



## CHAPTER | SEVEN



*Oxford Flood Control Basin*



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# next steps

### A. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 (Methods and Mechanisms) proposes a range of actions that will make progress towards improving the ecological health of the Watershed. However, given the degraded state of existing conditions, the effort required to undertake all of these actions is substantial, especially when other social and environmental needs are considered. As many decades may be required to make significant progress towards improving the ecological health of the watershed, some initial key steps can be taken to demonstrate the feasibility of the actions proposed in this plan, build support for watershed restoration, and illustrate the power of coordinated stakeholder action to make positive changes. These suggested key actions are summarized below, organized as relates to water, land, and planning.

#### 1. Water

##### TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS

The list of impaired water bodies (the “303(d)” list) identifies the pollutants of concern, but until TMDLs are established, the extent of effort needed to meet applicable standards remains speculative. Thus, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, with

the assistance of the City of Los Angeles (which has agreed to assume the lead for a stakeholder-driven process for the remaining TMDLs) should work with other affected agencies to obtain needed monitoring data and adopt the remaining TMDLs on timely basis.

#### BALLONA CREEK BMP PRIORITIZATION PROJECT

The Ballona Creek BMP prioritization project will identify which management practices and actions are most relevant and effective in the Watershed. This information will enhance future decisions about how to most cost-effectively and efficiently make progress towards water quality improvements.

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY NPDES PERMIT

In 2006, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board will renew the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for stormwater discharge in Los Angeles County. The Board has an opportunity to move from countywide to watershed-based permits, and to incorporate recommendations from this plan into permit conditions. Focusing efforts on a watershed basis has the potential to facilitate coordination between relevant jurisdictions and focus efforts on cooperation programs and practices.

NEXT STEPS



## LOWER BALLONA CREEK ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION STUDY

The Army Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with several local partners, is about to begin work on the Restoration Study, which will evaluate options to reduce sedimentation at the Creek entrance and may result in projects or other recommendations to reduce sediment loads and restore natural resources and could attract federal funding for such activities.

## COMPREHENSIVE STORM DRAIN MAP

A comprehensive map of the Ballona Creek drainage network is needed to link specific outfalls on Ballona Creek (e.g., where pollutant concentrations may be elevated) to the precise upstream area connected to that drain. Implementation of measures to reduce pollutants could be more effectively targeted if the source area for those pollutants could be readily identified.

## BALLONA CREEK WATERSHED WATER BUDGET

To expand appreciation of the value of water conservation, a water budget for the Ballona Creek Watershed should be developed by measuring and estimating water inputs (precipitation, groundwater inflow, and imported water) and output, including groundwater recharge, stormwater discharge, wastewater generation, and evapotranspiration by plants). This will require coordination between the cities and utility agencies in the watershed and could benefit from assistance of one or more colleges and universities in the Watershed.

## 2. Land

### BALLONA WETLANDS RESTORATION

After many decades of dreams and discussions, the State of California now has the ability to plan restoration of approximately 547 acres of wetlands and the creek channel. Owing to the probable complexity of the planning process, the strategic importance of the site, and the many regulatory hurdles to overcome, the Coastal Conservancy and relevant stakeholders must be prepared to make a significant commitment of time and resources for many years.

### BALDWIN HILLS PARK MASTER PLAN

The Baldwin Hills provide an opportunity to create a vast park in the midst of a highly urbanized area and serve as a laboratory to demonstrate the possibilities and constraints in restoring habitat in an isolated location. If the Plan is implemented and successful connections between the Baldwin Hills and Ballona Creek can be established, then the concept of creating natural spaces in urban areas and wildlife corridors across the watershed may be viewed as viable concepts.

### SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The portions of the Santa Monica Mountains within the watershed (generally between Sunset Boulevard and Mulholland Drive) provide opportunities to preserve the remaining open space in the headwaters, protect wildlife and riparian corridors and other habitat and create additional recreational opportunities.



**LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES**

The Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes for the Los Angeles River Master Plan identify a range of native, regionally adapted, and drought-tolerant plants that may be used in projects along the Los Angeles River, should be adapted for projects along Ballona Creek and at other locations in the Watershed, to inform public and private sector landscape projects.

**3. Planning**

**BALLONA CREEK WATERSHED COORDINATOR**

In 2004, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority received a Proposition 50 grant from the State of California Department of Conservation and hired a watershed coordinator for the Ballona Watershed (for a three-year period). The objectives for this position are to (1) facilitate implementation of the Ballona Creek Watershed Management Plan by seeking funding for priority projects identified in the Management Plan; (2) provide administrative support to the BCWTF and facilitate the transition of the Task Force into a long-term self-sustainable organization for oversight and coordination of watershed restoration activities; (3) support education and outreach to broaden the base of stakeholders and build up community support and participation in watershed restoration activities; (4) develop and facilitate implementation of projects/ measures that optimize water resources to reduce dependence on imported water; and (5) coordinate implementation of a community-based watershed monitoring program and enhance the citizen/volunteer monitoring efforts in the watershed.

**BALLONA CREEK WATERSHED TASK FORCE**

The Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force has the potential to serve as the catalyst for change on many fronts, facilitating the exchange of information and ideas, serving as forum for discussion of complex issues, and providing fertile ground for the formation of the type of public/private and interjurisdictional partnerships that will be necessary to achieve the magnitude of change necessary to achieve ecological health in the Watershed. The Task Force may also want to consider the option of becoming a nonprofit organization, to assure continued operation and provide opportunities to obtain grants for projects and/or operational support.

**BALLONA CREEK AND TRAIL FOCUSED SPECIAL STUDY**

The centerpiece of this Plan will remain the potential to enhance, improve and possibly restore Ballona Creek. The first step in that process is to implement to recommendations of the Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study, which will make significant progress towards converting the Creek into a valued-community resource.

**LOWER BALLONA CREEK INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE**

The City of Los Angeles, along with other jurisdictions and organizations are working to study options for joint management of natural resources in the lower Ballona Creek Watershed. If successful, not only will management of these resources be improved, this effort can also serve as a model for the type of interjurisdictional cooperation that is necessary to improve natural resources across the Watershed.



### BALLONA WMP GIS DATABASE

The geographic information system (GIS) database developed for this Plan could be expanded by incorporation of additional data on natural resources, land use, demographics, and infrastructure compiled by cities, agencies, colleges & universities and other entities. With additional information, the value and utility of this database could be enhanced and thereby better inform future decisions on which methods and mechanisms are most effective at meeting the goals and objectives identified in this Plan.

### “LIVING LIGHTLY” WATERSHED BROCHURE

First developed for the Topanga Creek Watershed, *Living Lightly in our Watersheds* was subsequently adapted for the Malibu Creek Watershed and is being localized for other watersheds in the Los Angeles area and provides good examples of how personal action can improve watershed health.

