



NOAA Marine Debris Program Innovative Removal

Port of San Diego Marine Debris Removal Project

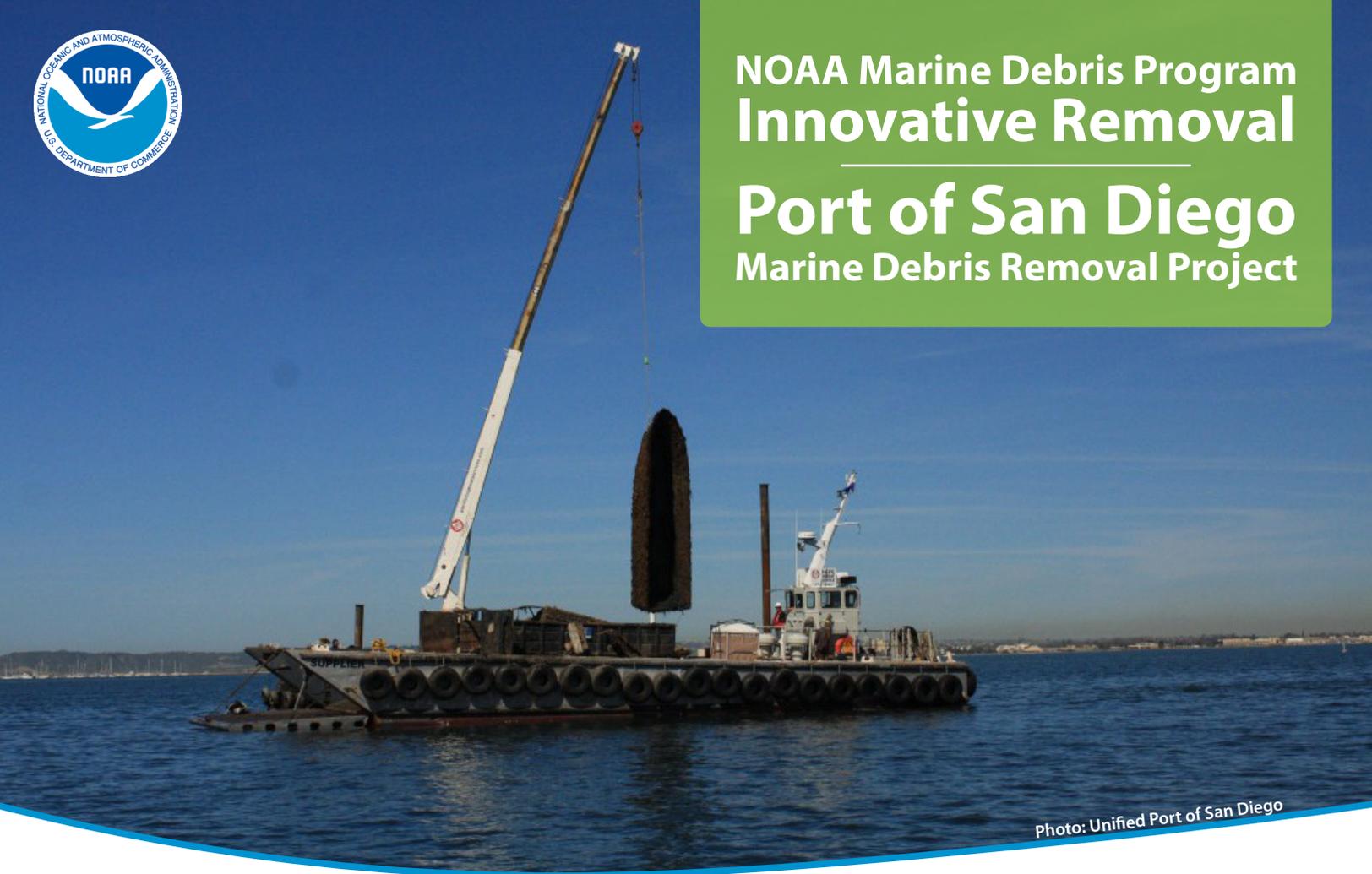


Photo: Unified Port of San Diego

Project Description

This project, piloted by the Port of San Diego, aimed to remove submerged debris from the formerly free A-8 anchorage of San Diego Bay. Through the removal of debris, including items with petroleum and abandoned vessels, the Port authorities aimed to restore soft bottom habitat, improve water quality, and educate boaters about the impact that debris has on the marine environment.

From 2007-2013, nearly 500 tons of debris were removed from San Diego Bay, including vessels, batteries, tanks, small motors, electronics, and other mixed marine debris. Other cleanup activities and education/outreach opportunities included participation in the International Coastal Cleanup, environmental education in elementary schools, marine inspections, and community cleanup events that were carried out with the help of over 3,500 volunteers.

Additionally, the Port revised and disseminated the San Diego Boater's Guide, a guide to safe and environmentally-friendly boating on San Diego Bay, providing opportunities to learn about the habitats of San Diego Bay and how to protect Bay resources.

Innovative Techniques

This project utilized a combination of side-scan sonar technology, divers, and outreach activities to identify, remove, and prevent debris in San Diego Bay. It was conducted using a phased approach, with targets identified in side-scan sonar surveys prior to each removal effort. Once a debris item was located, divers determined the hazard it posed to the marine environment before removal.

Uses & Lessons Learned

The methods used in this project are useful for removal of debris in shallow waters. By combining sonar with divers, the Port of San Diego removed potentially hazardous materials from 130 acres over the life of the project, removing over 175 tons of debris and 75 vessels.

Point of Contact

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