



GREATecology

ENVIRONMENT + DESIGN

CITY OF WEST COVINA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**PROPOSAL FOR HABITAT RESTORATION EVALUATION OF THE FORMER BKK
LANDFILL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITE**

*This submittal is in response to the RFP for the 218-acre Development Opportunity Site at the
Former BKK Landfill*

Submitted To

City of West Covina

City Clerk's Office

1444 West Garvey Avenue, Ste. 317

West Covina, CA 91790

Date

April 23, 2019

Prepared By



GREATecology

ENVIRONMENT + DESIGN

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PROPOSAL FOR HABITAT RESTORATION OF THE FORMER BKK LANDFILL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITE

TEAM BACKGROUND

This section is intended to supplement PVN's RFP response, and establishes Great Ecology's qualifications and proven approach to develop a sustainable restoration solution that harmonizes with the renewable energy program for the Former BKK Landfill.

Great Ecology specializes in land use planning, delivering innovative land use strategies for public and private lands. Our interdisciplinary team of experts create comprehensive ecological solutions that are both technically-sound and aesthetically integrated into our client's vision. We provide a full range of ecological restoration services, including ecological design and planning, habitat restoration, biological assessments, and landscape architecture. In partnership with Tellurium Partners, our sister company and a mitigation banking firm, we are able to seek sources for financing for ecological restoration through the use of environmental credits, California programs such as Proposition 68, private development, or other unique and creative financial mechanisms.

Great Ecology's forte is the development of site reuse plans and strategies to optimize land value and ecological assets. With built restoration projects throughout the United States we bring an experienced and important perspective on how to approach each new project site. Driven by a deep understanding of ecological and design principles, we craft sustainable solutions that maintain natural ecosystem services, improve environmental health, meet regulatory requirements, and provide environmental stewardship. Our approach optimizes ecological functionality by bridging the gap between site analysis and implementation, balancing the ecology of the site and the long-term project needs. Great Ecology brings an in-depth knowledge and familiarity of Southern California's natural resources and regulatory environment. Ultimately, we create habitats that are viable, productive, and resilient, offering benefits to both nature and the community.

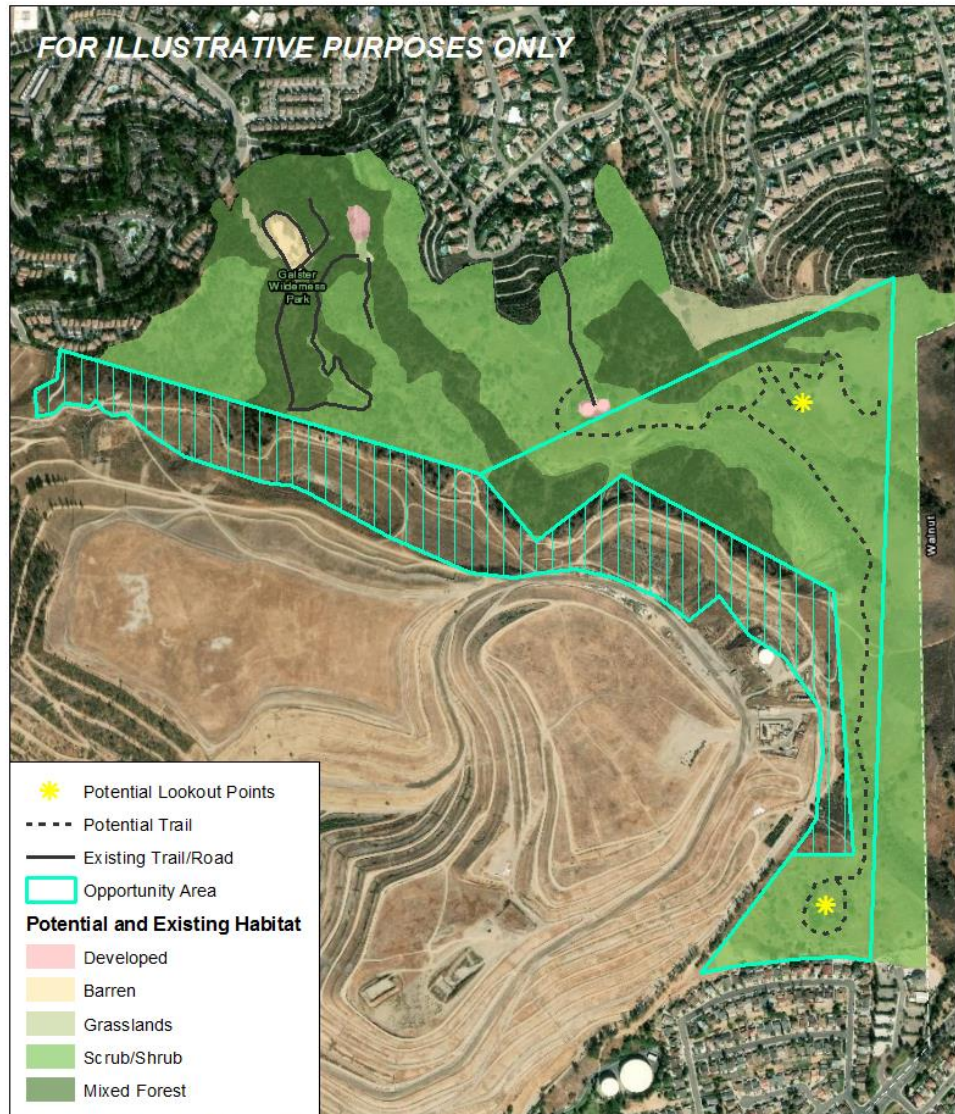
Our team is led by Dr. Mark Laska (see attached resume), who embodies the above experience and offers two decades of consulting experience in ecological restoration. He is supported by multidisciplinary staff who have worked in southern California for more than two decades and are highly experienced in native habitat and biota. Great Ecology has provided support to numerous California land owners and land managers in evaluating ecological opportunities on their properties, and the potential value of those opportunities. Great Ecology has also provided services to ensure the success of restoration projects; these include habitat stewardship, environmental restoration planning and design, permitting for conservation easements, coordination for long term endowments, and adaptive management to effectively meet habitat goals.

