

From: [Mastrup, Sonke@FGC](mailto:Mastrup.Sonke@FGC)
To: [FGC](#)
Subject: FW: Ballona / Annenberg update
Date: Tuesday, July 08, 2014 11:20:22 AM
Attachments: [USFWS Scoping Comments.pdf](#)
[Litwak Transcript Jan 9 2014 LA County FGC.doc](#)

Fyi – for August public forum

From: Walter Lamb [mailto:landtrust@ballona.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 08, 2014 9:40 AM
To: Mastrup, Sonke@FGC
Subject: Ballona / Annenberg update

Hi Sonke,

I hope you enjoyed your 4th of July weekend. Please pass this along to the Commissioners:

1) The Annenberg Foundation's proposal for Area C keeps taking on water.

<http://www.dailybreeze.com/opinion/20140703/ballona-wetlands-not-appropriate-place-for-a-pet-adoption-center-editorial>

This editorial ran also in the LA Daily News and the Long Beach telegram. I met with the editorial board for about an hour and they also met with other sources.

2) Please find attached scoping comments from the US Fish and Wildlife Service saying what everyone else is saying, which is that pet adoption services should not be included in an ecological reserve.

3) Also please find attached a transcript of comments by Howard Litwak at a January 9, 2014 presentation to the LA County Fish and Game Commission, in which Howard expresses his hope that in 10 to 15 years there won't be a distinction between household animals and "everybody else" as he puts it, meaning native wildlife. That, of course, is one of many quotes from Annenberg demonstrating their lack of understanding of, or appreciation for, biodiversity. It was also a mistake for Mr. Litwak, and the two CDFW employees supporting the presentation, to purposely mislead the Commission into thinking that the Foundation got involved at Ballona in response to an existing state need, when the well-documented truth is that the Foundation began looking for alternate real estate for their companion animal center immediately after withdrawing the project from another location. It is not a good idea to mislead public officials in a recorded meeting.

4) It seems as though one of my requests (either for access to the reserve or for agenda time at a meeting) was on the June agenda. I see from the recording that the meeting was adjourned early due to lack of quorum. Was one of my requests actually discussed during the official portion of the meeting?

5) Lastly, we are trying to construct an accurate timeline all the way out to construction if this project were to somehow be approved. You had indicated previously that the F&G Commission had to ratify the decision of CDFW to adopt the Final EIR and then vote on any regs changes. Can you confirm that sequence for me? Secondly, if that is accurate, does the

Commission have to wait for any litigation to play out, or can it proceed as soon as CDFW adopts the final EIR.

Thanks for any clarification.

It's clear at this point that this project is being propped up by political considerations that have nothing to do with preserving natural resources. I really think a lot of people miscalculated by assuming that the Annenberg Foundation would have some basic level of ecological expertise and certainly a more competent PR and lobbying strategy. They have been the keystone cops on both counts, and I think the folks who guessed wrong are now just having a hard time admitting the mistake. So more time and money gets wasted because no one wants to the empress the truth about her new clothes.

Regards,

Walter Lamb
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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office
6010 Hidden Valley Road, Suite 101
Carlsbad, California 92011



In Reply Refer To:
FWS-LA-02B0010-13TA0185

MAR 14 2013

Ms. Donna McCormick
Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project
1 Ada, Suite 100
Irvine, California 92816

Subject: Revised Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project, City of Los Angeles and Unincorporated Los Angeles County, California

Dear Ms. McCormick:

We have reviewed the Revised Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project in the city of Los Angeles and unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. The Revised NOP was issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to address the addition of an interpretive center to the project. The interpretive center would have a footprint of approximately 46,000 square feet and would include an auditorium, classrooms, public lobby, facilities for an animal adoption and care program, exhibits on wildlife and domestic animals, veterinary facilities, officer space, retail and concessions space, and associated parking.

We offer the following comments and recommendations regarding the proposed interpretive center based on our review of the Revised NOP and our knowledge of declining habitats and species within Los Angeles County. These comments are intended to supplement our comments on the original NOP (FWS-LA-02B0010-13TA0023), and are provided in keeping with our agency's mission to work "with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."

Our primary concerns with the construction of an interpretive center within the state-owned ecological reserve include: 1) a reduction in the extent of land available for restoration of native habitats, 2) the potential for limitations on the design of the restoration project, and 3) the potential for a substantial increase in the number of visitors and associated degradation of habitats from human-generated disturbance.

