wetlands news to every interested person with a Web browser.

"The Ballona Wetlands are a unique, precious habitat," said Richard Beban, co-executive director of the 32-year-old Friends, "and yet they share important functions and fill an ecological niche akin other wetlands, swamps, fens, bogs, etc. around the world. The new blog will show how our remaining two percent of L.A. County wetlands are linked in the web of life with wetlands the world over."

"As the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve is a small but integral part of the larger 128-square-mile Ballona Watershed," added Catherine Tyrrell, president of the Friends board of directors, "so will our blog use Ballona as a starting point to bring watershed worthy news from all over the Web."

In addition to news and updates on the work of the Friends as stewards of Ballona, and news of other organizations fighting for wetlands environments all over, the blog will also include:

- Weekly posts and unique "watershed biographies" from the finest poets and writers from around the neighborhood, the country and the world; initial contributors include Christopher Merrill, Annie Finch, Linda Pastan, Susan Terris, Ron Koertge, Dam Bellm, and C.J Sage, to name a few;
- A weekly column on Playa del Rey and Ballona Valley history by respected local historian Dave Dukesherer, author of three popular local histories;
- Updates on regional, national, and international wetland issues, with a special focus on news from the Ballona Watershed;
- Links to important environmental blogs and wetlands information around the area and around the world;
- And, the best of reader comments.

Ballona Blog will change every weekday, bringing news of the Friends continued commitment to wetlands conservation and restoration. According to Friends Co-Executive Director Lisa Fimiani, "One of our priorities will be to highlight the many successful and continuing restorations of wetlands habitat throughout California and around the world. Through the use of sound science and community engagement, direct wetland restoration efforts, including those that make effective use of the newest, environmentally sensitive engineering technologies, have shown time and again to be the best means to restore native habitat. The gorgeous, thriving Ballona Freshwater Marsh (which you can visit without reservations any day at the corner of Lincoln and Jefferson here in west L.A.) proves that every day."

Beban added, "We hope, at the end of each day, Ballona Blog will be a place for contemplating the beauty and importance of the Ballona Wetlands, and a place for us to convey the magic it holds."

"Because the state-owned Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve in Playa del Rey (primarily the saltwater marsh, and dunes habitat) is sensitive, somewhat degraded habitat, it's only open to the public through tours, or our monthly open house, but you can now visit whenever you like through this blog, which we'll be constantly updating with the latest news, photographs and even video and audio."

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 organization brings approximately 5,500 visitors a year to the wetlands, about half of those schoolchildren from underserved communities.

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>.