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## Seaside sculpture unveiled

### Kellogg Park shows off massive new artwork that 'maps' underwater park

**By Terry Rodgers**  
 UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

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LA JOLLA – Where others saw only an annoying mudhole at a seaside park, La Jolla's Mary Coakley envisioned an artist's canvas.

The result is “The Map,” a 2,300-square-foot artwork that depicts the underwater features and creatures of the San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park & Ecological Reserve.

The massive in-ground sculpture at Kellogg Park was unveiled at a ceremony yesterday attended by more than 300 people.

The underwater park – nearly 6,000 acres of tidelands and undersea terrain – was created by the city in 1970 to protect and conserve marine life.

Until now, the undersea reserve just offshore was invisible and unnoticed by most visitors to La Jolla Shores.

The frescolike artwork is made of Lithocrete, a mixture of concrete and recycled glass. The surface is embedded with life-sized brass fish ranging from yellowtail to anchovies, created by artists Lynn Reeves and Rick Sparhawk. There's even a memorial to “Blackie,” an avuncular black sea bass who was a favorite of scuba divers until he was illegally killed by a poacher in 2005.

“Every project has an angel, and this one had Mary Coakley,” said Loren Nancarrow, an eco-minded TV weatherman who hosted the ceremony.

Coakley got involved with Kellogg Park in the late 1990s, after the city revealed its blueprints for a humongous public restroom.

“When I saw the plans, I was pretty horrified,” she recalled.

Coakley, who lives across the street from the park, spent the next 18 months persuading city officials to



JOHN GIBBINS / Union-Tribune  
 Children visiting Kellogg Park checked out a bronze octopus compass at the debut of a massive in-ground sculpture called “The Map.”



JOHN GIBBINS / Union-Tribune  
 Artist Lynn Reeves hugged Mary Coakley, called “the angel” behind the art project.

replace the mega-restroom with a more elegant row of toilets called a “comfort station.”

“I don't every oppose anything without proposing an alternative,” she said.

After the downsized restroom was built in 2005, she turned her attention to fixing a nearby patch of muddy ground that had been a longtime eyesore.

The southern end of Kellogg Park is built near an area that, until the early 20th century, was a marshy coastal estuary.

For Coakley, covering the boggy patch with asphalt or concrete was not an acceptable solution. Some thought it could be turned into a lawn.

“A plan to plant grass in a mud patch morphed into a much grander scheme,” said San Diego Councilman Scott Peters, who became an ally of “The Map” at City Hall.

A colorful laminated map of the underwater park that Coakley saw in a local diving shop became the inspiration for the artistic endeavor.

The project eventually became her obsession. She recruited an army of supporters and raised about \$350,000 over 3½ years to bring the project to fruition.

Yesterday, she received a standing ovation for her efforts.

“Who would have thought that such a unique educational opportunity would come out of a toilet?” she told the audience.

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