

# LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM REPORT AUGUST 2020 – MARCH 2022

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## Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

### Nature Walks

*Raptor Ramble, Heron Hike, Turtle Trek*

Each of these tours immerse visitors in the unique habitats of Los Cerritos Wetlands and allow them gain new perspectives on the purpose of these rare environments. Each walk begins at the northeast side of 1st Street and Pacific Coast Highway in Seal Beach at 8:00 A.M. on the first Saturday of every month. Members of the public are encouraged to attend all three different tours into the Wetlands. For more information and to RSVP for land tours/nature walks, please contact Elizabeth Lambe at [elizabeth@lcwlandtrust.org](mailto:elizabeth@lcwlandtrust.org)

### 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only 3 nature walks were hosted in the first three months of 2020. This still allowed many visitors to explore the Hellman Ranch parcel, Marketplace Marsh, Zedler Marsh and the San Gabriel River. As the pandemic continued, we wanted to find a way to bring these natural open spaces to the community in a safe away, so a few virtual tours were created. This allowed those interested to join us on a virtual tour and visit the Los Cerritos Wetlands from the safety of their home. The video recording of the virtual tour can be accessed on YouTube using the following link <https://youtu.be/6WGGZswBvpS8>.

### 2021

Nature walks finally resumed on July 3rd after a 15-month hiatus. All public events on the LCWA property implemented COVID-19 safety guidelines that followed county, state, and federal guidelines when hosting public gatherings outside. This included having a limit on the number of visitors at one time and requiring facial coverings on site. Each tour experienced a lot of interest and reached capacity for each nature walk. As restrictions for outdoor gatherings lifted, we quickly saw many eager individuals ready to join us outside as well as many volunteer groups. This eagerness resulted in each event hosting a minimum of 30 visitors for the rest of the year.

### 2022

This year the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust has already hosted 4 land tours. These land tours included 2 Turtle Treks, 1 Raptor Ramble and 1 Heron Hike. This year COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted further and we are now seeing nature walks with with a minimum of 40 people in attendance. With many repeat volunteers as well as many new faces in attendance that want to get outside and learn about this local gem.

### Habitat Restoration Events

Monthly Habitat Restoration events take place at Zedler Marsh, which is currently the only active restoration site throughout the Los Cerritos Wetlands. Here volunteers can help with a plethora of activities from native plant installation, non-native plant removal, mulching, watering, trash clean ups, propagating and more! Restoration events follow immediately after Land Tours on the first Saturday of every month starting right at 10:15 A.M., please contact [iwanttohelp@tidalinfluence.com](mailto:iwanttohelp@tidalinfluence.com) for more information.

## 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mandated stay-at-home order that was enacted in the middle of March 2020, we were able to host Habitat Restoration events in just the first 3 months of the year. From January to March we saw a total of 149 volunteers that helped with the installation of 387 plants and the removal of 128lbs of trash. This resulted in combined volunteer hours of 298 hours, producing an in-kind service value of \$7,578. Although Zedler Marsh did not see any volunteers after March our team removed over 1,000lbs of non-native plant material, installed over 1,500 plants, and propagated approximately 2,000 plants.

## 2021

Habitat restoration events resumed in July of 2021 after a 15-month hiatus due to COVID-19. All public events followed all county, state and federal health guidelines for outdoor public gatherings. When first implementing events again we required facial coverings and limited the number of volunteers that could participate at each event. From July to December, we saw many familiar faces as well as new ones that joined us in making a difference at Zedler Marsh. In those 6 months, a total of 319 volunteers helped to remove 490lbs of non-native plants, install 624 native plants, and remove 660lbs of trash. Combined volunteer hours totaled 638 hours, producing an in-kind service value of \$18,209. In addition, our team at Zedler Marsh helped to install approximately 1,000 plants, remove over 1,500lbs of weeds, and continued to propagate different marsh and upland species.

