

Queens

City Opens Surfing-Only Beach In Rockaway

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Catch the subway to catch a wave – Rockaway Beach just declared a new surf-only beach. NY1's Shazia Khan filed the following report.

It's surfs up at Rockaway Beach, where you can now catch even more waves! The parks department just declared beach 67th to 69th Street a surf-only beach, the second one of its kind in the city.



“Not only is this a good location for surfing, but it’s also accessible to the subway,” says Jill Weber of NYC Parks & Recreation. In 2005 the city changed laws to legalize surfing designated Rockaway beach from 87th to 91st Street as its first surf beach. And as the number of surfers swelled, the surfing community asked for another area to “hang ten.”

“The fact that they have another beach break open is really nice because hopefully it will cut down on the crowds and it will make it a little bit safer so people aren’t running over each other in the water,” says surfer Michael Tiernay. “Surfing for a New Yorkers is the best way to get back into nature,” says surfer JScott Klossner.

Hitting the waves Saturday was the not for profit Stoked Mentoring. It engages inner city kids and their mentors in extreme sports. “We’re just really excited to be here and to be able to have the opportunity to serve kids, through a different kind of sport,” says Steve Larosiliere, executive director, Stoked Mentoring. “Most kids only see surfing through TV.”

Experienced instructors showed the abc's of surfing, everything from how to respect the beach to how to catch a wave. For many beginners, riding a wave was both a challenge and a thrill. “It’s scary, kind of exciting,” says surfer Monique Judy. “It’s hard. It’s really hard work. I’m going to have to start doing push ups actually!”

“It’s fun to just be out there and on the board and just watching the waves come, and if you catch them you go really fast,” says surfer Alexandra Parache.

On the East Coast, surfers say summer time is actually not the best time to catch a wave. “The waves are the weakest and the tiniest at this particular time, so late August, September, October, November, December, January, February, even March and April can be really wonderful,” says Stoked Mentoring surfing instructor Steffen Zellinger. Surfing beaches are open from dawn until dusk, year round.

There are no lifeguards on duty and swimming is not allowed. “There are special rules just for the surfers, that the surf is actually created for themselves about access and courtesy, and they basically follow their own rules,” says Weber.

- Shazia Khan