

City Council Citizen Development  
and Enrichment Committee  
City Council Chambers  
Torrance, California

Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: Community Services – Breakdown of the Madrona Marsh  
Nature Center and Madrona Marsh Preserve Budgets**

**BACKGROUND**

At the May 8, 2012 Budget Hearing, staff were requested to bring back a break-out of the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve budgets in order to explore budget efficiencies.

At the May 15, 2012 Budget Hearing, staff provided a complete break-out of the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve budgets, two distinctly different budgets. In recap, this request was an effort to better understand how these budgets are being subsidized. Staff has provided the following information that shows the breakdown for these budgets. The approved annual budget for the Madrona Marsh and Nature Center is as follows:

Program	Direct Costs	Indirect Costs	Dept.Overhead	City Overhead	Total
Nature Center	\$ 280,304	\$178,822	\$ 17,631	\$ 30,487	\$ 507,243
Preserve	\$ 142,233	\$ 90,738	\$ 8,946	\$ 15,470	\$ 257,387

**Direct Costs**

For clarification purposes, the full-time labor cost for the Nature Center Manager is loaded within the Direct Costs category for the Madrona Marsh Nature Center Budget; and the full-time labor cost for the Lead Maintenance Worker is loaded within the Direct Costs category for the Madrona Marsh Preserve Budget. These full-time labor budgets were placed within the Direct Costs category as these budgets are very specific and unique, and are only responsible for these specific facilities, and if all labor were eliminated, these budgets would also be eliminated. This is also true for the Farmer's Market Budget.

**Madrona Marsh Nature Center:**

- **1 Full-time Manager/Naturalist (incl. sal/benefits)** **\$115,900**
  
- **9 part time staff (does not include benefits)** **\$111,313**
  - 1 Recreation Specialist II (1,664 hours / .8 FTE)
  - 1 Intern (999 hours / .5 FTE)
  - 7 Senior Recreation Leaders (4,443 hours / 2.1 FTE)
  
- **Materials and Supplies:** **\$ 16,959**
  - Live animal upkeep and maintenance
  - Program supplies and services
  - Water testing supplies
  - Lab equipment maintenance and supplies
  - Audio-visual equipment replacement and maintenance
  - Taxidermy supplies and maintenance
  - Cleaning supplies
  - Staff uniforms
  
- **Professional/Contract Services:** **\$ 36,132**
  - Janitorial Services
  - Security/Fire Alarm monitoring
  - Security/Fire Alarm maintenance
  - Copier/Printing Services
  - Utilities
  - Program Instructors
  - Native Plant Garden maintenance and supplies
  - Equipment repair and service
  - Non-routine air conditioner service
  - Non-routine building maintenance – electric, plumbing, painting, pest control etc.

**SUB TOTAL** **\$280,304**

**Madrona Marsh Preserve:**

- **1 Full time Lead Maintenance Worker (incl. sal/benf)** **\$ 85,300**
  
- **Materials/Supplies:** **\$ 18,128**
  - Hand tools
  - Watering equipment: hoses, sprinklers, buckets, quick couplers etc.
  - Power equipment replacement
  - Heavy equipment: mowers, discers, landscape rakes etc.
  - Nursery materials: table construction, soil, fertilizer, containers, seed processing and storage, tools and storage

- Irrigation repair and installation
- Fence maintenance, materials and repair
- **Professional/Contract Services:** **\$ 38,805**
  - Rental equipment
  - Pumping services
  - Equipment repair and maintenance
  - Tool repair and maintenance
  - Green-waste hauling and dumping fees
  - Non-routine irrigation repair and replacement
  - Non-routine tree-trimming
  - Vacuum breaker maintenance and repair services
  - Electrical maintenance and repair
  - Bio-filter Maintenance and upkeep
  - Sump pumps maintenance and repair

**SUB TOTAL** **\$142,233**

**Indirect Costs**

The Indirect Costs for these budgets were developed from a formula and subsequent dollar value that was distributed throughout each program in the Recreation Division based on each program's budget size. The total indirect cost is comprised of the entire division's overhead costs, including full-time management, supervisory and clerical staff, employee training, professional memberships, and City Interdepartmental Charges including phone, internet and data service, computer replacement, liability/insurance funds, and general building maintenance. Staff took the Total Divisional Overhead costs, which are \$2,328,126, and divided them between each of the different program areas, based on their respective share of total Direct Costs.

