

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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# OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING Ukiah, CA 95482

June 7, 2019

**STAFF REPORT:** Oceano Dunes SVRA Update

**STAFF:** Dan Canfield, Acting Deputy Director

**SUBJECT:** Update on Oceano Dunes SVRA Planning Efforts

# **Summary**

California State Parks is currently engaged in three separate planning efforts to improve recreational services, air quality management, natural resource management and coastal act compliance at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA).

A Public Works Plan to develop a long range management plan with the California Coastal Commission, a Particulate Matter Reduction Plan for compliance with air quality goals, and a Habitat Conservation Plan for compliance with Federal and State environmental laws

#### Discussion

Established in 1974, Oceano Dunes SVRA (formerly known as Pismo Dunes SVRA) has been one of the quintessential coastal recreational destinations for California citizens and visitors to California. The Pismo beach experience has often been the subject of popular culture studies and remains one of the truly unique California recreation experiences.

Oceano Dunes SVRA accommodates over a million visitors annually on approximately 1400 acres in south San Luis Obispo (SLO) county. Camping and dune riding are popular recreation pastimes along with surfing, fishing, kite-surfing, hiking, bird watching and whale watching. A recent economic impact analysis indicated the Oceano Dunes recreation area annually generated approximately \$243 million in overall economic impact, 3,300 jobs, and approximately \$1.9 million in state and local taxes.

Managing a popular Off-Highway Vehicle area like Oceano Dunes SVRA requires dedicated staff with skill and creativity to navigate the complex legal and regulatory environment that surrounds this park. As directed by mission and statutory guidance,

California State Parks works to find balance between the competing interests to secure the continued viability of this park for future generations. California State Parks appreciates feedback from a diverse group of visitors and stakeholders to help us better manage the resources in this special place. Each visitor has special insight based on the way they experience Oceano Dunes SVRA. California State Parks looks forward to continuing its engagement with a diverse group of visitors, stakeholders, and public entities to develop a vision to guide the future of this iconic California beach destination.

Following is a summary of the three ongoing planning efforts for Oceano Dunes SVRA:

#### Particulate Matter Reduction Plan

The recreation area is located within the much larger Guadalupe-Nipomo dune system that stretches from southern SLO County to northern Santa Barbara County. This dune system formed over tens of thousands of years by natural sand supply and onshore winds. For several years California State Parks has been working with the SLO County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) on regional air quality issues.

The region has very high PM 10 air pollution in late spring when powerful onshore winds blow across the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes. Through a natural, wind driven process called saltation, sand grains creep and bounce along the dune surface. Through this process, very fine particles in the dune sand become airborne and are dispersed downwind. The SLO APCD operates an air quality monitor at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) fire station approximately one mile downwind of Oceano Dunes SVRA. In those late spring wind events the CDF monitor routinely exceeds the state PM 10 exceedance standard. In 2017, California State Parks approved a five-year plan aimed at reducing PM 10 at the CDF monitor and improving regional air quality. The California Coastal Commission permitted this five-year plan under Coastal Development Permit 3-12-050.

In April 2018, as part of the SLO APCD Hearing Board process, California State Parks entered into a Stipulated Order of Abatement (SOA) with the SLO APCD. The SOA required immediate implementation of additional dust control efforts described in the five-year dust plan and the coastal development permit. By September 2018, California State Parks implemented the dust control measures required in the five-year dust plan, basically fast-tracking the dust control efforts.

California State Parks undertook a substantial dune restoration effort in support of the SOA and regional air quality this last winter. Portions of the dune recreation area at Oceano Dunes SVRA were fenced-off to exclude public access. Thousands of native dune plants were then planted in coordination with the winter rains and moist conditions. The native dune plants are propagated from locally collected seed stock and grown at the Oceano Dunes Greenhouse, Cal Poly Horticulture Program and local commercial greenhouses. The restoration process includes application of straw mulch, sterile annual cereal grain seed, native dune plant seed, and fertilizer to support and protect the young native plantings in the dynamic dune ecosystem.

As part of the SOA, a new four-year dust plan or Particulate Matter Reduction Plan (PMRP) is under development in cooperation with the SLO APCD. California State Parks is working to develop innovative projects and programs to improve regional air quality. As necessitated by the terms and timeframes of the SOA, this process relies on adaptive management where we learn from previous efforts and modify our work based on analysis of results and new information. On May 1, 2019, the SLO APCD hosted a public workshop on the Preliminary Concept PMRP. The public workshop was well attended and the feedback received is helping shape the PMRP. The public comments and other pertinent project documents are available for review on the SLO APCD website, https://www.slocleanair.org/air-quality/oceano-dunes-efforts.php.

#### Habitat Conservation Plan

Within Oceano Dunes SVRA there is extensive breeding habitat for two special-status ground-nesting birds, the state and federally listed endangered California least tern and the federally listed threatened Pacific coast population of the western snowy plover.