This proposal is for ecological evaluation, planning, conceptual design, and restoration planning of the 134-acre opportunity site (the Site). Our process to design a successful project is straightforward and assures project cost effectiveness for the City of West Covina. The Site plan may involve public access, ecological restoration, or some other potential use of combination of outcomes. Our approach consists of:

- 1. PERFORM DUE DILIGENCE:** Perform a preliminary feasibility analysis to evaluate the Site's capacity to undergo a habitat restoration project, with careful consideration of protected natural resources, planned infrastructure routes, connected open space, and other Site constraints;
- 2. CONDUCT REGIONAL ASSESSMENT:** Evaluate the likelihood of regulatory approval, based on assessment of regional plans and communication with the City, regulatory agencies, and key environmental stakeholders;

3. **IDENTIFY RESTORATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Based on the outcome of preliminary feasibility studies and stakeholder outreach, develop conceptual design alternatives for the Site, consistent with the City’s goals for the Site (including mixed-use options) and Site constraints. Figure 1 illustrates a draft conceptual graphic of one potential restoration option for the Site, which includes an array of potential habitat types, hiking trails, and lookout opportunities.
4. **DEVELOP FINAL CONCEPTUAL RESTORATION PLAN FOR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE:** Develop a detailed vision plan for the preferred alternative to guide its future redevelopment. Chosen in consultation with the City, this plan will be developed in greater depth to define and illustrate future land uses and design elements. This includes a critical factors feasibility study analysis of the preferred design and a final conceptual plan for the Site.

FIGURE 1: POTENTIAL RESTORATION OPTION FOR THE OPPORTUNITY AREA



**WEST COVINA FORMER BKK LANDFILL
POTENTIAL RESTORATION OPTION FOR OPPORTUNITY AREA**

CITY OF WEST COVINA
APRIL 2019

0 0.07 0.14 MILES

1:8,500
NAD83 California State Plane
Zone V (Feet)

We look forward to an opportunity to collaborate with the City of West Covina to identify and establish the highest and best use for the Opportunity Area associated with the Former BKK Landfill.

