

To: IB Area Chamber of Commerce  
From: Roger Benham [roger@Pond20forUs.com](mailto:roger@Pond20forUs.com)

SUBJECT: Pond 20 - Wildcoast & SWIA's \$60 million Park Bench – Facts you Should Know

Dear Members:

Attached to this email below is the Wildcoast "Vision" for Pond 20, dated April 2014.

Sadly for the citizens of the IB Area, on October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Port District posted an RFP to mitigate a vast majority of Pond 20. The Port District adopted this Wildcoast Vision practically verbatim. Why wouldn't they? The Port District is made up mostly of members to the North, and they are not fools, they want the land of Pond 20 for their own economic prosperity. Wildcoast and SWIA are giving them everything they want – but what is in for them?

This means that the rich development to the North will use Pond 20 to secure \$billions of recurring revenue from precious economic development, and as illustrated on page 1 of the Wildcoast vision, see attached, we get a \$60million park bench.

Actually, the \$60 million park bench is a conservative number, the long-term cost to the IB Area would be in the \$billions. When you consider the opportunity costs of losing multi-billion dollar long-term recurring revenue developments such as Liberty Station, and the local taxpayers getting stuck with the ongoing restoration costs of mitigation and ecotourism. Yes, mitigation and ecotourism "cost" us. For example, please note the Chula Vista Nature Center demand in June 2013, 'give us \$350k or we are closing our doors'. SDG&E gave them their money, but of course, the Chula Vista Nature Center signed off on their switching station at the former power plant site – results – local residence get screwed.

In contrast, we proposed a world-class PCH Dinner Show for Pond 20 that was conservatively estimated to make \$40million per year. \$40million per year is only .5% of San Diego's annual \$8billion tourism industry. How much of that \$8billion does the IB Area bring in now, seriously? How much money is "ecotourism" projected to bring, seriously? Please show me in writing the economics of ecotourism for the IB Area. Not only will ecotourism not scratch the surface of economic potential of the development of Pond 20, but it will probably cost us \$ten for every \$one.

With the loss of the Silver Strand to Coronado, and the 9<sup>th</sup> and Palm shopping center fiasco, we have a history of not acting in own best interest and being taken advantage of.

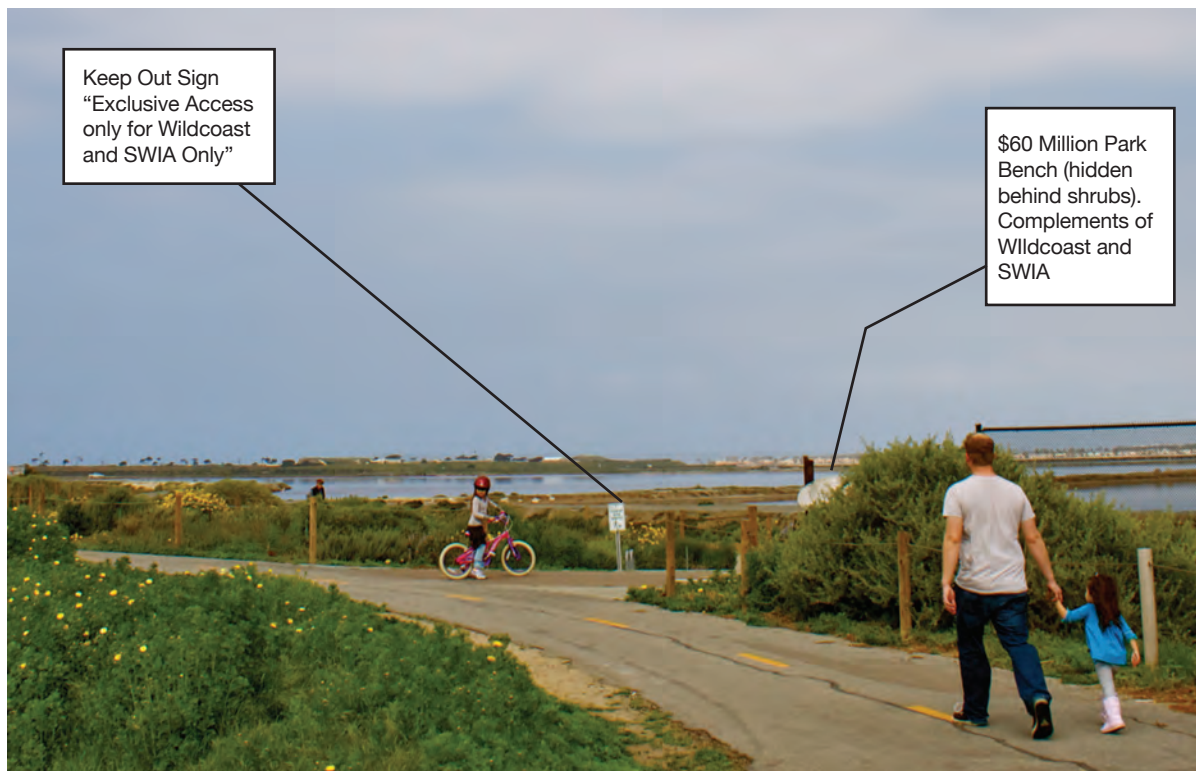
It's time we get it right; we should make every effort to stop this reckless giveaway of Pond 20. What is your opinion?

