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## ATTACHMENT A: BOTANY REPORT

**Botanical Resources of the  
Oxford Basin  
Marina del Rey, Los Angeles County, California**

Prepared for:

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

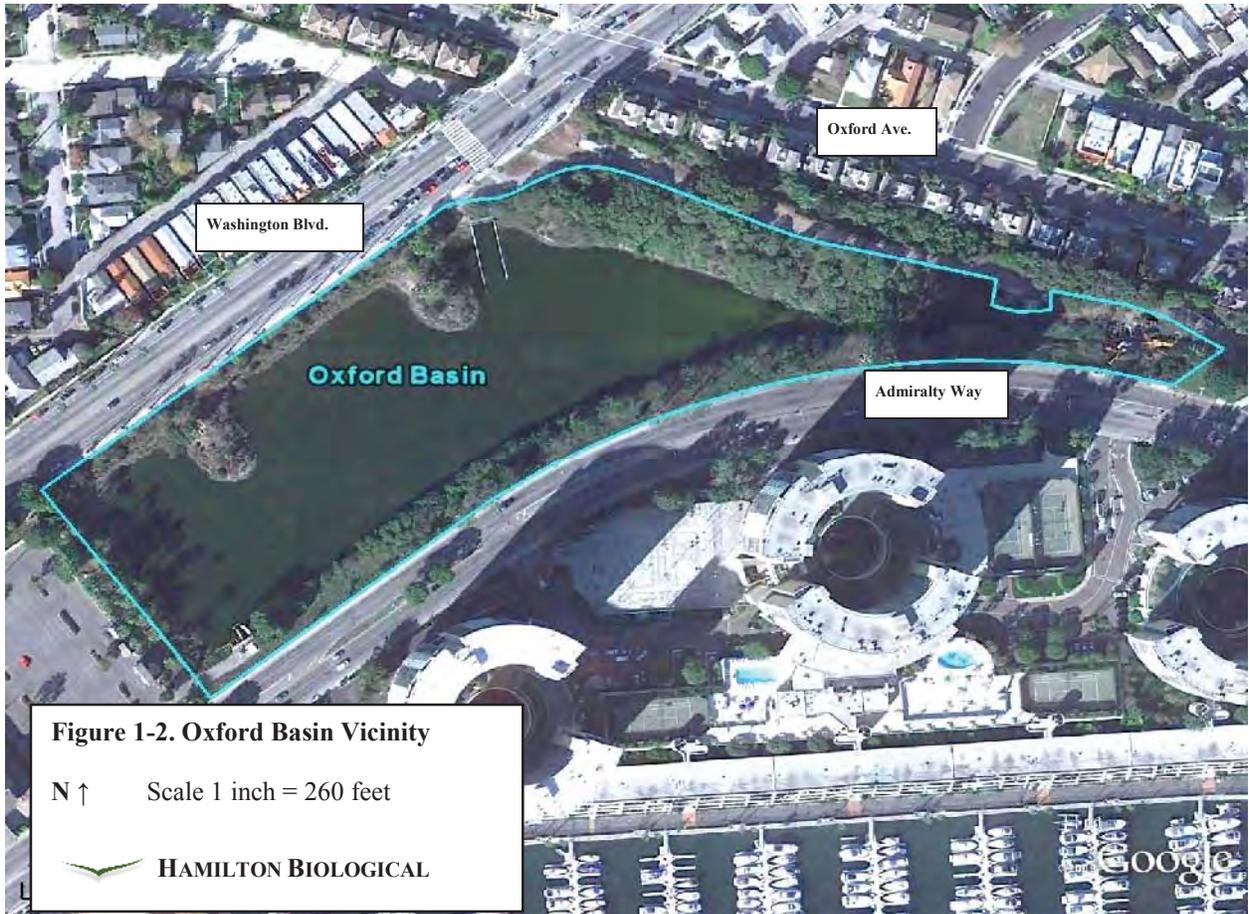
Oxford Retention Basin (Oxford Basin or Basin) is located in the Marina del Rey Harbor, Los Angeles County, California. It is located approximately 1 mile east of Venice Beach, and 600 feet north of the Marina del Rey Harbor (Figure 1-1). It is south of Washington Boulevard, north of Admiralty Way, east of an existing public parking lot, and west of Yvonne B. Burke park (Figure 1-2). The property occurs on the Venice 7.5' U.S.G.S. topographic quadrangle map and is generally located at the following UTM coordinates: 11S 03 65 584m E × 37 61 458mN. Oxford Basin occurs in an area that was historically part of the Venice Marshes (Figure 1-3).

