

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Addendum to Staff Recommendation

March 22, 2018

FRIENDS OF BALLONA WETLANDS ENHANCEMENT AND EDUCATION

Project No. 17-041-01

Project Manager: Mary Small

The section, **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES** is revised to replace paragraph 4. with the following:

4. **Support of the public:** There is a great deal of controversy around the Ballona Wetlands but all advocates support hand restoration led by the community. Approximately 7,000 students and 2,500 community members participate in FBW restoration events each year. The project is supported by the Department of Fish and Wildlife, see Exhibit 3.

White, Anulika@SCC

To: MacMillan, Jeannette@SCC
Subject: RE: Agenda Item H - \$20K grant to Friends of Ballona Wetlands

From: Walter Lamb <landtrust@ballona.org>
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2018 4:16 PM
To: Schuchat, Sam@SCC <Sam.Schuchat@scc.ca.gov>
Cc: Small, Mary@SCC <Mary.Small@scc.ca.gov>; dbosco@hansonbridgett.com
Subject: Agenda Item H - \$20K grant to Friends of Ballona Wetlands

Hi Mary,

While the Land Trust is glad that \$20,000 from the Coastal Commission's Violation Remediation Account will be invested in an interim stewardship activity for the Ballona Wetlands, we believe the Conservancy missed an opportunity for local stakeholder discussion over the strategic use of these and other available funds to satisfy urgent near-term management needs for this important public resource. The staff report does not indicate how the funds will be spent. although it appears that some of the funds will be used for staff time and some will be used to purchase native plants.

For context, the grant recipient, Friends of Ballona Wetlands, also just received over \$58,000 from a private fund controlled by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, also without any discussion among local stakeholders. The purpose of those funds has not yet been explained.

Although the Land Trust is not interested in these types of funds, there are many excellent groups, such as the Los Angeles Audubon Society, who conduct stewardship and educational activities in or around the Ballona Wetlands. However, the Land Trust is unaware of any public announcement of funds availability or competitive bid process for either of the fund sources referenced above. There is no longer any project newsletter, the project web site and Facebook page have not been updated in months, and there are no regular local meetings for stakeholders to receive project updates. There is a perception of favoritism in the granting of funds and site access for groups that are the most supportive of the Conservancy's desired restoration plans.

Also worth noting is the staff report's indication that State Senator Ben Allen supports this project. There is no indication of that in the supporting exhibit and the assertion seems to be contradicted by one of his staff in the e-mail below. Hopefully this discrepancy can be reconciled one way or another as quickly as possible so that the Conservancy and public can be accurately informed about this grant.

Thank you,

Walter

Walter Lamb
Ballona Wetlands Land Trust
310-384-1042
[Facebook](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Towle, Allison** <Allison.Towle@sen.ca.gov>

Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2018 at 2:23 PM

Subject: RE: Quick question and request

To: Walter Lamb <landtrust@ballona.org>

Hi Walter,

No Senator Allen did NOT support this project and I have already called the Coastal Conservancy to let them know that was in error. They will be removing his name from the list of support.

Thank you for letting me know.

Allison