

Field Assignment  
Hazard Park Freshwater Wetland, East Los Angeles  
Proposal to be added to the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters

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RECORDED  
2006 DEC 21 PM 4:32  
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER  
QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY

On the afternoon of Thursday, November 16, 2006, the Hazard Park Freshwater Wetland was assessed by this researcher for its water quality. This freshwater wetland is located in the city of East Los Angeles and is adjacent to the USC Health Sciences Campus and Bravo Medical Magnet High School. It is West of Soto Street and North of Charlotte Street. Spanning 25 acres over 1.4 miles, the wetland bisects the Hazard Park and Recreation Center and traverses the now abandoned Southern Pacific Railroad Tracks. It is a hidden and peaceful inner city oasis containing some thriving vegetation surrounded by buildings and bustling highways. It is a rare sight especially in a city that is known for its abased and withering conditions. It is located in the East LA neighborhood, a locality which is populated mostly by immigrants of Mexican descent, and second-generation Mexican-Americans, who are also often referred to as Chicanos.

At the time of visit the wetland was observed to be moist with very little water. At this time of year due to absence of rain the wetland was not as wet as it should be. From observations in the past there is generally a steady stream of water running through the stream to the main wetland area of the park. A small spring is located south of the Park. This particular wetland is of special interest to this researcher because it is located right behind Bravo Medical Magnet, a high school where this researcher finished her high school education. It also runs behind the

high school. Students use the path right next to the stream for their physical education - cross country activities.

The park is covered with grass and trees. It is an excellent retreat for people in the area to picnic or to gather for family outings. The shady trees are inviting especially to those who live in the area. There is always a breeze that runs from Valley Boulevard crossing the park to Soto Street, making the park a welcome respite for those passing through. Once in a while students are observed having some physical activities in the park. Some are eating, exercising such as brisk walking, running and people taking naps and children playing with their dogs.

During rainy season when there is more water in the wetland we see kids floating little boats, wading or observing little animals in the water. The stream ends in the east side of the park which could get deep up to four feet deep, sometimes deeper during rainy season. During the summer the wetland would have much less water and so from too much water during the winter or rainy season it turns to moist and sometimes dry during the summer season. During rainy season when the stream is full and the wetland is deeper and wider we hear frogs croaking and crickets making noise and the wetland becomes alive with different types of creatures. From the top floor of the high school this research remembers looking down at the wetland which becomes alive and with different types of creatures and lushly growing plants. The brown vegetation which permeates during the summer season transforms to a more colorful and lush vegetation.

The most recent visit to the wetland, water in the wetland was about a foot deep. The usually clear water was brown and muddy. The area must be about 20 feet by 30 feet. The same area during the rainy season could be wider and the water much deeper. There were some portions of the wetland where the water showed to be clear. Most of the water was covered with vegetation enjoying what is left of the moisture on the ground.

East of the Recreation Park near the tennis courts a municipal storm drain was releasing fairly dirty water into the gully, which obviously is a violation of federal law. Floating in the stream were several pieces of styrofoam cups and candy wrappers. In the center of the gully there was a sign posted which read, "***Stream Restoration In Progress: Please Protect Our Natural Wildlife. Become a Steward, Call (323)441-8634. Please Do Not Litter!***" Directly adjacent to the posted sign was a large garbage receptacle. Despite the sign and garbage can, trash abound the area, primarily consisting of styrofoam cups, plastics from commercial foods, and grocery bags which are obviously non-biodegradable. Because the wetland traverses the park, many people who visit the park pass through the gully. Natural vegetation appears to have been cleared and so people go through the gully as a short-cut to get to the other side of the park. The pathways created by people was cluttered with trash.

Walking along the wetland, vegetation was lush, primarily consisting of wetland plants, such as Cattail, Castor Bean and Mulefat. One area was particularly overwhelmed with trash. There was a large dilapidated orange cone and lying next to it was a large sullied mattress that seemed to have been there for quite some

time as animals began to inhabit it. Also lying in that area were more grocery bags and styrofoam cups.

With regard to the quality of water, a cursory look at the water showed presence of algae, sedimentation and possible toxic substances coming from the municipal storm drain. There could be possible fecal coliform as evidenced by presence of dogs brought by people who frequent the park. There were visible presence of trash everywhere. The water emitted a musty strong odor common to ponds that are almost dry. Source of contamination on the water could be people and animals who frequent the park. The re-diversion of dirty water from the storm drain could also be a possible source of contaminant.

Affected by water quality could be animals that inhabit the wetland, vegetation and people, particularly children who are attracted to the water. Estimated affected area would be a half a mile radius of the wetland, e.g. community who frequent the park, especially people who do not have yard and would prefer to come to the park. Others affected would be USC employees and students and high school students who utilize the park for recreation and physical activities. There may be no direct water quality impact on the population except for those who touch the water such as children who play around it. The smell of the water is quite strong but not totally overwhelming.