We recommend CDFW evaluate alternative locations for the interpretive center, adjacent to but not within the ecological reserve. Coastal lands available for restoration are extremely limited

and therefore, the benefits of including any development within the ecological reserve will need to be weighed against the cost of losing this limited resource. The proposed location of the interpretive center is at the eastern end of the property which is also the furthest upstream point along Ballona Creek. It is our understanding that Ballona Creek contains significant levels of contaminants that could impact the quality of the restoration site (Johnston et al. 2012). One potential option to address this concern would be to create a detention basin and/or treatment wetlands at the upstream end of the property to increase the quality of Ballona Creek water before it enters the restoration site. Alternative uses of the land for the creation of habitats that will contribute to the overall function and value of the restoration project should be given priority over the inclusion of an interpretive center within the ecological reserve.

If no other adjacent property is available for development of an interpretive center, we recommend interpretive spaces within the state lands be restricted to educating the public about the native habitats and species within Ballona Wetlands, rather than creating a domestic animal adoption center and veterinary services, which could be located anywhere.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the subject NOP. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Christine Medak of this office at 760-431-9440, extension 298.

Sincerely,



for Karen A. Goebel
Assistant Field Supervisor

Literature Cited

Johnston, K.K., Del Giudice-Tuttle, E., Medel, I.D., Piechowski, C.J., Cooper, D.S., Dorsey, J., and Anderson, S. 2012. The Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve Baseline Assessment Program: Second Year Report. Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. Prepared for the California State Coastal Conservancy, Los Angeles, California.

Transcript of Presentation by Howard Litwak, Project Manager for the Annenberg Foundation, to Los Angeles County Fish & Game Commission on January 9th, 2014

[Original audio recording can be found at:

<http://lacounty.govwebcast.com/Presentation/LACounty/1299c4d9-36d6-46e7-9061-ca1faea078ef/FNG%20010914.MP3>

Mr. Litwak's comments begin at 1:13:11 of the recording]

Howard Litwak: Thank you, Terri. While she's doing that Mr. newly elected commissioner and fellow commissioners, thank you for inviting us here. It's my understanding that you wanted to hear two things really from us: a little bit about the Annenberg Foundation and its interest in this project; and then a little bit about the piece of the project that we are involved in and, of course, as Terri just explained to you, it's a much larger project, we're just involved in one element of it, although we are supportive of the entire project.

Ah, here it comes, good.

My Name is Howard Litwak, I work on behalf of the Annenberg Foundation as the project manager for the planning effort. Although Terri described a project that's been ten years in the making ...

Terri Stewart (CDFW): I can't find how to get it up

Howard Litwak: Well, I wouldn't be able to help you either. That's alright, I'll just keep talking.

Although the project has a ten year history, the Annenberg Foundation's participation in the project only began January 28th of last year when we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the other three partner organizations that Terri showed you, DFW, Coastal Conservancy and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. Obviously there were some months of discussion that led to the MOU, but substantial planning work did not begin until the MOU ... [good, OK] ... until the MOU was actually signed.

And Commissioner Wax, I did want to point out to you that the full name of the facility is the Ballona Wetlands Ecological and Kid's Fishing Center [laughter] No, I'm kidding about that part.

Commissioner: In the interest of full disclosure, I used to live in that area.

Howard Litwak: OK, well then I hope you'll recognize it.

Commissioner: I do.

Howard Litwak: Alright, so first just spend a moment on the Annenberg Foundation – the Annenberg Foundation was started, if you look in the upper right corner, by Walter and Leonore Annenberg. Walter Annenberg was, among other things, President Nixon's

Ambassadore to the United Kingdom, Leonore Annenberg was President Reagan's chief of protocol, but how they became known was that Walter Annenberg was the publisher of the Philadelphia Enquirer, and the inventor and publisher of *Seventeen Magazine* and *TV Guide*, he also helped invent Dick Clark, which is probably the thing he's most noteworthy for. In 1989, the Ambassador sold the publishing empire to Rupert Murdoch and he used a large chunk of the money that he received for that to start the Annenberg Foundation. We are at the 25th year of the Annenberg Foundation and over the previous 24 years, more than 4 billion dollars in grants have been given by the Annenberg Foundation, which is currently run by Wallis Annenberg, Walter's daughter, and her three adult children: Greg, Charles and Lauren, whom you see on the bottom right. And the Foundation, as you can tell by the Ambassador's background with the Philadelphia Enquirer, the Foundation used to be based in Philadelphia, over the last ten years its been based in Los Angeles, and there's been a tremendous increase in Foundation giving in the Southern California area in general - Los Angeles area in particular. Education and environmental issues are very high on the agenda of giving and have been for the 25 years.

