

Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve – on the Los Angeles coast

**PROBLEMS with the Annenberg proposal and the MOU between
The Annenberg Foundation and three state agencies
that signed this agreement with NO public scrutiny.**

1. This land was acquired by the State of California for the protection of wildlife, and wildlife exists on the land where Annenberg wants to construct a 46,000 sq. ft. facility. **The deed says the land is for: “protection, restoration, recreation.”**
2. **An “animal adoption and care program” is not part of the mission or goals of the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.** They also plan “dog-friendly” trails – also incompatible with an ecological reserve.
3. **Why is the State Lands Commission – one of the land owners – not party to this agreement?** And why are two parties which are NOT land owners signatories to the agreement?
4. **Up to 25% of space [within the “Ballona Interpretive Center”] will be used for “live animal programming.”** Dog training classes? Cat shows? **Such uses are not compatible with the mission of the Dept. of F & W and not in alignment with the public trust uses which the land was originally acquired for.**
5. Plans are to have veterinary services for both wild and domestic animals; completely incompatible with an ecological reserve.
6. Plans to “improve” the existing Little League fields (“improvements” would include adding lights, irrigation and applying poisons to the lawn – **harmful to wildlife** and not allowed under current permits and “year round programming,” (which means displacing wildlife), according to Annenberg executive director Leonard Aube.)
7. Plans to “deposit” an undetermined amount of fill on Area C – the land east of Lincoln Blvd. **If one of the compelling reasons to use bulldozers is to remove the soils that are “unnaturally high,” why would it be ok to remove soils from west of Lincoln and then be ok to dump on lands east of Lincoln?**
8. Objectives: **Annenberg agrees to devote its center to support the Parties overall goals of “creating estuarine habitats and processes in BWER” – something that is a complete scientific inaccuracy.** The “estuarine” habitats currently in the Ballona Valley far exceed the amount of estuarine habitat that existed at Ballona any time during the past several hundred years. According to Dr. Travis Longcore and Dr. David Jacobs who have co-authored a historical ecology report on the region, the plans that the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission have developed and want to see implemented are based on a “tragic mis-interpretation of the Holocene record.”

9. Annenberg has already provided the state \$100,000 – and their offer is for **\$1 million to the state.** \$200,000 per year for five years, which is **a nice incentive to evade the department’s public trust responsibilities.** AND another \$400,000 per year (for how long?) And then, another \$2 million toward what they call “restoration.”
10. Annenberg will provide design standards for signage and public access. **This design was already paid for once by the State Coastal Conservancy to the MRCA – was this a waste of public funds?**
11. Annenberg is already funding “a public education campaign about the Restoration Project and the Interpretive Center.” **They have also hired lobbyists and p.r. professionals who have seats on a local neighborhood council board.**
12. **The parties have agreed to attempt to get legislation passed that would allow Annenberg to circumvent the law related to public land leases.** They want a 50+ year lease, which **essentially privatizes the land.**
13. **The parties have agreed to “clear any title issues” for the land** – which is very troubling, given that **there are deed conditions that were expressly placed on the land when it was acquired for the greater public good.** These title issues were the reason that so many public interest groups, citizens and elected officials supported the public acquisition of these lands. Why would those “title issues” be discarded without public support?
14. The agreement contemplates placing of temporary trailers on site – which is extremely troubling, especially since several uses not compatible with a protected ecological reserve already exist on site, such as several parking lots along Fiji Way which were supposed to be restored to wetlands after the 1984 Olympics, yet are being leased to various County of LA agencies; a private trailer operated by the private organization Friends of Ballona Wetlands/Playa Vista which DFG/W personnel have opined has been problematic in the past; and ever-expanding footprints and impacts from the little league fields. Adding one more **private trailer – especially one that the MOU states would serve as a marketing and sales effort location** (models, plans, etc.) and which provides roofs and hardscape to a limited amount of natural open space and ecologically sensitive areas – is opposite to the goals of protection of these fragile lands.