

MAKING WAVES

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Jericho Poppler Bartlow: SURF LEGEND, SURFRIDER ACTIVIST



(L TO R) Roland, Raquel, Tyson, Lauren:
Environmental Champions, Tomorrow

INSIDE LINE-UP

Issues Teams	4	Pacesetters.....	9
Fix The Surf	5	Chapter Beat.....	10
Clean H ₂ O Act	6	Iron Trees.....	11
Surfrider Kids	8		

WAVE REPAIR: A REALITY?

This past summer on Wednesday, July 14, the California Coastal Commission made a landmark, precedent-setting decision in Surfrider Foundation's and surfing's favor regarding the restoration of surfing spots lost due to the building of a coastal structure by Chevron Oil Company in El Segundo, California.

After presentations by both Chevron and Surfrider, the Coastal Commission ruled that Chevron must mitigate and restore the lost surfing waves in the same manner and spirit as any other damaged natural resource such as wetlands, sea grass, fisheries, lakes and streams, etc.

This is a precedent-setting decision because for the first time, good surfing waves are defined as a natural resource no different than a wetland or a lake.

Chevron had proposed to skirt around their 1983 jetty permit conditions to mitigate lost surfing waves, a condition that Surfrider Foundation had insisted be added to the permit. Chevron preferred to finance a study of surfing in LA and Orange counties. The staff of the Coastal Commission sided with Chevron's proposal, saying that Chevron was not wholly responsible and that artificial surfing reefs, the proposed method of mitigation, were too untested and expensive, thus a "study of mitigation methods and options" would be sufficient.

Surfrider's presentation was headed by founding Surfrider executive director Tom Pratte, acting as a Surfrider environmental

consultant, and included Peter Gadd, a producer of sand bag technologies for reefs and beach protection; two South Bay surfers testifying on the surf loss; and Terry McCann, a Surfrider Director of the Board. The presentation emphasized the need to equate mitigation with wave restoration, the history of the problem, public consequences of lost surf, and a proposal for relatively inexpensive mitigation by artificial surfing reefs.

The Coastal Commissioners surprisingly supported Surfrider Foundation over their own CCC

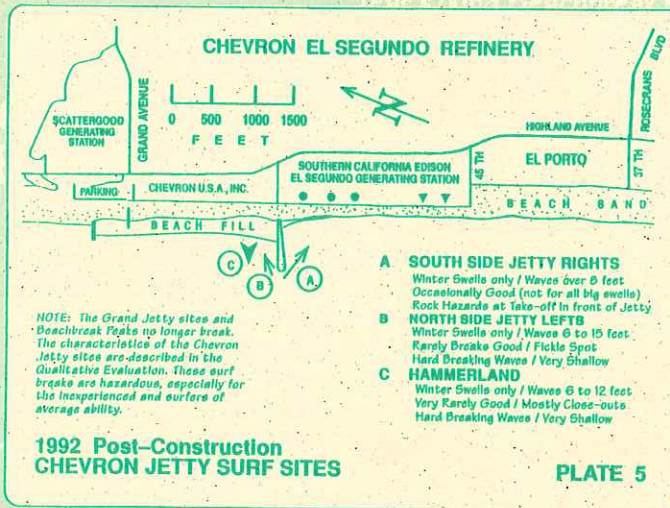
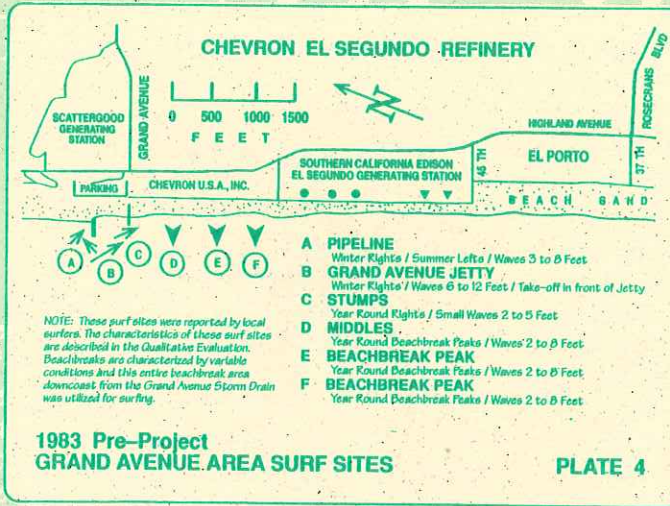
staff's recommendation. They upheld the requirement of direct mitigation. One Commissioner used the analogy that their staff's and Chevron's proposal to do a study in lieu of restoration of waves was like being hit by a car and having your insurance company not pay you nor fix your car or injured body but instead offer to do a study on how not to get hit in the future!

Surfrider Foundation still has much work to do in researching and reviewing the available artificial reef technologies. We are now seriously reviewing several

innovative and safe artificial reef technologies.

Surfrider feels a major precedent has been set by this decision to restore lost surfing spots that will affect the future of surfing and the environment. As Surfrider Advisory Board member Yvon Choinard says in his Patagonia ads: "Wreck a spot, build a spot".

Also, Surfrider feels a fresh calling to its original, unique sense of purpose: being a waverider's advocacy group. As the Coastal Commission said to us on Wednesday, surfers are the unique experts and most knowledgeable people on the planet concerning the natural phenomena of surfing waves. To protect waves and surf spots is our primary mission. Water quality monitoring is extremely important and will continue to be for the Foundation, and surfers probably lose more days of surfing from polluted water and closed beaches, but other environmental groups work on water quality issues as well. Only surfers can speak out about and protect the rideable wave as a natural resource.



For more information about this ground-breaking precedent for the surfing environment or to receive a copy of the Surfrider Foundation report on "Qualitative Evaluation of Changes in Surfing Quality" relevant to this case, please call