

Colorado Lagoon Wetlands Restoration Project



VIEW OF FUTURE WESTERN ARM RESERVE AT CORNER OF APPIAN WAY AND PARK AVENUE



COLORADO LAGOON

The Colorado Lagoon is in Long Beach, CA. It is a human made geomorphological feature located within the historical range of Los Cerritos Wetlands, which once boasted over 2,400 acres of coastal wetlands. This wetlands' acreage has been reduced to just 500 acres of open space, much of which is still privately owned and operated for oil and gas extraction purposes. However, Colorado Lagoon itself has been managed by the City of Long Beach since the 1920s as a park and marine recreational area. In 1923, the naturally occurring tidal wetlands of Alamitos Bay were dredged to form the Lagoon and Marine Stadium. The Lagoon became the site for the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic U.S. Diving Trails and was separated from Marine Stadium (the site for rowing competitions) by tide gates designed to maintain an adequate water depth during diving events. In the late 1960s, the north end of Marine Stadium was filled in preparation for a never-executed, cross-town freeway. Instead, this filled area became part of Marina Vista Park. Presently, all that remains on site is an 18-acre tidal water body connected to Alamitos Bay via a 1,000-foot box culvert.

Despite its urban constraints, Colorado Lagoon hosts 17 native salt marsh plant species and over 75 species of marine birds, such as the state and federally endangered California least tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*). This protected bird and other migratory bird species flock to the Lagoon to forage on 21 species of marine fish and other available food sources. The Lagoon is also a home for innumerable marine invertebrate species that inhabit this estuary.

Friends of Colorado Lagoon (FOCL) was awarded grant funding from the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Office of Spill Prevention and Response, the Port of Long Beach, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry to restore the Western Arm of the

Colorado Lagoon's wetland, upland, dune and eelgrass habitats. FOCL revegetated the bare ground left by the dredging activities, developed interpretive signage, created trails, installed protective –yet aesthetically pleasing – fences, and is effectively monitoring and maintaining this project. Habitat restoration events, educational nature walks and other events are held to engage the public's help and support in restoring this important wetland community.