After perusing the 303(d) list of water quality segment for the Los Angeles Region, the Hazard Park Wetland is not included in this list. This wetland is definitely one that has impaired water quality. It could be most likely an oversight by the Los Angeles Region. This wetland may not be terribly polluted but it had lots of algae and trash. The Los Angeles Region needs to be aware of this particular

wetland and its water quality, mainly because of its accessibility to people in the community and its popularity to those who frequent the park.

The sign that was prominently placed next to the wetland attempted to call people's attention that stream restoration was in progress. It encouraged people to protect our natural wildlife and the water in the stream. This sign, however, appears to be lame in the sense that it did not look that restoration was actively progressing. Old trash that have been in the area for quite some time were testaments to the apparent neglect. As an observer the wetland looked forgotten and abandoned and if there was natural wildlife, these animals and plants must have either left or are having difficulty surviving. It appeared that whatever attention that was given to the park was just the daily mechanical cutting of weeds and trimming of trees. Attempts to preserve any wildlife or restoration of wildlife did not seem to exist. The water quality in the wetland needs to be carefully looked at. People who like to play in the water, most especially children, may be exposed to coliform, bacteria, and toxic substances brought into the stream by animals, trash and by people themselves. At the time of visit the Hazard Park Freshwater Wetland, to this observer, was definitely pleading for attention and appealing for active stewardship.



Figure 1: Aerial View/Map of Hazard Park Freshwater Wetland: 2230 Norfolk Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033 Boxed in pink is the location of the Wetland.  
Taken November 16, 2007/6?  
Source: <http://www.mapquest.com>



Figure 2: Note the Styrofoam trash and graffiti surrounding the area.  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm



Figure 3: Sign posted on the West of Soto Street and North of Charlotte St.  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm





Figure 4: Hazard Park Wetland  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm



Figure 5: Hazard Park Wetland, adjacent to the tennis courts.  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm

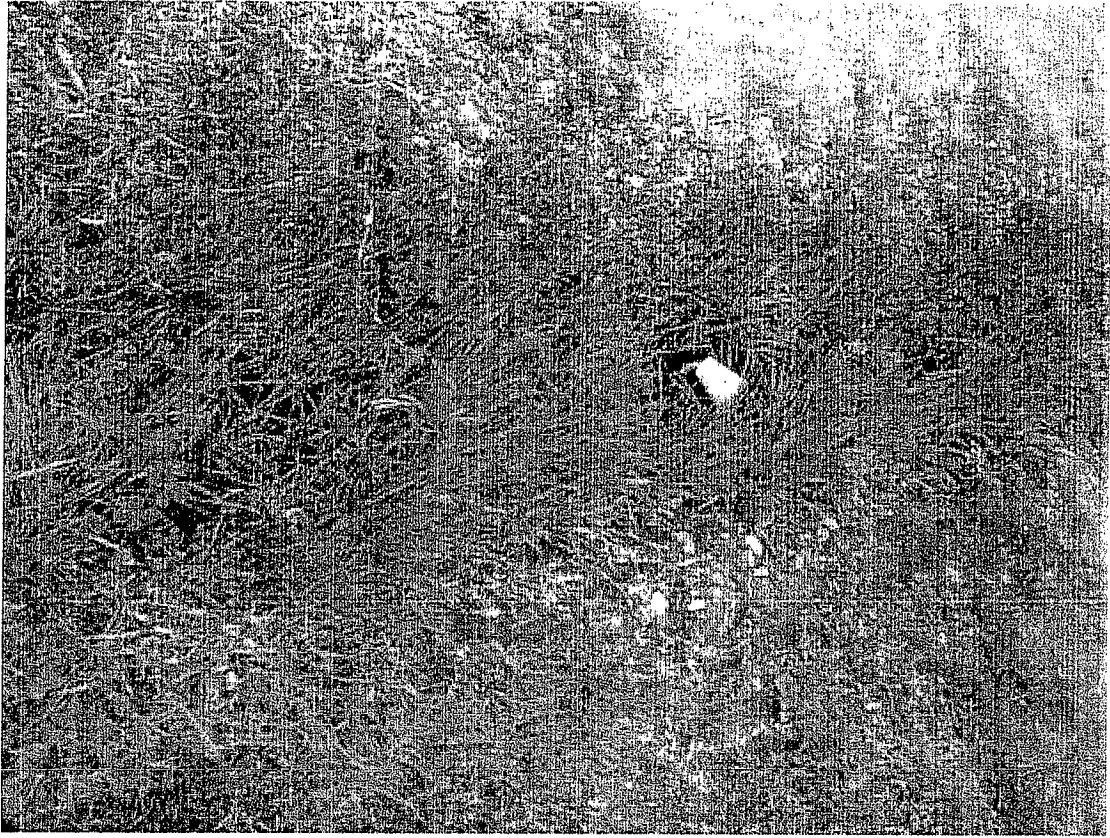


Figure 5: Hazard Park Wetland, note Styrofoam trash and wrappers.  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm



Figure 6: Hazard Park Wetland Scenery  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm



Figure 7: Note Orange cone, trash surrounding the area including plastic bags, and mattress.

Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm



Figure 8: Hazard Park Wetland, one of the many pieces of trash surrounding the wetland.  
Taken November 16, 2007 at 4:00pm