The County of Los Angeles has proposed an enhancement project for Oxford Basin (County of Los Angeles 2009), to improve flood control, water quality, aesthetics, and passive recreation at this facility.

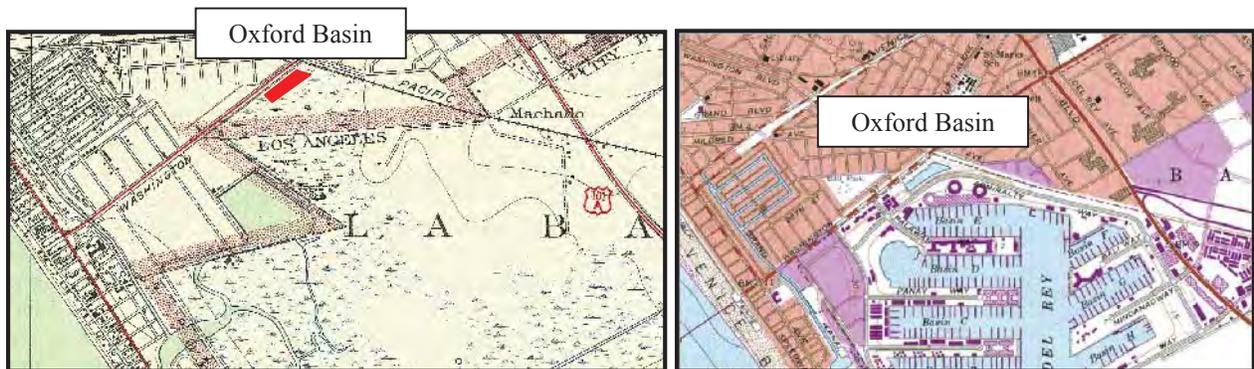
To characterize and document the existing botanical resources at Oxford Basin, a series of botanical surveys was conducted during the spring of 2010 in a study area, consisting of the Basin and a surrounding fenced-in area, which covers approximately 8.94 acres. The objectives of this study were to describe and determine the extent of each plant community and to note the plant species within this study area.



Figure 1-1. Oxford Basin is located on the northern boundary of Marina del Rey, Los Angeles County, California.



**Figure 1-2.** Oxford Basin is bounded on the north by Washington Boulevard and Oxford Avenue, and on the south by Admiralty Way.



**Figure 1-3.** Historical topography showing in red the future location of Oxford Basin in 1942 (left) and the Basin as it existed (and still exists) in 1964 (right). Source: USGS Venice 7.5' topographic quadrangles.

## 2.0 METHODS

A literature review was conducted to determine the known information on the plant communities and botanical resources in the Marina del Rey region, and to determine the known plant species of special interest documented from this area. Literature reviewed included various species lists (Frankel 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007; Mattoni 1997), environmental studies (Glenn Lukos Associates 2006), and information on plant communities (Zedler 1982). To determine the potential “special status” plant species known from the region, the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB 2010b), CNPS Inventory (2010), and the Consortium of California Herbaria (2010) were examined to note the species and when these plants had last been collected or observed.

A general tour of the project site was conducted with Robert Hamilton and other biologists evaluating Oxford Basin on 12 January 2010. Generally, only limited observations were conducted during this brief examination of the study area. Three botanical surveys were conducted during the spring of 2010. The surveys were conducted by David Bramlet, botanist, and generally consisted of walking over the project site for four or five hours. Surveys were conducted on 29 March, 22 April, and 13 May 2010. Field notes were taken on the plant species present in each community, and notes on the distribution of the communities were made on copies of an aerial photo of Oxford Basin at scale 1 inch equals 100 feet.

