

LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM REPORT MAY 2024-AUGUST 2024

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

Executive Summary

From May 2024 - August 2024, the Stewardship Program engaged a grand total of 198 volunteers who participated in community-based habitat restoration programs. The 263 hours worked by these volunteers contributed \$8,807.87 of in-kind services. These volunteers removed 1400 pounds of invasive plants, thereby reducing the seed bank of noxious weeds. The Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewardship Program (LCWSP), in partnership with the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust and Applied Energy Services (AES), hosted 18 field trips for 540 students from Title 1 Elementary schools in Long Beach Unified School District and the BeSAFE program. Additionally, the Conservation Corps of Long Beach assisted with repairing trails to better accommodate land tour participants.

Monthly Habitat Restoration Events

Monthly Habitat Restoration events take place at Zedler Marsh every 1st Saturday of the month. Volunteers help with a plethora of activities from native plant installation, non-native plant removal, mulching, trash clean-ups, plant propagating, watering, site preparation and trail clean-up.

The LCWSP hosted three monthly habitat restoration events during this period on May 4th, June 1st, and July 6th, 2024. A total of 76 volunteers helped remove 600 pounds of weeds. All this help from the community resulted in 152 hours of volunteer work time contributing \$5,090.48 worth of in-kind services. These events are supported by funding from the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) Warne Fund.

Special Events

Community and school groups regularly reach out to participate in special community-based habitat restoration events. The LCWSP hosted four additional community-based habitat restoration events at Zedler Marsh during this period, two LBCC Marine Biology and one Wildlife Biology classes on May 15th and 23rd, 2024, and Port of Los Angeles High School (POLAHS) service-learning trip on May 30th, 2024. In total, 800 pounds of non-native plants were removed. A total of 111 volunteer hours were contributed with \$3,717 of in-kind services. These events are supported by funding from AES.

Environmental Education Field Trips

The LCWSP continues to host a variety of youth groups and community members out at the wetlands. The Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust works each year to coordinate class field trips for underserved schools. For these field trips the Land Trust provides a bus that picks up students from their schools and transports them to Zedler Marsh. At Zedler Marsh, the LCWSP Environmental Educators offer an engaging and informative grade-based curriculum of ecological activities where youth participate in hands-on learning focused on the Los Cerritos Wetlands and Zedler Marsh. Since May 2024, the LCWSP hosted fifteen field trips which accommodated about 450 Long Beach youth. During summer months, the Land Trust hosts the BeSAFE program for Long Beach parks weekly and the program has

hosted three during this period. These field trips are sponsored by the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust with funding provided by AES.

Land Tours

Raptor Ramble, Heron Hike, Salt Marsh Stroll

Each month, the LCWLT hosts a land tour and rotates through the Raptor Ramble, Heron Hike, or Salt Marsh Stroll. These tours immerse visitors in the unique habitats of Los Cerritos Wetlands and allow them to gain new perspectives on the purpose of these rare environments. Members of the public are encouraged to attend all three different tours to experience diverse wildlife encounters in the Los Cerritos Wetlands.

The Raptor Ramble was offered in May 2024, where 15 participants experienced the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands and encountered wildlife, including several bird species. This was an opportunity to also learn about the upcoming habitat restoration and the past and future uses of the site by native peoples. The Heron Hike was hosted in June 2024, where 7 participants had the unique experience of exploring a freshwater marsh dominated by emergent vegetation, which is an excellent habitat for herons.

A new tour called the “Salt Marsh Stroll” was hosted for 20 participants in July 2024. This new tour’s theme focuses on ethnobotany in the context of an established restoration site which has plants with defined characteristics, such as the thorns on California boxthorn and the aromatic needle-thick leaves on California sagebrush. Ethnobotany focuses on the traditional knowledge of plants and their many uses in cooking, medicine, building structures, and in ceremony. Tour guides focus on plant adaptations and special-status plants that are thriving at Zedler Marsh. The Salt Marsh Stroll covers intricacies of plant ecology in the salt marsh and also the alkali meadow, coastal scrub, mulefat scrub, and other upland plant communities.

Youth Workforce Development

The Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) dedicated twelve workdays to habitat restoration activities in Zedler Marsh and Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands to help expand the impact of the stewardship team. CCLB has allowed our team to work efficiently with a larger skilled team available to accomplish priority tasks such as trail repair, spreading mulch over degraded soils, maintain fencing, and sanding and painting tables used for education. The CCLB team is very versatile in that they can assist with sensitive plant communities and can take on laborious tasks such as removing tons of asphalt and wielding power tools to complete the job at hand.



FIGURE 1. Habitat Restoration- Naples Elementary May 11, 2024



FIGURE 2. LBCC Marine Biology class May 15, 2024



FIGURE 3. Habitat Restoration- Weeding on June 1, 2024



FIGURE 4. Habitat Restoration- group photo on June 1, 2024



FIGURE 5. Habitat Restoration Event on July 6, 2024



FIGURE 6. Nature Walk- Raptor Ramble on May 4, 2024



FIGURE 7. Nature Walk- Raptor Ramble May 4, 2024



FIGURE 8. Education- Starr King Elementary on May 14, 2024