

## Summary of Alternative 1 – Ballona Restoration Project

The project is a science-based restoration, enhancement, and establishment of native coastal wetland and upland habitats that will restore the damaged and degraded Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (BWER) to a thriving wetland for listed and other native species, and for the enjoyment of all Angelenos (i.e. a slightly modified version of Alternative 1 as described below). The project's objectives focus on restoring wetland and other ecological functions within the reserve, maintaining existing levels of flood risk management provided by the Ballona Creek channel and levee system, and restoring and improving public access for compatible recreational and educational opportunities currently limited within the reserve.

As one of the last remaining opportunities for major coastal habitat restoration in Los Angeles County, the ecosystem at BWER is one of the most significant wetland resources in Southern California. However, the reserve has deteriorated to the point where it no longer sustains vital functions. Absent the project, sea level rise and climate change will require existing floodgates to be permanently closed. As a result, tidal waters will be cut off from the remaining struggling wetland habitats by around 2050 and portions of the site will be stagnant, flooded ponds.

The project, as described in the EIR, is divided into two phases (Phase 1 and 2). However, during the next design phase, CDFW will firm up potential sequences available to further divide the project into smaller components. Having smaller components facilitates securing funding and allows the restoration to pause, or even halt, and evaluate resource issues to ensure appropriate protective actions and implementation of adaptive management. The EIR included in its analysis the construction of a three-story parking garage at the present location of CDFW's lot in Area A. Having considered comments related to the garage, CDFW decided it will not build the parking garage.

The project's restoration components include: net increase of approximately 200 acres of coastal wetlands, replacing approximately 9,800 feet of existing Ballona Creek levees with transitional zones to accommodate for sea-level rise, realigning the existing Ballona Creek channel with a more natural "meander-shape" through the project reach and re-established floodplain, improving tidal circulation into the ecological reserve, and SoCalGas' decommissioning of many active wells and associated infrastructure.

The project's flood risk management-related components include: constructing new engineered levees set back from the existing Ballona Creek channel thereby reestablishing a functioning floodplain for flood attenuation and sea level rise, installing new hydraulic structures to allow for controlled tidal exchange from the Ballona Creek channel to South and Southeast Area B, and constructing a retention basin in Area B to alleviate neighborhood flooding.

The project's public access-related improvements include: installing approximately 5.5 miles (29,000 linear feet) of pedestrian-only trails, installing approximately 2,000 linear feet of elevated boardwalks to allow visitors to walk adjacent to the wetlands and obtain closer habitat views, and constructing two bike and pedestrian bridges to better, and more safely, provide access to the reserve.