Saving our surf breaks in california

Family

Saving California’s Surf Breaks Number Introduction Being a surfer means being one with nature, more specifically, “ Mother Nature” (Taylor, 2010, p. 116). Aside from having the right equipment and developing proper skills, surfing relies first and foremost on the condition of the ocean and the waves it produces for “ without waves, the concept of being a surfer would be totally meaningless” (Butt, 2009). Hence, since the 1960s, surfing environmentalism—which aims to preserve surf spots and the oceans of the world in general—arose; because where would surfers be without the environment (Kampion, 2009, p. 117)? With the advent of surfing environmentalism also came the task of educating the both the surfing and non-surfing public of how waves are created, how rock formations in the sea and its other natural resources aid wave formation and how human interference, such as coastal developments and road constructions, affects the process. Saving California’s Surf Breaks Educating the public about surfing basics is not complete without talking about surf breaks, which are crucial in creating wave breaks that surfers ride (Butt, 2009). “ A surf break is defined as a permanent obstruction, such as a reef, headland, bombora [and] rock or sandbar, which causes waves to break” (Silmalis, 2007). Although what constitutes the actual wave that surfers ride involves a more complex combination of weather, wind direction, tides and ocean current, an integral part of this fusion are surf breaks (Diel and Menges, 2008, p. 84). The texture and shape of the sea floor determines the height of the wave (p. 87). Hence, beaches rich in coral reefs—which are considered to be the best surf breaks—and blessed with great bombora and other rock and sand formations are considered to be prime surf spots (Almond, 2009, p. 93). California is home to some of the world’s best surf spots; and preserving the

state’s surf breaks is a huge task that involves more than the occasional “ Save the Beach” rallies. For instance, in 2008, about 3, 000 surfers and environmentalists expressed their opposition to an $875 million toll road project that would “ block sediment that creates world-class waves at San Onofre State Beach” by showing up for the marathon commission hearing (Flaccus, 2008). The Save the Waves Coalition is a prime example of a non-profit surfing environmentalist organization that teams up with local, national and international agencies to “ preserve and protect surfing locations around the planet and to educate the public about their value” (Kampion, 2009, p. 117). The organization asserts that proper coastal impact studies should be created before marina, jetties, and other major coastal construction are approved as they decimate sediments and coral reefs that make for great surf breaks (p. 117). Based in San Francisco, Coral Reef Alliance (2010) is the only international nonprofit organization where divers and surfers work together to mitigate the many threats to coral reefs, such as ocean acidification and warming, water pollution, fishing, coral mining and careless tourism. Increasing the public’s awareness through various media campaigns, like the annual Save the Waves Film Festival, capitalizing on the popularity of famous surfers like Kelly Slater and maximizing the funds generated from philanthropists are some of the grand ways of saving, not only Southern California’s, but also the world’s surf spots (Baker, 2009, p. 118). Conclusion Because surf breaks are affected by various environmental and human factors, educating the public, as well as mobilizing people and generating funds for campaigns, is key to saving them from destruction and preserving the survival of surfing as a sport. The breadth and complexity of the scope of saving California’s surf breaks might be intimidating and

overwhelming, but it must also be remembered that every little act helps. For instance, because the high concentration of carbon dioxide in the water damages and weakens coral reefs, letting people know that they need to lessen their use of heating and air conditioning appliances that release a large amount of CO2 can go a long way (Coral Reef Alliance, 2010). If everyone helps out, not only California's surf breaks, but more importantly, the planet's environment will be saved. References Almond, E. (2009). Surfing: Mastering waves from basic to intermediate. Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers Books. Baker, T. (2009). Giving back: Surfing gets all philanthropic on us. In B. Boal (Ed.), The surfing yearbook (pp. 118-122). Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith and Surfersville. Butt, T. (2009). The importance of waves. Save the Waves Coalition. Retrieved from http://www. savethewaves. org/WSR_faq Coral Reef Alliance. (2010). Threats to coral reefs. Retrieved from http://www. coral. org/resources/about_coral_reefs/threats_to_coral_reefs Diel. P. and Menges, M. (2008). Surfing: In search of the perfect wave. Maidenhead, UK: Meyer & Meyer, Ltd. Flaccus, G. (2008, Feb. 7). Officials pick surf break over toll road. Fox News. Retrieved from http://www. foxnews. com/wires/2008Feb07/0, 4670, TollRoadTussle, 00. html Kampion, D. (2009). The fan effect. In B. Boal (Ed.), The surfing yearbook (pp. 116-117). Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith and Surfersville. Silmalis, L. (2007, April 8). Surf break names recognized. The Daily Telegraph. Retrieved from http://www. dailytelegraph. com. au/news/sydney-nsw/surf-break-names-recognised/story-e6freuzi-1111113302360 Taylor, B. R. (2010). Dark green religion: Nature spirituality and the planetary future. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.