



California Four Wheel Drive Association, Inc.
Advocating for Recreation Since 1959

July 4th, 2020

California Coastal Commission

Subject: Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area

The California 4 Wheel Drive Association (C4WDA) was founded in 1959 and we are a non-profit organization that has actively promoted the advancement of vehicle oriented outdoor recreation.

C4WDA is a volunteer-based organization of enthusiasts who promote responsible family recreation and exercise environmental conservation for protecting access to public lands. C4WDA represents over 8,000 members and 160-member clubs. We are the largest organization of this type in California.

The Oceano Dunes SVRA provides a major economic benefit to the local businesses and residents but the dunes also offer a unique recreational experience that provides access to coastal recreation for millions of Californians.

The Oceano Dunes SVRA itself generates more than \$150 Million dollars a year in economic activity from outside visitors. It is a major contributor to the SLO County's tourism industry. Local businesses depend on these visitors to generate revenue and employ local residents.

With ODSVRA now closed due to the recent Covid 19 restrictions, the surrounding local economy has been devastated. The tourism which bringing revenue into the community has come to a halt. Nearly all of the retail stores, restaurants, hotels, rental companies, and other small businesses in the area, are just struggling to stay afloat.

The continued attacks on OHV recreation by the CCC, APCD & SAG have really hurt local low- and middle-income families and small family owned businesses in the area. Sadly, many of these local, family owned businesses will not survive the Covid 19 restrictions.

This paints the perfect picture of what the local economic impact to the surrounding communities would look like with closure of Oceano Dunes SVRA. In the Oceano Dunes District alone the Oceano Dunes SVRA contributes about 3,300 jobs and provides about \$2 million in state and local taxes as well. The revenue lost impacts the entire county, thriving businesses become extinct and unemployment skyrockets.

Right now, the future of the dunes has been based solely on environmental concerns, the fiscal impact of closing the Oceano Dunes SVRA has not been given equal consideration. Both of these issues must be addressed before making any decision to close the Oceano Dunes SVRA.

Since the Oceano Dunes is now closed due to Covid19 restrictions, there has been zero OHV activity or vehicle access to the dunes for months. But the dust emissions are much worse now. The CDF site exceedances have doubled to 12 and the Nipomo-Guadalupe Road site exceedances have nearly quadrupled to 11. We encourage the CCC to take into consideration this new data and take a good look into the results and findings of the Scripps Institute study.

While species management is important, it needs to be balanced equally with OHV recreation.

Unfortunately, the OHV community will never see an equal balance, the scales will always be tipped in favor of the groups who look to remove OHV recreation from the Oceano Dunes SVRA.

Please keep in mind that the Oceano Dunes SVRA was purchased with Green Sticker Trust Fund money for the purpose of promoting OHV recreation and preserving these OHV areas for future generations.

Oceano Dunes SVRA should be managed as a State Vehicular Recreation Area, not a bird sanctuary or a butterfly grove. It should be managed as a park designated for OHV recreation.

After reading the CalCoastNews article "The Regulators who cried wolf" we have become very concerned about the blatant disregard for science and facts by the local APCD, CCC and State

Parks and the millions of dollars wasted on scientific reports that were ignored because it didn't fit their narrative to remove OHV recreation from Oceano Dunes SVRA.

The Coastal Commission is once again overreaching their authority with the issuance of a Cease and Desist Order to CLOSE the Oceano Dunes SVRA. This seems to be is a clear violation of their own regulations.

The Coastal Commission is supposed to protect public access, but this latest attempt to remove OHV access from the Oceano Dunes SVRA proves that the California Coastal Commission staff at least believes its only access for some Californians.

NOT the millions of Californians that enjoy OHV Recreation.

Jeff Blewett

California 4 Wheel Drive Association

Northern Natural Resource Consultant

3843 Hartvickson Lane

Valley Springs Ca 95252

209-210-7880

ndnrc@cal4wheel.com