Roger Benham, P.E.  
[Roger@Pond20forUs.com](mailto:Roger@Pond20forUs.com)

# SCENIC SOUTH BAY VISION

## A VISION FOR ENHANCED RECREATION AND BEAUTIFICATION FOR POND 20 AND SOUTH SAN DIEGO BAY

*April 2014*



Inserted notes and comments by Roger Benham roger@Pond20forUs.com

### Notes:

1. All of the natural habitat objectives stated in this "Vision" can be obtained by completing the habitat restoration work on the vast amounts of exiting unrestored Western Salt Land that has already been set aside for mitigation. In other words, they do not need Pond 20, they want it because of greed.
2. Pond 20 was promised for much needed economic development for the IB Area.
3. We have dedicated too much to already, and there are minimal, if any, business justifications for ecotourism.
4. With Pond 20 we have the opportunity to demonstrate advanced concepts where economic development can coexist with natural flora and fauna.
5. We gave away most of the Salt Works land to mitigate Liberty Station, and they still get more park benches, public amenities, trails, bay access – with no fences or signs – Where is leadership that cares about our people?
6. The fast track give-away of Pond 20 to special interests is trading our future options, and our future prosperity ----- IT IS WRONG.



# Scenic South Bay Vision

*A Vision for Enhanced Recreation and Beautification for Pond 20  
and South San Diego Bay*

**The vision for a Scenic South Bay (SSBV) incorporates recreation, adaptation, mitigation, and habitat restoration for South San Diego Bay and the bayfront shoreline of Imperial Beach.**

## WHY?

- Pond 20 is a 95-acre publicly owned segment of tidelands and wildlife habitat the Port of San Diego has the opportunity to use for mitigation, restoration and beautification.
- Climate change increasingly puts our port tidelands and our coastal communities at risk. Early action and long term planning are needed to reduce the severity of impacts in the future. The Port of San Diego's Climate Action Plan is being developed.
- South San Diego Bay shoreline communities are improving nature-based recreational assets in the area such as the 8,869-acre Otay Valley Regional Park.
- Local communities overwhelmingly support passive recreation, beautification and ecological restoration on Pond 20 and west of Otay Valley Regional Park.
- Pond 20 is a critical migratory bird habitat that borders the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge and Otay Valley Regional Park.
- A network of nearby restoration areas present an opportunity for increased nature based education and recreation and open space access in the South San Diego Bay community.
- Enhancement and improvements to Pond 20 would support the City of Imperial Beach's adopted ecotourism plan.

## PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

1. Improve Imperial Beach's "Front Porch" by beautifying the shorelines along Pond 20, aligning this with the Palm Ave. improvement plan, and link with Parcel A (see map) to be consistent with community character.
2. Improve trail options to increase linkages between trail systems.
3. Removal of "orphan" and unnecessary fences around South San Diego Bay and Pond 20 that would be paired with community driven environmental restoration projects.
4. Increase recreational assets in Parcel C linking it to the OVRP consistent with local resident support and community character. A managed campground may be a possibility at this site.

