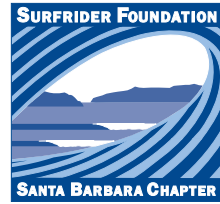


Surfrider Foundation Santa Barbara Chapter

Comments on Coastal Commission Permit Amendment

May 17, 2016



The Santa Barbara Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation opposes any amendments to Coastal Commission Permit #4-14-0687 for the retention of the rock revetment at Goleta Beach Park.

One year ago, Santa Barbara County presented to the Coastal Commission an application to retain the rock revetment at Goleta Beach Park. The centerpiece of this application was an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared by AMEC Foster Wheeler. On the basis of computer and other modeling, the EIR, which cost Santa Barbara County taxpayers more than a quarter million dollars, claimed that there would be no significant exposure of the revetment prior to the year 2050. If some exposure were to occur, the EIR claimed, the revetment would quickly be recovered by natural processes. On the basis of these claims, the EIR dismissed significant visual, access, safety, and coastal process impacts of the revetment.

Since that time, exposure of the revetment has only grown. For the entire winter season, the beach was fronted by unsightly orange plastic fencing with "No Trespassing" signs. Public access to the sand, both vertical and lateral, was severely impeded by the revetment, which was for most of this period exposed along its entire length. Contrary to further claims in the EIR, the revetment did not prevent destruction of a substantial portion of the park lawn. Since last summer, approximately 175 feet of spawning habitat for the California Grunion has been lost to revetment exposure. Today about 2/3 of the revetment is covered by artificially-placed sand, no natural accretion having occurred.

The County has spent more than a million dollars in consulting fees, staff time, and "emergency" sand relocation on Goleta Beach in the last 18 months. County staff are now proposing to make permanent temporary rock fill and several hundred feet of unpermitted rock and plastic armor installed on the beach.

More coastal armoring is not the solution to erosion problems at Goleta Beach. As the pitiful failure of AMEC's 35-year prediction shows, the ocean will destroy the beach in front of a revetment, and heavy wave activity will adversely impact the lawn with or without the revetment. What Goleta Beach needs is a carefully thought-out adaptive management plan that avoids further hard armoring and does not cause the kind of significant unmitigable impacts that we can now see are inevitable with a rock revetment. We need to stop wasting money on AMEC's nonsense predictions and protect the coastal environment at Goleta Beach Park.

Any further actions at Goleta Beach should be preceded by a proper CEQA analysis that corrects the blatant falsehoods in last year's EIR.



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