Thank you,



Mark S. Laska, Ph.D.
President and Principal-in-Charge
Great Ecology

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: MITIGATION & RENEWABLE ENERGY



GREAT ECOLOGY is an ecological consulting firm specializing in the permitting, design, mitigation, and enhancement of large-scale environments. We work with landowners and communities by improving challenged ecosystems to provide ecological functions that promote economic, social, and environmental welfare.

Great Ecology evaluates each project holistically to align our clients' long-term goals with site-specific permitting, restoration strategies, and designs. Our work to support mitigation and renewable energy programs includes:

- Preparing Planning Documents and Permit Applications
- Stakeholder Outreach
- Determining Mitigation Requirements
- Developing Mitigation Compliance Strategy
- Post-Construction Monitoring
- Site Surveys Including: Bird, Fish, Animal, Benthic, Vegetation, & Aerial Digital

WHAT WE DO



Project: Valley Center Solar Facility Permitting Plan

Client: Summit Renewables

- Solar photovoltaic site on 139 acres in Valley Center, CA
- Key project contributions:
 - Evaluation & planning of permitting pathway
 - Preliminary CEQA Initial Study
 - Strategic coordination with San Diego County
 - Analysis of potential significant environmental impact
 - Stakeholder engagement plan to streamline permitting



Project: CleanPower Solar Evaluation and Permitting

Client: Bamburgh Consulting

- Utility-scale solar photovoltaic facility in Lancaster, CA
- Key project contributions:
 - Identification of project opportunities and constraints
 - Permitting plan, cost assessment, and regulatory analysis
 - Streamlining strategies to reduce costs associated with CEQA and Conditional Use Permit processes



Project: Sonoma Solar Facility Permitting Plan

Client: Mechatron

- Solar photovoltaic site on 55 acres in Santa Rosa, CA
- Key project contributions:
 - Assessment of ecological site constraints
 - Evaluation and planning for Major Use Permit pathway
 - Strategic coordination with Sonoma County
 - Management of integrated project team

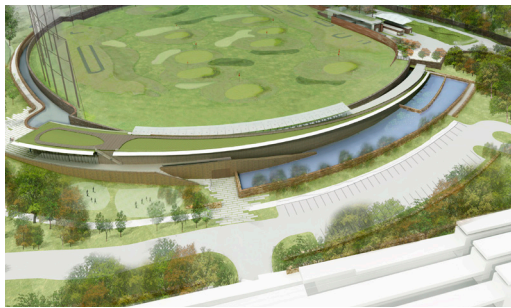
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Bringing higher ecological thinking to leading corporations and governments throughout the world.

WHAT WE DO

- Land Use / Environmental Planning & Permitting
- Wetland Delineation & Permitting
- Ecological Design & Planning
- Litigation Support & Expert Witness Testimony
- Financial Assessment
- Mitigation Banking
- Natural Resource Damage (NRD) Strategy
- Public Outreach & Engagement



Project: Croton Water Filtration Plant Wetland Design **Client: NYC DEP & DPR**

- NYC's largest public infrastructure project, which includes constructed wetland habitat
- Key project contributions:
 - Constructed wetland design to complement surroundings
 - Water quality improvements via stormwater retention and recycling for onsite irrigation



Project: Woodbridge Waterfront Park Restoration **Client: EPEC Polymers Inc.**

- Multi-year 185-acre brownfield site restoration
- Key project contributions:
 - Mitigation evaluation, planning, permitting, implementation & construction oversight
 - 100+ acres of wetland creation and restoration
 - Renewed public access for surrounding region
 - Biological surveys



Project: Central California Coast Restoration Planning **Client: Confidential Energy Client**

- Beneficial site reuse of multiple degraded surplus and buffer properties
- Key project contributions:
 - Site assessment
 - Review of market and regulatory drivers
 - Development of restoration planning and design
 - Site vision planning and modeling