**ANALYSIS**

In an effort to review, and see if there were any budget efficiencies that could take place at the Nature Center and Preserve, staff reviewed all of the direct costs within the Nature Center budget and Preserve budget individually. Staff found that Nature Center Budget consists of 41% full-time labor; and 59 % Materials, Supplies and Contract Services. The Madrona Marsh Preserve budget consists of 60% full-time labor; and 40% Materials, Supplies and Contract Services.

In summary, staff have identified that \$201,500 of the total \$422,537 for both the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Madrona Marsh Preserve, or approximately 47% of the total direct costs are attributable to the full-time labor of the Nature Center Manager and Lead Maintenance Worker. The remaining amount of \$221,037 or 53% of the Direct Costs are associated with part-time Staff, Materials and Supplies, and Contract Services.

In review of the labor operational efficiencies of the Nature Center and Preserve, staff identified that there are two full time staff members and a total of 9 part-time staff members who are responsible for the full operation and maintenance of these two facilities. The labor budget for the part-time staff members totals \$111,313. Staff has provided an Organizational Chart and Operational Chart with duties for all staff members at these facilities (Attachment A).

In addition, volunteerism by the Friends of Madrona Marsh and local volunteers equated to 7,685 volunteers totaling 20,067 hours. In order to provide a value for these volunteered hours, staff used the Bureau of Labor Statistics for California rate of \$21.79 per hour, which totals \$167,914. These volunteers assisted in habitat restoration, leading tours, teaching classes, conducting biological surveys, assisting with publications, assisting with grant writing, developing art work, keeping statistics on numbers of visitors, volunteers and usage for the Preserve and Nature Center, assisting in Marsh-related water quality monitoring, assisting in biological research, mapping of the Preserve and Nature Center Property, and assisting in the maintenance and management of the Nature Center and the Preserve. Staff has concluded that without the support of this huge volunteer pool, and the part-staff that direct these volunteers, the current classes, programs and events that are currently provided at the Nature Center and Preserve would not be possible.

Besides offering thousands of volunteer hours annually, the Friends of Madrona Marsh (FOMM) also support the Nature Center and Preserve financially. In 2011 they donated \$62,482. Their donations provide for or assisted with the native plant garden maintenance, restoration of the Preserve, publications, tool and other equipment purchases, research/lab equipment purchases, the Friday Fun preschool and Second Sunday science programs, contract services, small grant support, audio visual maintenance, repair, and (if necessary) replacement.

Grant funding has also contributed greatly in support of the total Nature Center and Nature Preserve programs. Over the past 10 years, small grants totaling more than \$113,000 have assisted in all aspects of the Nature Center and Nature Preserve program. Funds from these grants have provided for everything from interpretative panels for the gardens, to interpretative brochures, to the landscaping of the Madrona Avenue Median. In addition, staff have been successful in securing a couple of large grants totaling \$1,464,000 of which approximately \$500,000 funded a bio-filtration system that cleanses urban runoff before it enters the wetlands. The remaining funds will be used to make improvements to the educational aspects of the Nature Center creating an Interactive Educational Exhibit as well as improvements to the Preserve.

Staff also reviewed quantity and quality of community programs offered, and determined that the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve offers numerous high-quality programs and volunteer opportunities throughout the year. The programs focus on nature-related educational classes, tours that are in alignment

with California State Elementary School Standards for third grade, general Preserve tours for elementary students, college (curriculum-based) tours, senior programs, Native Plant – Water-wise Gardening Classes, nature art classes, nature photography classes, nature writing classes, nature-related Boy and Girl Scout Merit Badge Classes, Eagle Scout Projects, Girl Scout Gold, Silver and Bronze Award Projects, science fair student mentoring, college research mentoring, college internships, Torrance Youth Leadership mentoring, Youth development Program mentoring, Service Learning programs, outreach programs for many schools and organizations and Special Events.

In order to put this into perspective, in 2011 the Madrona Marsh was visited by 30,582 people, who participated in self-guided walks, guided tours, field trips, classes, clean up days, and other special activities. Of these visitors, 9,860 participated in a scheduled program.

In review of each operational area within the Nature Center and Preserve programs, staff concludes that both the Nature Center and Preserve operate extremely efficiently on their existing (Direct Cost) budget of \$422,537, and there are no budget efficiencies to be found without elimination of operational hours or full programs that are currently being offered to our community.

Lastly, staff are providing copies of various emails and letters they have received from the community regarding their support of the Nature Center and Preserve. (Attachment B).

