

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2013

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Malibu Lagoon Reopens

One of the Most Ecologically Significant Wetlands Restoration Ever on the West Coast Brings New Life to Formerly Stagnant Pools

Los Angeles, CA (May 3, 2013) – Malibu Lagoon officially reopened to public enjoyment today after an extensive restoration effort to bring the wetlands back to life.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), with project partners State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM), and Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC), held a ribbon cutting ceremony on the shores of the lagoon May 3 in celebration of one of the most ecologically significant wetlands restorations ever completed on the West Coast.

Project supporters State Assemblymember Richard Bloom and Senator Fran Pavley spoke at the event, along with representatives from the partner organizations. Local science students participated and experienced firsthand the new educational facilities at the Lagoon, led by volunteers from the Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society.

District 50 Assemblymember Richard Bloom, longtime supporter of the project, states, "This day marks a new beginning and a new lease on life for this lagoon. I'm proud of the extraordinary effort shown by all parties involved who were committed to cleaning up Malibu Lagoon and making it a place we can enjoy for generations to come."

The event celebrated how the restoration of Malibu Lagoon—on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency list of impaired water bodies for over a decade due to excess nutrients and low oxygen levels—is literally breathing new life into a habitat that daily is becoming healthier for birds, fish and all aquatic organisms.

"Larval fish have been documented in the new lagoon which is already being used as an estuary. Pelicans and kingfishers can be seen diving in the lagoon for fish...a sight seldom

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seen in the old lagoon,” notes Suzanne Goode, Senior Environmental Scientist for DPR. “And there is water circulating. You can see visible wave surges, reacting to incoming and outgoing tides, with water levels at times changing by up to 8 feet within a few hours.”

Before the restoration, the Lagoon was filled with contaminated soil and trash built up over many decades, including fill dumped from past road construction work. The fill caused choke points which impeded regular tidal flow in and out of the Lagoon, resulting in a serious decrease in the “flushing” of the Lagoon channels, an essential action needed for a healthy lagoon. This created a build-up of nutrients and fine sediments (mud) in the lagoon, which in turn caused low oxygen levels in the water. Without oxygen, aquatic life cannot breathe, so very little was able to grow in the Lagoon. The habitat could not support the variety of worms, mollusks, crustaceans and other creatures that are food for the fish and birds that depend on wetlands for survival. In turn, fish and bird species declined at the lagoon.

The restoration addressed and has safely and successfully completed:

- ✓ Removal of the old fill and trash
- ✓ Improvement of the tidal flow and connection so there is natural cleansing and flushing of wastes from animals, and healthy levels of oxygen for creatures
- ✓ Better habitat connectivity and less disturbance of wildlife by humans
- ✓ Attracting added fish, birds and other animals and increasing the habitat diversity
- ✓ Enhanced the visitor experience for surfers, students, birders, and residents

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED FAQs FOR DETAILED EXPLANATIONS.

Enhancing the visitor experience was an important goal of the restoration. The new public-focused, user-friendly design includes:

- ✓ Several bird-watching stops, including the **Bird Observation deck**, closest to PCH and great for morning watching; the **Birder’s Nook** with whimsical egg-shaped seating colored to match eggs laid by birds in the lagoon; and the **Bird Blind**, made from sandbar willows interwoven on a steel frame, where interested watchers can watch birds up close without being seen.
- ✓ The **Kelp Node** is named for the inlays of native vegetation and kelp fronds that decorate its semi-circular seating that is perfect for school groups to gather for lectures and exploration.
- ✓ The **Surfer’s Express**, a 1,800-foot long path that provides surfers quick access to Surfrider Beach, bypassing all the areas where people or groups might be lingering.
- ✓ The **Watershed Fountain** is an interactive 30-inch diameter 3D version of the Malibu watershed, featuring varying shapes and geographic contours.
- ✓ The **Winter Ramp Summer Clock** works similarly to a sundial but using tides. When tides rise more than 6 ½ ft., water will slowly move up a ramp that angles down toward the lagoon.

- ✓ The **Summer Amphitheater** offers another group seating location with benches made from trees repurposed from the old parking lot.
- ✓ The **Watershed Overlook** at the far end of the lagoon cantilevers over the water during high tide. From here, visitors look inland, over the Lagoon and up Malibu Canyon toward the entire Malibu Creek watershed.

The restored Malibu Lagoon is the result of 20 years of discussion and 10 years of planning with more than 80 participant stakeholders in a public process that included the local community, environmental groups and state and national agencies. The stakeholders conceived the major elements of the plan including the new educational and access features, and provided direction to technical experts who did the detailed design.

http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=835

State Parks web site for general information about Malibu Lagoon

<http://www.restoremalibulagoon.com>

Web site for detailed information and pictures on the restoration of the lagoon.

The California State Park system is responsible for managing more than 1.5 million acres of land that includes 280 park facilities with natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources. The system provides more than 15,000 campsites, more than 4,500 miles of non-motorized trails, and includes nearly one-third of the California coastline. More than 58% of the last remaining old growth coast redwoods are in State Parks. The system has more than 65 million visitors yearly.

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