



# the BLUE HERON

LEAVING A LEGACY OF OPEN SPACE      SPRING 2007

## A Note from our President



### Greetings Everyone,

A comprehensive audit of park space in the Los Angeles urban region was just completed by a joint venture of USC, the Coastal Conservancy, and several other local conservancies such as the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. **"The Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern**

**California"**, which includes parts of Ventura and Orange Counties, an area of 5.5 million acres, is a technical report that assesses parks and recreational open space assets in this region.

Of the twelve 'sub-regions' identified, the South Bay finished 10th for park space, and was grouped with East LA and South LA as the worst communities for places to go and relax. And yes, this included the beaches. If you can't walk to the beach, your choices of places to get away are very limited.

The low ranking of the South Bay contrasts with our demographic profile, and this was specifically noted. To quote from the report, "It may be noted, however, the South Bay does not typically fit into the above group...with a median household income higher than the other sub-regions."

One of the reasons we formed the South Bay Parkland Conservancy was our concern for lack of park space in our area, and that nothing seemed to be happening to correct the situation. This report confirms our earlier analyses that not only is the

LA region considered 'park poor', the South Bay in particular is one of the worst offenders.

Lack of park space has been tied to higher levels of childhood obesity, various diseases such as diabetes, higher crime rates and lower property values. The South Bay is still a great place to live, but this is one area that definitely needs our attention.

One of the best opportunities we currently have to alleviate this situation and improve the quality of life for everyone in the South Bay is the purchase of underutilized land right on our coast in Redondo Beach. The residents have weighed in on their preference for some park space here, and we at the SBPC continue to advocate on their behalf to ensure this opportunity does not slip by.

The citizens of California approved Propositions 84 and 1C last November, which calls for allocating almost \$3 billion for projects like Heart Park. And the City of Redondo Beach may soon be receiving millions more from unpaid utility users taxes that should certainly be used for purchasing some open space on this very site.

So the money is there now, or soon will be, and it's up to your elected leaders at all levels of government to make it happen. Encourage them, and educate yourself about other areas like Ormond Beach in Ventura, that have accomplished much the same thing. And consider joining our group. We are the one entity that continues to advocate what we all want, more open space in our community.

— President, Bill Brand

Come Volunteer at the  
Beach Bluff Restoration  
Project on May 26, from  
9:00am – Noon at  
Avenue I and Esplanade!

See You There.  
Bring Your Friends.

## Beach Bluffs Restoration Project, and Update

by Ann Dalkey

At the south end of Redondo Beach, the Beach Bluffs Restoration Project (BBRP) has been restoring native habitat to the beach bluffs over the past few years. This project, known as a Redondo Beach Demonstration Project, was funded by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission because it met their goals of bringing natural conditions back to Santa Monica Bay. In early 2006, we took an introspective look at the project in order to determine what was working and identify areas needing improvement. In general, most people were satisfied with the organization but clearly noted that change was warranted in how we handle the restoration and the public volunteer effort.

The two changes identified were fairly straight forward; increase the density

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*Above:* This historic photo of the Redondo Salt Lake was taken in 1908, shortly after the first power plant was built here. We found this photo on the Library of Congress website, along with a couple other gems from Redondo's past. You can view the others at <http://www.loc.gov/index.html>- go to the "American Memory" page.

A very unique site, this lake was filled periodically with seawater by waves washing over the natural berm during high tides and large winter swells. There was probably underground mixing too, of the sea water and fresh water aquifers that also flowed into the lake. It was a complex process, with evaporation most of the year

leaving behind copious amounts of salt that was easily collected.

As you can see, there was significant development along its shores already – mostly lumber and oil storage awaiting distribution, with a few homes scattered about. In the background are three piers which served as the first trading port in Los Angeles County, before the San Pedro Harbor was opened. Also in the background is the famous Hotel Redondo, and a very wide road, probably the original 'Pacific Coast Highway.'

To the right is a glimmer of the coastal dunes that are the long forgotten natural landscape of the area. Unfortunately, there are no cool photos of the native american culture that

## "South Bay Open Space" Task Force

*by Joan Davidson, Co-Chair, South Bay Open Space*

The Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club – the largest chapter in the US – recently voted to form the "South Bay Open Space" task force. The formation of this task force is the result of the hard work and progress made on 2 major open space opportunities in this area, the former PV Landfill and the Heart Park vision for the AES site in Redondo Beach.