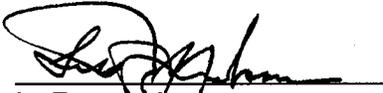
Respectfully submitted,



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John Jones  
Community Services Director

CONCUR:



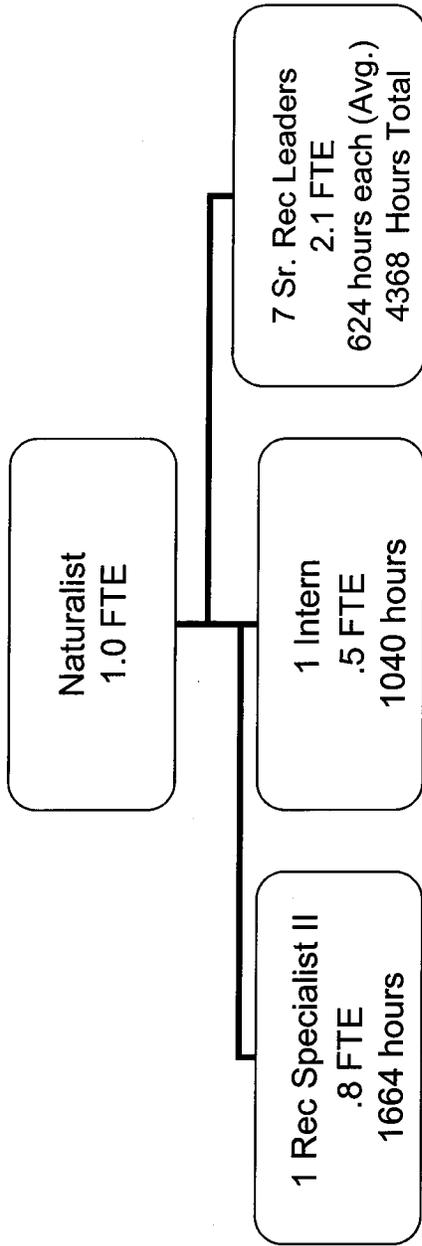
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LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

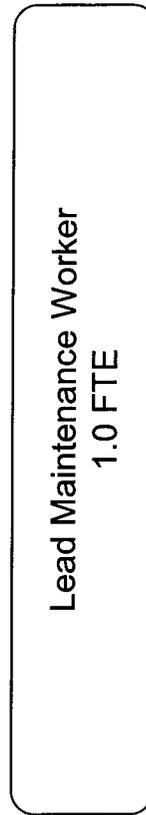
Attachment:

- A. Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Madrona Marsh Preserve Organizational Charts with Operational Chart
- B. Copies of letters and emails of support

### Madrona Marsh Nature Center Organizational Chart



### Madrona Marsh Preserve Organizational Chart



# Madrona Marsh Operational Chart

City of Torrance / Community Services Department / Recreation Services Division  
**Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center**

(as of 8/09/12)

## Tracy Drake, Manager and Naturalist (full-time)

Oversee all aspects of the Preserve and Nature Center operations, management and programs including research, monitoring of species, maintenance of the Preserve and Nature Center, all volunteers, educational, outreach, mentoring, leadership and internship programs. Liaison with COT departments on projects on and off the Preserve. Works with all land management regulation agencies. Set Nature Center and Preserve protocols related to safety, training and maintenance. Publish all nature related documents about the nature of the Preserve.

### PART-TIME STAFF

**Mark Christiansen, Intern I Nature Center Maintenance**  
 Oversees general maintenance and upkeep of Nature Center, including organization and improvement projects, runs all evening programs

**Dawn (Beth) Scott, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Programs Coordinator**  
 Creates and implement all marketing, coordinates logistics of all Madrona programs, maintains files, manages all Nature Center Animal exhibits

**Robert Carr, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Sciences Coordinator**  
 Conducts Preserve soil and water testing, and reports, maintains two science labs, creates and implements science-based educational programs

**Ed VanDever, Lead Groundskeeper (full-time)**  
 Responsible for all of the maintenance of the Preserve, surrounding parkways, and Nature Center grounds, all tools and equipment with limited assistance from volunteers, hire-a-youth and Youth Development Program students. Coordinates with PT staff for projects, liaisons with the Park Services Department at other agencies as needed

**Manages 10 volunteers per/mo**  
 Volunteers assigned to reception, research and special projects related to maintenance

**Manages 15 volunteers per/mo**  
 Volunteers assigned to reception, animal feeding, clerical assignments and program assistance

**Mentors 10-20 students per/yr**  
 Mentors Elementary, Middle, High school and college students conducting research at Nature Center and who present at local science fairs

