

# SAN DIEGO REGIONAL BEACH SAND PROJECT FACT SHEET

## Restoring a priceless resource

Sun, sand, and surf are images San Diegans and people around the world think of when they hear names like Oceanside, Carlsbad, Moonlight Beach, Fletcher Cove, Torrey Pines, and Imperial Beach. But the image quickly fades when residents and visitors alike discover that sand is missing from many of the region's beaches.

That's one of the reasons why residents and community leaders from coastal areas and inland neighborhoods are again making a concerted effort to place sand onto the critically eroded beaches along the region's shoreline.

In 2001, the SANDAG Regional Beach Sand Project (RBSP) dredged 2.1 million cubic yards of clean, beach quality sand from offshore and placed it on 12 eroded beaches from Imperial Beach to Oceanside.

In summer 2012, the second RBSP will again widen beaches from Imperial Beach to Oceanside by adding over a million cubic yards of clean sand to eroded shorelines. It is the second major public works effort being coordinated by local governments, working together through SANDAG.

## Why beach nourishment?

The region's beaches have been steadily eroding for the past 20 years. Sand that once flowed down rivers to preserve our beaches is no longer making that trip because of the development throughout the region, and water supply and flood control projects needed to support that development.



Oceanside at present

Some beaches are stripped of sand and during the next few decades, most of our beaches will be too narrow to enjoy unless positive action is taken, starting now.

The RBSP will benefit the region's environment and economy and, most of all, its overall quality of life. As the beaches continue to erode and become increasingly narrow, recreational opportunities are restricted. A unique and highly valued environment disappears. The important visitor industry component of the local, state, and national economies is constrained. In addition, infrastructure is subject to increased damage from storms.

There are choices when it comes to protecting and restoring the region's coastline. Should we enhance the shoreline by restoring and maintaining wide sandy beaches, or armor it with heavy duty steel, rock, and concrete seawalls, or sacrifice it to the destructive forces of storm waves, flooding, and erosion?

The RBSP is based upon the conclusion that beach sand restoration is the best

*(Continued on reverse)*



2001 RBSP photos for Imperial Beach before, after, and March 2010



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*Beachgoers enjoying 2001 RBSP final product*



*Bulldozers and sand at Batiquitos 2001 RBSP*

*Source:  
Great Lakes Dredging and  
Dock Company*

*A portion of the land required for the 2012 Regional Beach Sand Project was contributed by the California State Lands Commission.*

strategy to pursue. Putting sand onto the region's beaches will provide environmental, economic, and recreational benefits for the region's residents and visitors.

But what happens to the sand after it is placed, won't it continue to erode? The answer is yes, the sand will eventually spread out over the region's entire 60-mile coastline. The San Diego coastline loses sand to various places including offshore to deeper water and inside the harbors and lagoons. These losses are not adequately offset by input from rivers, bluffs, and nourishment. So the losses exceed the gains each year and the sand volume is decreasing. The good news is that beach width gains from the 2001 RBSP sustained for about four years on average and volumes sustained for about six years. And, as of 2010, there still appeared to be sand from the 2001 RBSP in the system and this material will serve as a foundation for the 2012 RBSP.

#### **How are beaches restored?**

The RBSP places sand on many of the region's beaches. The beach quality sand is dredged from large deposits of sand located in 30 to 100 feet of water found within two miles of the shoreline.

Dredging sand from nearshore sources and pumping it to beaches is a technology that has proven reliable and effective all over the world. The nearshore sand sources must be

tested to prove they will provide a quality source of material for the region's beaches that is compatible, such as similar size, texture, and color. The most cost-effective, highest-quality, and environmentally-suitable sources of sand will be used.

Beach building technology must be adapted to the specific geological and environmental challenges presented by our shoreline. The RBSP takes into consideration all of the unique features of our region's coastline and will avoid sensitive reef habitats in the nearshore and make every effort to minimize impacts to our coastal environment.

#### **What's next?**

SANDAG is moving the project forward to construction in summer 2012. Construction updates will be posted to [www.sandag.org/beachsand](http://www.sandag.org/beachsand) as they become available. Beaches scheduled for replenishment include those in the cities of Oceanside, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Solana Beach, and Imperial Beach.

If you would like more details about the 2012 RBSP or would like to receive project updates, including construction notifications, please contact SANDAG at (619) 699-0640, [beachsand@sandag.org](mailto:beachsand@sandag.org) or visit [www.sandag.org/beachsand](http://www.sandag.org/beachsand) to request that your name be added to our e-mail distribution list.