## 2022

This year the LCWA has hosted 4 Habitat Restoration events with a 5<sup>th</sup> event happening on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In the first 4 months of events, we have hosted a total of 155 volunteers, that have helped us to install 356 native plants, propagate 62 salt tolerant native grasses, and remove 350lbs of trash. Combined volunteer hours totaled 310 hours, producing an in-kind service value of \$8,847. We look forward to hosting even more events and volunteers this year at the Los Cerritos Wetlands.

## Special Events

### 2020

Due to the pandemic all extra events, field trips, and nature walks were put on pause. In fall of 2020 schools were still eager to learn about wetlands and natural spaces, and we were eager to continue teaching others about the importance of the Los Cerritos Wetlands. We had several opportunities to host virtual field trips for elementary students and created a virtual curriculum through the use of videos, live videos in nature, and presentations to keep students engaged. We hosted several days of virtual field trips for students at Heroes Elementary. This ongoing partnership had started prior to the pandemic, so it was great to adapt and learn new skills in order to continue educating our youth. We also hosted a virtual field trip for middle schoolers from Kinetic Academy, which was our first partnership with them.

### 2022

For the third year in a row, we have seen the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic when it comes to extracurricular activities, fieldtrips and special events out at the Los Cerritos Wetlands. This year has seen a lifting of restrictions and a decrease in the spread of the virus. This has allowed us to confidently open up to hosting youth events and schools, and in turn it has allowed more schools to reach out to us to get their students involved outside. This year we have seen an influx of inquiries to get students of all ages and summer groups out to the Los Cerritos

Wetlands. We have hosted nature walks at Zedler Marsh exposing visitors to the marsh and coastal sage scrub habitats, including 9<sup>th</sup> graders from Oakwood School and AP Environmental Students from a Port of Long Beach High School class with which we have a long-standing partnership. In May we will be hosting college students from Marine Biology and Wildlife Biology classes from Long Beach City College who we also have a long-standing partnership with. This year we have already started field trips with our partners at Heroes Elementary where we will be hosting a total of 10 field trips for grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>. On these trips we have a fun and interactive curriculum we call “Explore the Coast” where they get to learn about the Los Cerritos Wetlands, Zedler Marsh, help with habitat restoration, make plant presses, and even a scavenger hunt for different insects and animals they may find on site. This Earth Day we partnered with our partner the Aquarium of the Pacific (AOP) for one of the largest events Zedler Marsh has ever seen. On Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, we hosted 170 of the AOP volunteers, who helped us install 125 plants, remove 1,000lbs of non-native vegetation, and mulch a large portion of our trails system.

## **Kayak Tours**

This year the LCW Land Trust was able to bring back the loved kayak tours to Steam Shovel Slough for the first time since 2016! For these kayak tours we partnered with LA River Expedition Guides to provide liability and safety on the water and Tidal Influence and the AOP to provide naturalists to be a guide while navigating these natural features. From January until April, 7 kayak tours hosted 18 visitors each trip, totaling 126 people who joined us in learning about the history and wildlife found throughout Los Alamitos Bay, the San Gabriel River, Los Cerritos Wetlands, Jack Duster Biological Marine Preserve, Los Cerritos Channel, and Steam Shovel Slough. These tours have allowed others to experience and access parts of the Los Cerritos Wetlands they otherwise never would have known about. The goal is to continue kayak tours in the Fall when LA River Expedition Guides will be able to assist again.

## **Open Trails Day**

In 2021 the LCWA was able allow the trails at Zedler Marsh to be accessible from the San Gabriel River Bike path twice a week with the supervision of a staff member on site during open hours. Since June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the trails at Zedler have been open every Friday and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In the past year there has not been too much advertisement as we have been upgrading the trails for more public usage, but so far, we have still seen over 200 individuals explore our trails system. The goal is to make these public trails more accessible, so this month we are planning to promote this opening even more so others can learn about the site and access it on their own with the supervision of a staff Trail Keeper.