Monitoring of the least tern and snowy plover at Oceano Dunes during the breeding season began in the early 1990s. Shorebird conservation efforts include seasonal nesting exclosure, seasonal habitat improvement, intensive daily monitoring of nesting birds and predator management. The number of breeding snowy plover adults at Oceano Dunes has steadily increased over the years. In 2002, the minimum number of breeding adults was 32. With increased management the number of breeding adults jumped to 201 in 2018.

Currently, a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is being developed with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to facilitate the long-term continuation of these successful conservation practices. These efforts help in the recovery of the least tern and snowy plover while keeping well-managed Off-Highway Vehicle use and other recreational opportunities available to the public. Currently, an administrative draft HCP and associated environmental documents are under review by California State Parks and the USFWS.

#### Public Works Plan

The recreation patterns at Oceano Dunes SVRA and the way the public accesses the recreation area has remained largely unchanged since 1982. As the surrounding communities continue to grow and evolve it is incumbent on California State Parks to coordinate with the community, the recreating public, and the California Coastal Commission on the development of a new land management plan for Oceano Dunes. This new plan would accommodate the continued cooperative effort with SLO APCD on regional air quality improvement, continued shorebird conservation efforts and continued public access to this special coastal destination.

In 2017, California State Parks began a Public Works Plan process to fill this need. Just recently, a second round of public workshops was conducted in support of this planning effort. Included as an attachment (Attachment 1) to this report is the Information Packet that was provided at the public workshops. Some of the planning concepts being discussed include development of a new campground and dune access from the

southern part of Oceano Dunes SVRA near Oso Flaco Lake. This new campground concept has generated the most interest and comments with many comments supporting the concept and many others strongly opposed. Any future proposed development at Oso Flaco would preserve and improve the current recreation experience enjoyed by visitors while preserving the unique natural resource values of this special area. These proposals are conceptual in nature and interested members of the public are encouraged to visit the project website at www.OceanoDunesPWP.com to learn more about the project and to sign up and receive email alerts for future project updates

#### **Commission Action**

For information only.

#### **Attachments**

Attachment 1: PWP Project Concepts Public Meeting – Information Packet

Attachment 2: Oceano Dunes Planning Overview Chart



# PWP Project Concepts Public Meeting Information Packet

for the Pismo State Beach and Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area Public Works Plan and Environmental Impact Report

February 2019







#### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second set of public meetings for the Pismo State Beach and Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) Public Works Plan (PWP) and Environmental Impact Report. At this open house-style meeting, you will have the opportunity to learn about and provide input on project and overall PWP concepts that will guide future uses and management of Pismo State Beach and Oceano Dunes SVRA.

This meeting provides background information on Park resources and recreation and presents concepts for four specific projects envisioned at sites within the Park (as outlined below in the Station 3 description). There are two concepts presented for each project, Concept 1 and Concept 2. The project concepts represent a range of uses and possibilities for each site.

#### **BOOKLET CONTENTS**

This booklet is arranged according to the stations at the open house. Please feel free to visit each station in the order you prefer. Review the information in this booklet and comment using the comment card provided at the sign-in table. You may return the comment card during the open house or at a later date (instructions provided on the card).

Meeting materials, including the information from this booklet, will be posted on the PWP website (www.oceanodunespwp.com) so that those who could not attend today's meeting will be able to review and comment on the PWP and project concepts.

Comments on the materials presented at this meeting will be accepted until March 5, 2019.

#### **Station 1: Park Resources**

Station 1 provides background information on Park Resources, including Vegetation; Special-Status Species, Streams and Wetlands; Sea Level Rise; and Air Quality.

#### Station 2: Park Recreation

Station 2 includes a map highlighting proposed improvements to recreation, visitor amenities, and facilities, and a map of current conditions at the Park.



#### **Station 3: Project Concepts**

Station 3 presents two concepts (Concept 1 and Concept 2) for each of the following proposed projects:

- Grover Beach Lodge Site Alternative Use Project 2/15/19: Recently received information indicates that the Grover Beach Lodge Project will be moving forward as hoped. This alternative is no longer active for the Oceano Dunes District Public Works Plan.
- Pismo State Beach Boardwalk Project
- Oso Flaco Campground and Public Access Project
- Monarch Butterfly Grove Public Access Project

Maps and descriptions of each concept are provided in this booklet.

#### **PWP OVERVIEW**

The PWP is a long-range land use management plan for compliance with the California Coastal Act (Coastal Act) that is reviewed and approved by the California Coastal Commission. The PWP will document existing conditions, consider improvement projects and management programs to improve access for motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities, and develop policies and programs. Today's meeting focuses on four site-specific proposed Park improvement projects.

