

To: IB Area Chamber of Commerce
From: Roger Benham roger@Pond20forUs.com

SUBJECT: Pond 20 - Wildcoast Bogus Survey

Dear Members:

Below is an example of the Wildcoast Survey, dated January 7, 2014.

Pond 20 was originally “set aside for economic development” to give much-needed economic help to the communities of the IB Area. This was promised to the communities of the IB Area after about 90% of Western Salt land was given away to “mitigate” rich development projects to the North, including the vast economic and public amenities of Liberty Station.

The October 7th posting of an RFP on Port District’s website proves that the Port District is reversing their promise to use Pond 20 for economic development.

As proof of the kind of manipulation used by local environmentally based nonprofits, is the Wildcoast Survey of Jan. 7, 2014.

Below is a copy of this survey, with my comments added in underlining.

Does this survey give the participant unbiased options, or does it appear to be a misleading and manipulative method of imposing a self-serving agenda?

Has this type of skewed information led to the loss of the most valuable asset and opportunity ever presented to the citizens of the IB Area?

Please let me know what you think.

Sincerely,
Roger Benham
Roger@Pond20forUS.com

Example of Wildcoast Survey Sent out to Public Jan. 7, 2014

R.A. Benham comments are underlined

Restore and Protect South San Diego Bay at Pond 20

SIGN THE PETITION HERE!

Why This Is Important

The Unified Port of San Diego has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cities of San Diego and Imperial Beach to decide the future of Pond 20 in south San Diego Bay. Public comments are being accepted now, until the end of April, 2012.

Pond 20 is a 95.13 acre salt marsh wetland (this is a misleading statement – The Jurisdictional Wetland Delineation Report, Merkel & Assoc #02-010-03 states “No wetland habitat was located within Pond 20”. Study #06-007-09 further describes that wetland and regulated non-wetland waterways by other regulatory agencies make up only a small percentage of the Pond 20 area (a literature search indicates 2% of Pond 20 is “wetland”). The geotechnical report submitted to the Port regarding Pond 20, Geotechnics Inc, Project No. 0298-019-00, states “it is our opinion that site could be developed for proposed commercial, retail, industrial, or hotel use”. In fact, Pond 20 was originally “set aside” for future development by the Port District when they acquired the Western Salt property in 1998, after the Port gave about 90% of the land to land mitigation bankers) adjacent to the South San Diego Bay Unit of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Habitat restoration at Pond 20 could provide important habitat and foraging for threatened and endangered species of migratory and resident birds such as least tern, the snowy plover, and light-footed clapper rail. (advanced environmental concepts could be adopted for Pond 20 where natural flora and fauna could coexist with for-profit economic development. We already gave away 90% of Western Salt for habitat restoration).

It is with commitment and concern that we write in support of protecting the totality of the natural environment at Pond 20.

This project represents an excellent opportunity to involve the south San Diego Bay community in the protection and ecological restoration at Pond 20, to preserve the last remaining open space viewshed on the Palm Avenue corridor, and to facilitate public access to open space for healthy nature based recreation and nature appreciation.

1. This is a dubious and misleading statement because Wildcoast is not disclosing that they are a “stakeholder” in a proposal to acquire the land in a land banking deal with Sunroad Development, BAE Systems, Hornblower Cruises, and The Port Tenants Association, and stand to realize potential financial gains and control through the land banking business. Also, their land banking motive does NOT increase the amount of land for the wildlife as they claim, it only offsets the land taken by the developers - See William Hall Mitigation Stakeholder Team Proposal at www.portofsandiego.org/pond-20/letters-of-interest.html).

2. This is a misuse of the term "open space". All examples of the past, including the "San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge" have resulted in "Keep Out" signs being posted on parts of the bay that were formerly accessible by the public. What viewsheds? Are you saying that Liberty Station does not provide the Point Loma community with viewsheds? It definitely does, go check it out.

3. Wildcoast is not disclosing that already about 90% of the Western Salt land, or about 750 acres, has already been used as wetland restoration land banking, to offset development

further to the North, including Liberty Station, the Airport Expansion, and others. This approximate 750 acres was given away without any vote, referendum, or disclosure to the people of the South Bay.

We do not support the development of any retail, new housing, fill, or hotels at Pond 20. (Neither does anybody else- this is a scare tactic language used by Wildcoast to manipulate and get an emotional response from the people. Why do you deny the community options? We have proposed 'homegrown' concepts, including a \$40 million per year PCH Dinner Show and OTI Four Year University, both of which will greatly enhance the economic and social fabric of the Palm Corridor, and the whole IB Area - why doesn't Wildcoast disclose these options for the people to chose?)

