



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

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**Armando Quintero, *Director***

**OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING  
Bakersfield, CA**

**June 17, 2026**

**STAFF REPORT:** Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area Update

**STAFF:** Jon O'Brien, District Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** Oceano Dunes Temporary Closure

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**Summary**

Following the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on May 20, State Parks resumed normal operations at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA) on Thursday, May 21, at 9:00 a.m. Camping, day use, and OHV limits were restored to pre-closure levels. Visitor use over Memorial Day weekend was strong, with approximately 250 campers in the SVRA on Sunday morning, May 24.

During the temporary closure period, State Parks completed a substantial amount of operational, maintenance, resource protection, and facility improvement work that enhanced park conditions and prepared the SVRA for reopening. Operational efficiencies were implemented, including the removal of trash dumpsters from Post 2 to reduce costs. District Maintenance crews utilized mechanical trash removal equipment between Post 2 and Post 5.5, where nesting conditions allowed, to remove uncovered debris from the camping area. Approximately 74 acres were treated through mechanical trash removal efforts, resulting in the removal of 32 cubic yards of glass, plastic, and other debris.

Facility improvements were also completed throughout the SVRA. CXT vault toilets were refreshed through sanding, painting, and replacement of worn components. Significant fencing improvements were undertaken within sensitive habitat areas. Historic fencing located within existing vegetation islands was removed and replaced with newer symbolic fencing in five vegetation islands. Approximately 20,000 feet of outdated fencing material, some consisting of multiple layers accumulated over time were removed, and new fencing was installed around approximately 118 acres. The symbolic fencing is easier to install, less expensive to procure, requires less maintenance, and presents fewer safety hazards than traditional fencing.

The Shorebird Program continued to monitor nesting activity throughout the closure in accordance with established nesting season protocols. The majority of Western Snowy Plover (WSP) nests remain within enclosed habitat areas. Two WSP nests were documented in the open recreation area near Post 4, with three additional nests identified east of the plover enclosure between Posts 5 and 6. Consistent with the Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) developed with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), protective buffers were established around each nest. The first California Least Tern (CLT) nests were reported during the week of May 17, prompting the placement of protective buffers and seasonal closure of the blue, red, and white access routes for the remainder of the nesting season. State Parks also initiated the Natural Communities Conservation Program (NCCP) process, the State equivalent of a Habitat Conservation Plan administered by CDFW.

The Public Safety team successfully implemented and managed the temporary operational changes with no reported trespass incidents during the closure period. Throughout this time, the area south of Arroyo Grande Creek remained open for non-vehicular recreational use, and Pismo State Beach remained accessible to street-legal vehicles.

The temporary closure began on April 14 following a court ruling related to the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit. Vehicular recreation and camping south of Arroyo Grande Creek were suspended, and a boundary fence was installed just north of the creek. To accommodate the reduced recreation footprint, day-use capacity was temporarily limited to 1,000 visitors and camping reservations through May 23 were cancelled. Closure information was coordinated by the District Interpretation team and Parks Communications and distributed through the Oceano Dunes District website, social media platforms, and a Superintendent's Posted Order.

Operational impacts extended to the park's concessionaires and special event program. The four OHV concessionaires suspended ODSVRA operations, and Pacific Adventure Tours paused activities during the closure. The beach store, Yo Banana Boy, successfully relocated operations to Pismo State Beach and remained open. Vehicle-based special events and filming activities within ODSVRA were cancelled during the closure period, while non-vehicle-based special events continued to be accommodated where appropriate.

Overall, the temporary closure provided an opportunity to complete significant maintenance, operational, and resource management improvements while continuing critical species protection efforts. These accomplishments helped position the park for a successful reopening and continued public access.

### **Commission Action**

For information only.