A wetland delineation was conducted on 12 June 2010 by D. Bramlet and R. Riefner, using the Arid West supplement (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2008) to the Corps’ 1987 wetland delineation manual (Wetland Training Institute 1991). The examination included a review of hydrology, soils and vegetation at selected areas around the Basin and determinations were made of those areas that would qualify as Corps jurisdictional wetlands and those that would qualify as wetlands under the criteria of the California Coastal Commission.

The scientific names provided in the text generally follow Roberts (2008) for native plant species and Brenzel (2007) for ornamental plant species.

## 3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

### 3.1 PLANT COMMUNITIES

Oxford Basin is generally characterized by open water, with wetland and upland communities occurring along the margins of this Basin. Mapping units or plant communities found within the Oxford Basin study area include open water, mud flats, saltmarsh, annual grassland, ornamental plantings and ruderal areas (Figures 3-1a, 3-1b). The following paragraphs describe the characteristic species in each community. Plant species observed on the project site are specified in Appendix A.

#### **Open Water (OW)**

Oxford Basin is characterized by open water that generally has a high salinity. This open water characteristically has blooms of dense mats of algae, but no vascular plants occur in the fluctuating waters of the Basin.

#### **Mud Flats (MF)**

Mud flats are exposed during normal tidal fluctuations, and are generally unvegetated, although some of the higher areas do support common woody pickleweed (*Salicornia virginica*) during the summer months. The total area of exposed mud flats can fluctuate greatly depending on management actions. In particular, Oxford Basin can be drained in anticipation of winter storms, exposing additional areas within the Basin, and the Basin can be allowed to fill with storm waters when the tidal gates are closed, leaving no mud flats exposed.

#### **Beach (Bch)**

These unvegetated areas of Oxford Basin have a similar substrate to the mud flats but are dry and generally unvegetated, as they are inundated only by the highest tides or during heavy rainfall. However, some beach areas may develop stands of common woody pickleweed during the summer months.