**Ruth McConnell, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Program Assistant**  
 Provides program support for Second Sunday Science Program only (works 24 hours a yr)

**Manages 10-20 interns & staff and volunteers per/yr**  
 Mentors people on work permits are paid or are volunteers from outside organizations who are assigned to Madrona to learn job skills through temporary work assignments

### PART-TIME STAFF ... CONTINUED

**Linda Gonzales, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Nursery Coordinator**  
 Manages the native plant nursery, including propagation and inventory. Coordinates Marriott Volunteers monthly. Teaches 10-20 Native American programs per/yr

**Daniel Marion, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Restoration Coordinator**  
 Recruits and train Advanced Restoration Crew members, coordinates Preserve Watering and Service Learning Program, develops and implements many programs

**Ron Melin, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Restoration Coordinator**  
 Coordinates all Eagle Scout Projects, scout tours, merit badge classes, coordinates general restoration, conducts biological surveys, teaches classes

**Cindy Fox, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Restoration Coordinator**  
 Co-coordinates general restoration, oversees all tule management including mapping, mows and maintains restored areas, maintains 236th Pl. project and oversees tool inventory

**Dinuk Magammana, Sr. Rec. Ldr. Wildlife Specialist/Graphic Artist**  
 Conducts biological surveys and documentation, creates graphic art for programs, fliers, and provides tours and program support in art, photographic and science programs

**Manages Propagation Society 5-15 vols per/mo**  
 Volunteers assist in the nursery and on highly specialized projects

**Manages 75-100 vols per/mo**  
 Volunteers assigned to restoration and participate in the leadership-training program

**Manages 75-150 vols per/mo**  
 Volunteers assigned to restoration, Eagle Scout projects, and those conducting biological research/surveys

**Manages 75- 100 Restoration Volunteers per/mo**  
 Volunteers assigned to general restoration or tule maintenance

**Manages 5-10 Volunteers per/mo**  
 Volunteers assigned biological surveys, record keeping, reception Nature and Center animal maintenance

### PART-TIME STAFF ... CONTINUED

#### **FULL-TIME:**

- 1- Manager/Naturalist: Tracy Drake
- 1- Lead Grounds Keeper: Ed Vandever

#### **PART -TIME:**

- 1 - Intern II works 999 hours per year: Mark Christiansen

#### **PART-TIME continued...**

- 8 - Senior Recreation Leaders:
  - - 4 work 999 hours: Bob Carr, Ron Melin, Beth Scott, and Cindy Fox
  - - 1 works between 700 and 800 hours per year: Daniel Marlon
  - - 2 work between 300 and 500 hours per year: Dinuk Magamanna & Linda Gonzales
  - - 1 works one program, 2nd Sunday Science, approx 24 hrs per year: Ruth McConnell

### **Senior Recreation Leader Duties**

#### **Position Summary**

Under supervision, plans, organizes, and directs recreation programs, and does related work as required.

#### **Organizational Relationships**

The Senior Recreation Leader reports directly to a full-time Recreation Professional. Differs from Recreation Specialist in that the incumbent is not responsible for planning and organizing community wide events and programs within a specialty area in the field of recreation. Differs from Recreation Leader in that the Recreation Leader is not responsible for the overall operation of a program.

#### **Representative Job Duties**

- Monitors facility and equipment to ensure appropriate and safe utilization by participants and other personnel.
- Completes a variety of reports and routine forms such as safety check, work requests, vandalism reports, participant attendance reports, telephone log sheets, program posters and parent permission forms.
- Plans programs for an assigned park and prepares monthly and master calendars of activities.
- Completes program registrations.
- Collects and disseminates City and department information to the public.
- Takes facility reservations and provides clerical support services such as completing purchasing and contract requests according to established procedures.
- May assign duties to subordinate leaders.
- May perform lower classification tasks of same assignment.

#### **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

Knowledge of:

- A variety of recreation activities such as softball, arts and crafts, field trips, tournaments, and special events;
- Techniques of planning and implementing recreation programs;

Ability to:

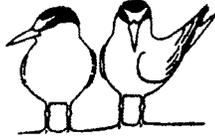
- Basic first aid procedures.
- Follow written and oral instructions;
- Perform basic arithmetic calculations;
- Plan, lead and direct recreation activities;
- Implement department's philosophy of recreation;
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with the public and with other personnel.

#### **Experience**

Minimum of 1 year of part-time experience in recreation or demonstrated job performance in a specialty area (i.e. fine or performing arts, sports, park and playground activities, preschool activities, therapeutic recreation, senior citizens or public information).

