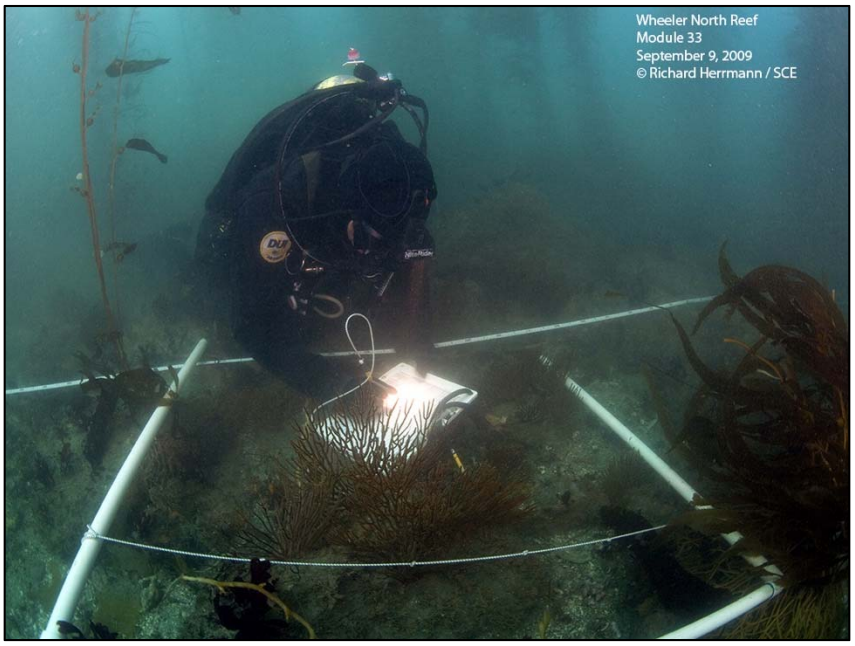
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March 1, 2024

NOTICE OF TECHNICAL REVIEW WORKSHOP FOR THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (SONGS) WHEELER NORTH REEF MITIGATION PROJECT

Wednesday, April 8, 2024 from 1:30 to 3:30 PM
Community House, 24642 San Juan Ave, Dana Point, CA

A public workshop on the status of the Wheeler North Reef Mitigation Project will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2024 at the Community House in Dana Pt, CA. Although in-person participation is encouraged, virtual attendance via the Zoom webinar platform will be available for individuals not able to attend in person. The workshop is sponsored by California Coastal Commission (CCC) to provide an overview of the artificial reef mitigation program required by the CCC to compensate for impacts of coastal marine resources caused by the operations of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). Monitoring and evaluation of the Wheeler North Reef mitigation project is conducted by contract scientists at U.C. Santa Barbara (UCSB) under the direction of the CCC. Presentations by UCSB scientists will include an overview of the project and results from the 2023 performance monitoring of Wheeler North Reef.



Please RSVP at https://ucsb.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4-yY37qdSum-btUOu3sUwg if you are planning to attend virtually (no RSVP is needed if you are planning to attend in person). A zoom link for the webinar and instructions for using Zoom will be sent via email upon receipt of RSVP. More information about the SONGS mitigation program can be found at https://marinemitigation.msi.ucsb.edu/ .

WHEELER NORTH REEF MITIGATION PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Four mitigation projects are required as conditions of Southern California Edison Company's (SCE) coastal development permit for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) Units 2 and 3 (permit no. 6-81-330A, formerly 183-73); among them the requirement to construct an artificial reef large enough to sustain 150 acres of medium-to-high-density kelp bed community and a fish standing stock of 28 tons. The CCC originally adopted the conditions in 1991 to mitigate the adverse impacts of the power plant on the marine environment. The 1991 conditions also require SCE to provide the funds necessary for CCC staff's technical oversight and independent monitoring of the mitigation projects, to be carried out by independent contract scientists under the direction of the Executive Director of the CCC.

A five-year monitoring program on the Phase 1 experimental portion of the artificial reef mitigation project was completed in December 2004. The CCC approved SCE's Final Plan and Coastal Development Permit (#E-07-010) for the Phase 2 mitigation reef on February 12, 2008 and construction of the reef was completed on September 12, 2008. The Phase 2 reef was designed and constructed as a low-lying boulder reef consisting of 18 polygons ranging in area from 1 to 39 acres for a total reef area of 150 acres. Together, the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reefs comprise the Wheeler North Reef with a total area of 175 acres. The Phase 2 reef construction achieved the following desired objectives: (1) all polygons were built in close proximity to the San Mateo Kelp Bed; (2) all polygons avoided existing hard substrate areas that historically supported giant kelp; (3) the integrity of the Phase 1 Experimental Reef modules was maintained; (4) navigation channels were provided in response to concerns raised by fishermen; and (5) all constructed reef polygons avoided areas of historical kelp growth as well as areas of special interest to local fisheries.

In addition to Phases 1 and 2 of the Wheeler North Reef, Southern California Edison (SCE) constructed an additional 198 acres of low-relief, low-cover boulder reef in state waters offshore of the City of San Clemente as the third phase of this project. Construction of the Phase 3 reef was completed in July 2020 and involved placing 150,975 tons of quarried rock in 20 new polygons north and inshore of the Phase 1 and 2 reefs. The Commission has been involved in the SONGS Mitigation Program since the SONGS Coastal Development Permit was initially issued in the early 1970s. The Phase 3 reef was required by the Executive Director to bring the mitigation reef into compliance with the performance standards required by the SONGS Coastal Development Permit.

PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP

The CCC's technical oversight and independent monitoring program provides periodic public review of the performance of the SONGS mitigation projects. Concurrent monitoring of physical and biological attributes of the Wheeler North Reef and the two reference reefs (the San Mateo kelp bed located adjacent to the southern end of the Wheeler North Reef and the Barn kelp bed located approximately 12 km south of San Mateo kelp bed) is used to evaluate whether the Wheeler North Reef meets the performance criteria set forth in the SONGS permit. Performance monitoring began in 2009 with quantitative underwater surveys of the reefs by the UC Santa Barbara scientists contracted by the CCC. The 15th year of surveys was completed in 2023.

No regulatory decisions will be made on the mitigation project at the workshop. CCC staff will consider information from the workshop in carrying out its oversight and monitoring of the mitigation project. It is the CCC's intention that the technical review workshop provide an opportunity for information exchange among representatives of state and federal resource agencies, local government representatives, SCE, scientists interested in restoration and environmental monitoring, and the general public.