



California Off-Road Vehicle Association

January 14, 2026

CORVA Public Statement ICP and HCP – Oceano Dunes SVRA

On behalf of the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA), we respectfully submit this public comment regarding the ongoing management of Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and the protection of the western snowy plover.

Oceano Dunes SVRA is far more than a recreational site. It is a cornerstone of California's multiple-use public-lands framework and one of the last remaining coastal locations where lawful, family-oriented motorized recreation is permitted. The Legislature's designation of this area as a State Vehicular Recreation Area reflects a clear intent that recreation and resource protection coexist through active management—not exclusion.

Oceano Dunes lies within the Guadalupe–Nipomo Dunes complex, one of the largest intact coastal dune systems in California. For generations, this landscape has supported both public recreation and sensitive coastal species, including the snowy plover. These uses are not mutually exclusive. They have coexisted for decades through intentional, on-the-ground management guided by monitoring, data, and adaptive decision-making.

California State Parks and the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division have invested millions of dollars at Oceano Dunes in species monitoring, seasonal and permanent fencing, predator management, public education, enforcement, habitat restoration, and dust mitigation. This level of active management is comparable to—and in many cases exceeds—that employed at non-motorized coastal State Beaches that also support snowy plover habitat. The presence of off-highway vehicles alone is not determinative of species outcomes.

Snowy plovers face a range of pressures common to all California coastal beaches, including human presence, predators, storm events, shifting habitat conditions, and broader environmental dynamics. Successful protection depends on adaptive, science-based management that addresses these factors comprehensively. Blanket closures that eliminate one form of recreation without addressing the full spectrum of stressors do not constitute sound conservation strategy.

Despite extensive mitigation efforts, Oceano Dunes has faced sustained closure pressure driven largely by litigation strategies that seek to eliminate motorized recreation rather than improve measurable biological outcomes. This approach has prolonged conflict, diverted resources away from on-the-ground solutions, and undermined confidence in balanced land management.

"Protecting Public Land *FOR* the PeopleNot *FROM* the People"

1500 W. El Camino Ave. #352, Sacramento • California • 95833

mike.mcgarity@corva.org • www.corva.org



California Off-Road Vehicle Association

The recent court ruling underscores the need for a durable, lawful, and scientifically defensible path forward. CORVA views the Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) process as a critical opportunity to establish regulatory certainty, align management actions with clear and measurable biological objectives, and ensure continued public access while listed species are protected and recovered.

CORVA respectfully urges California State Parks and the OHMVR Division to continue advancing solutions grounded in data, adaptive management, and transparent performance metrics. We ask the Department to evaluate Oceano Dunes within the broader context of coastal plover management statewide and to recognize that active management—not closure—offers the greatest opportunity for long-term success for both species conservation and public recreation.

California's public lands were not set aside for exclusion, but for thoughtful, balanced use. Oceano Dunes can and must remain a place where environmental protection and responsible motorized recreation coexist under a science-based management framework.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and for your continued efforts to balance public access with environmental stewardship at Oceano Dunes SVRA.

Sincerely,

Mike McGarity

President

"Protecting Public Land *FOR* the PeopleNot *FROM* the People"

1500 W. El Camino Ave. #352, Sacramento · California · 95833

mike.mcgarity@corva.org · www.corva.org