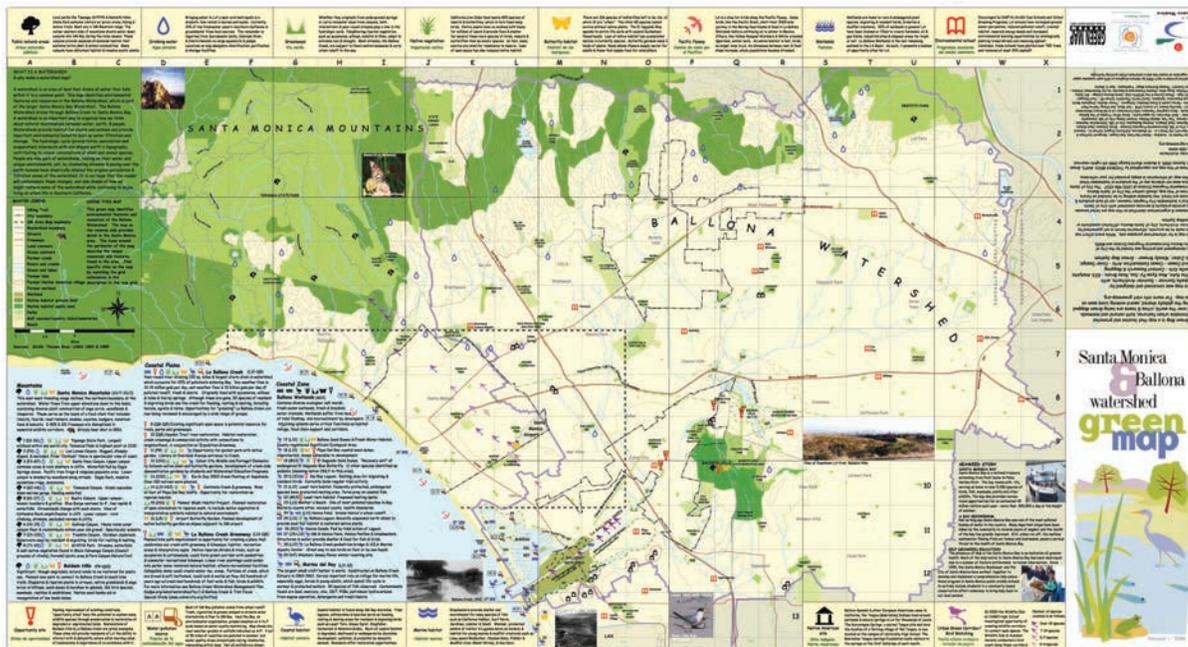


## Santa Monica and the Ballona Watershed Green Map

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### Background: Charting One of the Most Cinematically Depicted Land Masses on the Planet



Santa Monica and the Ballona Watershed Green Map

After completing graduate school in architecture, I returned to the city of my teenage years, Santa Monica, and began to discover the nature in my hometown. As I voraciously gathered information on native flora, fauna and waterways, I decided I had to make a Santa Monica and Ballona Watershed Green Map to help residents and visitors visualize the breadth and diversity of the local environment.

Visualizing a watershed on a map (as opposed to a city or other political region) gives us the unique opportunity to look at the relationships between water, earth, and people. Encompassing La Ballona

Creek, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, Venice, Culver City and portions of Los Angeles, the map charts the largest wilderness within any world city, Topanga State Park, where one can still find mountain lions and bobcats. Thousands of birds stop in the Ballona Wetlands during migrations along the Pacific Flyway from Alaska to Mexico. In addition to open space and wetlands the Green Map also shows locations of endangered species, creek and rivers, former Native American sites and ocean water quality grades. With the help of Dafna Kohn, and support from the City of Santa Monica, all of these elements were mapped.

It is my hope that the reader of this map will see this region from a watershed perspective and appreciate the wealth of natural features we have as well as what we need to preserve, restore or recreate native habitat.





My Watershed, the Ocean and Me – A Kids' Green Map



## Impacts: Connecting with Nature

The Santa Monica and Ballona Watershed Green Map is used by residents, tourists, teachers, students, non-profits and public agencies for discussions about water quality and conservation, habitats and the impact of non-native species, the consequences of sprawl and consumer choices on the natural and built environment, and the interconnectedness of our actions and policy decisions. Covered in the Los Angeles Times and other publications, the map is used by many organizations and is distributed at farmers markets, tourist bureaus, libraries and local businesses.

In addition to edible plant and watershed tours, our mapmaking has led to projects including the Malibu Creek Green Map (for our own Living Lightly in Our Watersheds Guide), the Santa Monica Col-

lege Green Map (by the EcoClub at Santa Monica College) and the LA Metro Green Map (for the American Institute of Architects conference). Most recently we published My Watershed, the Ocean and Me – A Kids' Green Map to explore and protect wildlife that lives under the Santa Monica Pier.

On a personal note, this mapmaking has had significant impacts on my career. I was awarded the City of Santa Monica's Sustainable Leadership Award in 2004 and the Chamber of Commerce's Sustainable Quality Award in 1999 and 2002 for my role in advancing the city's commitment to reducing its global footprint. Additionally the map led a state agency to hire me as a consultant facilitating restoration of the newly acquired Ballona Wetlands. Additionally, I have spent



the last year mapping all of Los Angeles County for a regional clean-up of impaired water bodies.

In the 3 years since the Santa Monica and Ballona Watershed Green Map was published, it has advanced understanding of our natural resources and has engaged the general public, especially young people. In the near future we hope to create more educational Green Maps of the entire Los Angeles Region.

Young mapmakers at the wildlife club (right) Ballona Watershed Wildlife (below)