[1:16:27]

So, there were three reasons why the Annenberg Foundation became interested in the project. One, as we started to look at it and become aware of it, one is going back to the initial feasibility report, there was a desire for public access and interpretation and the mission of the Annenberg Foundation is "enhance community well-being through communications". And what we basically could see in our discussions with DFW is that there wasn't likely to be the funding to do the quality of public access and public interpretation – managed public access I should say, and public interpretation that this project deserved, and we thought that was a place where we could add value to the larger project.

So, one reason we were interested was fundamentally this ability to fulfill this part of the vision for the project. A second reason we were interested was, frankly, what Terri already said – we, too, believe that when this property is enhanced, restored, whatever the correct verb will be, it will be a gem in Los Angeles, the Foundation is interested in helping to create great places in Los Angeles, the Annenberg Community Beach House, the Annenberg Space for Photography, the Wallis Annenberg Performing Arts Center, those are places that are a deliberate attempt by the Foundation to make public places in the Los Angeles area. And so the ability to contribute to this project fit very naturally into that desire.

[1:18:01]

The third reason I'll get into shortly. Terri already showed you this so we don't have to go through this piece again particularly, but let me focus ... the area that the Foundation in particular got interested in working with was the uplands area. We didn't want – we felt – many people – and you perhaps have heard some of this – many people keep saying "why are you building something on the wetlands?" And the answer is we're not building

something in the wetlands, we're actually proposing something in the uplands area of this property, not in the wetlands area.

In particular, we were interested in C South and that was for a couple of reasons. One was we like the adjacency to the bike trail that was already there – I'm going to tell you more about that in a moment. Another was that we liked that there was already this Little League field, this public access, this public use, this multiple use that could take place at the uplands. And the third reason was we could imagine tucking an interpretive center into C South here away from the immediate neighbors, away from being visible outside of the site.

So, when we talk about C South at the Foundation, we're really talking about two things. One is, we agreed to undertake as part of our proposed contribution to the project, the larger piece of - again whatever verb we want to use, "enhancement", "restoration", whatever we want to call it – the upgrading of C North – uh C South – from what is now, which is largely an environmentally dead zone – to a healthy, appropriate uplands with a series of interpretive habitats.

And in particular, as I mentioned before, as part of the - what I'll call the landscape work - we wanted to enhance the bike trail that already exists, and what we are proposing is adding – when we think of the bike trail as kind of the freeway – and what we propose adding is a bypass off of the bike trail so that bikers can actually access and use C South and we can even encourage people to come to the interpretive center by bike because of providing that ready access.

And, ideally, we will end up - the bikers - with a situation like this: you see the bike trail, you see where the levy will be replaced, you get a sense of what the uplands habitat might look here. And let me emphasize, as Terri did, obviously all of this is subject to public review, all of this is subject to the authority of the various regulatory bodies, what you're seeing here are very early artist renditions of what might be. We're not seeing plans that have actually been fully fleshed out and developed.

Now one of the interesting things we learned in the discussions that led up to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding was there was a real common ground that we could find between what some of the goals that the Department of Fish and Wildlife were, in terms of education, public access, interpretation, and the kinds of environmental and education that the Foundation is interested in. So all of these kinds of things, raising public awareness, increasing resource protection, promoting public use consistent with shared values and so forth, these were all things that we could see as common values with DFW and the other partner agencies.

And why we think its important to create what we've been calling an "Urban Ecology Center." Very briefly, we see the entire C South Area, and I should mention that C South is roughly 30 acres in size, out of a total of 600 acres. We see the entire C South as an educational environment, as well as a recreational environment, and in that total environment we think a lot of about what's the user, what's the visitor going to do,

what's the visitor going to think about. They're going to ask questions like, "What is this place?" They're going to ask questions like "What do you mean when you say 'Urban Ecology?'" They're going to ask questions like "Who lives here?" "Who shares this habitat?" They're going to ask questions like "How do I fit in?" And those are the kinds of questions that, through exhibits and programs, we would hope by working with DFW and the partner agencies to help answer. In particular the question of "who shares our habitat?" is the focal point for the actual urban ecology center itself.