### **Salicornia Marsh (SM)**

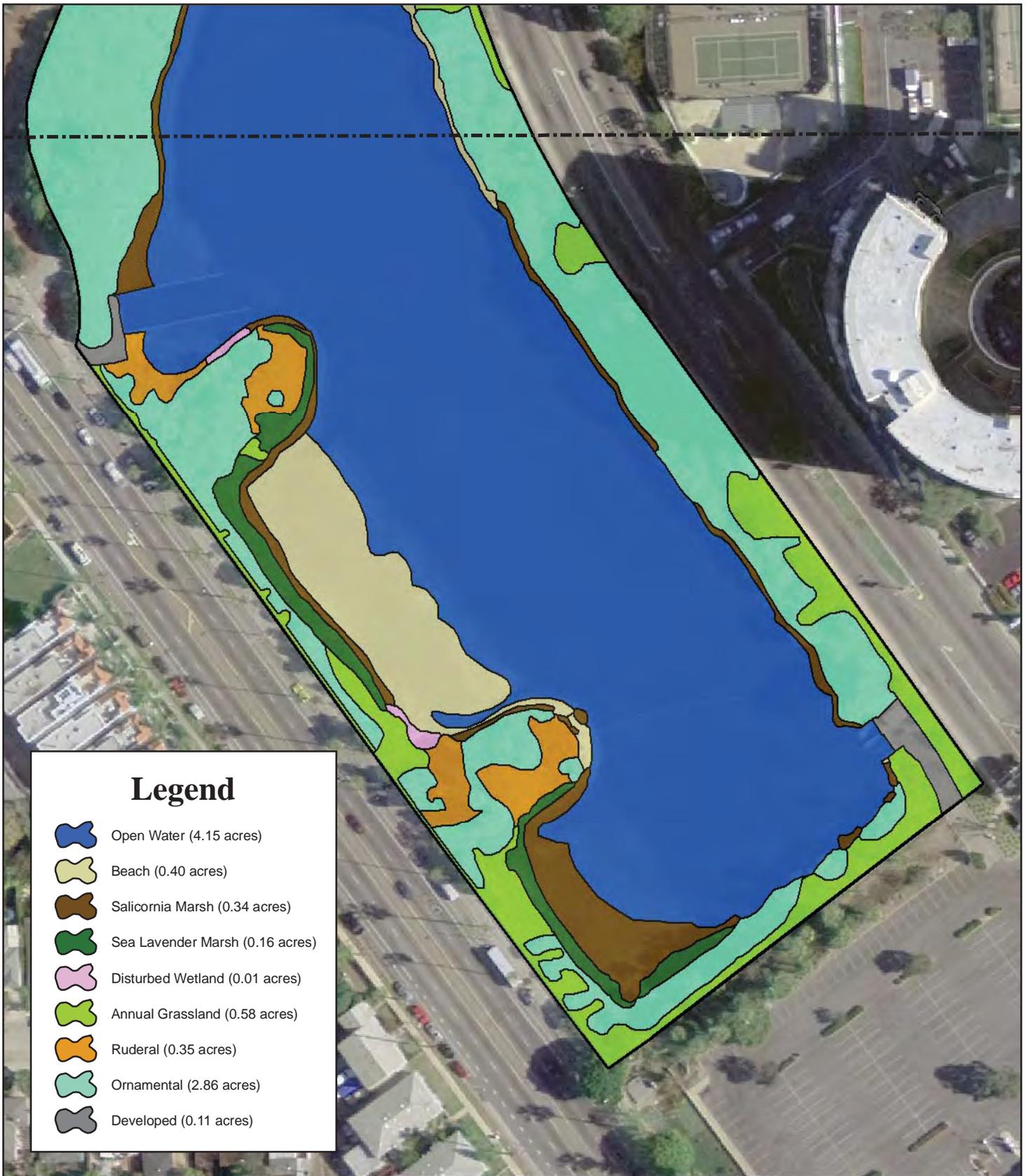
Except near the inlet area at the east end, Oxford Basin supports a “ring” of saltmarsh-like vegetation along the upper tidal edge. This vegetation generally consists of a lower stratum dominated by common woody pickleweed; other commonly found species consisted of spearscale (*Atriplex prostrata*), rabbit’s foot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), saltmarsh sand spurry (*Spergularia marina*), toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*), alkali heliotrope (*Heliotropium curassavicum*), scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), alkali weed (*Cressa truxillensis*), slender-leaved cat-tail (*Typha domingensis*), and lesser wart-cress (*Lepidium didymum*). This marsh area also included some localities with dense stands of spearscale, along with some scattered common woody pickleweed.

### **Sea Lavender Marsh (SLM)**

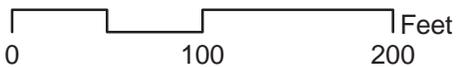
At Oxford Basin, this community occurs at a slightly higher elevation than does Salicornia Marsh. Sea Lavender Marsh is characterized by dense mounds of Perez’s sea lavender (*Limonium perezii*), and on the south side of the Basin this species occurs together with tall limonium (*Limonium arborescens*). Other species found in this community include saltmarsh sand spurry, alkali heliotrope, curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), yellow sweet clover (*Melilotus indicus*), garden beet (*Beta vulgaris*), kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), and Australian saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*).