The planning process for the PWP will:

- Document existing conditions
- Consider improvement projects and management programs to improve access for motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities
- Integrate other planning efforts and ensure consistency with the General Development Plan
- Develop policies, goals and guidelines

Concurrently with the PWP, State Parks will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the PWP and implementation of the proposed Park improvement projects. The EIR will consider the environmental effects of the proposed PWP and proposed improvement projects and, if necessary, include mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts.

### **Draft PWP Guiding Principles**

The project team has developed the following draft PWP Guiding Principles.

- Sustainability. Adaptively manage lands, resources, and recreational opportunities so they may be enjoyed by many generations of Californians to come.
  - > Adaptability. Consider the effects of climate change and sea level rise during planning and investment decisions for infrastructure. Create flexible



- operations and maintenance procedures that can easily be adapted in response to environmental change.
- > **Protect the Natural Environment.** Preserve and restore natural habitats, maintain healthy ecosystem processes, and assist the recovery of degraded ecosystems in line with state and federal regulations. Reduce any social and environmental impacts on the natural environment and prevent future impacts through site sensitive planning.
- > **Diversity.** Continue to provide a variety of affordable recreational opportunities for all Park users.
- Transparency. Share the reasoning behind decision making that affects land uses with those that are affected by them.
  - **Enhancing Communication to the Public.** Consistently use a variety of methods and formats to regularly educate and update the public about Park history and current activities. Increase opportunities for Park visitors to have direct interaction with Park staff.
- Considering the Needs and Concerns of Stakeholders. Gather input from all constituents (public, Park visitors, agencies, neighbors) throughout any planning process, as appropriate.
  - > **Promoting Stakeholder Participation.** Regularly provide stakeholders and community groups with convenient opportunities to learn and provide input about Park activities through various modes of communication, languages, activities, and locations.
  - > Cultivating Stakeholder Relationships. Create or strengthen relationships with stakeholders and community groups by identifying and validating their interests and motivations, being responsive to their input, identifying issues, and seeking feasible solutions to those issues.
- Working with Partners and Volunteers. Actively seek input and meaningful dialogue.
  - ➤ Inspiring Partner and Volunteer Contribution. Create a communication forum that respects differences, welcomes divergent ideas, considers nontraditional solutions, creates opportunities for meaningful dialogue and work, and acknowledges the importance of community partners and volunteers.
  - > Implementing Full Circle Communication. Practice active listening, intentional speaking and conscious self-monitoring to clearly articulate expectations and encourage diverse contribution while building consensus.



 Sound Data for Management. Obtain the latest and best data available to make informed management decisions and communicate them well.

## **Draft PWP Goals**

The project team has developed the following draft PWP Goals.

- Obtain and Manage for Coastal Act Compliance within the Oceano District
  - > Develop a Long Term Sustainable Plan. Create a reasonable and achievable long-term operations plan that supersedes the Coastal Development Permit (CDP), resolves conflicting language that currently exists between local coastal programs (LCPs) and the CDP, and addresses outstanding CDP issues.
  - Communicate the Complexity of Existing Conditions and Regulation Compliance. Clearly document the dynamic Park environment, existing conditions, and mandates, including Coastal Act and Air Pollution Control District Stipulated Order to Abatement compliance, and Endangered Species Act Compliance.
  - > Illustrate State Parks Recreation Management Expertise. Demonstrate State Parks' expertise in Park management and ability to identify the appropriate balance between vehicular use and resource protection, effectively manage Park operations, protect and monitor natural resources, and communicate and enforce rules.
  - ➤ Highlight Community Relevancy. Highlight the Park's special and unique recreational opportunities and amenities, including the OHV riding experience and the non-motorized experience. Expound on the Parks cultural history and heritage, demonstrating its uniqueness and contribution to the local economy to strengthen relationships with tourism associations, public agencies, local business organizations, local tribes, and residents.
  - Develop Streamlined Park Management Guidelines and Procedures. Strengthen the relationship between State Parks, the California Coastal Commission, surrounding communities, and other stakeholders by providing clarity regarding jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities. Streamline the permitting and development of PWP identified projects, establish natural resource reporting procedures, and providing consistent and well-defined adaptive management guidelines for Park operations, management, and maintenance activities.
  - Promote Efficient Communication. Provide a forum for streamlined. efficient, and productive meetings and communications between State Parks and the California Coastal Commission with a focus on Park project development, operation, maintenance, and management programs consist with the PWP.



