

## **Removal of Tsunami Dock Near Forks Completed**

### **Local News**

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A 185-ton dock that washed out to sea during the March 2011 tsunami in Japan has now been removed from Washington's Olympic Coast. As of today, crews from *The Undersea Company* of Port Townsend, Wash., removed the last of the dock's concrete and plastic foam from the beach and the inland landing site. NOAA contracted with *The Undersea Company* earlier this month to remove the dock from the remote wilderness coast in the [Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary](#) and the [Olympic National Park](#) and work began on March 17. "This operation was challenging—imagine opening up a 185-ton concrete package filled with foam packing peanuts while standing near a helicopter on an extremely remote coastline," said John Nasset, president and C.E.O. of *The Undersea Company*. "We wouldn't have been successful in removing the dock without the hard work and dedication of everyone involved;

"Thanks to the extraordinary teamwork of all involved, the dock has been removed. No one was injured and the potential for environment impacts has been reduced significantly. But this cannot erase the tragedy experienced by the people of Japan," said Carol Bernthal, sanctuary superintendent. "Throughout this project, we've been reminded that the ocean connects people. Our common concern for the ocean environment brought us together to solve this problem, and our common respect for one another made us acutely aware of how interdependent all ocean peoples are." The removal effort was supported by many state and federal agencies. Washington's Marine Debris Task Force provided support for the initial response in December 2012, inspected the dock for non-native species, and continued to provide information on their website. The U.S. Coast Guard initially located the dock after it was reported by a mariner. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also supported the effort's planning and preparation, and NOAA's National Weather Service provided spot forecasts for the area, ensuring that the contractors and agency staff were using reliable weather information during the removal work. To ensure contractor and visitor safety, the coastal area of Olympic National Park between Goodman Creek and Jefferson Cove had been closed to all public entry. These areas have now been reopened. "The coastline of Olympic National Park is one of the most popular wilderness destinations in North America," said Olympic National Park Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum. "Thanks to the excellent work by The Undersea Company, the support of our state and federal partners, and the generous gift from the government of Japan, we are able to reopen this wild stretch of coast to the public." The cost for the \$628,000 removal effort was paid by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the national park, and with funds provided to NOAA from the government of Japan to help with cleanup of marine debris from the tsunami. "We are grateful to our federal and state partners in Washington state for all the work that went into this successful removal operation. It was collaboration at its best," said Nancy Wallace, director of NOAA's Marine Debris Program. "We also thank the government of Japan for generously contributing funds to remove this dock and other tsunami debris from U.S. coastlines, so that we may mitigate any impacts." Since the 2011 tsunami, NOAA has been leading efforts with federal, state and local partners to coordinate a response, collect data, assess the debris and reduce possible impacts to natural resources and coastal communities. Mariners and the public can help

report debris by emailing [DisasterDebris@noaa.gov](mailto:DisasterDebris@noaa.gov) with information on significant sightings. For the latest information on tsunami debris please visit [Japan Tsunami Marine Debris](http://JapanTsunamiMarineDebris.com) at <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/tsunamidebris>. 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 more than 150 documented historical shipwrecks and the vibrant contemporary cultures of Makah, Hoh, and Quileute tribes and the Quinault Indian Nation. Time lapse and other videos are posted on the Washington Ecology YouTube channel at [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list= ...6dKbvCW0Z1J0fU\\_kDIviNqrbZ](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=...6dKbvCW0Z1J0fU_kDIviNqrbZ). Photos of the removal are posted on the Washington Ecology Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ecologywa/sets/72157632473219008/>