### **Disturbed Wetland (DW)**

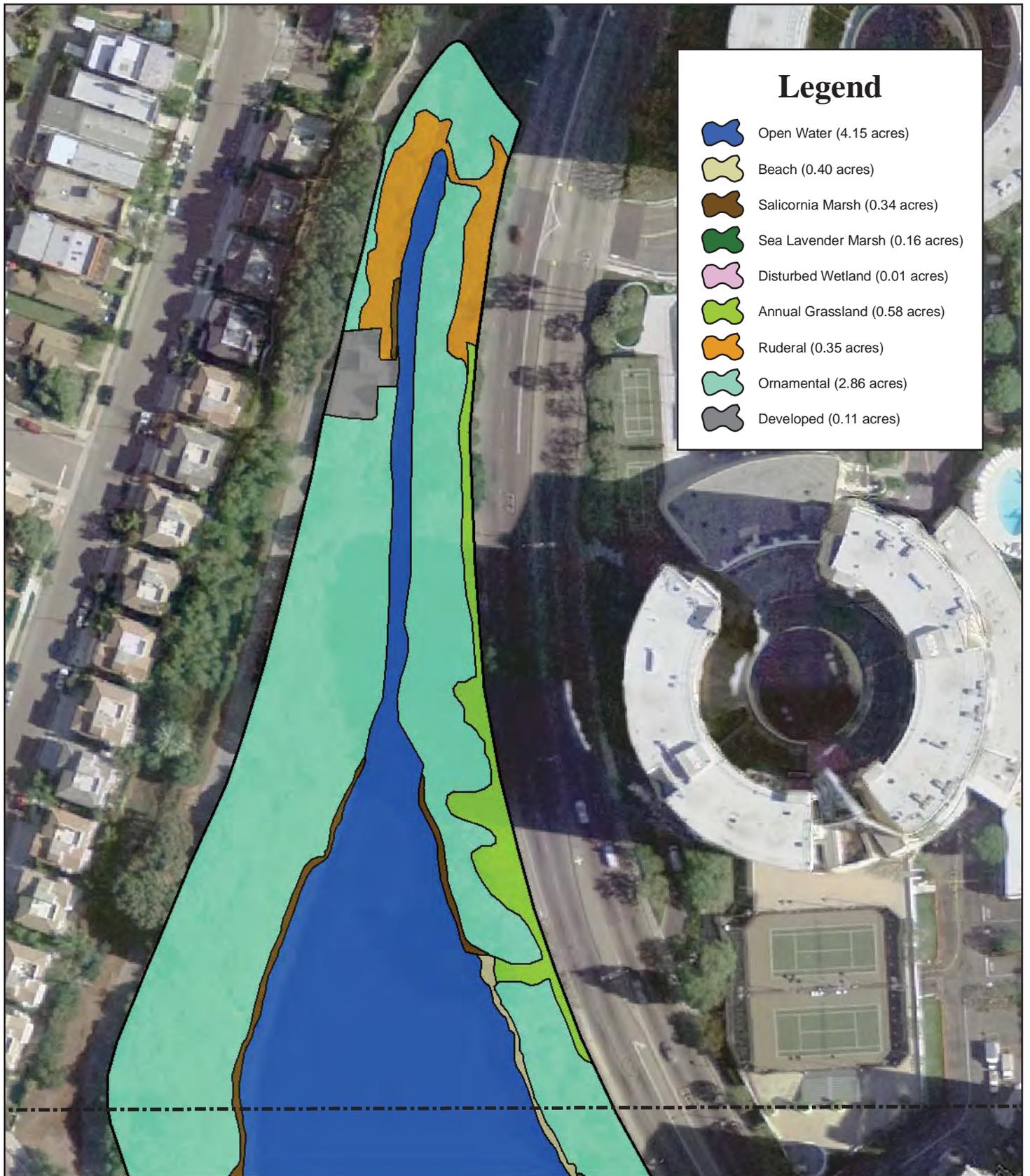
Some small areas along the margins of Oxford Basin that did not appear to be part of the saltmarsh community were classified as “disturbed wetland.” These small areas consisted of stands of rabbit’s foot grass, spearscale, Mexican tea (*Dysphania ambrosioides*), crab grass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*), Boccone’s sand spurry (*Spergularia bocconei*), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*) seedlings, annual blue grass (*Poa annua*), common purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), goose grass (*Eleusine indica*), lesser wart cress, and common stink grass (*Eragrostis cilianensis*).