Both these sites have been front and center in the struggle to clean-up brown fields and provide more open space in these 'park poor' communities. The Sierra Club has been actively supporting the above visions, and

was satisfied that the visions for these areas were far enough along that a special task force was warranted.

Myself and your president, Bill Brand, are co-Chairs of the new task force. We met at a Conservation Committee meeting of the PV/South Bay Group 3 years ago, and have worked tirelessly on both opportunities. As long time residents of the South Bay, we see the value and importance of both projects and have been helping each other along the way. We are very thankful for the Sierra Club support we've received to date, and look forward to even more

help from their team of experts as we move on to the next phase of both projects.

While membership in the SBPC is important to all of you, I hope you'll consider joining the Sierra Club as well. Not only have they been a big help in your own community, they influence environmental policies worldwide. Visit [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org) for more information.





Photo courtesy of: The Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov>

thrived here for thousands of years. If there were, we would see the natural sand dunes, native vegetation such as pickleweed and marigold, as well as birds, foxes and other wildlife. Most likely, the natives lived in huts that were clustered along the lake where fresh water was easily gathered from the shallow aquifers. Known as the Tongva, this tribe had it all: large amounts of salts and minerals for food and bartering, abundant sealife, a mild climate and plenty of fresh water. Little is written about the natural history of this site, but for thousands of years it was a very special place with a thriving culture. It has since been designated a California State Landmark, No. 373.

The South Bay Parkland Conservancy continues to advocate for restoring a portion of this wetland and constructing a combination of walking trails and more active recreational activities. Since the Redondo Beach advisory vote of March, 2005, where the citizens overwhelmingly supported all park here, the state of California has approved Proposition 84 and Proposition 1C to provide funding for these types of projects. Approximately \$3 billion is at stake but we need leadership from ALL levels of government to make this a reality. Other communities like Bolsa Chica, Ventura County and San Luis Obispo have done it, so can we! Visit us at [www.southbayparks.org](http://www.southbayparks.org).

## BEACH BLUFFS RESTORATION PROJECT, AND UPDATE

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of plants for new restoration efforts and provide additional water during years of lackluster rainfall. Co-chairs Ann Dalkey and Giancarlo Cetrulo have diligently worked toward meeting these new mandates and were quite challenged this year record low rainfall.

The SEA Lab staff has implemented a new planting strategy at Dockweiler State Beach and they are pleased with the results so far. Adding supplemental irrigation posed considerable challenges on the technical end, but they are ready to turn on the spigot, just in time before summer arrives.

Our efforts at improving the public volunteerism are also going well. The first task was for the SEA Lab personnel to improve their ability to handle volunteers. Volunteer leaders Monica Acosta and Stefanie Miller spent time with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy to learn how to host volunteer events. Then they worked with their Corps' members to apply their new knowledge during their monthly volunteer

events at Redondo Beach, held every third Saturday. Now they are ready for the next phase where our program will expand to organizations



El Segundo Blue

who will agree to volunteer one month a year for a minimum of three years. We are looking forward to the South Bay Parkland Conservancy to be one of the lead participants in this revised program. We already know that the Conservancy is a hard working, fun loving group. Then, add-in the spectacular ocean views, The Strand, and nearby Riviera Village, and wow, what a combination!

Please join the SBPC for a couple hours on May 26th, 9a.m. – noon, and help weed, water and plant the bluffs overlooking our coastline. It's a fun way to meet your neighbors and give back some time to your community. Drinks and muffins will be served.

## Special Thanks To...

The Capital Group Companies  
Pier Ventures

Irene Kurata - *our new Secretary*  
All our new members!!

State Coastal Conservancy  
Jane Harman - *US House of Representatives*  
Ted Lieu - *California State Assembly*  
Mike Gin - *Redondo Beach Mayor*

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Annual Membership \$25  
Family \$40 ■ Patron \$250

[www.southbayparks.org](http://www.southbayparks.org)

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