

## **South OC Beach Coalition Meeting Notes and Summary** – February 18, 2026

**Date:** February 18, 2026

**Subject:** Orange County Sediment Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program (OC SCOOP)

### **I. Program Overview**

Giles Mathews, Manager with Orange County Public Works, presented the Orange County Sediment Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program (OC SCOUP).

The central issue addressed by the program is that insufficient sand is naturally reaching Orange County beaches. Historically, sediment management focused primarily on flood control and channel maintenance, rather than proactively transporting compatible sediment to the coastline. OC SCOUP is designed to bridge that gap by creating a standing, environmentally reviewed framework for beach nourishment.

The SCOUP was originally conceived in 1993; however, the program is now being formalized as a countywide regulatory structure. Once finalized, it will be the first SCOUP program to cover nearly all Orange County beaches (Laguna Beach excluded).

### **II. Program Structure and Significance**

OC SCOUP establishes a pre-authorized permitting framework that:

- Identifies approved sand source sites
- Identifies approved receiver beaches
- Establishes maximum placement volumes (per event and annual)
- Provides sand placement design options
- Includes biological and physical monitoring protocols
- Streamlines regulatory approvals compared to standalone projects
- Functions as a “living document” that may be amended over time

The Capistrano Bay District was specifically identified during the meeting as a high-need erosion area.

A key benefit of the program is timeline efficiency. Traditional standalone nourishment projects can require 1–2 years for permitting. Under SCOUP, once sand is identified and funding secured, implementation could potentially occur within 1–2 months.

### **III. Sand Sources and Supply**

The program anticipates sediment from multiple regional sources, including:

- Santa Ana River (historically 15,000–70,000 CY annually)

- Sediment basins (~15,000 CY)
- Creek systems (potentially up to 200,000 CY in certain conditions)
- Prado Dam (Army Corps has indicated significantly larger volumes may be available than earlier CEQA modeling assumed)

Importantly:

- SCOUP does not automatically authorize sand extraction.
- Source sites must have separate extraction authorization.
- Transportation and haul permits remain separate approvals.

The discussion regarding Prado Dam suggests that long-term sand supply potential may be materially greater than previously understood.

#### **IV. Placement Options**

The framework allows for multiple placement strategies depending on site conditions:

- Beach berm construction
- Temporary storm protection berms
- Below mean high tide placement
- Back beach dune creation (living shoreline concepts)
- Bluff toe protection
- Cobble placement (confirmed eligible material)

This flexibility allows projects to respond to site-specific erosion conditions.

#### **V. Monitoring and Volume Thresholds**

Monitoring requirements are tiered based on placement volumes:

- Less than 25,000 CY
- 25,000–75,000 CY
- Greater than 75,000 CY

Monitoring addresses:

- Grunion spawning
- Least terns and snowy plovers
- Rocky reef, surfgrass, eelgrass, kelp
- Turbidity and surf conditions
- Beach profile stability

Each receiver beach has maximum per-event and annual volume thresholds (examples discussed ranged from 150,000–300,000 CY annually). These volumes function primarily as monitoring triggers rather than strict caps.

## **VI. Regulatory Status and Timeline**

Current status:

- CEQA (Mitigated Negative Declaration) in final review
- Federal and state permits submitted
- Weekly agency coordination is ongoing

Primary regulatory agencies include:

- California Coastal Commission
- State Lands Commission
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Regional Water Quality Control Board

Anticipated timeline:

- Program finalized in spring
- Permits secured by end of year
- Implementation possible late 2026 or early 2027

## **VII. Funding and Responsibility**

Funding:

- SCOUP does not provide funding.
- SCOUP does not obligate the County to place sand.

The agency placing the sand is responsible for:

- Hauling and transportation
- Monitoring and reporting
- Compliance with permit conditions
- Securing any required haul route approvals
- Securing source site extraction permits (if not already authorized)

Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) remain entity-specific. If private beaches (such as Beach Road) are added or participate, separate inclusion or amendments may be required.

## **VIII. Jurisdictional Coverage**

Currently covered:

- County beaches
- City beaches (San Clemente, Dana Point, Newport Beach, and Seal Beach)

- State beaches

Under discussion:

- Private beaches (e.g., Capistrano Shores, Shorecliffs, Beach Road)
- OCTA-related corridors
- Federal lands (e.g., San Onofre – jurisdictional complexity)

The program may be amended over time to expand coverage.

## **IX. Key Takeaways for Beach Road**

- Beach Road was identified as a high-need erosion area.
- SCOUP creates a pre-permitted regional pathway for sand placement.
- Implementation remains dependent on local funding and coordination.
- Private beach participation may require additional regulatory inclusion. If other private communities are approved without a Coastal Commission requirement to provide public access through the community this could be an option worth pursuing by the District.
- Potential sand supply from Prado Dam appears greater than previously modeled.
- The Coastal Commission and State Lands Commission remain key regulatory variables.

## **Overall Assessment**

The Coalition expressed strong support for the SCOUP as it represents a structural improvement in sediment management by significantly reducing regulatory timelines once sand and funding are secured.

While the program does not independently resolve funding or sediment supply challenges, it meaningfully lowers regulatory barriers and positions participating jurisdictions to act more quickly when sand and funding become available.