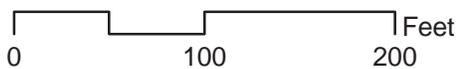
Site area: 8.94 acres



**Figure 3-1a**  
Plant Communities  
of the Oxford Basin



Site area: 8.94 acres



**Figure 3-1b**  
Plant Communities  
of the Oxford Basin

## Annual grassland (Agr)

Much of the upland areas around Oxford Basin consist of an annual grassland, often interspersed with ornamental shrubs and trees planted on the site. Commonly found grasses in this community consisted of ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*), red brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum* ssp. *leporinum*), and panic veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*). Moist sites contained Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), smilo grass (*Piptatherum miliaceum*), rabbit's foot grass, water bentgrass (*Agrostis viridis*), rescue grass (*Bromus catharticus*), and Dallis grass (*Paspalum dilatatum*). Commonly found forb species included summer mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), common horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), scarlet pimpernel, Mexican tea, lesser wart cress, Australian saltbush, cheese weed (*Malva parviflora*), white-stemmed filaree (*Erodium moschatum*), common sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), yellow sweet clover, nettle-leaved goosefoot (*Chenopodium murale*), red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), and dwarf nettle (*Urtica urens*).

## Ruderal (Ru)

Some parts of the study area contain plant species consistent with disturbed localities. Common species in the ruderal habitat consisted of foxtail barley, panic veldt grass, red brome, ripgut brome, Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), bull mallow (*Malva nicaeensis*), London rocket, serrate-leaved saltbush (*Atriplex suberecta*), garden beet, summer mustard, bristly ox-tongue (*Picris echioides*), redscale (*Atriplex rosea*), puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*), petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*), dwarf nettle, four-leaved polycarp (*Polycarpon tetraphyllum*), kikuyu grass, black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), prickly lettuce, common purslane, castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), and sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*).

## Ornamental

Ornamental tree, shrub and vine plantings generally dominate the upland areas of the Oxford Basin study area. In the eastern part of the property a myoporium "woodland" is found, characterized by dense stands of myoporium (*Myoporum laetum*), along with some planted pines (*Pinus* sp.). Other areas of the site contained scattered stands of myoporium, with Mexican fan palm, melaleuca (*Melaleuca* sp.), Brazilian pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), crimson bottle bush (*Melaleuca citrina*), Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), Indian laurel fig (*Ficus microcarpa*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), and grape vines (*Vitis* sp.). The south side of the Basin has a more open cover of myoporium and a greater diversity of ornamental plantings. Planted trees and shrubs in this locality included, pines, lemon gum (*Eucalyptus citriodora*), Catalina

cherry (*Prunus lyonii*), creeping fig (*Ficus pumila*), Brazilian pepper tree, red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Canary Island palm (*Phoenix canariensis*). Shrubs consisted of crimson bottle bush, oleander, melaleuca, firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*), and dwarf myoporum (*Myoporum parvifolium*).

### **Developed (Dev)**

The pump stations, low flow bypass structure, paved roads and concrete inflow structures were mapped as developed.

## **4.0 SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

Species of special interest, or “special status” species, are defined as those plant species of concern to the California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB 2010a), California Native Plant Society (2010), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The literature review was described previously, in the Methods section. The results of this review are provided in Table 4-1. Many of these species were historically documented, but few have any recent observations. Some of the exceptions include the recent finding of an occurrence of the Orcutt’s pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula* var. *orcuttiana*), and it is assumed that other historically known sensitive plant species still occur in this region.

Oxford Basin has very limited habitat for any of the special status plant species potentially occurring in the region. The only species with some potential for occurrence is the southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), since this species often occurs in disturbed habitats. However, this species was not observed during the field surveys and the potential for occurrence appears to be low in the highly modified habitats surrounding the Basin.