And I'll tell you I was fascinated listening to some of your earlier parts, earlier discussions about, you know, stocking lakes with fish, and the shooting map and so forth, because they really said to me some of the things that we're interested in talking about here are very much front and center in your minds. Urban environments change, there are many different interests and species that live in urban areas, there are people that want to do all manner of different things in urban zones and how do they all fit together?

So that's actually a very real and pressing issue when you think about a place like Ballona and how it relates to the larger Los Angeles community. So, we have fundamentally broken the who shares our habitat into three wings that then lead to a building. The center wing, what we call the main gallery is to try to talk about the big picture that I just mentioned. What really, what is the story of Ballona in the context of Los Angeles and what does it mean to preserve a beautiful place like in the midst of an incredibly dense urban environment and how do those pieces work together.

We then, sort of broke it apart, between what we called the Wild LA and the Urban LA wings that look at some of the issues in particular. And so you can see that the building is intended to have two wings, one for Wild LA, one for Urban LA, and one central zone. I'll also mention while you're looking quickly at the building here that the building is roughly proposed at 46,000 square feet. It's on two levels so the actual amount of building that touches the grounds is a little over 30,000 square feet and we have attempted through planting of green roofs, to – "replace" would be not quite an accurate term – but we have more than 30,000 square feet of green roof to make up for the 30,000 square feet of where the building touches the ground.

[1:24:33]

The Wild LA Wing is intended as basically a transect from the uplands, right through the wetlands, and out into the pacific itself. So you can see, if you sort of look along the line here, that you will enter down at the bottom there where it says uplands, you'll go through a wetlands area, you'll go through a tidal area, and you'll go through a marine offshore area. And when I say go through those areas, we're talking here about exhibits that will have live elements to them, so this will have something of the quality of an aquarium, a botanic garden, of a natural history museum where will be mixing live habitats, live species, explanation and interpretive and interactive exhibits. You can also see if you look on the right that sort of green rectangle that comes outside, we're very much looking at breaking down the barrier between indoor and outdoor, we're trying not

to make it you're inside a building and you're outside a building but rather you sense that you're always in the environment.

[1:25:40]

And so this gives you a little flavor of how the overall quality of the experience may play out between the live and the interpretive exhibitry.

Commissioner: Very similar to what the Natural History Museum has ...

Howard Litwak: That's right ...

Commissioner: evolved into ...

Howard Litwak: That's right ...

Commissioner: And I'm just commenting because I take my grandchildren there every so often and we go these different areas. ...

Howard Litwak: Um hum ...

Commissioner: and I've been going there since I was a kid. ...

Howard Litwak: Wow ...

Commissioner: And of course the changes to me when they talk about making changes to what it was, it's like how can you change a museum. I mean it was good the way it was. I liked that old smell and all that but when I take my grandchildren there the fascination for them is what takes precedence over that old smell that I liked ...

Howard Litwak: Sure. Well, they have always kept the old dioramas for you ...

Commissioner: because they're learning from it

Howard Litwak: Well, let me also mention next time - you are absolutely right that very much is evocative of what they are working on now at the Natural History Museum - you might also, next time you take your grandchildren, stroll over to the California Science Center world of ecology pavilion which also is doing some similar things here and I was actually involved in the early planning of that project as well.

Howard Litwak: Well, I'm glad to hear that because that whole complex has become exquisite.]

Howard Litwak: Well, don't get me started on them, I've been involved with them since 1983 so I'm thrilled to hear you say that.

Commissioner: And they kept the Rose Garden so an old guy like me can still be happy.

Howard Litwak: Isn't that great, the Rose Garden, they're beautiful, it's beautiful isn't it.

Alright, so then the other wing is urban Los Angeles and of course we don't have quite the same nice, neat transect that you can have on the Wild Los Angeles side, [1:27:25] but what we can do in Urban Los Angeles is look at what it is that makes up a city, which includes your home, your back yard, urban parks, urban streets, urban neighborhoods, and who lives there? What are the creatures that live there, up to and including – and this is important, [1:27:41] I said to you earlier there was a third reason the Annenberg Foundation was interested in this project and that is the human animal bond, is a very high level of concern for the Foundation, they believe very strongly – the leadership of the Foundation believes very strongly that the human-animal bond is a very important part of daily life, and so we thought that it was important and DFW agreed that it was important that we not only look at wildlife in the city, [1:28:10] but domestic animals in the city and after all you're a group that probably can recognize, let's take feral cats for instance. They have a major impact on wildlife populations, so if you're going to talk about the full story of Los Angeles as an urban environment, you need to just not draw a line at the wild animals, you need to look at the domestic animals, the animals that live in our homes, the animals that are in our back yards, the animals that are in our neighborhoods, all of that because its one big picture, they aren't separate or isolated.

