



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
PO Box 942896  
Sacramento, California 94296  
Telephone: (916) 902-8598

Armando Quintero, *Director*

## OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING

### Virtual Meeting

September 16, 2022

**STAFF REPORT:** Planning Program Update

**STAFF:** Alexandra Stehl, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Recreation Services Division

**SUBJECT:** Status of Planning Efforts for State Vehicular Recreation Areas

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### Summary

Several General Plan efforts are underway within State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs). Ocotillo Wells SVRA, Carnegie SVRA, and Hungry Valley SVRA are in the process of updating their park general plans. The Red Rock Canyon State Park General Plan, which has off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation components and is located adjacent to several SVRAs and federal offroad vehicle areas, is revising its general plan. This report describes each plan's purpose, process, and current milestones.

### Discussion

Following is a summary of recent SVRA/OHV general plan developments.

#### ***Ocotillo Wells SVRA:***

The Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan team, in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) El Centro Field Office staff, is developing a new land management plan for Ocotillo Wells SVRA/Ocotillo Wells Special Recreation Management Area. For compliance with both state and federal land management policies, the long-term land management plan for Ocotillo Wells SVRA is envisioned to be comprised of:

- a California State Park unit General Plan,
- a BLM Recreation Area Management Plan, and
- a California Desert Conservation Area Land Use Plan Amendment.

Presently, the General Plan team and the BLM El Centro staff are working on restarting the project after it was put on hold in 2019.

#### ***Hungry Valley SVRA:***

The planning team is preparing the administrative draft general plan and EIR for Hungry Valley SVRA for internal review. The Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan has

a project website at [www.PlanHungryValley.com](http://www.PlanHungryValley.com) to facilitate public involvement in the planning process. Interested parties should visit the project website and register to receive email notifications regarding project progress.

***Red Rock Canyon State Park General Plan:***

The General Plan team is preparing the Preliminary Draft General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report for public review in September 2022. The Final General Plan and EIR will be presented to the State Park and Recreation Commission for review and approval in 2023.

**Background:**

Red Rock Canyon became a unit of the State Park System in 1968 with the purchase of approximately 4,000 acres from private owners. Red Rock Canyon State Park was initially classified as a state recreation area in 1973. This action was primarily based on the types of recreation uses (BLM allowable activities) historically occurring in the area. Red Rock Canyon was reclassified as a state park in 1980. In January 1982, a General Plan was approved for the park. At the time, the unit consisted of approximately 3,000 acres. Since then, an additional 24,000 acres have been acquired through BLM land transfers and the 1994 California Desert Protection Act, including the area known as Last Chance Canyon.

Under the park's existing classification as a State Park, vehicle use is confined to primary park roads and other areas specifically designed and maintained for normal ingress, egress, and parking. OHVs, both street-licensed and non-street-licensed, use have been allowed on roads until a general plan update is completed.

**General Plan background:**

State Parks began a general plan update project in 1994 to include new properties added to the park in 1982. The planning process was stalled and was restarted in 2018. The proposed general plan includes new cultural and natural preserves, interpretive trails, and a few new park amenities, such as an equestrian staging area and environmental camps. The proposed general plan will allow street-licensed vehicles on park roads and authorize vehicles registered as off-highway on Sierra View Road and Red Rock Wash. These routes will provide connectivity to and from popular BLM OHV Areas and Onyx Ranch SVRA.

***Carnegie SVRA General Plan Update:***

The previous GP prepared for this SVRA was overturned on CEQA grounds, and after that, legislation removed the "Expansion Area" of 3,100 acres. The current proposed General Plan Update and EIR are limited to the 1,575-acre original Carnegie SVRA. The classification of and planning for the Expansion Area will be addressed in the future under a separate planning effort.

The OHMVR Division prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) under Section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. This NOP informs

agencies and the public that an EIR is being prepared to address potential impacts resulting from the approval and implementation of the *General Plan Update*. The Planning Division and consultant held a virtual public scoping meeting on April 19, 2022, and the public comment period ended on April 30, 2022. Please visit the Carnegie SVRA General Plan Update [webpage](#) for project updates and to sign up to receive project email announcements. The team anticipates the draft updated general plan and EIR to be released for public review in Winter 2022/2023.

