

## **Tsunami Dock on Washington Coast to be Removed**

### **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

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Officials will begin work to remove a dock that beached on a remote shore within the boundaries of both Olympic National Park and NOAA's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary December of 2012. NOAA has [contracted](#) The Undersea Company of Port Townsend, Wash., to lead the removal.



The contractor plans to complete removal efforts by the end of March, depending on weather and tidal conditions. The dock weighs approximately 185 tons and is 65 feet long, 20 feet wide and 7.5 feet tall and most of the dock's volume is Styrofoam-type material encased in steel-reinforced concrete. "Although the dock has stayed in the same general location since its arrival on the beach, there is potential for changing tides and waves to move the dock and batter the coastline," said Carol Bernthal, sanctuary superintendent. "The intertidal area of the Olympic Coast is home to the most diverse ecosystem of marine invertebrates and seaweeds on the west coast of North America. By removing the dock, we hope to minimize damage to the coastline and marine habitat."

The Undersea Company will work with the sanctuary and national park, as well as local partners in Washington, to remove the dock by helicopter after dismantling it onsite. This was determined to be the safest and most efficient method for removal in light of concern that the dock is no longer seaworthy. The cost for removal will be paid for in part by NOAA's Office of National Marine

Sanctuaries (\$75,000) and the national park (\$75,000), with the remaining \$478,000 likely coming from funds provided to NOAA from the government of Japan to help with cleanup of marine debris from the tsunami. Removing a piece of marine debris of this magnitude is possible only through the coordinated efforts of many agencies," said Olympic National Park superintendent Sarah Creachbaum. "Without the support of our state and federal partners, the quick and effective response and removal of the dock from our wilderness coast would not be possible." In January, in an attempt to prevent establishment of aquatic invasive species, officials removed the majority of organisms on the dock. Over 500 pounds of organisms were scraped off of the dock and placed in a safe location to decompose. The dock surface was also treated with a mild bleach solution. Experts do not anticipate a further threat from invasive species while removing the dock. The government of Japan confirmed that the dock was lost during the March 2011 tsunami in Japan. Based on the fender production serial number in a picture, the Japanese government positively identified the dock as coming from Misawa in Aomori Prefecture. Determining the origin of marine debris is challenging," said Nir Barnea, NOAA's Marine Debris Program Northwest regional coordinator. "Not only was the government of Japan incredibly generous in providing funds to address marine debris, but we really appreciate the help the government of Japan, especially the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle, has provided in identifying this dock and many of the other items that have come ashore." NOAA works closely with the government of Japan to determine, when possible, whether an item originated in the tsunami impact zone. To date, 21 items have been [definitively traced back to the tsunami](#), typically by registration number or some other unique marking. This is the fourth confirmed item found in Washington. Olympic National Park protects more than 70 miles of wild Pacific coast. Most of this coastline was designated by Congress as Wilderness in 1988, and is part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System and established a policy for the protection of wilderness resources for public use and enjoyment. The park was internationally recognized in 1976 as a World Heritage Site. More information about Olympic National Park is available at <http://www.nps.gov/olym>. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, designated in 1994, spans 3,200 square miles of marine waters off the rugged Olympic Peninsula coastline. The sanctuary protects a productive upwelling zone - home to rich marine mammal and seabird faunas, diverse populations of kelp and intertidal algae, and thriving invertebrate communities. The sanctuary is also rich in cultural resources, with over 150 documented historical shipwrecks and the vibrant contemporary cultures of Makah, Hoh, and Quileute Tribes and the Quinault Indian Nation. NOAA's Marine Debris Program is leading efforts with federal, state and local partners to collect data, assess the debris, and reduce possible impacts to our natural resources and coastal communities. NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).