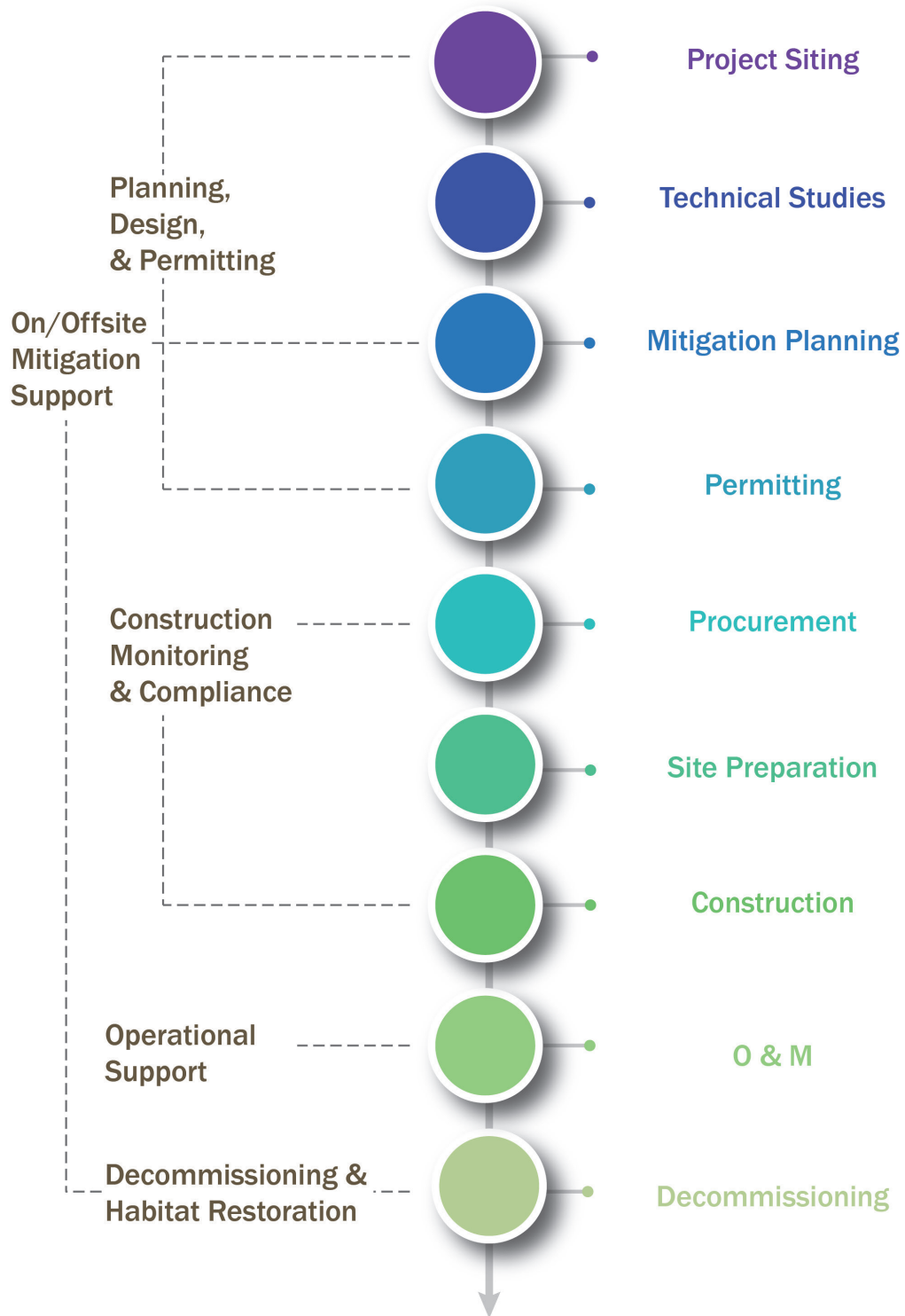
Project: Mitigation Strategy & Permitting Technical Assistance **Client: Midas Gold**

- Gold mining project in Central Idaho, with significant project impacts to streams, wetlands and wildlife
- Key project contributions:
 - Permitting assistance & regulatory compliance support
 - Onsite and offsite mitigation analysis
 - Functional stream and wetland assessments
 - Flora and fauna surveys

PROJECT PROCESS

Great Ecology's Services

Client's Project Management



WHO WE ARE



Mark Laska, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT & FOUNDER

Dr. Mark Laska has built his professional career and firm, Great Ecology, by developing creative and strategic solutions to complex environmental issues. He specializes in energy sector restoration, mitigation banking, natural resource management, and strategic site use planning. With over 25 years as an expert technical consultant with national and global projects, Dr. Laska's experience provides a unique perspective on how to approach complicated projects with multiple stakeholders. Dr. Laska advocates and applies an innovative ecological approach to address challenges and appease regulators while maximizing ecological function. He holds a Doctorate in Ecology and Evolution from Rutgers University.



