

Ballona EIR

The only public forum to discuss the proposed Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Ballona Wetlands was held on November 8th at Burton Chace Park. Approximately 150 people attended to hear from 50 speakers on their perspective on what they believe to be the best approach for restoring the Wetlands. Lisa Fimiani, Environmental Leadership Fellow at CUREs, spoke about the importance of local and migratory bird species at the Marsh, speaking from her 30+ years of experience volunteering and working in Ballona, including 15 years as former Executive Director of the Friends of Ballona. Dr. Eric Strauss also gave a statement to the Argonaut, which can be found [here](#).

The EIR offers three possible plans for the restoration of the Wetlands. There is debate as to which plan best addresses the needs of the region's animal and plant species, hydrodynamics, and human uses. The entire report can be read [here](#). Comments on the EIR may be submitted until February 5, 2018.

COP23 and CUREs

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place in Bonn, Germany, from November 6-17th. It was the 23rd annual conference of the parties (COP) and was presided over by the Government of Fiji. However, due to sea-level rise and extreme weather impacts, Fiji's prime minister, Frank Bainimarama, determined that COP should not be held in his home country. Since 1993, Fiji has seen a rise in sea level of [0.2 inches](#) (6mm) annually and in 2016, Cyclone Winston, Fiji's worst recorded natural disaster, caused \$1.4 billion in damages.

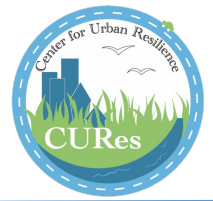
This COP was closely related to the Paris Agreement, given the United States' withdrawal and Syria's [recent ratification](#). The United States is now the only country in the world to have not signed onto the 2015 Agreement. However, the majority of other world governments remain confident that [progress can occur](#) without support from the United States government. There were two US delegations present at COP23 – one from the federal administration and the second representing American leaders still behind the Paris Agreement, including Mayor Michael Bloomberg (NY) and Governor Jerry Brown (CA).

A method of implementation for the carbon cuts pledged by most countries was heavily discussed in Bonn, with an expansion of the Paris "rulebook," primarily with additions to reporting and monitoring frameworks. Special focus was on China and India, as rapidly developing countries, to adapt more climate friendly policies than developed nations previously held.



Images of Fiji post Cyclone Winston (2016)

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Environmental Lecture Series

On November 13th, CUREs hosted the third installment of the 2017-18 Environmental Lecture Series. The talk was given by Dr. Traci Voyles (LMU Women's and Gender Studies) and was titled "Man Destroys Nature? Gender, History, and the Feminist Praxis of Re-framing Environmental Politics." Dr. Voyles spoke on the interconnectedness of feminist and environmental movements, as well as the false dichotomies that separate men from women, city from nature, and Western ideals from indigenous knowledge. She emphasized that in order to combat climate issues, we need to accept the past influence of white, Western, males on how our society views the world. Dr. Voyles suggests a breakdown of hedonistic ways of thinking to embrace ways of thinking we previously ignored. The lecture series will continue in January – the calendar of talks can be found [here](#).



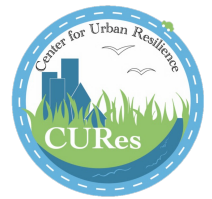
Research Spotlight – City of Colton Tree Inventory

From 2016-17, CUREs conducted a tree inventory, in association with Jack Sahl & Associates, of all the trees within the public domain of the City of Colton. This included trees in cemeteries, parks, schools, and major cross-streets throughout the city. Interdisciplinary student and staff teams gathered data on the size, distribution, age, health, and energy efficiency of over 8000 trees. The goal of the project was for the City to better understand tree planting strategies and to engage with the communities.

The City of Colton, which is part of the inland empire, is currently experiencing social and ecological challenges associated with climate change. Trees provide both short and long-term benefits that mitigate harmful environmental climate impacts and benefit societies and communities by promoting the use of outdoor spaces, which has been shown to reduce tensions and improve resident place attachment.

As a low-income and socially vulnerable city, the City of Colton has a greater need to understand its urban tree canopy. Trees increase the value of properties and reduce energy costs. It is estimated that the greenhouse gas storage capabilities of Colton's tree canopy can be valued at \$2,841,045. Across the LA area, there is a disparity between tree cover in high-income versus low-income areas. By conducting a tree inventory, the City can assess which neighborhoods within its limits are not being adequately served by urban trees and can thus more effectively focus planting efforts. Combating demographic differences associated with tree access may help eliminate, or at least decrease, access disparities.