#### **Education**

No specific minimum. High School graduate.



## Friends of Ballona Wetlands

[www.ballonafriends.org](http://www.ballonafriends.org)

July 7, 2012

Honorable Frank Scotto  
Mayor  
City Council Members  
Torrance City Hall  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503

*Via Email*

RE: Support for Madrona Marsh

Dear Honorable Mayor and Torrance City Council Members:

As Executive Director of Friends of Ballona Wetlands I represent the interests of thousands of constituents who visit the Ballona Wetlands every year. One of the things we do is promote other organizations that offer education and restoration programs in their watersheds, and Madrona represents a very special habitat of remnant vernal pools and seasonal ponds.

More than that, the Friends look up to and emulate the programs that Tracy Drake and her staff have created for the enjoyment and education of the many visitors to the Madrona Marsh Nature Preserve. Considering that the Preserve receives more than 30,000 visitors yearly - between the school kids coming on field trips, people attending classes of all kinds, performing restoration activities, volunteering and participating in programs, or just holding meetings, Madrona is a mecca which draws community members to gather and celebrate our natural world.

You have a fabulous nature center and preserve habitat for visitors to explore, a wonderful treasure that we consider one of the "pearls" in the "emerald necklace" of parks and native habitats left in Southern California. We hope you feel the same way we do and will continue supporting Madrona Marsh and all the wonderful services they provide.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fimiani  
Executive Director

**Board of Directors**

Dr. David Kay, President  
Dr. James Landry, Vice President  
Lisa Fimiani, Secretary  
John Gregory, Treasurer  
Ruth Lansford, Founder  
Micah Ali  
Paul Costa  
Dr. Pippa Drennan  
Susan Gottlieb  
Stephen Groner  
Steve Hirai  
Dr. Edith Read  
Bob Shanman  
Catherine Tyrrell  
Richard Wegman

**Board Delegates**

Jacob Lipa  
Michael Swimmer

**Emeritus Board**

Tim Rudnick  
Ed Tarvyd

-----Original Message-----

From: Marcelo Vignali <[vignalistudio@aol.com](mailto:vignalistudio@aol.com)  
To: fscotto <[fscotto@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:fscotto@TorranceCA.Gov)  
Sent: Sun, Aug 5, 2012 3:53 pm  
Subject: Please Keep the Marsh Open

Dear Mayor Frank Scotto:

On behalf of myself, my two daughters, Grace and Gloria, and several the neighborhood children, I would like to implore that you please protect the Madrona Marsh from budget cuts or worse -- closing the marsh. My youngest calls the marsh, "Our backyard."

Ever since I moved to Torrance five years ago, and discovered the marsh, I've been taking my girls and several neighbor children there on a regular basis. The marsh is a magical oasis that lies dormant for many months, revealing its incredible splendor after a good rain. We look forward to spotting the shy seasonal migratory birds after the rains. We've seen wood ducks, mallards, egrets, black phoebes and hawks.

By hardened muddy pools, we've walked alongside the tiny footprints of the marsh's nocturnal creatures such as the skunks, opossums and raccoons. My youngest daughter can show you and describe to you the difference between raccoon prints and an opossum.

I brought my youngest daughter along with one of her friends, Angeline, to the marsh after a rain. There we caught some of the tiny frogs that were hiding by the water's edge in the reeds. Her friend is ten years old and she said that she had never held a frog in her life, she described that day as "the greatest day in (her) life." The tiny frogs swam in the pools of their palms as both girls scooped up the water, then we made sure to carefully release the frogs back into the reeds.

My daughter and I have caught California fence lizards. Some have blue bellies, and some are a dark brown. These aren't different species, they're actually the male and female version of the same reptile.

On one occasion we discovered a large cricket. It was the size of my daughter's thumb! She held it in her hands while I snapped a few pictures. We researched it after we released it, only to discover this is a sand cricket. Neither of us had ever seen one before.

At a time when most kids never get their noses out of some reality TV show, or a virtual reality computer game, we need the marsh more than ever. Our Madrona Marsh is a visceral reality, an ambassador to those things that are real. Our Madrona Marsh isn't an amusement park, or garden park, it's a real functioning marsh with fragile and shy creatures enjoying this magical oasis amid our ever encroaching community.

Mr. Mayor please protect the Madrona Marsh, "our backyard."

