Soquel Fishing Reef OK Not Final

Additional approvals and funding still needs to be acquired before an artificial fishing reef for Soquel Cove becomes a reality.

The Central Coastal Commission Monday unanimously approved what is said to be the first-ever quarry rock artificial fishing reef off the coast of Central California. The city of Santa Cruz does have an artificial reef of tires underneath and around the Municipal Wharf.

The Soquel reef is targeted about 1½ miles offshore between the Capitola Wharf and New Brighton State Beach some two miles east of Soquel Point.

James E. Hardwick, a marine biologist for the California Deaprtment of Fish and Game, which is applying for the reef, said this morning approvals must still be obtained from the Army Corps of Engineers and the state Lands Commission.

He termed it, "a long way from being done." He is hopeful it could become a reality by October 1981.

Funding is estimated between $60,000 and $70,000. It will be considered at the state Wildlife Conservation Board's mid-September meeting, he added.

Chances for funding, he feels, are "fair," depending on other proposed projects.

If denied, they would either have to hope for funding next year or look elsewhere for help.

Strong support has already been received from diving clubs in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Valley.

The idea of an artificial fishing reef goes back to 1971, explained Hardwick. Soquel Cove was selected because of its access to Capitola Wharf, which is undergoing a renovation, as well as its protection from prevailing winds and swells.