**TABLE 4-1**  
**PLANT SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST**  
**IN THE OXFORD BASIN STUDY AREA**

Species	Status		Habitat	Known Localities
	Federal, State	CNPS		
<i>Astragalus pycnostachyus</i> var. <i>lanosissimus</i> Ventura marsh milk vetch	FE, CE	List 1B.1	Coastal salt marshes	Currently known from a single locality in Ventura County, other historical localities are considered extirpated. Historically recorded from the Ballona marshes.
<i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>titi</i> Coastal dunes milkvetch		List 1B.1	Coastal dunes	Known in the region only from historic localities, including Santa Monica & Hyde Park
<i>Atriplex pacifica</i> South coast saltbush		List 1B.2	Grassland, Sage scrub, Alkali meadow	Historically recorded from Redondo & San Pedro, no recent documentation from the region
<i>Atriplex serenana</i> var. <i> davidsonii</i> Davidson's saltscale		List 1B.2	Alkali meadow	Historically recorded from Los Angeles, Cienega, no recent documentation from the region.
<i>Camissonia lewisii</i> Lewis's evening primrose		List 3	Coastal dunes & scrub	Historically recorded from Ballona, El Segundo Dunes, Ingelwood, no recent documentation from the region.
<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>australis</i> Southern tarplant		List 1B.1	Alkali meadows, grasslands	Ballona marshes, Marina del Rey, Marina del Rey Hills.
<i>Chaenactis glabriuscula</i> var. <i>orcuttiana</i> Orcutt's pincushion		List 1B.1	Coastal dunes, Coastal bluff scrub	Ballona wetlands, coastal strand, recently documented from the study region.

Species	Status		Habitat	Known Localities
	Federal, State	CNPS		
<i>Cordylanthus maritimus</i> ssp. <i>maritimus</i> Salt marsh bird's beak	FE, CE	List 1B.2	Salt marsh	Historically recorded for "Santa Monica", considered to be extirpated from this area.
<i>Hordeum intercedens</i> Vernal barley		List 3.2	Moist grasslands and alkali meadows	Historically recorded from the Ballona wetlands.
<i>Juncus acutus</i> ssp. <i>leopoldii</i> Southwestern spiny rush		List 4.2	Salt marsh, brackish marsh	No formal documentation for the occurrence of this species within the study region. However, it does occur on some compiled lists (Frankel 2006).??
<i>Lasthenia glabrata</i> ssp. <i>coulteri</i> Coulter's goldfields		List 1B.1	Alkali meadows salt marshes	Historically recorded from the Ballona wetlands, del Rey and El Segundo, no recent documentation.
<i>Nemacaulis denudata</i> var. <i>denudata</i> Coast woolly-heads		List 1B.2	Coastal dunes, margins of salt marshes	Historically reported from Los Angeles and Long Beach, no recent documentation from the region.
<i>Phacelia stellaris</i> Brand's star phacelia		List 1B.1	coastal dunes	Historically recorded from Playa del Rey, considered extirpated from this region.
<i>Potentilla multijuga</i> Ballona cinquefoil		List 1A	Salt marsh	Considered extirpated.
<i>Suaeda esteroa</i> Estuary seablite		List 1B.1	Salt marsh	Long Beach, Seal Beach, no records from the study area.
<i>Suaeda taxifolia</i> Woolly seablite		List 4.2	Salt marsh, coastal bluff	Historically reported from Playa del Rey

## STATUS CATEGORIES

### **Federal Status:**

FE - Listed as federally endangered.

FT - Listed as federally threatened.

### **State Status:**

CE - Listed as endangered by the state of California.

CT - Listed as threatened by the state of California.

### **California Native Plant Society:**

CNPS 1A- Plants presumed extinct in California.

CNPS 1B - Plants considered rare, threatened or endangered  
in California and elsewhere.

CNPS 2 - Plants rare, threatened or endangered in California but more common elsewhere.

CNPS 3 - Plants about which we need more information - A review list.

CNPS 4 - Plants of limited distribution - A watch list.