### ***OHV/OSV Economic Impact Study:***

Field work for the survey (one research component of the OHV/OSV Economic Impact Study) started at State Park and non-State Park recreation sites. Outreach via email will begin after internal content review. The survey and all outreach materials (email, posters, postcards) are available in English and Spanish. Data collection for the special events version of the survey will begin at events this fall. Secondary data analysis has already begun, which includes DMV registration data. This will help correlate data collected in the survey. Data collection is expected to continue through 2023, and a draft report is expected in fall 2024.

#### Data Collection In Process:

- postcard invitation with QR code and survey link mailed to ~3000 DMV-registered users
- posters with QR codes and survey links posted at recreation sites
- onsite data collection and postcard distribution at recreation sites

#### Coming Soon:

- survey links posted on State Park webpages
- email invitation sent to OHV contact list (~2000 contacts)
- onsite data collection about the impact of special events

Please complete the survey by clicking on this link for English <https://rb.gy/fsnewj> or Spanish <https://rb.gy/il5ois>.

## ***ODSVRA and Pismo State Beach Survey***

The Center for Urban Resilience (CUR) at Loyola Marymount University is developing a more comprehensive engagement management model for the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and Pismo State Beach. The goals of this project are twofold: 1) to provide specific tools to better understand the community's needs at these initial locations and 2) to serve as a general model for future projects throughout the state. CUR has a successful history of developing such plans for multiple municipalities by delivering these multimodal reports to key stakeholders.

CUR staff is uniquely poised to conduct this work with in-house expertise in social science, survey development, ecology, assessment of recreational activities and needs, plus knowledge of off-highway recreational vehicles and the specialized communities that participate in those sports. The proposed project includes a series of social science tools that focus on key stakeholders and the general community. When conducted and analyzed, the combined pool of information becomes a powerful toolkit for shaping a sustainable management plan.

### Fundamental Components of the Survey:

- Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and Pismo State Beach (SB) will serve as a pilot study and proof of concept for a survey instrument and methodology that can be used for Parks throughout the State of California
- CUR scientists will build upon the successful [Baldwin Hills Parklands Survey](#) (Romolini et al. 2017) and methodology as the foundation from which to build this novel survey
- We will work in partnership with State Parks staff to develop and refine survey instruments and protocols
- We will collectively determine locations for surveying the community, which will include onsite locations at both parks, as well as community locations outside the parks, such as libraries, community centers, grocery stores, and local stakeholder meetings and events
- We will partner with local community organizations (e.g., community groups and community colleges) for information gathering, outreach, and recruiting participants to conduct the survey

### **Commission Action**

For information only

### **Attachments**

SVRA General Plans chart

**CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

**SPRS & OHMVR DIVISION**

<b>Park Unit</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>Amended</b>	<b>Plan Status &amp; Updates in Progress</b>
Prairie City SVRA	2016 1991		Approved by the OHMVR Commission in September 2016
Carnegie SVRA	2016 1981		GP was approved by the OHMVR Commission in October 2016 and rescinded in 2021. General Plan (GP) Update for the 1575-acre original Carnegie property began in April 2022
Clay Pit SVRA	2012		The OHMVR Commission approved GP in June 2012
Heber Dunes SVRA	2011		The OHMVR Commission approved GP in December 2011
Hollister Hills SVRA	1978	2003	
Oceano Dunes SVRA	1975	1991	
Hungry Valley SVRA	1981		GP update in progress. Preparing the draft preliminary GP and draft environmental impact report (EIR) for public review
Ocotillo Wells SVRA	1981		GP EIR/Environmental Impact Statement restarted in 2022
Eastern Kern County, Onyx Ranch SVRA			GP and EIR project may begin in 2023
Red Rock Canyon State Park	1981		GP revision in progress. Preparing the draft preliminary GP and draft environmental impact report (EIR) for public review September 2022