



## Defense of Place

July 9, 2013

TO: The Westchester Playa Neighborhood Council

FROM: Nancy Graalman  
Defense of Place

RE: The Annenberg Foundation Development: Imperiling the Ballona Wetlands

Thank you to the Westchester Playa Neighborhood Council for including the position of Defense of Place as you consider the Annenberg Foundation's proposed development within the Ballona Wetlands.

From the initial announcement this past January of the MOU by the Foundation and the State's Fish and Wildlife Department (joined by the State Coastal Conservancy and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission), Defense of Place has protested the betrayal of the Wetlands' deeded protections as purchased by and promised to the public.

For Defense of Place, the Foundation's proposal cued up not only Ronald Reagan's famous "There you go again," but also a sense of *déjà vu*, since the plans -- highlighted by the loss of natural habitat and an incongruous domestic animal component -- took us back to the Annenberg Foundation's efforts in Rancho Palos Verdes to install essentially the same structure and program in a city park. That proposal was withdrawn in August of 2011 with, it would appear, the Ballona Wetlands and financial incentives to Fish and Wildlife already in the Foundation's sight.

We are now watching a Foundation repeat of inconsistent timeframes, changeable descriptions, partisan benefits, and even shifting project titles that only add to the skepticism of the purpose and outcomes of the proposal.

We encourage your Council to exhibit courage and independence from influence during considerations of the proposed development within the Ballona Wetlands. While an "urban ecology" complex and wetlands alteration may seem appealing, the reality we have seen nationwide is that such interpretive centers and engineered solutions are increasingly considered to be outmoded, environmentally detrimental, and out of favor.

The honor to be gained by demanding newer models of wetlands recovery and in defending lands held in the public trust will last far beyond transitory political or social sway.

Thank you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide information or perspective.

Defense of Place  A Project of Resource Renewal Institute  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  415. 515. 1616