### CNPS Threat Extensions

0.1 Seriously endangered in California.

0.2 Fairly endangered in California.

0.3 Not very endangered in California .

## 4.2 COMMUNITIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Plant communities of special interest are those depleted habitats of concern to local, state and federal agencies or that are within the jurisdiction of federal state or local acts ordinances or other regulations. These include coastal wetlands, Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA), or other habitats designated as of special interest in the region. In the Oxford Basin area, sensitive habitats include waters or wetlands under jurisdiction to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Coastal Commission, and the California Department of Fish and Game. It also includes those areas designated by the County of Los Angeles as Significant Ecological Areas, including SEA No. 5 (Old SEA 29) at Ballona Creek (England and Nelson 1976, County of Los Angeles 2008), approximately 1.25 miles south of Oxford Basin. There are no designated ESHAs within Marina del Rey.

A wetland delineation was conducted within Oxford Basin (Bramlet 2010) to determine the extent of (a) Corps jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the United States and (b) wetland habitats as defined by the California Coastal Commission. Please refer to the wetland delineation report for maps and descriptions of these wetland areas.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for improving the ecological functions and values of Oxford Basin's plant communities:

- Investigate the feasibility of increasing the total area of the tidal prism at differing elevational levels. The principal function of Oxford Basin is to maintain maximum flood control capacity, and this may require a uniform upper elevational level. However, if sediment is to be removed from the Basin, the potential of having differing elevational levels within the Basin should be evaluated. This would allow for a greater diversity of native salt marsh "habitats" (e.g. mid-marsh, high marsh) and species that could potentially be introduced into the Basin.
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing vascular aquatic plant species, such as eel grass (*Zostera marina*) within the mud flats of Oxford Basin. These could be placed in artificial submerged structures, that would allow "harvesting" of the eel grass. These plants would be grown more to enhance water quality and reduce the algal blooms, than to enhance the habitat found within the mudflats. Another alternative would be to create areas of sandy habitat within the Basin, to provide substrate for this or other suitable species.
- Consider the feasibility of enhancing the salt marsh community found at Oxford Basin. This would include plans for the removal of the non-native Perez's sea lavender (*Limonium perezii*), which has low habitat value for native wildlife, and replacement with a more diverse group of native salt marsh species. Some of these species could include California marsh rosemary (*Limonium californicum*), alkali heath (*Frankenia salina*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*), shore grass (*Monanthochole littoralis*), and American saltwort (*Batis maritima*). The plan would need to determine the suitability of the existing habitats for these species, and potential procedures that could

allow for develop different marsh habitats within the Basin. Planting plans would then need to be developed with the different palettes for the salt marsh plantings, along with detailed procedures for preparing the sites for planting/seeding and long term maintenance of the marsh enhancement areas.

- Consider the development of a native plant enhancement plan for Oxford Basin. This would include a plan for the removal of the myoporium, melaleuca, and other non-native trees and shrubs from the Basin. A planting palette of suitable native trees, shrubs and grasses could then be developed for the project site. These could include laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), coyote bush (*Baccharis pilularis*), bladder pod (*Cleome isomeris*) and other suitable shrubs or trees for the project site. Perennial grasses, such as purple needle grass (*Nassella pulchra*) or giant wild rye (*Elymus condensatus*), could also be planted in the understory. The planting plan would need to include procedures for testing the soils for excess salts, and preparing these soils before planting, determining the suitable planting procedures, detailing any provisions for erosion control, such as mulches on the exposed soils, and determining the potential need for supplemental irrigation. A detailed long-term maintenance plan would also have to be developed. This would develop provisions for maintaining any irrigation systems, repairing erosion, weeding the site, and replacing dead or damaged plantings in the enhancement areas.
- Determine the native plants within Oxford Basin and a listing of non-native plant species that should be removed from the area surrounding the Basin. The botanical survey conducted for this report could not identify all of the species present within the study area, typically because the available plant materials lacked certain characters required for positive identification. Further studies would be necessary to more completely define the Basin's existing flora.

- Determine the invasive non-native plants that occur within Oxford Basin and develop a plan to remove these species. Such a plan would note the invasive plant species that are likely to cause continual problems in any native plant enhancement plantings, such as panic veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*). Procedures for the initial removal of the existing infestations and long-term maintenance measures to prevent further infestations of these species within the Basin would need to be developed in such a plan.

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