

Frequently Asked Questions

Removal of the artificial surfing reef in El Segundo, CA

Why did you install the artificial surfing reef?

The reef was built as mitigation for lost surfing resources when Chevron built the groin at the El Segundo Refinery and surfing in the area was adversely impacted (a determination made by the California Coastal Commission).

Why are you removing the artificial surfing reef?

The experimental reef was permitted for a 10-year period ending in 2010. Because it has not improved surf quality and has begun to deteriorate, we believe that its removal is consistent with our mission to protect the world's ocean, waves and beaches.

Despite the disappointing outcome with respect to surf enhancement, the project has succeeded in highlighting the need for protection of existing surf breaks. This project helped the California Coastal Commission recognize surfing breaks as natural recreational resources that are worthy of protection.

Why didn't the artificial surfing reef work to produce surfing waves?

The reef was too small to effectively influence wave breaking along the dynamic shoreline at El Segundo, CA. The natural sand bars that form along that stretch of coast have a larger impact on wave breaking than the reef.

Why not leave the reef in place?

The reef was an experiment that employed unproven design concepts and geotextile technology. We believe that removing this artificial structure from the ocean is the right thing to do and is consistent with our mission to protect the world's oceans, waves and beaches.

The reef was constructed using almost 200 geotextile bags filled with beach-quality sand. The bags are made of two different types of materials: a white polyester fabric that is negatively buoyant and a black polypropylene fabric that is positively buoyant. Some of the bags are damaged and some are beginning to decompose so we want to remove this synthetic material before it is discharged into the marine environment.

Do you have permission to do the removal?

The project to remove the reef requires permits from the following four regulatory agencies: the California Coastal Commission, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the City of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department, and the US

Army Corps of the Engineers. All of the necessary permits from these agencies have been approved.

Who is doing the removal?

The removal project is being directed by Coastal Frontiers Corporation, an LA-based coastal engineering firm with extensive experience in the installation and removal of geotextile containers in the marine environment. A professional dive crew from American Marine Corporation will conduct the underwater portion of the removal process, while personnel from Morrissey Construction Company will bring the bags ashore and assure their proper disposal.

How much is the removal going to cost?

Removal of the reef will cost approximately \$300,000. No membership dues will be used to pay for the project removal. The removal was paid for by a private donation.

Here's what we expect to happen at the beach during the removal process?

The dive team, operating from a support vessel, will attach a stout cable from the bulldozer to one bag at a time using a net, sling, or combination thereof. The bulldozer then will pull the bag ashore. Depending on the condition of the bag, it may arrive at the shoreline filled with sand, partly empty, or in pieces. In any event, an excavator will empty whatever sand remains in the bag fabric onto the beach. The fabric will be stored in a fenced enclosure on the back beach before it is trucked to a landfill.

To minimize the impact of the removal activities on marine life and beachgoers, monitors will patrol to beach to collect loose fabric and other debris that may escape from the reef, and the shore-based construction equipment will be parked in the fenced enclosure when not in use. The long-term objective will be to exert no deleterious or lasting impact on the beach and nearshore area while removing the threat of fabric discharge into the marine environment.

Who should I contact with additional questions?

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