Sincerely,  
Marcelo Vignali  
20117 Hawthorne Blvd  
Torrance, CA 90503  
310/948-3658



Date: Tue, 17 Jul 2012 14:58:13 -0700  
To: [FScotto@torranceCA.Gov](mailto:FScotto@torranceCA.Gov)  
From: Ruth McConnell <[bk506@lafn.org](mailto:bk506@lafn.org)>  
Subject: August 13 Council Meeting  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
X-Attachments:

Dear Mayor Scotto - I am leaving town tomorrow and will be gone when the Council meets on August 13 to discuss the funding of the Madrona Marsh. I hope that the Council will recognize what a gem they have in the Marsh and how lucky we are to have it and the money spent there is not wasted. Just the other day when I was weeding, a lady was walking along the path and stopped to talk. She was from Hermosa Beach and had found out about the Marsh through the Internet

- and her comment was "I have found a little piece of heaven, and I won't let it go".. I hope all of you on the Council will recognize that we do have a little piece of heaven there, and you will continue to fund it. We are so lucky that our hotels recommend their guests visit the Marsh, and Torrance is becoming the place for nature lovers and birders from the world over to come and visit.

Remember that when you are thinking of dollars and cents and know that all you spend there comes back to us. I have weeded at the Marsh since I arrived in Torrance in October, 1995-just because when I called the Marsh, Shirley Turner said she was going to weed, why didn't I join her and I did and I have loved every minute of the time I have spent there since.

Sincerely,

Ruth M. McConnell

-----Original message-----

**From:** Alfred Hennig <[derfla715@hotmail.com](mailto:derfla715@hotmail.com)>  
**To:** "Scotto, Frank" <[FScotto@TorranceCA.gov](mailto:FScotto@TorranceCA.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wed, Jul 25, 2012 02:05:53 GMT+00:00  
**Subject:** Madrona Marsh

Dear Mayor Scotto:

Please keep MADRONA MARSH, and its staff, operational. The Marsh is a true oasis in the South Bay!!

Thank you.

*Al Hennig*  
Torrance Professional Offices Tenant



# LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90046-6694

Tel: (323) 876-0202, (888) 522-7428 Fax: (323) 876-7609

Website: [www.LAAudubon.org](http://www.LAAudubon.org) E-mail: [LAAS@LAAudubon.org](mailto:LAAS@LAAudubon.org)

Honorable Frank Scotto  
Mayor  
City Council Members  
Torrance City Hall  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503

*Via Email*

**Re: Support for Madrona Marsh**

Dear Honorable Mayor Scotto and Torrance City Council Members:

Los Angeles Audubon is a California non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation established in 1910. The mission of Los Angeles Audubon is to promote the enjoyment and protection of birds and other wildlife through recreation, education, conservation and restoration.

As Conservation Chair of the Los Angeles Audubon Society I represent the interests of hundreds of avid bird watchers who visit Madrona Marsh every year.

Madrona Marsh is the last remaining remnant vernal pool in Southern California, and as such provides a vital stop-over for thousands of migrating birds and ducks every year.

LA Audubon considers the education and restoration programs that Naturalist Tracy Drake and her staff have established at Madrona Marsh Preserve as invaluable in promoting healthy ecosystems for birds and other wildlife, both at the preserve and in the local community.

Thousands of visitors benefit from these programs every year at Madrona.

Without these pocket preserves, and the education programs that go with them, the city of Torrance and surrounding areas of LA county would be deprived of a great natural asset.

We ask that you continue to support Madrona Marsh and the education programs that Tracy Drake and her staff provide.

Thank you

Conservation Chair

Honorable Mayor Frank Scotto  
City of Torrance  
3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, California 90503

August 6, 2012

Dear Mayor Scotto,

I recently learned of the City's interest in determining the level of community support for the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve. Unfortunately I cannot attend the August 13 meeting at City Council Chambers; I have summarized my thoughts in this letter.

I have followed Madrona Marsh Nature Center since its inception, and the Preserve itself long before the Center was established. The City is to be commended for the Center's design, exhibits, programs, habitat restoration activities, and efforts to reach out to the community. Tracy Drake, together with staff and volunteers, has done a phenomenal job placing Madrona Marsh, and hence, the City of Torrance, on the map of "best practices" and destinations when it comes to Southern California's nature facilities.

Most notably, the service-learning and community service opportunities Tracy has extended to local high school and college students is remarkable. These programs present a cost-effective way to restore and maintain Madrona Marsh, eradicate invasive weeds, reestablish native habitat, and restore populations of sensitive plant and animal species. In addition, these programs enable youth to gain invaluable job skills and expand their career horizons. For some, it likely instills a sense of hope for the future and a compelling reason to stay in school and away from problematic elements. In the greater scheme, it is not unreasonable to consider Madrona Marsh an effective form of primary prevention of society's larger—and expensive—problems.