- Manage the Park Consistent with State and Federal Resource Protection Goals and Mandates and Other Applicable Plans
  - > Comply with Applicable Plans and Regulations. Comply with state and federal regulations and permit requirement, and manage the Park consistent with relevant LCPs of surrounding jurisdiction, and local Park plans such as the dust control plan, habitat conservation plan (HCP), and other applicable Parks management plans.
  - Partner with Local Agencies to Conserve and Improve Habitat. Partner with local agencies in an effort to improve habitat within the Oceano Dunes SVRA and enhance natural resource monitoring programs.
  - Highlight Success in Park Revegetation and Air Quality Efforts. Describe the Park's historical and current success in revegetating dune areas to reduce dust and improve air quality.
  - Protect Cultural Resources. Develop a cultural resource inventorying and monitoring program.
  - **Educate the Public about Resource Management.** Build on existing resource management programs and expand occasions to educate the public about resource protection and management.
- Improve Public Access to the Parks
  - Foster Accessibility for All User Groups. Recognize all user groups. and maintain accessibility for all Park visitors, preserving user diversity and inclusivity and enhancing low-cost recreation opportunities.
  - > Improve Traffic Circulation. Improve local traffic circulation associated with vehicle access to Oceano Dunes SVRA and explore additional parking and alternative transportation options between Park amenities and parking facilities. Consider mutual solutions with the surrounding communities and jurisdiction.
  - Provide Park Trip Planning Tools, Improved Connectivity, and Enhanced Wayfinding. Provide additional visitor/trip planning tools in formats congruent with a diverse group of Park users, increased connectivity between Park facilities and amenities, and improved recreational circulation and wayfinding signage within the Park.
- **Optimize Recreation** 
  - > Optimize Motorized Recreation at Oceano Dunes SVRA. Optimize motorized recreational opportunities, and incorporate new technology when feasible, while preserving the Park's natural habitat.



- > Enhance Compatible Non-Motorized Recreation. Preserve access to and explore opportunities to enhance compatible non-motorized recreation opportunities.
- **Ensure Future Park Access.** Demonstrate the value of managed recreation for the local community and visitors and preserve access to the Parks unique recreational amenities and facilities for existing and future generations.

# **Enhance Visitor Experiences**

- Improve Visitor Facilities and Amenities. Add or improve existing facilities and amenities, such as trash enclosures, bathrooms, and Wi-Fi.
- **Enhance Recreational Experiences.** Amplify visitor recreational experiences by incorporating new ideas, such as guided tours, new concessions, diverse camping accommodations, and aesthetics that complement and support the Parks purpose and natural environment.
- **Expand Interpretive Programs.** Improve the Park's interpretive programs, exploring the development of additional education programs or facilities, where most needed and appropriate. Partner with local community schools to enhance youth education and recreational programs and activities.

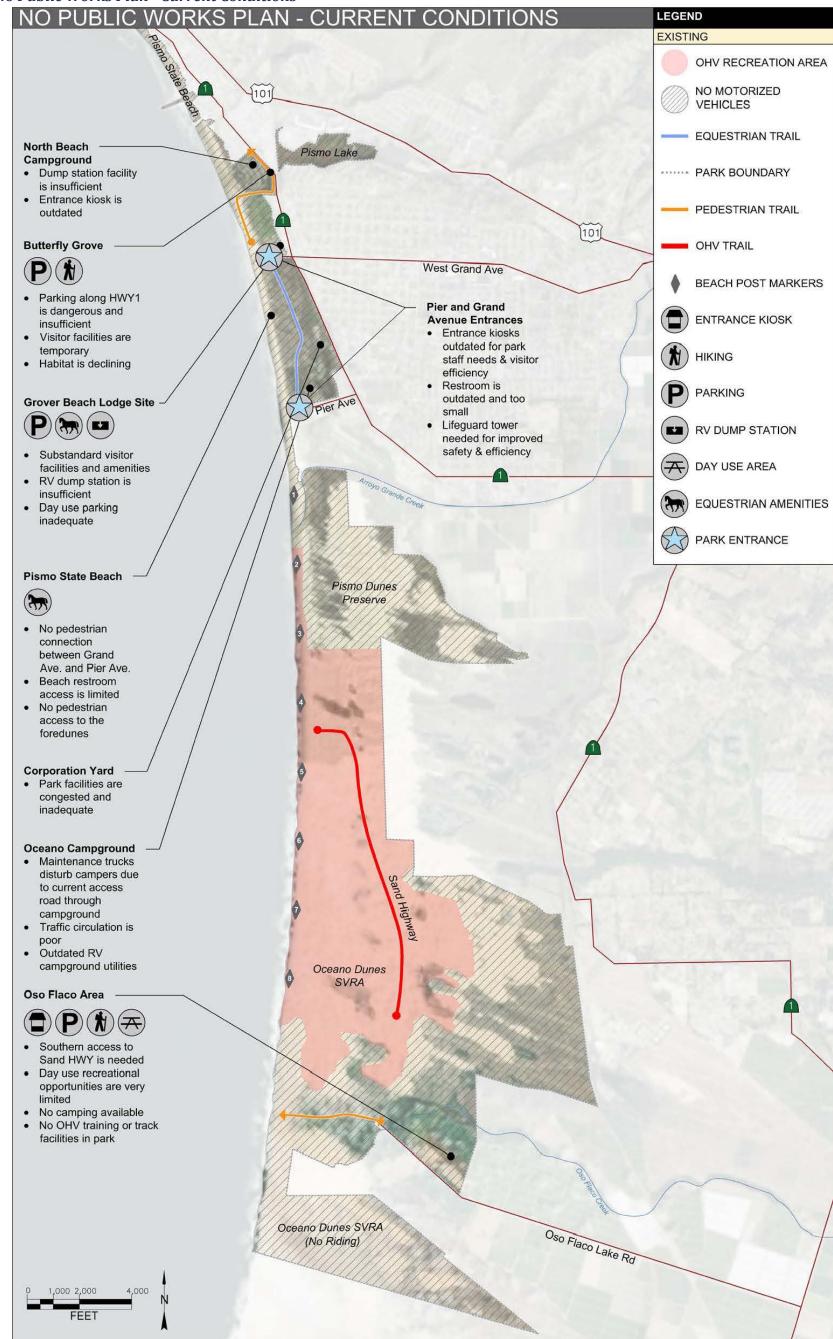
# Increase District Operational Efficiency