Jill McGrady, Ph.D.

SENIOR ECOLOGIST

Dr. Jill McGrady has over 15 years of experience in the fields of habitat restoration, ecology, and ecosystem studies. Dr. McGrady oversees a number of the firm's California-based restoration, renewable energy, and mitigation projects. She specializes in restoration evaluation, planning and development of Natural Resource Damage (NRD) strategy following environmental impacts from contamination events. She has multiple publications in academic journals and holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Allegheny College, a Master's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Purdue University, and a Doctorate in Ecology and Evolution from Rutgers University.



Damian Holynskij, AICP, LEED GA, CPHC

REGIONAL DIRECTOR, EASTERN

Damian has over thirteen years of experience as an ecologist and environmental land planner in both the public and private sector. He has dedicated much of his career to developing practical and feasible cost-effective solutions that at a minimum reduce the detrimental effects of the built environment on local ecology, but ideally create healthier and more resilient landscapes. Damian has extensive experience in procuring funding for and managing the design and approvals of large-scale ecological restoration projects throughout the mid-Atlantic, as well as managing the design, approvals, and marketing for numerous mitigation banks. Mitigation credits sold from these mitigation banks can be used to offset impacts to regulated resources, such as wetlands, streams, and land within the riparian zone.



Chris Loftus, PLA, ASLA, SITES AP

SENIOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Chris Loftus is a Professional Landscape Architect with 15 years of professional design experience. His past project experience includes planning and design of parks, trails, and open space; green infrastructure design; brownfield redevelopment and design; and ecological restoration planning and design, including wetland, riparian, and upland habitat restoration. He collaborates with ecologists, planners, engineers, and other landscape architects to provide nature-driven design solutions that balance ecological functionality with social and cultural amenities. Chris holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon and a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture from Colorado State University. He is a licensed landscape architect in California (#6259) and is a CLARB Certified landscape architect. Chris is a SITES Accredited Professional (SITES AP).

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Dr. Mark Laska has built his professional career and firm, Great Ecology, by developing creative and strategic solutions to complex environmental issues in urban environments, including vacant lots, degraded lands, and surplus properties with high potential for improved ecological function and urban regeneration. He specializes in habitat restoration and enhancement, redevelopment, strategic site use planning, ecological planning, renewable energy site development, and mitigation banking. Dr. Laska's innovative approach addresses ecological challenges and regulations while maximizing ecosystem services, including at multi-use sites in highly urban areas. He has performed work throughout the United States as well as Canada, the Philippines, and elsewhere.

Dr. Laska has more than 25 years of experience taking projects from the conceptual stage through monitoring and management, including planning, design, evaluation, construction, and post-construction monitoring. He is the co-founder of Ecology Landwatch, a company which offers real-time, cloud-based site monitoring for landowners and land managers. Dr. Laska holds a Doctorate in Ecology and Evolution from Rutgers University.

SELECT HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

VALLEY CENTER SOLAR FACILITY PERMITTING PLAN, San Diego, CA

As Principal-in-Charge, Dr. Laska oversaw Great Ecology's work to prepare a permitting plan for a proposed solar photovoltaic site on 139 acres of land in San Diego, California. The intent of the permitting plan is to provide the detailed steps and potential cost estimates to receive all the necessary land use and environmental permits required to entitle the land for a solar development. Great Ecology prepared a preliminary initial study of the subject areas covered under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to identify opportunities and constraints for the project design and engineering process. Using this information, Great Ecology and the client consulted with the CEQA lead agency and land use permitting authority to identify the pathway to line of sight for the project. Great Ecology's permitting plan described the technical reports and other regulatory permits that are required to support a County-driven CEQA analysis for the site in line with the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements. Additionally, to garner support and streamline the permitting process, Great Ecology included a stakeholder engagement strategy as a component of the permitting plan.