Ideally, we would like to have the Port embark upon a project which supports ecosystem restoration for the rare Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub, salt marsh wetlands, and upland vegetation. The habitat at Pond 20 represents some of San Diego's last best property for habitat restoration and mitigation. Pond 20 provides important habitat and forage for threatened and endangered species found in San Diego County and migratory species of international importance. (we have already given about 750 acres of the Bay Western Salt Lands for the "rare Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub", and who know how much of the TJ River Valley, we are asking for the 95 acre Pond 20 land for much needed economic development, which is only a small fraction of the land given to land mitigation banking).

We support access to open space and healthy nature based recreational activities.

We respectfully ask the Port to protect this property for its open space values - see notes regarding "open space" above. Wildcoast's idea of open space is posting Keep Out signs, while only allowing Wildcoast personnel to have access and use of the land. -, which include passive recreational and educational opportunities for the underserved communities surrounding the site. We are amenable to the removal of the chain link fence that currently surrounds the property, to be replaced by a walking and cycling trail accessible to those with disabilities. This trail could also incorporate wildlife overlooks, interpretive signage focused on the historical and ecological components of Pond 20, and benches and walls suitable for wildlife viewing and resting. Any public art components which could be incorporated into these amenities would be of benefit to the community as well. The trail would ideally connect to the western end point for the OVRP and the existing Bayshore Bikeway and 13th Street Bikeway Village Project.

1. all of the positive comments about the bike trail and public art issues have nothing to do with land banking (wetland restoration) of Pond 20. These improvements have been made possible by public's efforts and paid for by the Taxpayer and business fees. We can achieve much more of this type of public amenities with the economic development of Pond 20.
2. Wildcoast does not disclose that they would receive funding to do these improvements. See Wildcoast's "Capital Improvement Project proposal" referenced on page 1 of the William Hall Mitigation Stakeholder Team Letter-of-Interest. .

Further, we request that the Port work towards a proposal that incorporates the following management components for the future of Pond 20:

Restore the ecosystem and wildlife habitat at pond 20, overseen by representatives of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. (The people of the South Bay have given too much for this cause, including 90% of the Western Salt land, Beach areas, and the TJ River Valley, all without vote, referendum. or Public disclosure. Pond 20 is our last opportunity for economic development.)

Support The Port and U.S. Navy draft Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) to improve the habitat value of the shoreline infrastructure, reduction of armored shoreline in exchange for natural, more biologically functional shoreline. (This is about land banking and offsetting habitat destruction to our North - this comment is another ruse by Wildcoast to manipulate and draw an emotional response from the public - why don't they disclose that they are in bed with the developers, Sunroad, BAE, and Hornblower? The people of the IB Area have already given too much to their cause, without ever knowing or being informed by the perpetrators).

Explore the potential for a habitat mitigation bank to be established. The Port and Cities of Imperial Beach and San Diego may be able to realize income from the sale of wetland and other credits

[“Explore the potential”, you already have a formal proposal to the Port District to do this, why don't you disclose that information? Yes, this is the real motive. Who gets the money? How much? This is the subtle tactic used to exploit the people of the South Bay from their assets, just like they did a 9th and Palm, where the City of IB paid \$12 million, then gave it to the developer for \$1 dollar. After he shenanigans were disclosed, they manipulated the value of the property and allowed the developer to buy it for approximately a paltry \$240,000. A survey of the Pond 20 "Letter of Interest" proposals shows that the land bankers are trying to claim that the entire 95 acre Pond 20 parcel is only worth about \$950,000 (or \$10,000 per acre for San Diego Bayfront property!), see Land Bankers proposal at www.portofsandiego.org/pond-20/letters-of-interest.html]

Adhere to the recommendations of the California Coastal Commission letter of February 28, 2011 that states the “best and highest use of the site would be habitat restoration.” (Who wrote this letter? Is this really the position of the Coastal Commission, or is this just someone who is in bed with the Land Banking companies writing a letter using the Coastal Commission letterhead? It must be verified that there was not undue influence by land banker lobbyists. People of the IB Area, please don't let these self-serving interests ram these non-substantiated claims down your throats. On what basis, and in comparison to what options did the “person” representing the Coastal Commission consider when they wrote this letter? Did the person who wrote this letter consider all the options that were available? Did the person who wrote this letter happen to work for a land mitigation banker, or an environmental organization that would benefit from land mitigation of Pond 20? Did the “actual” Coastal Commission consider any public input before they made the “recommendation”?)

