

PREVENTING THE ULTIMATE WIPEOUT: POLICY APPROACHES FOR PROTECTING SURFING AREAS

*Brycen Swart, Surfrider Foundation
Rick Wilson, Surfrider Foundation
Chad Nelsen, Surfrider Foundation*

KEYWORDS: surfing, recreation management, coastal zone management, surfing reserves, protected areas, marine protected areas, heritage sites

Established surfing areas are unique natural resources that provide not only recreational opportunities, but also environmental, aesthetic, cultural, and economic benefits to the surrounding coastal area. Many surfing areas may be threatened or degraded by access restrictions, water quality problems, coastal development or disturbance to coastal ecosystems. Due to these threats, protection of surfing areas has become necessary. Although in some instances current reactionary legal approaches in the United States have been successful in protecting surfing areas, they leave much to be desired. Here we identify and evaluate three different types of proactive and preventative tools for establishment of protected area status for surfing areas: (1) surfing reserves (2) protected areas (including marine protected areas) and (3) heritage sites. Each model offers its own unique objectives, establishment, jurisdiction, and legal authorities. In addition we suggest a surfing area protection nomination process and protocol for evaluating surf protection priorities. The intent of the outcomes of this study are to assist practitioners in evaluating which surf area protection model will produce the most desirable outcome(s) based on their objectives. Stakeholders will benefit from a wider range of policy tools to protect surfing areas.

Brycen Swart
Surfrider Foundation
PO Box 6010
San Clemente, CA 92674-6010
949-492-8170
bswart@surfrider.org