5. Prepare for climate change through restoration, carbon sequestration, and buffering to reduce flooding and create habitat in a significant portion of parcel B.
6. Allow for traditional project mitigation in the remainder of Parcel B enabling Port or Port Tenant project development in the Bay.

### TIMING

- Timing is crucial. We are engaging the residents of Imperial Beach and South San Diego as well as elected officials.
- Linkages between nature-based recreation and restoration areas around Pond 20 call for momentum on the SSBV. The Poseidon Mitigation project, the Otay Valley Regional Park and coastal trails, will all benefit the City of Imperial Beach, the Bayshore Bikeway, and potential restoration sites in the Coronado Cays.
- The Port of San Diego has begun to implement a 50-year visioning plan that should include improvements to Pond 20.

### FUNDING AND SUPPORT

- Parcel B improvements can be accomplished by accessing restoration and climate change grant funds, Port environmental and mitigation funds, and the establishment of a Port Tenant mitigation bank to leverage funds for climate action.
- Beautification can be funded through Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), and Coastal Access Funds, along with funding from regional agencies such as SANDAG.
- A coalition of organizations, government agencies, and residents are forming the **Scenic South Bay Working Group** in order to seek funding for passive recreation, restoration and beautification projects.

### NEXT STEPS

1. Work with the **Scenic South Bay Working Group** to identify funding and project concepts.
2. Palm Ave. beautification through Port CIP funding.
  - a. Identify funding and work with City of Imperial Beach to implement beautification elements for Palm Ave.
  - b. Initiate community driven beautification projects including removal or replacement of “orphan” fences” and restoration events.
3. Habitat Restoration on Parcel B
  - a. The Port will issue an RFP, funded by Environmental Fund, to develop the hydrological, restoration, mitigation, and adaptation plan for Parcel B.

- b. The Port will work with USFWS to connect the Pond 20 restoration and Poseidon Mitigation projects.
- 4. Recreational Enhancements on Parcels A and C.
  - a. Community outreach meetings will be held seeking designs and ideas for Parcels A and C.
  - b. Develop low impact concepts for Parcel A that add value and desirability for a Bikeway Village hub and connection between Palm Ave. and Parcel A.
  - c. Develop concepts for Parcel C can be any sort of low impact development or recreation site consistent with the Coastal Act.
- 5. The Port of San Diego and the Scenic South Bay Working Group are encouraged to work with local economic development organizations, such as the South County Economic Development Council, to expand sustainable ecotourism opportunities in the South San Diego Bay based on the Urban Waterfront and Ecotourism plan adopted by the City of Imperial Beach as part of the Port's 50-year Vision plan.

For questions or concerns please contact:  
John Holder, WILDCOAST  
[john@wildcoast.net](mailto:john@wildcoast.net)



## Scenic South Bay

*A Vision for Enhanced Recreation  
and Beautification of Pond 20*

### **Parcel A: Pocket Park and Overlook (3.5 acres)**

New passive pocket park and scenic overlook along 13th Street  
Designed with support of local residents and consistent with community character

Benefits Bikeway Village and Bayshore Bikeway improvement projects along 13th Street

### **Parcel B: Habitat Restoration and Overlook (80.4 acres)**

Provides for future Port and Port tenants mitigation needs  
Allows adaptation for rising sea levels and habitat migration  
Mitigates greenhouse gas emissions by trapping carbon in salt marsh vegetation

### **Parcel C: Neighborhood Gateway to OVRP (8.0 acres)**

New enhanced recreational opportunities on upland areas  
Designed with support of local residents and consistent with community character

Complement future parks on adjacent City of San Diego lands and link to the Otay Valley Regional Park

**San Diego National Wildlife Refuge  
South San Diego Bay Unit**

**Otay River Estuary  
Restoration Project**

**Otay Valley Regional Park**

Cypress Ave

Calla Ave

Florence St

13th St

Palm Ave

Saturn Blvd

5



0

500

1,000

Feet