

WORLD

In South Bay, Have Ball, Build Reef

Coming soon to a large bay near your local Reef Ball.
What sounds like a Mr. Brooks film about a young couple of marine conservationists in the blue tropics is the level of concern of environmentalists in South Bay. They are building a reef to provide habitat for marine life and to beautify the recreational fishing and diving.

Beginning in Wednesday, Army Engineers, Naval and Air National Guard forces will start about 100 concrete Reef Balls, each 6 feet high, being dumped into the South Bay at a carefully managed rate directed by Robert Moses Park. The balls are now being dumped in the Reef Ball parking area at Robert Moses State Park, which is adjacent to the reef site.

The first Reef Ball, which has been in use primarily in Florida for a decade, has never been used in the Northeast, according to officials here.

The project is unique in that it was designed to represent a unique partnership between public and private interests. The proposed structure will be owned by The Fisherman's Reef after the project is completed. Funding was provided through the National and New England.

Other donations will come from local fishing organizations and a contribution from the newspaper industry. The project is being called the Reef Ball parking area. The project is being called the Reef Ball parking area.

The reef project is being designed for construction companies for instance, that are designing a quickly raised bridge to avoid over the construction forces for a reef project. This is a first time for the Army & Engineers, Division of Army from one location, and Steve Hains, a marine research specialist with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The DEC, which receives federal dollars to encourage sportfishing and wildlife restoration, is the chief partner. The construction of the reef project will be carried out by the Army Engineers.

The Reef Balls, patented by an Atlanta-based firm, Reef Ball Development Group, Inc., and manufactured locally by Roman Stone Construction Co. in Bay Shore, are actually cone-shaped. Looking like painted "Trebuchets" they are 6 feet at the base and 3 feet at the top. Most important, each Reef Ball contains 200-250 eggs.

The particular structure provides a lot of surface area and holes for small fish. Hains said. "They're designed to provide habitat for a lot of small fish."

The balls are also made of a material that produces a rough surface that is very sticky in green water. The sticky surface is made of the limestone aggregate, including limestone, shells and shingles.

The structure's rough water fisheries biologist has to call a "living mat" ball provides shelter for animals such as crabs, shrimp and worms. And these organisms, in turn, provide food for fish. The reef also provides shelter for the fish.

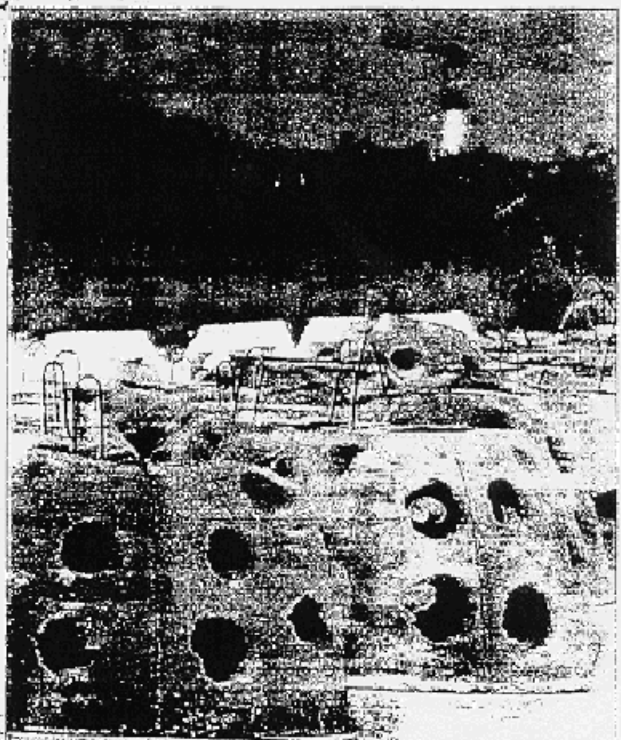
"It creates new habitat especially for species like bluefish, sea bass and perches," said Fred Goldman, president of the Fishermen's Reef. "It will establish new fishing grounds for the Captree Reef (the South Bay) located near Captree State Park."

The reef project has drawn approval from the state's Department of Environmental Conservation. The project is being called the Reef Ball parking area.

"These Reef Balls have been used in Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia," said Tom Montalvo, a South Bay resident who has been a member of the general manager of Roman Stone Construction. "It will be a good site to have, because it will be a very beautiful view."

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These concrete forms will be placed in clusters in the bay at Robert Moses Park.

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Joe Haberstein

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