

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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Richard Brody
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
c/o ESA (jas)
550 Kearny Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94108

Email: BWERcomments@wildlife.ca.gov

**Support for Public Access Connections
from the Ballona Reserve to the Santa Monica Mountains**

Dear Mr. Brody:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) would like to extend its support to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for public access pathway connections included in the proposed public access improvements to the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (Ballona Reserve), as more fully described in the draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/S) for the Ballona Restoration Project (Project). These linkages will offer significant public benefits and ultimately expand recreational opportunities to and within the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Project objectives include development of compatible public access improvements for recreation and educational purposes at the Ballona Reserve, specifically by providing a system of entrances, public spaces and walking trails with signage, interpretation and learning opportunities focused on the natural resources and cultural context of restored uplands habitat and by providing new access for cyclists. These trails, especially the bike trails, will connect with existing bike routes that connect the Ballona Reserve to the Santa Monica Mountains.

It should be noted that although the SMMC supports the Project's proposed expansion of public access opportunities to connect from the Ballona Reserve to the Santa Monica Mountains, SMMC does not extend its support, or lack thereof, for the other components of the proposed Project.

Sincerely,

IRMA MUNOS
Chairperson