Guide to the Ray E. Williams Files on Newport Bay Environmental Issues
MS.R.108

Finding aid prepared by Christine Kim
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Title: Ray E. Williams files on Newport Bay environmental issues
Identifier/Call Number: MS.R.108
Contributing Institution: Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine Libraries
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 3.3 linear feet (8 boxes and one XOS folder)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1968-1988
Date (inclusive): 1942-2003
Abstract: This collection comprises the papers of Ray E. Williams, an environmental and political activist in Newport Beach, California. The collection documents Williams's efforts as president of the board of Friends of Newport Bay (1973-1976), as well as his work as a member of the Newport Beach City Council (1976-1980), to preserve the Upper Newport Bay's wildlife and natural environment. The collection includes correspondence, reports, maps, meeting minutes, newsletters, clippings, analyses, speeches, and teaching materials.
Creator: Williams, Ray E.
Access
The collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
For the benefit of current and future researchers, please cite any additional information about sources consulted in this collection, including permanent URLs, item or folder descriptions, and box/folder locations.
Acquisition Information
Processing History
Processed by Christine Kim, 2010.
Historical Background
Ray E. Williams is an environmental activist in Newport Beach, a city in Orange County, California. He was a member of the Friends of Newport Bay, serving as president from 1973 to 1976, and was a member of the Newport Beach City Council from 1976 to 1980. He also taught at California High School in Whittier for 12 years and then joined the faculty at Rio Hondo College as an environmental biologist. He worked to preserve Upper Newport Bay's wildlife and natural environment, eventually becoming involved in the creation of the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve, which was established in 1975.
Williams was born in Los Angeles, California in 1933. His father was the librarian at Whittier High School and the family relocated to Newport Beach each summer, living in a tent camp on 19th Street for a few weeks up to two months from about 1938 to 1942. He lived in Newport Beach as an adult from 1969 to 1981.
Williams took an evening class at UC Irvine in 1969 after he had started teaching at Rio Hondo College. The class, aimed at teachers, was about Orange County environmental problems and issues. Williams worked with a group on a class project that focused on the Upper Newport Bay, also known as the Back Bay. He attended a tour of the Back Bay with Bob Fry, a Newport Harbor High School teacher, as tour leader. Williams got involved after the tour and was heavily involved with the organization for the next 10 years.
Williams' main involvement in Friends of Newport Bay began in 1973, following successful efforts by local activists to save the Upper Newport Bay from development by halting a land exchange between Orange County and the Irvine Company. The organization was asked what they wanted for the future of the Back Bay, and environmental activists Frank and Frances Robinson led a group of about a dozen citizens to prepare a plan for a park reserve, for which Williams was a spokesperson. The Friends of Newport Bay was founded in 1967, later renamed Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends after merging with the Upper Newport Bay Naturalists in 2000, then the Newport Bay Conservancy in 2010.
Williams got involved in Newport Beach politics through an appointment to the Newport Beach Planning Commission, after which he was elected to the Newport Beach City Council. The major issues during his years on the city council were a senior citizens center and efforts to slow growth. From 1978 to 1980, Williams and other environmentalists led the Newport Beach City Council with a five to two majority. Williams served as mayor pro tem from 1978 to 1980. In the 1980 election,
Williams and Mayor Paul Ryckoff, the two incumbents, were defeated by a three to one margin.

Williams retired from full-time teaching at Rio Honda College in May 2006, continuing to teach part-time thereafter. He retired as a guide for monthly Back Bay tours in 2006. He was elected to the Board of Directors of the Newport Bay Conservancy in 2011.

**Collection Scope and Content Summary**

This collection comprises the files of Ray E. Williams, an environmental and political activist in Newport Beach, California. Materials were largely created and compiled while Williams was president of Friends of Newport Bay (1973-1976) and while he was a member of the Newport Beach City Council (1976-1980). These files reflect his involvement in the preservation of the Upper Newport Bay’s wildlife and natural environment, including his efforts toward the creation of the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve. Forms of materials include correspondence, reports, maps, meeting minutes, newsletters, clippings, analyses, speeches, and teaching materials.

**Collection Arrangement**

This collection is arranged in 3 series:

- **Series 1. Friends of Newport Bay files, 1942-2003, 1.2 linear feet**
- **Series 2. Newport Beach City Council files, 1973-1981, 1.5 linear feet**
- **Series 3. Reports and other materials, 1971-2003, 0.6 linear feet**

**Related Collections**

Related materials can be found in the following collection: Collection on Upper Newport Bay. MS-R94. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Friends of Newport Bay. -- Archives
Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends. -- Archives
Newport Beach (Calif.). City Council.
Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve (Calif.) -- Archives.
Williams, Ray E. -- Archives
Activists -- California -- Orange County.
Ecological reserves -- California -- Upper Newport Bay
Land use -- California -- Upper Newport Bay
Land use -- Environmental aspects -- California -- Orange County
Newport Bay (Calif.) -- Archives.
Newport Bay (Calif.) -- Environmental conditions -- 20th century
Newport Beach (Calif.) -- History -- 20th century -- Sources
Public lands -- California -- Upper Newport Bay -- History -- Sources
Wetland conservation -- California -- Upper Newport Bay


- Physical Description: 1.2 Linear feet
- Series Scope and Content Summary
  
  This series contains materials generated by the Friends of Newport Bay, including correspondence, meeting agendas and minutes, publications, and newspaper clippings. The bulk of the materials were created while Ray Williams was president of the Friends of Newport Bay.