CUREs anticipates expanding the scope of this tree work in the future through iTree technology and surveying methods. Better understanding urban tree canopy will be vital for addressing climate change impacts and resiliency in the future.



COP23 and CUREs

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Despite these two nations opposing excessive carbon limitations to their growth, China emerged as part of a new shared leadership. It is particularly interesting to note the proposed greenhouse gas cuts given a [recent study](#) released by US government researchers on the clear link between human activities and climate change. COP23 also launched the “[Powering Past Coal Alliance](#),” a group of over 20 countries and two US states (Oregon and Washington), that aims to phase-out coal. The group aims to have over 50 countries by this time next year. However, there are no defined methods for coal phase out or penalties for inaction.

The [Mediterranean City Climate Change Consortium](#) (MC-4), for which CUREs is the Secretariat institution, was present at COP to discuss climate change adaptation. Climate change impacts to Los Angeles and other Mediterranean climate cities may [include](#): increased drought, shorter growing seasons, increased fire and other extreme weather events, the spread of disease, and a fall in economic output. MC-4 will continue to engage with international groups to determine how related climate regions can effectively address global changes. Dr. Cristina Tirado (LMU Environmental Science) represented CUREs and MC-4 at COP to speak about the impacts of climate change on food, health and sustainability. Tirado previously gave a [talk](#) as part of LMU’s Environmental Lecture series (password for talk is LMU2017). Additionally, the recently released [Cities and the Environment Journal](#) issue, curated by CUREs staff, focuses on climate change for urban areas in Mediterranean climates.

Given the perception that 2020 marks a [turning point](#) for climate change mitigation, the decisions made and conversations held at Bonn are critical. More outcomes of COP23 can be read [here](#) or [here](#). CUREs will continue to work to address local and regional climate impacts through research and partnerships.

Christmas Bird Counts

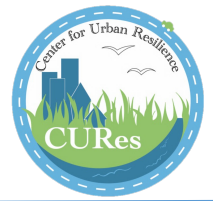
Interested in getting involved with local annual Christmas Bird Counts? There are multiple sites throughout the LA area! This is a wonderful way for both inexperienced and expert birders to participate in a citizen science initiative where birds can be observed and counted! Contact CUREs Fellow Lisa Fimiani if you’d like to participate through LMU (310-338-3758 or Lisa.Fimiani@lmu.edu):

- January 2 – LMU

More information: [Audubon](#)

Make sure to check out the bird counts in your local area!





CUREs Teacher Workshops

Monthly teacher workshops continued in November as part of the 2017-2018 teacher workshop series focused on the development of a new Urban Ecolab module, Module 10 titled, "Garden Ecology" and expansion of an existing Module 9 titled, "Human-Animal Interactions." Workshops are led by CUREs faculty and staff, Dr. Eric Strauss, Lisa Fimiani, and Maria Curley. The workshops aim to involve LAUSD teachers in the development of Urban Ecolab curricula, and subsequent implementation of lessons in local middle and high schools. The urban ecology curricula that makes up Urban Ecolab strives to connect students to nature and the environment, with special focus on human-environment interaction and impact, as well as the importance of human stewardship of local natural resources, the land, and all the organisms that inhabit it. The free, downloadable Urban Ecolab urban ecology lessons can be downloaded [here](#).

CUREs' Most Recent Publication!

The most recent release of the [Cities and the Environment Journal](#) (CATE) focuses on the impacts of climate change on Mediterranean regions. While the issue is primarily comprised of case examples from the Los Angeles region, it is hoped that these may serve as examples for future research in other Mediterranean climate regions.

Dr. Eric Strauss, Executive Director of CUREs, and Dr. Michele Romolini, Director of Research at CUREs, were co-authors on "[Tree Canopy Change in Coastal Los Angeles, 2009-2014](#)," which is featured in the issue. This study examined the relationship between tree canopy cover in coastal Los Angeles, using high-resolution aerial imagery and LiDAR, with resident demographics and income. Through this fine level of analysis, they were able to determine that higher-income groups tend to have more tree canopy and less loss over time than lower income groups. Further examining this relationship through the lens of green infrastructure in other areas of Los Angeles could help guide decision making about urban forestry projects. Stay tuned for future updates!

Upcoming Events and Volunteer Opportunities

- 12/2: [Native Plant Walk at Debs Park](#)
- 12/9: [Freshwater Marsh Tour](#)
- 12/9: [Malibu Lagoon Restoration](#)
- 12/16: [Bird Walk at Debs Park](#)
- 1/02: LMU Christmas Bird Count (see page 3)

To see all events and volunteering programs for December, visit our [website](#).

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