



Manhattan Beach Dune Restoration Project

Frequently Asked Questions

PROJECT SUMMARY

What is the Manhattan Beach Dune Restoration Project?

The Manhattan Beach Dune Restoration Project is an approximately 3-acre dune restoration project demonstrating the benefits of living shorelines in protecting our coastline from sea level rise and erosion. The goal of this project is to restore sandy coastal dune habitats through the removal of invasive and non-native plants, seed native coastal plants, and increase community engagement through outreach and educational experiences.

Where will this project be located?

This project will be located along the Manhattan Beach shoreline, adjacent to Bruce's Beach, from 36th to 28th Street and 26th to 23rd Street restoring the existing back dunes. The beach is owned is co-owned by the City of Manhattan Beach and County of Los Angeles and actively managed by Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors.

Why is this project important?

Beaches are an important cultural and economic resource for coastal regions. However, they are highly impacted by threats such as invasive species, erosion, sea level rise, and severe storms. By restoring these coastal systems, we improve their ability to combat these threats and increase coastal resiliency of both beaches and infrastructure. Native plant species, many of which are endemic or rare, would provide habitats to support higher native wildlife such as invertebrates and shorebirds.

This demonstration site will serve as a model for the region, showing that heavy recreational use of beaches and meaningful habitat restoration are compatible goals. It will be monitored scientifically over time, evaluating the change in dune topography and plant cover. It will show that nature-based, low-cost natural living shorelines can add protection from sea level rise and storms, while providing public benefits and enhancing natural resource values.

Who is in charge of this project?

The Bay Foundation will be responsible for the implementation, maintenance, and scientific surveys of the project. However, the project would not be possible without many collaborators, partners, supporters, and scientific advisors. The City of Manhattan Beach and Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors are both key partners on this project, along with the California State Coastal Conservancy.

Who is funding this project?

The State Coastal Conservancy is funding the project through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and California Climate Investments-cap and trade dollars at work.

PROJECT DESIGN

What processes will occur as a part of this project?

This project will include the removal of ice plant followed by seeding and planting native vegetation. The native plants have the ability to trap and retain wind-driven sand, allowing for the slow growth of small-scale dune systems which will make the beach more resilient to erosion.

Why is iceplant not a good fit for beaches and dunes?

Iceplant is an invasive species that grows quickly into dense monocultures that crowd out native plants. In the case of coastal systems, they often outcompete endemic, endangered, or rare native plant species that support important wildlife. Although iceplant does have some capacity to stabilize sand dunes, it grows in thick layers on top of itself that increase the likelihood of erosion and limit the potential for sand dune growth compared to native coastal species.

Iceplant is identified by the California Invasive Plant Council as having a threat rating of “high” due to its impacts on ecosystem processes including, but not limited to, reducing soil pH, altering nutrient dynamics, interfering with water uptake, outcompeting native plants, invading habitats, altering soil organic content, expanding through multiple dispersal mechanisms, and other impacts.

The alternative to iceplant is a variety of native plants with beautiful flowers that provide many services and are important dune species (see below).

What are some good native plant alternatives to iceplant?

Native plants that are adapted to dunes and coastal strand habitat for southern California will be used for this project. The beach evening primrose with its beautiful yellow flowers will be a key component of the plant community, as it is the City of Manhattan Beach’s official city flower and good at forming beach dunes. Additional native plants will include species such as sand verbena, sea scale, and others. The final plant community will be decided upon with input from the community during public meetings and with feedback before going into the final Restoration Plan.

Will this project limit my ocean view?

The project is designed to maintain the existing back dune footprint with small increases in height over time that will minimize viewshed disturbance. We hope that the beautiful flowers, butterflies, and birds that will use the area will contribute additional recreational viewing opportunities and offer improved aesthetics. Pathways will still allow for easy beach access and interpretive signs will provide educational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Artistic renderings are being developed for this project to illustrate the views after project implementation and will be posted on the project website once complete.

Have similar projects been implemented elsewhere in California?

Yes! There have been several successful implementations of beach restoration projects along the California coast, such as Surfers Point in Ventura, Point Reyes in San Francisco, and others. Locally, The Bay Foundation implemented the Santa Monica Beach Restoration Pilot Project on Santa Monica Beach just north of the Annenberg Community Beach House in 2016 and continues planning for other projects in the LA region. See our Beach and Dune Restoration page to learn more about these projects.

When will the project be implemented?

Project implementation will take place between Fall 2021-Winter 2022.

MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE**Who will be responsible for maintaining the restoration site?**

The Bay Foundation will be responsible for the overall maintenance of the restoration site and will continue to monitor and organize community restoration events after initial project implementation. Ultimately, we hope the project will be a self-sustaining dune system, though occasional weeding of non-native species may be necessary.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**How can I get involved?**

We appreciate your interest in this project! There are several ways to get involved including attending public meetings, hosting a lecture at your local community group, and joining one of our events along the Strand. Upcoming public meetings will be shared via The Bay Foundation's and the City of Manhattan Beach's websites and social media outlets.

If you are interested in TBF speaking to your community group or if you'd like to discuss the project in more detail, please send an email to info@santamonicabay.org. Events along the Strand such as USC Sea Grant's Urban Tides Walks, and TBF's community restoration events will be announced on our volunteer page and on social media outlets.

Who can I contact for questions or more information?

For more information, please send an email to info@santamonicabay.org and the project managers will get back to you shortly. Thank you for your interest!