

SANDAG Infobits

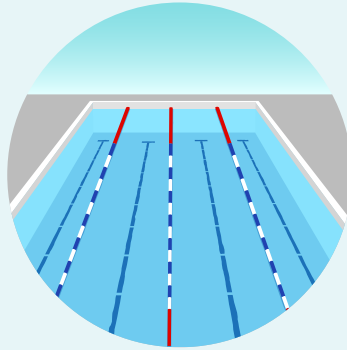
Got Sand? Why Our Beaches Need TLC

July 2020

Did you know?



Coastal erosion, a reduction in sediment from inland waterways, and rising sea levels threaten our region's beaches.



Since 2001, SANDAG has placed approximately **3.6 million cubic yards** of beach quality sand onto our region's beaches. That's enough sand to fill **1,100 Olympic-size swimming pools!**



Sea level rise poses a **threat to our coastal transportation facilities**, including the railroad on top of the Del Mar Bluffs, which could impact the movement of goods and people in our region.

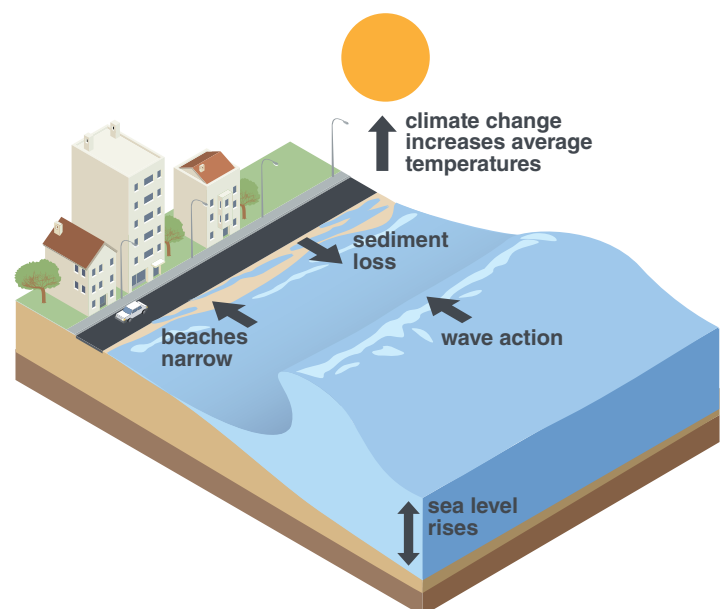
With about 70 miles of coastline, the beaches in the San Diego region are enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. But many people are unaware that policy makers are working to ensure our beaches are maintained and sustainable for years to come.

Why are our beaches at risk? Erosion is a continuous process in which rock, soil, and other materials are worn away and transported by natural forces such as wind and water. California's shorelines are steadily eroding and development has decreased the natural supply of sand that helps to sustain our beaches. Rising sea levels exacerbate this issue and create new threats to the coastline and coastal infrastructure including the second busiest rail corridor in the nation linking San Diego to Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo.

Since the 1980s, the SANDAG Shoreline Preservation Working Group has advised the SANDAG Regional Planning Committee, one of the five SANDAG policy committees that advises the SANDAG Board of Directors.

Thanks to the work of the Shoreline Preservation Working Group, during the last 25 years SANDAG has developed regional sediment management policies, managed an ongoing shoreline monitoring program, and completed several projects to maintain local beaches and coastlines.

Beach Erosion



Key actions include:

- Development of the [Shoreline Preservation Strategy \(1993\)](#) which recommends beach nourishment as the primary shoreline management strategy to address critical erosion areas on the scale of approximately 30 million cubic yards (cy) of sand across the region for initial restoration and nearly 400,000 cy/year thereafter for maintenance.
- Creation of the [2001 Sand Retention Strategy](#) which concluded that structures that help keep sand on the beach, such as groins, breakwaters, or reefs, have the potential to increase the cost-effectiveness of beach nourishment activities.
- Preparation of yearly beach monitoring reports as part of the [Regional Shoreline Monitoring Program](#). Did you know that most beaches in the San Diego region were at least 20 ft wider prior to the start of the 2015–2016 El Niño than they were before the 1997–1998 El Niño? Wider beaches may have helped to reduce storm impacts in 2015–2016 winter months.
- Implementation of two regional beach sand nourishment projects in [2001](#) and [2012](#) (RBSP I and RBSP II, respectively) that placed a total of 3.6 million cy of sand on badly eroding local beaches.
- Development of the [Regional Transportation Infrastructure Sea Level Rise Assessment and Adaptation Guidance \(2020\)](#) to examine how sea level rise may impact regional coastal transportation facilities and determine possible ways to adapt to future conditions.



To learn more about the efforts SANDAG and its partners are taking to ensure the region’s natural resources are maintained, please visit sandag.org/shoreline

About infobits

SANDAG serves as the region’s clearinghouse for information and data. InfoBits publish timely, relevant information informing the public while providing context on complex issues facing the region.

sandag.org