



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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**OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING
Sacramento, CA 95816**

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STAFF REPORT: Mammoth Bar Track Relocation

STAFF: Peter Jones, Environmental Scientist, Prairie City SVRA,
Mike Howard, Sector Superintendent, Auburn State Recreation Area

SUBJECT: Mammoth Bar OHV Area/MX Track Update

Summary

Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) consists of approximately 30,000 acres of mostly federal land managed under a Managing Partnership Agreement between California State Parks and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The area has been managed by State Parks since 1977 after the land was acquired by BOR in the 1960s for the Auburn Dam Project. The Mammoth Bar Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area, located along the Middle Fork of the American River, has been used for OHV recreation since the 1970s and is also popular with mountain bikers, river rafters, fishermen, beach goers, and hikers.

Discussion

The Mammoth Bar motocross (MX) track and trails were severely damaged by large storm events in January and February of 2017. Following the storms, the trails and track were evaluated for damage in a collaboration between the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division and ASRA staff. Following the survey, the decision was made to temporarily close the OHV area while devising a plan to make the necessary repairs. The surveys revealed that more than 20% of the MX track washed away leaving a 10-15 foot high cut bank (see Figure 1) where the MX track once stood. The river flow peaked at 65,460 cubic feet per second on February 8, 2017. This river flow has a 6.67 recurrence interval annually, defining the event as a 15-year flood. All of the trails were also surveyed and determined to be too badly damaged to allow continued usage before being repaired.

The OHMVR Division in conjunction with ASRA staff developed a plan to inventory and maintain the OHV trails which had a good alignment and would be kept moving forward.

On May 10, 2018, after several weeks of surveys and heavy equipment work was completed, eight of the trails totaling nine miles were reopened to OHV use.

In March of 2017, the MX track area was mapped using a drone from the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division in conjunction with California Geological Survey (CGS). This data provided a precise inundation line from the flood event, as well as acreages for the previous track footprint to develop alternatives for the facility. The final CGS report provided four options for the MX track. The selected option will relocate the MX track to higher ground in the existing staging area where floodwaters will have substantially less erosive force and will be much less likely to be damaged by future flood events.

One of the recommendations of the CGS report was to lay back the newly formed vertical cut bank at a 2:1 ratio for public safety and erosion control purposes. This project was completed in the fall of 2019 under a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. Large boulders were also placed along the newly sloped bank to further protect and armor the river channel (see Figure 2). The material removed from the cut bank has been stockpiled for use on the relocated MX track. The OHMVR Division contributed an additional \$56,000 toward this project in order to cover permit costs, heavy equipment rentals, best management practices (BMP) materials, boulders, and staff time from Prairie City SVRA.

In order to move forward with the plan to relocate the MX track, the OHMVR Division hired environmental consulting firm, MIG, to produce a National Environmental Policy Act/California Environmental Quality Act (NEPA/CEQA) document to analyze the project for significant impacts. An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and the CEQA documents were posted to the State Clearinghouse at the end of April with a public and agency close of comment period ending on June 1, 2020.

MIG then prepared the response to comments and the Notice of Determination (NOD) was issued in July with an anticipated project start date of August 2020.

This project at the Mammoth Bar OHV Area is a great example of what is possible with partnerships. California State Parks is continuing to work with the OHMVR Division under a Project Agreement to aid ASRA with an additional estimated \$200,000 in order to cover the project costs which exceed what is possible within the Mammoth Bar OHV area annual budget allocation. Input was solicited from the Mammoth Bar Task Force (comprised of OHV and non-OHV user groups) and stakeholders from the MX track and trails communities to devise a plan to relocate existing facilities and ensure that all user groups recreating at Mammoth Bar will have continued use of the area after project completion (see Figure 3 which shows the facility placement).

The Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Preliminary General Plan/Draft Resource Management Plan for Auburn SRA was released June 26, 2020. The General Plan and EIR will go to the State Park and Recreation Commission sometime in 2021 for approval of the Plan and certification of the EIR. Some of the Guidelines in the Plan for Mammoth Bar which may further benefit OHV riders include repair, re-route, re-construct, or add trails to improve trail

sustainability, and increasing the number of OHV ride days from 3 to as many as 6 days per week.

Commission Action

None

Figure 1.



Bank on west side of MX Track eroded by February 2017 high water flow along channel braid.

Figure 2.



Completed Cut Bank Mitigation Project, November 2019.

Figure 3.

