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The Bay Foundation and City of Santa Monica Partner on a Beach Restoration Pilot Project for the Future of Our Beaches

LOS ANGELES (December 1, 2016) [The Bay Foundation](#) (TBF), in partnership with the City of Santa Monica, announces the [Santa Monica Beach Restoration Pilot Project](#). This project aims to transform an approximately three-acre section of existing sandy beach into a healthy, beautiful coastal ecosystem, to address coastal hazard risks while protecting and enhancing coastal resources, such as public beach access and recreation, natural shoreline habitat, and aesthetic values.

The installation will take three to four weeks beginning December 2016 and will include the installation of a low-lying, three-foot tall sand fence for protection and seeding of native beach plants. The designated area is ocean-ward of the bike path near the water, parallel to the Beach Club, and about one and one half of a mile north of the Santa Monica Pier. The wide beaches of Santa Monica provide a valuable environmental and economic resource, receiving 17 million visitors annually. Seventy-two million people visit the beaches throughout LA County in a given year.

The pilot project will transform a highly impacted beach by seeding with native coastal strand species, such as flowering *sand verbena* and *beach evening primrose*. The project will evaluate increased protection from sea level rise and erosion for coastal infrastructure and residences, while also providing a vital refuge for coastal vegetation species, invertebrates, and birds, which are locally rare.

The project is also meant to offer a unique beach aesthetic for the region, an opportunity to see how people in Los Angeles interact with this type of coastal ecosystem, and bird watching opportunities for visitors. One local homeowner, after learning about the project, said, "I wish it was a bigger project ending in a ribbon of natural plants...all along the beach."

"The most exciting part of this project for me is the chance to show people what a different kind of beach can look like and what it can actually do," states [TBF](#) Executive Director Tom Ford. "The multiple benefits of this project, if successful, are profound. This project may clearly demonstrate that the beach can again be a place for wildlife and people while providing protection from sea level rise in a very cost effective manner. In essence we're using Mother Nature to protect us from Mother Nature by providing Mother Nature with some space on our urban beach."



In addition to the curved, flowing, low-lying fence lines, there will be a path through the restoration area, and it will be open along the water's edge. Many of the design components are created to minimize disturbance, and encourage visitors' interaction with the beach, from normal recreation to enjoying and learning about the local native plants.

Karina Johnston, TBF's Director of Watershed Programs, states, "We believe that the iconic beaches of Santa Monica will be a beautiful and important location to test this restoration project, which will use existing sand to transform a portion of the current beach into a sustainable coastal strand and foredune habitat complex resilient to sea level rise."

As the pilot project gears up, the City of Santa Monica is also launching a new virtual reality installation on the Santa Monica Pier revealing how sea level rise will affect the Santa Monica shoreline in the not too distant future. Will its iconic beaches be underwater in 30 years? Could projects like the beach restoration project help protect us? Inside the viewer is an [immersive virtual reality display](#) showing panoramic views of Santa Monica Beach accurate to the vantage point on the North side of the Pier, where it is mounted. The public can see how the beach and infrastructure will flood with sea level rise and big storms by the end of the century. The installation will be in place through the end of the year.

"Personally speaking I'm thrilled to be a part of this!" adds Ford. "The City of Santa Monica, California State Parks and the folks neighboring the project have been so welcoming, it's a very encouraging start. I can't think of a better way to ring in the New Year."

Learn more about the Santa Monica Beach Restoration Pilot Project, see beautiful artistic renderings (by Mia Lehrer + Associates) and watch for volunteer and educational outreach events at <http://www.santamonicabay.org/santa-monica-beach-restoration-pilot/>

About The Bay Foundation (TBF)

The Bay Foundation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit environmental group founded in 1990 to restore and enhance the Santa Monica Bay (from the LA-Ventura county line to the Palos Verdes Peninsula) and local coastal waters. The Foundation is the non-profit partner of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, raising and expending funds for research, education, planning, cleanup efforts and other priorities identified in the Commission's Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan. As advocates for the Bay, TBF works collaboratively with a broad group of stakeholders, including government agencies, industry, environmental groups, and scientists, to implement innovative policies and projects that clean up the waterways, create green spaces and natural habitats in the Los Angeles region. The TBF conducts research and mentors student intern and volunteers through its Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies at Loyola Marymount University. <http://www.santamonicabay.org/>

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