

# Del Mar Bluffs Stabilization Project

NCTD is designated as the Federal Railroad of Record for the coastal tracks from the Orange County line to downtown San Diego. As such, NCTD is responsible for the operations, maintenance, and safety of the rail line. Additionally, NCTD has contractual agreements with BNSF and Amtrak that include specific obligations to ensure the safe and reliable movement of goods and people both locally and inter-state.

NCTD understands the significant responsibilities that it has as the Railroad of Record and the risks posed if the movement of goods and/or people are disrupted or in the event of an accident or occurrence that results in injury or death. As a public agency, our top priorities must be safety, meeting our regulatory and contractual obligations, and being strong stewards of public resources.

Coastal bluffs are formed through a combination of erosion from wind, sea spray, and crashing waves. The Del Mar Bluffs experience natural erosion resulting from wave action, wind, and inclement weather, along with erosion resulting from people walking on the Bluffs, preventing the growth of natural vegetation that in turn would help protect them from erosion. Approximately 1.7 miles of NCTD's tracks are on the Del Mar Bluffs. On average, the Bluffs will naturally retreat on an average of six inches per year. Engineering studies completed by SANDAG and the City of Del Mar's Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Plan highlight the need for action to ensure the safe operations of passenger and freight rail service. Since the summer of 2018, eight surface slides on the face of the Bluffs have been reported in the Del Mar Bluffs area. Each time a surface slide occurs, NCTD annuls train traffic until inspections are complete verifying that the Bluffs are safe for regular rail operations.

NCTD, in collaboration with SANDAG, has developed and performed bluff stabilization since 1998 that has resulted in the completion of three bluff stabilization projects at a cost of approximately \$17 million. NCTD and SANDAG are also currently advancing a new phase of projects that will be completed between 2019 and 2039 that are projected to cost up to \$100 million which includes adding soldier piles, drainage structures, and bluff toe protection at the beach level. NCTD and SANDAG will begin construction of the Del Mar Bluffs 4 (DMB4) project (\$5.8 million) in early 2020. DMB4 includes repairs to existing drainage structures, upper bluff stabilization near 7th street, and lower bluff stabilization near Anderson Canyon.

NCTD has received a grant award that will fund the design and construction of fencing in various locations along the right-of-way that will support re-vegetation and reduction in the occurrence of trespasser events. In advance of the fencing project, NCTD is adding new signage to further alert trespassers of the dangers of walking on the Bluffs.

NCTD will continue to work collaboratively with the City of Del Mar as it seeks to create safe and legal crossings for access to the beach. NCTD will also follow all applicable regulatory requirements as it advances infrastructure improvements.

From a long-range perspective, SANDAG, as the region's metropolitan planning organization, has conducted preliminary studies and developed cost estimates for the construction of the Del Mar Tunnel which would remove the tracks from the Bluffs. This project is currently estimated to cost \$2.5 billion to \$3.5 billion in overall project expenditures and is currently unfunded. Given the significant cost of a tunnel and lack of a dedicated funding source, NCTD's focus must be on ensuring the safety of current operations, which includes stabilization and maintenance of the Bluffs.



## Additional Information

For more information or to provide feedback, please contact NCTD Customer Service at (760) 966-6500 or email [creports@nctd.org](mailto:creports@nctd.org).

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