The presence of Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve brings "green relief" to a heavily industrialized city. It provides Torrance residents, as well as visitors, with a range of opportunities to help curb what noted author Richard Lou has dubbed "nature-deficit disorder." Its ambience attracts people who seek exercise in beautiful surroundings, birdwatchers who seek wildlife-watching outings, teachers who seek authenticated experiences to connect abstract scientific concepts to local, real-world examples, and families who seek recreational outings with children. It is well documented that such experiences in nature extend far beyond simply having a good time. They counter emotional stress, promote mental acuity, and reduce physical health problems. Further, the data exist to support the claim that natural open space and trails are considered highly desired amenities among prospective homeowners (<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits/index.html>).

The tangible and intangible benefits of Madrona Marsh Nature Center are significant and extend far beyond "nature study." It truly is the emerald gem of the City and a destination place for its communities.

I hope the City takes these points into consideration as it reviews the merits of Madrona Marsh.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rigby  
Director, The Acorn Group  
Member, American Trails, Executive Committee and Board of Directors  
Member, California Blueprint for Environmental Literacy Leadership Team (ad hoc)

Dear Mayor Scotto,

We've had the pleasure of visiting Madrona Marsh and working with some of their staff and volunteers on exhibits a few years ago. Split Rock Studios work with a number of museums, parks, aquariums and nature centers in the Los Angeles area, and know what a rare and valuable resource the city of Torrance has in Madrona Marsh. There are not many places where residents can experience a native ecosystem in the heart of a city. The nature center is an important community resource, to help visitors understand and value the world around them.

You well know how few undeveloped areas remain, and Madrona provides an important haven for wildlife and people. The Marsh provides a peaceful escape for a short walk, and a fun place for families to explore at all times of the year. Residents place a high value on the sense of well-being that natural spaces provide. Preservation of ecosystem fragments is important regionally and globally.

We know these days of tight budgets require careful assessment of the value of every expenditure. We visit nature centers all around the country, and we can state unequivocally that Madrona Marsh is a high quality center and natural area that serves the community well, and deserves ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Lisa Friedlander  
Split Rock Studios  
2071 Gateway Blvd.  
Arden Hills, MN 55112

Ph 651.631.2211 x717  
800.433.9599 x717  
Dir 651.789.4717  
Cell 612.790.6428

[lfriedlander@splitrockstudios.com](mailto:lfriedlander@splitrockstudios.com)  
[www.splitrockstudios.com](http://www.splitrockstudios.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: NIETOENT <[NIETOENT@aol.com](mailto:NIETOENT@aol.com)>

To: groat99 <[groat99@aol.com](mailto:groat99@aol.com)>

Sent: Mon, Jul 30, 2012 12:10 pm

Subject: Re: Madrona Marsh

Good letter, thanks Candy.

In a message dated 7/30/2012 10:34:31 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time, [groat99@aol.com](mailto:groat99@aol.com) writes:

Dear Members of the City Council and Mayor Scotto,

Please avoid making any decisions which would negatively impact the Madrona Marsh, which many regard as a priceless crown jewel of the South Bay. Not only do thousands of birds frequent the Madrona Marsh as one of the few available places to nest or visit during migration along the coast, but just as importantly, thousands of visitors, including schoolchildren, have learned to appreciate the beauty and wonders of nature by visiting the Madrona Marsh, and the Nature Center with the native plant garden that is located across the street.

Recently, I was fortunate to be able to attend The Evening Stroll on the Marsh which was put on by the PVSB Audubon Society. We heard and saw numerous genera and species of birds, including egrets, and learned that there were about 60 ducks and ducklings visiting and living on the marsh during that period. We also learned quite a bit about the seasonal and perennial vegetation from Tracy Drake, who was our leader that night. As a frequent visitor of the nature center, I have noticed that Tracy often works overtime and yet, she always has a positive, helpful and friendly attitude. Other dedicated staff members also often attend our Audubon Third Tuesday monthly meetings and they add so much to our discussions and appreciation of birds and nature in general. We should all realize and appreciate just how hard working and dedicated those staff members really are.

I invite you to please come out and attend our Evening on the Marsh which is scheduled for the month of May next year. But, if you have not yet ever visited the Madrona Marsh and the Nature Center, you should visit soon, because you will begin to appreciate it just as much as those of us who frequently visit the Marsh to observe and learn about the other forms of life that exist in this wonderful place.