So again, you get the flavor here of live animal exhibits, in this case it's more like living dioramas, so there's a back yard where maybe there are squirrels, or rodents or what have you. And then a particular focus in the home and domestic animals, and as part of that, and I will say that this is the easy to caricature part of that, we will have a relationship with County Animal Control to have a small animal adoption program that will be part of this larger facility because we believe that helps bring the full story together, to allow people to have that direct interaction, those that are interested in having an animal in their home this is a viable place for them to do it and its also a value to the County in that the strong educational component here is really – you probably know the County has hundreds of thousands of animals that they deal with every year, I'm talking domestic animals, and our little – our facility isn't going to make any impact on that other than educationally, but that is the most important impact we can make – is to help people better understand that the domestic animals that you take into your homes, you need to be thinking seriously about their impact on the urban environment.

[1:30:01]

So, to step back now I'm now at the west end of C South just to give you the full flavor, let's pick up a couple of points, you see the bike trail again next to the levee, you see the ball fields, we are planning as part of the project, at least what we are proposing is to redo the ball fields and not only redo them as ball fields but also create a way so that when it isn't little league season, that area can be used for informal recreation purposes by others, that's not possible today the way the ball fields are set up and laid out, you'll notice there

are two parking lots, one is for the urban ecology center, which you see off in the distance there tucked in the corner, the other is for the use of the little league ball fields and so on, so that we can – we didn't want to have a massive parking lot, we wanted to break that apart, and it – I'm not going to take the time right now, unless you want to get into it in Q&A, but there are a number of sustainable aspects to the design and one of them is the approach to the design of the parking lots and how they will actually be engineered.

[1:31:05]

And that is a very quick overview and I appreciate your time and I'm certainly happy to answer any questions or I'm sure Terri is as well.

Commissioner: Full disclosure, my step-daughter was deputy controller when this was on the land [inaudible] so she was really happy about it.

Terri Stewart: Well, one thing I might add – I just wanted to say that initially when Annenberg and the Department started talking, we weren't sure that there was room for a partnership, because you'd think that they're totally different ideas and topics, but the more we started talking, the more we started thinking, and it's not really intuitive to think that the impact of a pet on a wild land area is that big of a deal but it's huge. If you think of all of the issues that we have in an urban ecological reserve, or an urban wildlife area - that wild land urban interface – we even have an acronym for it, a “WLUI”, wild land urban interface. Those issues are so important to those species that are trying to live, in this case a 600 acre area, that we need to get out in front of this, we need to have the audience that their center – our center – might be bringing in and have the educational opportunity to say what is a responsible pet ownership situation, you know how should a person have their dog on the land in an urban environment where you also have endangered birds. So it's really something that we've grown to respect of each other, and I think the messaging that we're together working on, is really going to be fantastic.

Howard Litwak: And I want to add – sorry - one other quick thing in case she their and then our – let me just clarify for you that: a) the Department will continue to own the land – we are not in any sense taking on ownership of the land, it remains the Department's; b) although we are planning on funding this work, it ultimately itself will be owned by the Department, and there will be an operating lease that will be openly arrived at and agreed upon that will determine how the facility will be run and so forth. But ultimately at the end of that operating lease, the building and the improvements on the site all will belong to DFW.

[1:33:25]

So although, you know, it's easy to say “theirs” because we're putting the money up and leading the planning effort on this side, really it is “theirs”, it's not “ours”, we're just helping make it happen for them. It's our gift.

Terri Stewart: It's actually for the public, the citizens.

Commissioner: "... you guys worked that out"]

Terri Stewart: It's for the public and the citizens and that not only are the wildlife going to benefit from the restoration of the entire area, you know, I think the benefit of the education is huge.

Commissioner: Well I certainly am pleased to hear the end result, because my personal opinion is that public lands, and the public domain belongs with the most public of the agencies that the public can access, and sometimes, that's not the way it is, even in some of the creations that the state has made you find that the public is not really involved. That public becomes very, very small, a little cluster of people who have great control over facilities that are available to the public. So I'm always in favor of the big picture of ownership. And that way, if there's an issue, everybody knows where to take that issue to.