CLEAN POWER SOLAR, Lancaster, CA

Overseen by Principal-in-Charge, Dr. Marka Laska, Great Ecology prepared a permitting plan for a proposed solar photovoltaic site (the Site) in Lancaster, California. Great Ecology garnered an initial understanding of the Site based on the Preliminary Systems Summary and a site visit with the Client and PV AMPS (the Team). Great Ecology conducted additional analysis to identify the complete set of regulatory constraints on the Site and opportunities to leverage resources from external sources to streamline the permitting process. With this information, Great Ecology drafted permitting plan with the steps necessary to achieve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a ground-mounted utility scale solar photovoltaic facility at the Site. The ultimate goal is to provide the detailed permitting pathway to line of sight for the Project, including a list of the technical and regulatory work and associated costs to advance the Project to construction.

EXPERTISE

Habitat Restoration
Wetland Ecology
Ecological Design & Planning
Renewable Energy Planning
Mitigation Banking
Natural Resource Management

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Ecology, Rutgers University
M.S. Ecology, Fordham University
B.S. Biological Sciences, University of Colorado

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Ecological Society of America
Ecological Restoration NA
Society of Wetland Scientists
Society for Ecological Restoration

SONOMA SOLAR FACILITY PERMITTING PLAN, Santa Rosa, CA

Dr. Laska led Great Ecology's development of a solar facility permitting plan for a 55-acre site in Santa Rosa, CA. Contracted work included assessment of ecological site constraints, evaluation and planning for a Major Use Permit pathway, strategic cooperation with Sonoma County, and management of an integrated project team.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MITIGATION EVALUATION, San Diego, CA

Dr. Laska led Great Ecology's initial mitigation credit marketplace analysis to support informed investment decisions regarding the viability of establishing a mitigation bank in the San Diego region. Dr. Laska and staff identified existing mitigation banks, credit availability, and credit costs to evaluate the current market supply. Planned infrastructure and development projects as well as growth projections for the region informed potential mitigation bank sites and future market analysis. In addition, Great Ecology identified the priority habitat types for conservation, including aquatic resources such as marine eelgrass, vernal pools, tidal wetlands, upland streams, and riparian areas to inform potential mitigation areas. Great Ecology detailed guidelines next steps for further due diligence and marketplace analysis.

LAKE SAN MARCOS BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS & RESTORATION EVALUATIONS, San Marcos, CA

As the Principal-in-Charge, Dr. Laska oversees Great Ecology's biological investigations of Lake San Marcos, a nutrient-impaired water body in Southern California. Great Ecology is implementing an approved monitoring plan, which includes collecting water quality data, conducting bathymetry and sediment quality studies, and evaluating watershed hydrology and nutrient sources. In addition, Great Ecology is using various approaches to evaluate the phytoplankton community, fish populations, and the potential for toxic algal blooms. Data collected by Great ecology will be used to create a lake management strategy to address both water and nutrient-associated issues.

LA JOLLA WHALE VIEW POINT ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION CONCEPTUAL PLAN, La Jolla, CA

Dr. Laska oversaw Great Ecology's conceptual restoration plans for three key areas along the coast of La Jolla's Whale View Point Park. This effort was for the non-profit La Jolla Parks and Beaches (LJPB) explores on-site urban stormwater capture and management, coastal erosion, public access, and interpretive signage. Great Ecology prepared a suite of design alternatives, focusing on green infrastructure strategies, to be further developed with grant funding. Great Ecology also prepared a visually engaging marketing package for LJPB to generate interest in the project and solicit funding from private donors and public agencies.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

DEL MAR FAIRGROUNDS SOUTH OVERFLOW PARKING LOT ECOLOGICAL PLANNING AND RESTORATION, *Del Mar, CA, USA*

MOOSA CREEK MITIGATION BANK, STRATEGIC ECOLOGICAL PLANNING, AND RESTORATION DESIGN, *San Diego, CA, USA*

CROTON WATER FILTRATION PLANT CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS DESIGN, *New York, NY, USA*

GULF COAST NRD/RESTORATION PLANNING – EXPERT WITNESS, *Gulf Coast, USA*