- Maximize the Long-Term Utility of Park Facilities. Consider long-term functionality, natural hazards, potential effects of climate change, emergency response, and optimizing visitor experience when planning and (re)locating Park facilities and infrastructure, and incorporate these considerations into investment decisions.
- > Improve Management Space and Storage. Create, consolidate, upgrade, or rearrange facilities to create more office space, equipment storage, and staff and fleet parking where necessary and feasible.
- **Ensure Visitor Safety.** Provide for improved Park safety through enhanced education, safety training programs, and facilities.
- > Provide for Improved Data Collection and Maintenance. Provide for regular review and updating of data needs, as practicable, to adequately support Park operations and programs, improve processes and procedures for centralized storing and maintenance of data, and make data more easily accessible to Park staff and constituents.



# Station 2 - Park Recreation

No Public Works Plan - Current Conditions







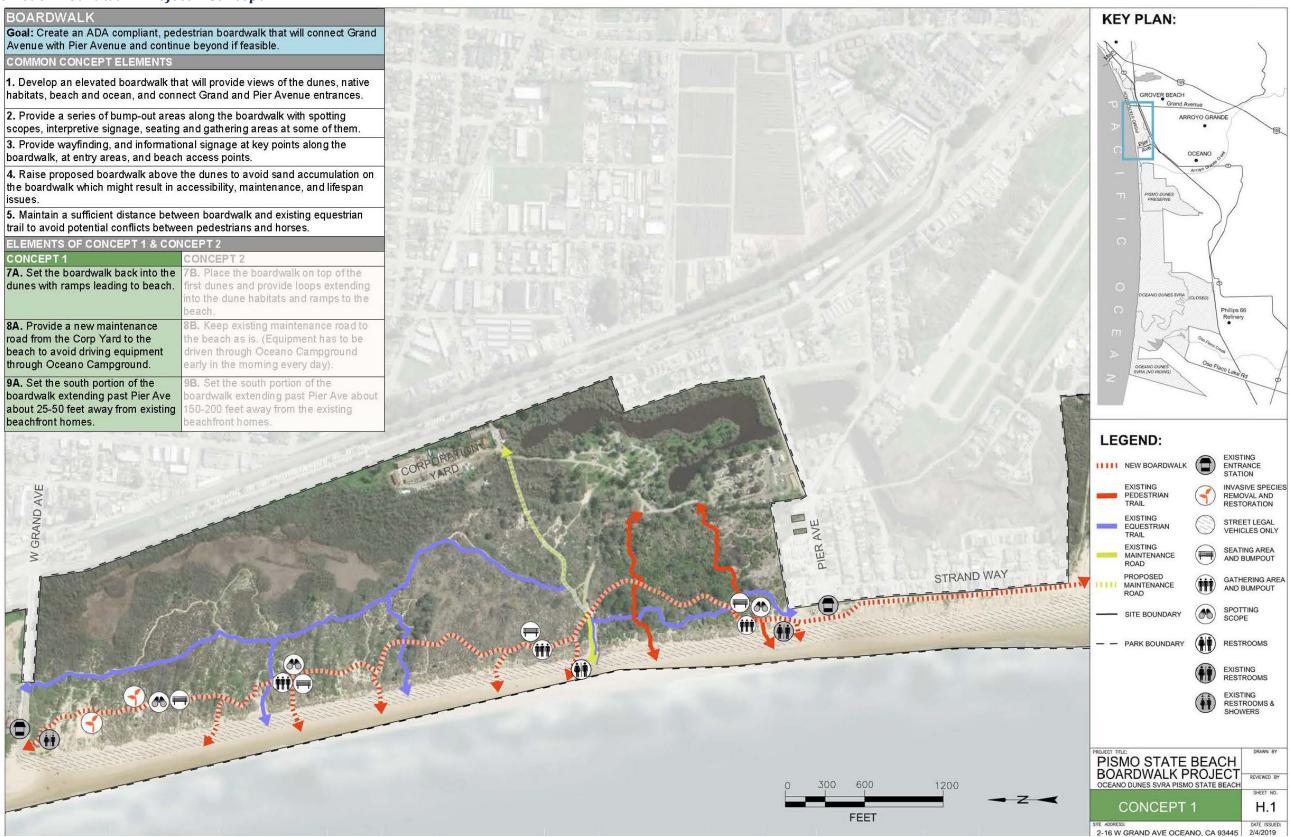


**INVOLVE IMPROVEMENTS** 

AND UPDATES TO FACILITIES.