Respectfully,

Candice Groat  
PVSB Audubon Society

Dear Frank Scott, Mayor and City Council Members: Gene Barnett, Tom  
> Brewer, Pat Furey, Cliff Numark, Susan Rhilinger, and Bill Sutherland,  
>

> I am a member of the Point Vicente Chapter of National Society Daughters of  
American Revolution. Our chapter has invited Tracy Drake, Nature Center &  
Madrone Marsh Preserve Manager, to speak at our October meeting on the history  
and conservation of Madrone Marsh Preserve. We asked her to speak because of the  
high value we place on conservation of natural resources. The Madrone Marsh  
Preserve is an extraordinary natural resource that should be preserved.

>

> I am alarmed at the news that the City of Torrance may close or reduce its  
operations at the Nature Center and Preserve. Please know that the City of  
Torrance provides a valuable public and environmental resource and I strongly  
encourage you to continue funding the Nature Center and Preserve, including all  
its programs. Thank you for allowing me to voice my support of the Nature Center  
and Preserve, and I hope that you will consider these comments at your August  
13th meeting.

>

> Michele Gabelich  
> 200 Via Las Vegas  
> Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274-1126

Honorable Council Members,

As a 40 year Southbay resident and therefore a witness to the creation of the Madrona Marsh, I like to urge you to support and fund this jewel in the urban jungle which surrounds it!

Surely many of you have experienced the relative silence and bird filled ambiance surrounding the visitor there!

I also like you to know, that as the coordinator of the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy Nature walks, I make a point of including the marsh into our walk calendar and happily advertise at every opportunity!

Sincerely,

Anke Raue, PVPLC walk coordinator

28813 Rothrock Dr.

RPV

# California Native Plant Society

## South Coast Chapter

July 9, 2012

The Honorable Frank Scotto  
Mayor, City of Torrance  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, California 90503

Re: Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Dear Mayor Scotto:

The South Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) commends the City for its stewardship of the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center, and urges you and your City Council colleagues to continue funding this community treasure.

This oasis of natural beauty in the heart of Torrance is highly valued by those living in Torrance, many other South Bay residents, and even out-of-town visitors. The Preserve attracts a wide variety of native wildlife, including amphibians, birds, insects and small mammals. Because the Preserve is readily accessible, it is heavily used by the public who find refuge in the marsh itself and attend classes offered by faculty from CSU Dominguez Hills. The marsh has become part of the formative education of many elementary and intermediate school children by offering supplemental education about biology, botany and conservation. City of Torrance funding for the Marsh is greatly leveraged by the work of many dedicated volunteers. Additionally, the Friends of Madrona Marsh non-profit organization raises funds to maintain and program this fabulous natural resource.

We commend Tracy Drake for her outstanding leadership, extensive knowledge, and enthusiasm as Manager of the Preserve and Nature Center. She plays a vital role in developing the many activities which occur at the marsh throughout the year, recruiting the volunteers, working with the Friends, and providing the vision for future marsh restoration projects.

This year, CNPS plans to collaborate with Madrona Marsh on several activities. The first of these occurred just a week ago when nearly 50 people came out for an evening program and walk through the Preserve. On September 29, we will hold our annual Native Plant Sale there in collaboration with the Friends of Madrona Marsh and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. We expect more than 200 people to attend.

Please continue to fund this vital resource.

Sincerely,  
David Sundstrom  
Vice President, South Coast Chapter  
California Native Plant Society  
[www.sccnps.org](http://www.sccnps.org)

**From:** [SBWildlifeRehab@aol.com](mailto:SBWildlifeRehab@aol.com) [SBWildlifeRehab@aol.com]

**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 10:34 PM

**To:** Barnett, Gene; Rhilinger, Susan; Scotto, Frank; Numark, Cliff; Brewer, Tom; Furey, Pat; Sutherland, Bill

**Cc:** [WildBirdBob@gmail.com](mailto:WildBirdBob@gmail.com); Drake, Tracy

**Subject:** Madrona Marsh

I understand that the city of Torrance is considering reducing funding or even closing the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve. This would be a disaster!

Our organization, South Bay Wildlife Rehab, has participated in many educational events at the Marsh and have often worked closely with them with our wildlife rehabilitation efforts as well. The Center has provided very valuable education to a vast span of children and adults from all walks of life. The Marsh has also provided a crucial element in the preservation of a large assortment of wildlife species, especially birds.

Madrona Marsh is a very valuable part of the city of Torrance and the environment at large. Please do not let it go away!

Ann

Ann C. Lynch, Director  
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