

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

# Wetlands conservationist visits Cal State Long Beach

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In honor of Earth Week, Tim Anderson, executive director of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust for Long Beach and Seal Beach, visited Cal State Long Beach Wednesday to discuss the state of California's wetlands.

While speaking to a group of students and professors, Anderson gave a slideshow presentation on the wetlands and the plans that Land Trust has to restore them.

"We'd like to restore the wetlands to their full title function," Anderson said. "But while it's one of the most restorable areas, it's also the most contaminated."

According to an informational pamphlet distributed at the discussion, "The Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust is a community-based nonprofit California corporation chartered to hold land in the public interest and is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the San Gabriel River Estuary."

The wetlands are a stretch of tidal channel surrounded by dredge-and-fill, located where the San Gabriel River meets the Pacific Ocean in Long Beach, the pamphlet stated.

According to the pamphlet, "healthy wetlands are active bio-filters protecting water quality" that scrub out toxic contaminants in order to keep it from reaching the harbors, beaches and oceans.

"Southern California's salt marsh wetlands are 5 to 10 percent more efficient in absorbing greenhouse gases than the rainforests," Anderson said. "It's amazing how well [wetlands] work."

There is a small pristine ecosystem at the center of the degraded wetlands that will serve as the springboard for complete restoration, according to the pamphlet.

In order to restore this ecosystem, the Land Trust plans to get rid of the two power plants located on the wetlands off of Studebaker Road and Loynes Drive in Long Beach, Anderson said.

"The plan is to restore the marsh areas and install solar panels over the marsh," Anderson said. "We're down to 2 percent of the land that's possible to restore, and that's a crime against people and the state."

He said the purpose of installing solar panels over the marsh is to generate energy that will be lost if the power plants are removed.

"When you take out the power plants, you've got to do something to make up the difference," Anderson said.

After his presentation, several students participated in the discussion and asked many questions pertaining to the wetlands.

"It was really great to integrate the guest speaker with classroom discussion," said Danae Werthmann, a senior environmental science and policy major and club treasurer for the Environmental Science and Policy Club. "The turnout was good and Anderson provided great insight."

Senior botany major Katie Gallagher said, "It inspires me to make a career of [conservation], not just in Southern California, but maybe all over the world."

The Environmental Science and Policy Club sponsored the discussion.

"It's great to have Earth Day and Earth Week, but it's time for Earth life," Anderson said.

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