FEET

## Pismo State Beach Boardwalk Project - Concept 1



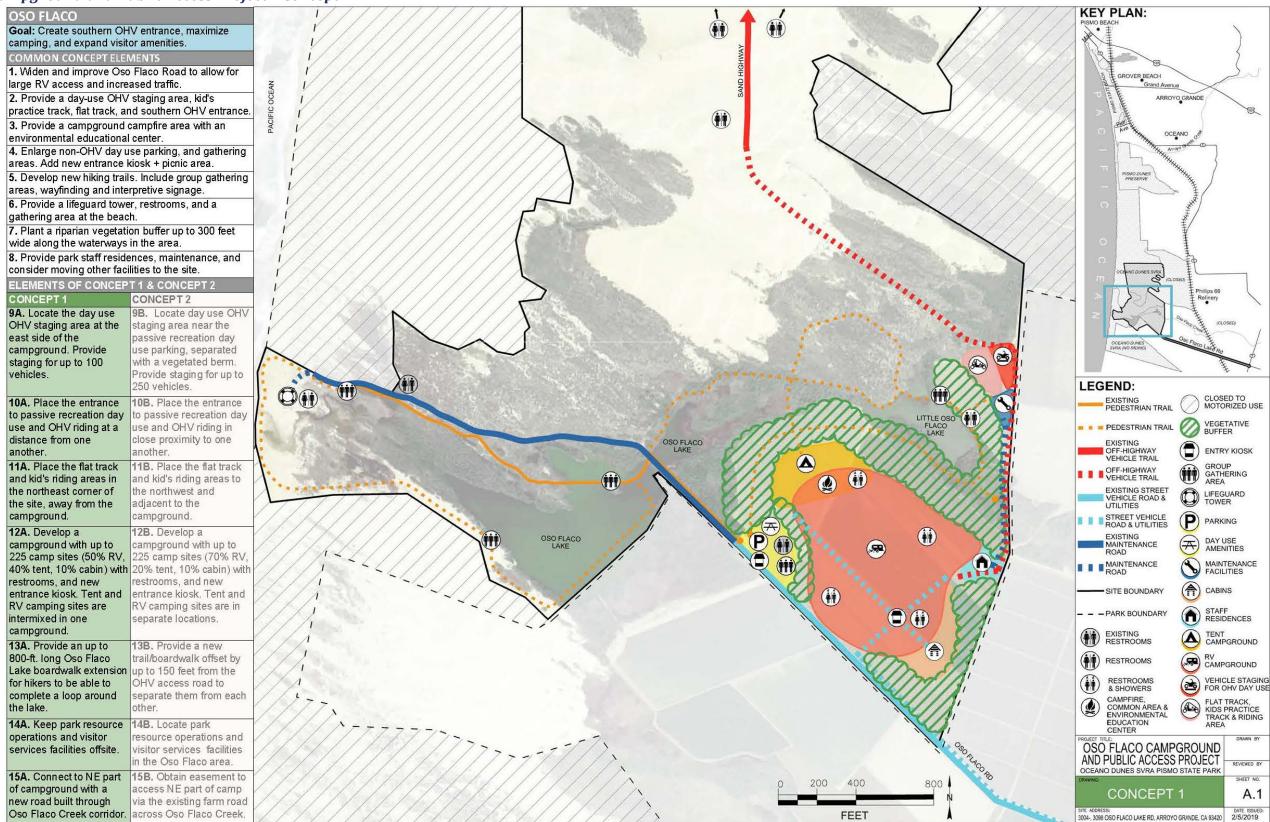


#### Pismo State Beach Boardwalk Project - Concept 2



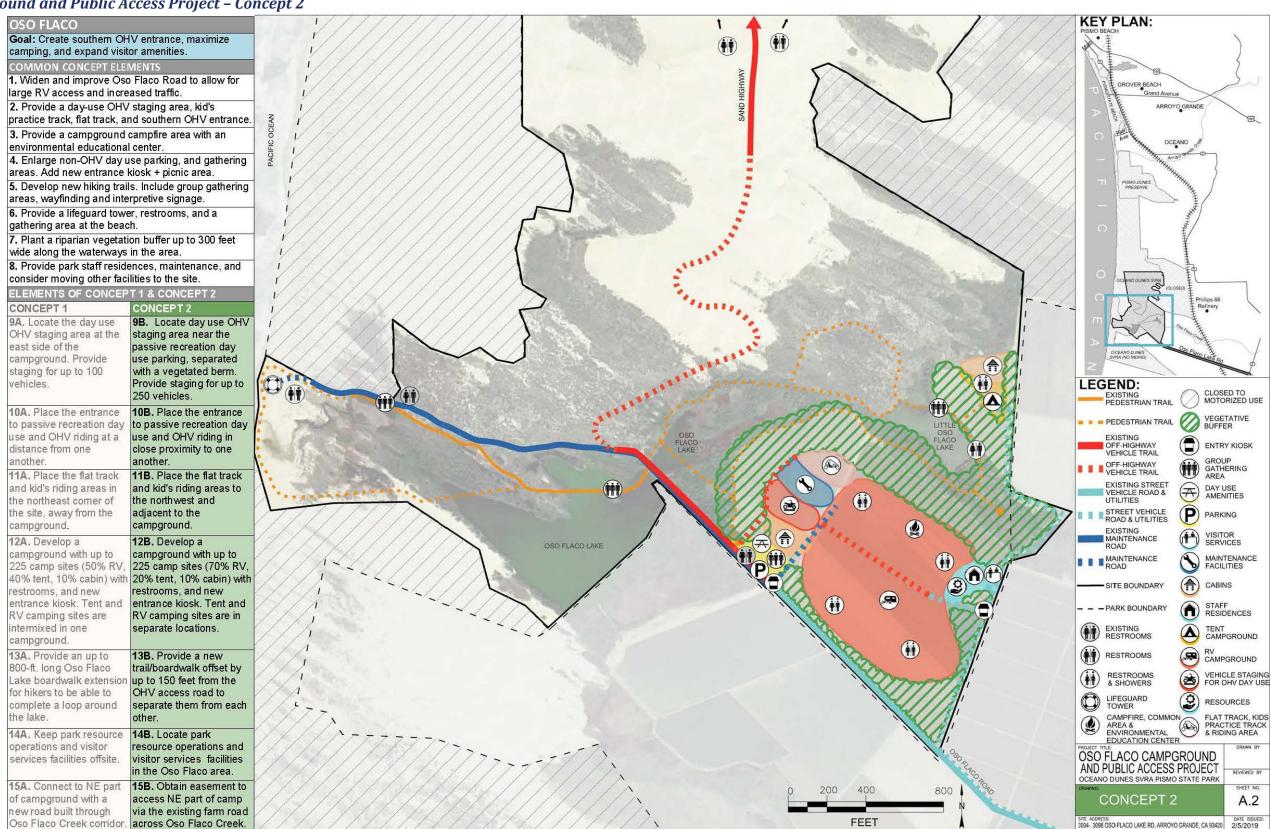


#### Oso Flaco Campground and Public Access Project - Concept 1





## Oso Flaco Campground and Public Access Project - Concept 2





# Butterfly Grove Public Access Project - Concept 1





# Butterfly Grove Public Access Project - Concept 2





# 2/15/19: Recently received information indicates that the Grover Beach Lodge Project will be moving forward as hoped. This alternative is no longer active for the Oceano Dunes District Public Works Plan.

Grover Beach Lodge Site Alternative Use Project - Concept 1 GROVER BEACH LODGE SITE ALTERNATIVE USE PROJECT **KEY PLAN:** Goal: Improve circulation and visitor amenities. COMMON CONCEPT ELEMENTS 1. Add parking stalls, picnic tables, and shade structures for day use visitors and special events. 2. Provide a separate equestrian parking/staging staging area for day use visitors. 3. Expand the existing RV dump station. 4. Increase the width of the existing riparian buffer along Meadow Creek to approximately 100 feet. 5. Develop a pedestrian connection between the existing and proposed boardwalks. 6. Move visitor services and resource operations into a new building. **ELEMENTS OF CONCEPT 1 & CONCEPT 2** CONCEPT 1

