On December 18th the holidays came early for beach lovers around the world, especially those that hold a special place in their hearts for Trestles. The U.S. Department of Commerce announced that it would uphold the California Coastal Commission's ruling that found the Transportation Corridors Agencies' (TCA) proposed extension of the 241 Toll Road inconsistent with the California Coastal Act. And with that, the famous surf break and surrounding state park was rescued from a poorly planned project that would have wreaked havoc on this precious resource.

Although this happy day and paramount decision were the culmination of years and years of grassroots advocacy efforts, it is certainly 2008 that will mark the year when everything came together to “Save Trestles.” That is because it’s the year that two important hearings were held to decide Trestles’ and the surrounding San Onofre State Beach’s fate.

February 6th, 2008
The Place: Wyland Hall at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.
The Purpose: the California Coastal Commission hearing to evaluate whether the toll road extension project should receive consistency certification.
The Vibe: Incredible!

State Park and Trestles supporters turned out in droves to make their voice heard and oppose the 241 toll road extension. The reported total number of people in attendance ranged from 2,500 to 5,000 depending upon which paper you read, but either way that still meant that a heck of a lot of people turned up to “Save Trestles.” Groms took the day off of school to attend (with their parents’ permission of course), surf industry execs shuttled people in on their company buses, hard-core “greenies” rode their bikes or took the train in and every day “Joes” took a hard-earned day off of work to come down and protect that which was precious to them... Trestles. It was amazing. After 15 hours of testimony, the Commission determined by a vote of 8-2, that the plan submitted by the TCA was inconsistent with California coastal law and the room erupted! We had won the fight but would we win the war?

Sept 22nd, 2008
The Place: O’Brien Hall at the Del Mar Fairgrounds (a bigger hall to accommodate more people).
The Purpose: The public hearing related to the TCA’s appeal to the U.S. Department of Commerce to OVERRULE the decision by the California Coastal Commission.
The Vibe: A bit more nerve-racking.

Save Trestles supporters stayed well into the night long after opponents called it a day.

Local support took on an organic vibe all its own.

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Here we were again, same venue, same fight but would there be the same outcome? Even worse, we would have to wait months for an answer. Unlike the February 6th meeting, this was merely an opportunity for both sides to be heard and an actual decision on the appeal wouldn’t be determined that evening. But still you showed up! Thousands and thousands of you showed up to keep fighting for Trestles... sitting again through ten plus hours of testimony (this time in a fly-infested, hot expo room). And what was even more apparent by this time was that this was no longer just about protecting a great surf break, the fight to “Save Trestles” had become so much more. There was magic everywhere that day. From the speakers ranging in age from ten-to-82 who took to the podium, to the guys who held up signs that read: “live better, get barred” opposed to “live better, build roads,” to the lady from San Bernardino who drove 100 miles to save the San Mateo campgrounds where her family spent their annual family vacations... there was no shortage of emotional moments. But would it be enough? Many people drove home late that night wondering and only time would tell.

And so it came... the big decision on the appeal. Two months and 27 days later. In a release issued from the Department of Commerce, they “determined that there is at least one reasonable alternative to the project and that the project is not necessary in the interest of national security.”

And that was that, we had won dang it. We had actually done it, “Saved Trestles!” Years of campaigning, protests, letter writing, raffles, paddle outs, shout outs... you name it. We had done it all. And it worked!

Our coastlines will always be threatened by development and the resulting pollution problems that come part and parcel with that. There will always be projects to question and Trestles may need saving again one day (unfortunately). But, if there is anything 2006 has shown it’s that grassroots coastal activism is alive and well and together we can do anything. Here’s to you! Thank you.

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