Howard Litwak: And we agree with that. And the same thing was true, for example the Annenberg Community Beach House, we funded it, but it is owned by Santa Monica, and we have no control over it, it's a Santa Monica facility, we simply funded it and participated in its development.

Commissioner: What is the estimated time that, I know you guys are going through permitting and planning and so on and so forth, when might something like this exist? In reality?]

Terri Stewart: You want me to try that one?

Howard Litwak: [laughing] Go ahead. You can take the lead.

Commissioner: Will I still be here to see it?

Howard Litwak: You look like a very youthful kind of guy. So I would say sure.

Terri Stewart: I'm going to have my retirement party there. Well I'm going to have my retirement party there so it's got to be in there soon.

Howard Litwak: But you're only 40 something right? Started when you were twelve and you've been at it for 30 years.

Terri Stewart: That's right. Ok, so, you know, all kidding aside, the environmental document is a big deal, it's a lot of work, and we're doing the best we can to get it out in a timely fashion. We're hoping summer, fall, you know later this same year, you know we had higher hopes initially, even back when we acquired the property we didn't think it would take this long to figure out the restoration alternatives. But it is, it really is, you

know averaging ten years per property so we're right along that. But we're hoping that the public will have an opportunity this coming fall to look at the document.

Commissioner: I'm thinking also that this area is maybe not as controversial as the other part because it's already a disturbed area and it is not necessarily critical to the wetlands themselves, am I correct in that?

Terri Stewart: Well and I think Howard made a good point that the name of the ecological reserve, Ballona Wetlands, doesn't mean that the whole thing is wetlands. There's very few wetlands and it's a lot of uplands, and there's a lot of infrastructure and there's baseball fields, and so I think your right that this is the part that's already disturbed, we've got the habitats maps we do the species work. There's some native habitat but its mostly disturbed and the restoration of the other 500 plus acres is more – it's a larger picture.

Howard Litwak: But let me say two more things to that though. One is, there are certainly – I mean you'd like to think that people will draw the conclusion that you just cite, and I draw that conclusion, Terri draws that conclusion, but I believe there are people who think that if this project goes ahead it guarantees the rest of the project will go ahead and so they want to resist it, whether they like it or don't like it, because they want to resist the rest of the project. So, you know, who knows how that plays out, that's one issue.

[1:37:33]

The second, overall timing, what I would say is that once we clear the entitlement process, whenever that is, and let's assume that we do, right, because one of the options to be studied is a no-project option, and one of the options that's being studied is a project option without the center on the site. So there are options where this project does not happen in this way. But once the entitlements are concluded, we are in agreement that, because we already have the funding, whereas DFW does not, we are in agreement that once the entitlements are concluded, we can proceed with this piece as Phase 1. So we believe that whenever "go" is - two years from now? - whenever "go" is, it can then be implemented in roughly two more years, and could open six months after that. I mean open it, shake it down, staff it all the rest, but roughly two and a half year process from "go" to opening the doors to the public, after the entitlements are cleared.

[1:38:32]

Commissioner: That's what I was going to ask, with the possibility that the wetlands area can get all messed up, litigation and so on and so forth, if your part could proceed as a separate entity and still be successful, while the other part is entangled in the courts for the next 20 years.

Terri Stewart: Yeah, we're still working on the phasing. You know and we just have to go step by step, but it's really hard to project out what might happen in the next six

months or six years. But we're optimistic that we're going to have not only a nice marsh in the wetlands area but we'll also have the education center and they will complement each other.

Howard Litwak: And we would be - I mean yes, it is totally financially and technically feasible for this phase to proceed while litigation works out elsewhere - but we'd be mighty disappointed if all that ever happened was this got built and the rest of the project was hung up in litigation for twenty years. So I hope that it doesn't play out that way, I hope we get a lead because our funding is better not because they're tied up in litigation for twenty years.

Terri Stewart: Well, one of the things we're trying to do and I know some of the Annenberg Foundation folks have met with elected officials, Board of Supervisors, individuals, we've met with community groups, LA County Democratic Party, we met with - whoever has invited us - we want to come and explain what we've been working on since 2004, and most recently, you know the Annenberg Foundation has become a partner, that is a multi-partner project, and its going to stay a multi-partner project because as you know, the state needs partners.