9A. Locate equestrian CONCEPT 2 9B. Locate equestrian staging about 300 feet from staging about 60 feet equestrian trailhead. from equestrian trailhead. Horses Horses required to use sidewalk for a longer required to use sidewalk distance. for a shorter distance. 10A. Keep the CA Parks 10B. Move the CA Parks district office offsite. district office into a new building onsite. 11B. Install a crosswalk 11A. Install a crosswalk (iii) ( connecting the existing and connecting the existing new boardwalks west of and new boardwalks the entrance kiosk. east of the entrance LEGEND: EXISTING EVENT SPACE 12A. Expand plaza and 12B. Maintain existing EXISTING PEDESTRIAN PATH EXISTING GOLF COURSE ENTRANCE day use facilities. plaza size. EXISTING DAY USE AMENITIES PEDESTRIAN PATH P CETTER GOLF COURSE SIGN PEDESTRIAN BOARDWALK ECHEROLEUCE F. TO (<del>1</del>) ( RESTROOMS VISITOR SERVICES Charles att. PARK BOUNDARY VEGETATION BUFFER DAY USE AMENITIES EXPANDED PLAZA CLOSED TO MOTORIZED USE W GRAND AVE EXISTING RESTROOMS PARKING TRAILER DUMP & LIFT STATION PROJECT TITLE:
GROVER BEACH LODGE SITE
ALTERNATIVE USE PROJECT
OCEANO DUNES SVRA PISMO STATE BEACH **CONCEPT 1** C.1 FEET

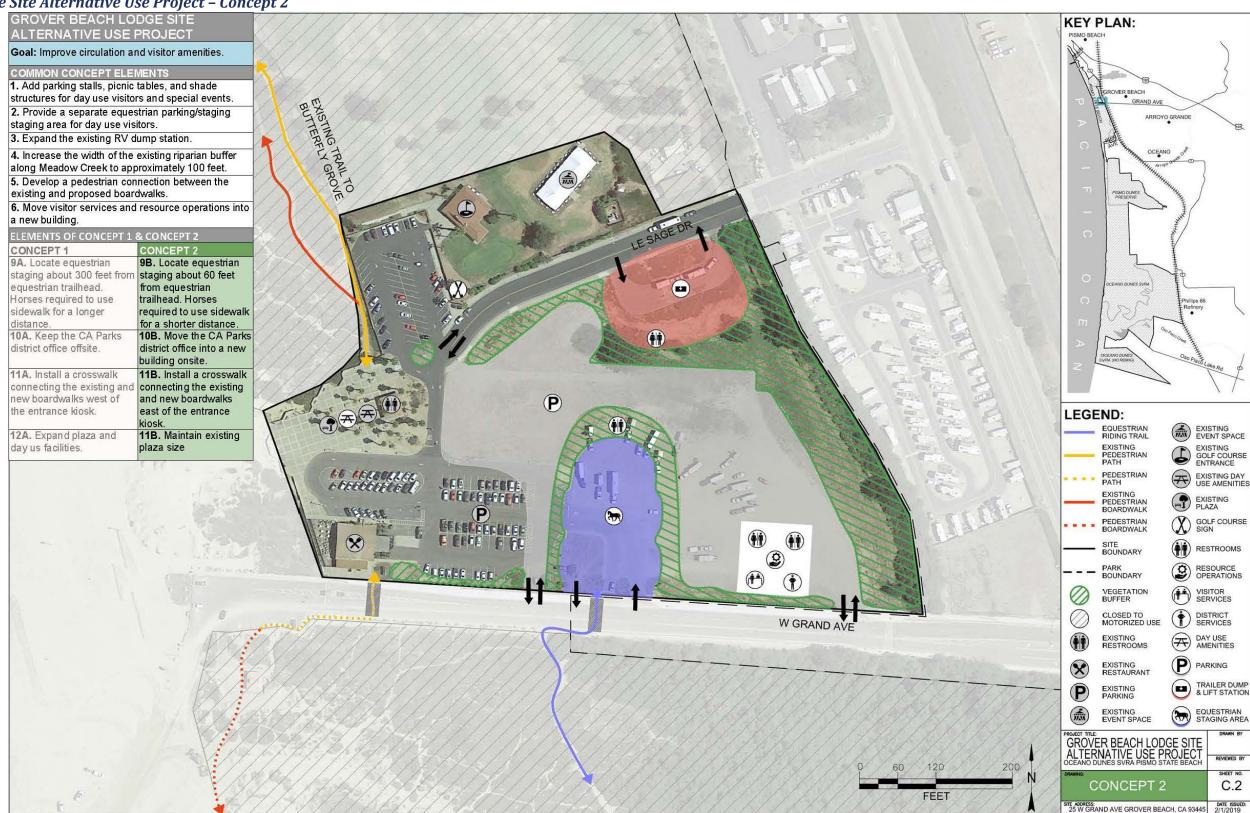


te address:
25 W GRAND AVE GROVER BEACH, CA 93445

DATE ISSUED:
2/4/2019

# 2/15/19: Recently received information indicates that the Grover Beach Lodge Project will be moving forward as hoped. This alternative is no longer active for the Oceano Dunes District Public Works Plan.

Grover Beach Lodge Site Alternative Use Project - Concept 2





# Oceano Dunes SVRA – Planning Update