Direct any business related development towards redevelopment of existing urban and retail space in the surrounding communities

(What exactly are you saying? What “business related development”, by whom? What does “any” mean, and why would the “any” be influenced by the decision to use Pond 20 for land banking mitigation? Who is going to pay for “redevelopment, and what is the business model? How is this statement going to increase the business opportunities in the surrounding community? Regarding “business related development”, how does using 95 acres of Pond 20 for land mitigation (wetlands restoration) compare to using it for “economic development”, namely, the development of a 4-year Institute of Higher Education, and a \$40 million per year PCH Dinner Show? Obviously, there is no comparison between the economic impact of land mitigation compared to economic development. Economically speaking, using Pond 20 for land mitigation banking will put the nail-in-the-coffin for future prospects for economic and social progress of the Palm Avenue Corridor)

Respect the spirit of the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan that designates Pond 20 as a Special Study Area of significant ecological importance, and (the Port) to address it's biological resources, habitat value, and hydrology

(This claim must be verified to show that there was that there was not undue influence. What is the basis for the claims by the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan? Who was on this committee? Were they influenced by Lobbyists? What options did they consider? Did they do a responsible survey that included educational material about various options, and the meaning of "land mitigation" banking? The Port Districts December 4th, 2012 meeting at the Silverwing Library proved that very few residents of the area know what "land mitigation banking" means).

As Pond 20 is within the 100-year floodplain, maintain the natural floodplain, and adhere to the most up to date scientific data that explains the dangers of sea level rise in the next 100 years

(The claim of a 100-year flood is a scare tactic used by the land bankers to manipulate and mislead the public. Both the PCH Dinner Show and the OTI University include design options to address both the 100-year flood issue and sea level rise. Also, each year the public pays \$millions to haul sand out of the Tijuana River Valley. The public need to be informed about the real options - not just the imaginary problems used as scare tactics by the land banking (wetland restoration) interests).

Retain Pond 20 as mitigation land for "water dependent" activities (i.e.: docks)

(Very vague comment - what are they suggesting? who would be the owners and operators? Is this something that would only be accessible to the privileged "Owners", namely the environmental elitists, who use it for their privileged access?)

Preserve the open space amenities currently available at the site

(What available open space amenities?)

Preserve the current viewshed at Pond 20

(Preserve what? I looks terrible the way it is. Are you suggesting that Coronado's golf course, Hotel Del, and Glorrietta Bay are eye-sores? This types of world-class improvements are exactly what the IB Area needs. I'm not suggesting a hotel or golf course. We have received tremendous feedback that the PCH Dinner Show and OTI University would greatly enhance the "Viewshed" of Pond 20 and the Palm Corridor. Has the public been given a true representation of the options so that they can develop their own opinions?)

Permit public access to the perimeter of the site and explore opportunities for the construction of a multi-use path that rims the property for passive recreation, education, and wildlife viewing

(So, what you are saying is that we give you 95 acres of prime bayfront property for your self-serving land banking needs to offset development to the North, and you give us a "perimeter trail" and a park bench? And, you expect the people of the IB Area to thank you, volunteer for you publicity shoots, and donate their money to you? Do you really think this is a fair deal?)

Construction of small, wildlife viewing overlooks, historical and ecological interpretive signage for the purpose of public environmental learning

(What is the economic impact, cost verses income, of this "development"? Why can't we install more of these installation at the other 750 acres of the Western Salt land that has already been used for land banking mitigation? Since these types of developments are so sparsely used, it should be easy to fit them in other area outside of Pond 20. The PCH

Dinner Show and OTI University would be much more effective for public "learning". Also, does Wildcoast just so happen to sell these types of services?

Removal of the chain link fence surrounding the property, to be replaced by a low sitting wall and/or benches constructed of recycled materials and designed by local students and artists

(Ok, so Coronado, La Jolla, and Del Mar get beautifully crafted stonework and tile structures, and we get walls made out of recycled bottles. This is another example of how the Land Mitigation Bankers are preaching us into poverty, while they get the money and control. This is clearly a heads I win, tails you lose, proposition).

Explore Capital Investment Project funds to implement the above-stated projects (Just several months ago the Chula Vista Nature Center announce that they needed \$350K, or they would quit, causing the whole South Bay to panic and send in their dollars. Instead of going out and begging for "funds" from tax payer and business-fee based programs, why don't we use our resourcefulness and entrepreneurship and use Pond 20 for economic development. This would get us off the never ending cycle of being socially and economically deprived. Turning Pond 20 into another land bank (wetlands restoration) will not help us economically, and will cost us dearly, by giving away our last opportunity to development interest to the North. The PCH Dinner Show is a local homegrown concept that will produce \$40 million per year in revenue. The OTI four-year college would bring tremendous economic and social benefits to the families of the IB Area).

We hope that the Unified Port of San Diego, and the Cities of Imperial Beach and San Diego do the right thing, to work towards protecting open space, providing public access and recreational opportunities, and to restore the wildlife habitat at Pond 20. Thank you for taking our public comments.

(This would have been a good opportunity for Wildcoast to disclose their self-serving intentions, and their collaboration with developers to the North, including Sunroad, BAE, Hornblower, and other, as described in the Sam Hall Mitigation Stakeholders Team Letter-of-Interest submitted to the Port District).