- Arrangement
  
  This series is arranged alphabetically by topic or material type.

**Back Bay Trunk Sewer: reports and other materials**

- Maps of proposed trunk sewer, 1977 February 14
- Reports, correspondence, and other materials, 1976-1978
- Birds in Newport Bay list, undated
### Compiled materials

**Scope and Content Summary**
Includes writings, advertisements about local ecological issues, and analyses.

**Note**
During processing, clippings were photocopied for preservation. Originals were discarded.

**Arrangement**
Materials were compiled by Williams in a notebook, the order of which was retained during processing.

### Physical Description:
1.5 Linear feet

### Series Scope and Content Summary
This series documents Ray Williams's work on the Newport Beach City Council, and contains newspaper clippings, correspondence, reports, and other materials. Also included are the planning papers of several city development projects, as well as election documents.

### Arrangement
This series is arranged alphabetically by topic or material type.
Box 4, Folder 1-10  Clippings, political advertisements, and analyses, 1976-1983  
Note  
During processing, clippings were photocopied for preservation. Originals were discarded.

Box 4, Folder 11  The Irvine Company v. The City of Newport Beach lawsuit: correspondence, 1980 February

Box 5, Folder 1  Legal research: reports, journal articles, and statutes, 1973-1976

Folder XOS 01  Maps of Pacific Coast Highway bridge plans, 1973-1974

Box 5, Folder 2-5  Correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, and related materials, 1974-1975


Box 5, Folder 7-9  Section 208: Water conservation project materials, 1976-1980

Box 6, Folder 1  Scope and Content Summary  
Contains correspondence, work plans, progress reports, newsletters, clippings, and meeting materials.

Box 6, Folder 2  Speech drafts, clippings, and other materials, 1974-1976

Box 6, Folder 3  University Drive extension: correspondence, reports, and other materials, 1975-1981

Folder XOS 01  Maps of proposed Back Bay trunk sewer, 1976

Box 6, Folder 4-6  Correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, and other materials, 1973-1977, undated

Physical Description: 0.6 Linear feet  
Series Scope and Content Summary  
This series comprises reports, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, settlement agreements, writings, and other materials on Newport Bay compiled by Williams.

Arrangement  
This series is arranged alphabetically by report title, topic or material type.

Box 6, Folder 7  At the Crossroads: A Report on California’s Endangered and Rare Fish and Wildlife, 1972 January

Box 6, Folder 8  Back Bay Trunk Sewer: Summary of Project and Conditions report, 1977 August

Box 6, Folder 9  Chronology of events in Newport Bay from 1901 to 1998, undated

Box 6, Folder 10  City and School Politics manuscript, undated

Box 6, Folder 11  Determination of the Age of the Islands in Upper Newport Bay report, 1974 February  
Scope and Content Summary  
Report was written by Royal R. Marshall, a consulting geochemist.

Box 6, Folder 12  Development and Comparison of Alternative Management Systems report, 1982 August

Box 7, Folder 1  Important Fish & Wildlife Habitats of California report, 1980 September

Box 7, Folder 2  Newport Bay Tour student report, 1981  
Scope and Content Summary  
A school assignment on Newport Bay. Includes labeled photographs of plants, birds, and the Upper Newport Bay landscape.

Processing Note  
In order to comply with privacy laws governing student records, the report’s title page was copied to redact the student author’s name. The original title page was removed from the collection.

Box 7, Folder 3  Newport Beach Annual Report, 1974-1975

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| Box 7, Folder 4 | **Photographs, circa 1978-1980**  
Scope and Content Summary  
One photograph of Paul Ryckoff, mayor of Newport Beach (1978-1980), and three photographs of a Friends of Newport Bay event. |
| Box 7, Folder 5 | **Political figures of the 1970s in Newport Beach list, 2003, undated**  
**Preliminary Title Report of the Three Islands in Upper Newport Bay, 1974 June**  
Scope and Content Summary  
Contains a preliminary attorney's opinion, and includes maps, a list of pertinent case laws, an introductory letter, findings of fact and conclusions of law, a recapitulation of the report, a list of exhibits, and a bibliography. |
| Box 7, Folder 8 | **Sedimentation Analysis report, 1982 July**  
**Sediment Source Analysis and Sediment Delivery Analysis report**  
**Maps of Upper Newport Bay watershed and drainage areas, 1982**  
**Report, 1982 October**  
**Silt Removal: Upper Newport Bay report, 1973 November**  
**Speeches, letters to the editor, and other materials, 1980-1986**  
Scope and Content Summary  
Also includes campaign materials, notes, and clippings. |
| Box 8, Folder 1 | **Study of Environmental Quality of Newport Bay report, 1972 September**  
**Upper Newport Bay Cooperative Planning Project report, 1971 November**  
**Upper Newport Bay settlement agreement, 1975**  
Scope and Content Summary  
Land transfer to the County of Orange and the City of Newport Beach, by the Irvine Company. Also includes an agreement to create an ecological reserve in Upper Newport Bay. |
| Box 8, Folder 5 | **Upper Newport Bay Teacher Workshop materials, 1996**  
**Writings: notes and drafts, 1978-1980**  
Scope and Content Summary  
May include notes from city council meetings. |