



Debris from Huntington pier unsuitable for fishing reef

By Ann Pepper

The Orange County Register
O.C. Register - 12-19-90

HUNTINGTON BEACH — The old city pier might not get a dignified burial at sea after all.

So far, rubble from the continuing demolition of the 75-year-old concrete pier is of such poor quality, the state Department of Fish and Game has refused to accept it for an offshore sport fishing reef.

Department biologists and local anglers had hoped pilings and other debris from the historic structure could be added to the artificial

reef about three miles off Bolsa Chica State Beach. The reef provides sport fish with a place to spawn, relax and hide from anglers.

But this week, Kimberly McKee, a marine biologist with the department's Near Shore Sport Fish Habitat Enhancement Program, said she had examined the debris, and so far it does not look suitable.

"The old, poured concrete used in building the pier is crumbling the minute any pressure is put on it," McKee said. "It's hard to say what the material from the rest of

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The pier will look like, but so far with the age and general condition of the materials, I'm not going to accept it for the reef."

Material that cannot be used at the reef will be dumped at a landfill. Such a fate will not help the city reduce the quantity of refuse it is unloading at landfills — one of the boons of the reef idea.

Whatever can be used at sea will be cut to lengths specified by Fish and Game. After that, it will be sunk in three to 10 piles at a depth of about 70 feet.

Jim Paulk, a fisherman and volunteer with the Gill Net Watch Committee, one of the principal boosters of the reef project, said he

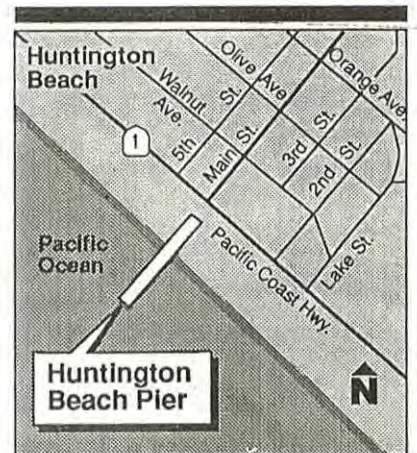
was disappointed that the material recovered so far was not usable.

"It's such a great project," he said. "We've already raised \$25,000 in pledges, and we expect much more" toward reimbursing the city for the cost of the \$67,600 project.

He said some of the pier might prove usable yet, and any money left over could pay to transport concrete from other sources.

McKee said she would examine another batch of pier debris as soon as it was recovered.

"But at this point, unfortunately, it looks like the pier is not going to provide a lot of reef material," she said.



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