Commissioner: Well, you're making a good choice, because the wetlands will never be 1874 again, so you take what you have, maybe you develop the best potential for the next 50 years or whatever is going to suffice for as it is. It sometimes takes a while for people to come to realization that they actually do have a thing there, even if they didn't like it at the beginning.

Terri Stewart: Well, and we enjoy the dialogue, and we enjoy being able to explain how this does meet our mission, we enjoy explaining how a pet owner's - pet responsibility and pet ownership fits into an urban ecological reserve, we enjoy explaining that and you know, if you have questions even after tonight, feel free to contact us.

Howard Litwak: It's our hope ...

Commissioner: One of the greatest detriments to any of the local birds is the house cat.

Howard Litwak: Exactly

Commissioner: One of which I have which I constantly chastise when she starts looking at those birds.

Howard Litwak: Well, you know, one of the things I've learned since we started on this project is how bad it is to let your house cat outside. I mean that wasn't something I knew previously, and that's a small but telling example.

We'd also like to think, I mean Terri says we enjoy explaining it, and we do, we enjoy going out for these opportunities to show people connections that they might not have previously thought about. We'd like to think - ten years from now, fifteen years from

now – this will be a very standard idea – the idea that there isn't this strong distinction between household animals and everybody else. And we'd like to think that this will be thought of as the first of a number of facilities that try to cover this kind of content, however they do it, rather than a one-off or something that really this could be a cutting edge kind of outcome.

Terri Stewart: Well academicians are involved as well, Loyola Marymount, there's a whole division of urban ecology going on there.

Howard Litwak: Which we have a strategic partnership with, because we thought that it was important to have that intellectual horsepower – I mean I'm just waving my arms for ten minutes – but we have intellectual horsepower backing up and could get well into the weeds so to speak. Precisely because we think its important that this isn't just an "airy" idea, that its really rooted in solid scholarship and solid research.

Commissioner: Your descriptions of the building made me think of a little passage on TV that I saw a couple of times – there's a building similar to this in Arkansas that was built right into the environment, of course its wooded environment there – but its based on the same concept that the environment is around the building and its inside the building and it was beautiful – with walkways through and people could see exactly what they're living in.

Howard Litwak: Well, that's what we're hoping to achieve and I'll add that I mentioned some sustainability goals and so on. One of the things that we're very much looking at is natural ventilation in as much of the building as possible, so it's not just a glass between you and the outside, but wherever possible, open that up, and really now it's just a roof and an interior and an exterior, but really, do away with that hard line as much as we can.

Commissioner: Well, we I'm sure certainly thank you for your presentation, and hopefully whatever mitigation compromise agreement comes to it is the best and at some point in time we see something wonderful like this in that area.

Howard Litwak: Great, thank you.

Commissioner: Thank you. Do you have any questions or comments?

Commissioner: I've gone to the Wallis a couple of times now.

Howard Litwak: Already?

Commissioner: And if it is done like that, great.

Howard Litwak: Well, one of the great things, I have to tell you, one of the great things about working for Wallis Annenberg is when she is committed to a project, she wants it done at the highest level of quality, and this is a project that she is committed to. It is

exciting to have that kind of backing, and that kind of vision, in terms of what we can think about doing with our partners.

Commissioner: I will say that one of my, I guess cautions, is that I always want the environment and the habitat to be number one, and that balance has got to be there, regardless of sometimes it seems like ? the way things look.]

Howard Litwak: Well, the way we look at it is that the building is one acre out of six hundred acres and if we do our job right, we're pushing people out to the other 599.

Commissioner: Alright a very ambitious project and I'm sure the three of us and the other two commissioners would really appreciate it if you would keep us informed when you do things or events or whatever, or meetings, we'd love to follow this through

Richard Brody (CDFW): On that subject, my name's Richard Brody, I'm the land manager for the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, and as much as Terri and Howard, our partner of Annenberg's, love doing these presentations and getting the message out, you're going to hear a lot of negative press for the next few months from a very small, very vocal minority, and I'd welcome you to come to the reserve any time you want, I'll take you for a tour around, show you Area C for yourself, show you some of the other areas we want to preserve and enhance and just go for a walk around.

Open invitation. Everyone knows how to reach me?

Commissioners: Yes, we have your information. Thank you. Enjoyed the presentation.

Howard Litwak: Thank you.

[Presentation ends at 1:46:11 of the recording]