

**Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division – Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission – Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area Ad Hoc Committee – AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

**Ad Hoc Committee:** Oceano Dunes SVRA

**Date of Meeting:** June 27, 2023

**Time of Meeting:** 5:30-7:30pm

**Location:** Virtual

**Attendees:**

See Attachment A listing members of the public attending the meeting virtually. In addition, the following OHMVR Division and Oceano Dunes District Staff attended the meeting:

Sarah Miggins, Deputy Director, OHMVR Division

Callan McLaughlin, OHV Division Chief, OHMVR Division

Tara Lynch, Chief of Legal Counsel, CA State Parks

Jon O'Brien, Environmental Program Manager, OHMVR Division

Jonathan Barros, Associate Park and Recreation Specialist, OHMVR Division

Vicki Perez, Administrative Assistant II, OHMVR Division

Kevin Pearce, Oceano Dunes District Chief Ranger

Ronnie Glick, Oceano Dunes District Resource Program Manager

Jeff Findlay, Oceano Dunes District Maintenance Chief

Roger Jacobs, Oceano Dunes District Planning Chief

**Agenda:**

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm. Commissioners Ross-Leech and Whettam were present.
  
- II. **Welcome and Introductions:** Commissioner Whettam welcomed everyone and announced that this would be her last official meeting as a Commissioner.
  
- III. **Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items:**
  - Many comments from the public recognizing Commissioner Whettam's contribution to the OHMVR Commission and her passion for OHV.

- Concern about daily use limits at the ODSVRA and suggestion to use technology to account for day use vehicles leaving the park so that new day use vehicles may enter the park.
- Concern about total rental vehicle numbers which have not been reduced while private vehicle numbers allowed have been reduced.
- Opportunities to off-set Snowy Plover mitigation off site and outside of riding areas.
- Request for updates on previous suggestion for entry kiosk operations utilizing QR codes for reservations which would also alleviate traffic congestion at Pier Avenue.
- Comment about use and vehicle limits at other SVRAs (Hollister Hills, Carnegie) that must close during parts of the day due to capacity limits being reached. Suggest research into technology solutions that can better track entry and exit vehicle use and/or setting up am and pm riding times.

IV. **Friends of Oceano Dunes v. Coastal Commission, San Luis Obispo Superior Court Case #21CV-0214 (Consolidated) Update:** Tara Lynch, Chief of Legal Counsel gave a brief update on the status of the case. A hearing of all of the cases was held on June 15, 2023. Oral arguments were given by all parties. The judge has 90 days to make a decision on the case.

V. **Report and Updates from the Previous In-Person and Virtual Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on January 24, 2023:** Commissioner Whettam thanked Jim Suty for providing a helicopter tour of the ODSVRA and surrounding environment prior to the last in-person/virtual Ad Hoc meeting. She also mentioned that the agenda for this Ad Hoc Committee meeting was based on the comments and questions from the last meeting. Commissioner Whettam expressed her desire to have this virtual Ad Hoc meeting be more of a workshop, with questions and responses to address the public's concerns.

VI. **ODSVRA District Operations and Maintenance Update:**

- a. Deputy Director Update on District Superintendent Search: Deputy Director Miggins recognized and thanked Ronnie Glick for his time as

the Acting District Superintendent. Kevin Pearce is the current Acting District Superintendent. Deputy Director Miggins reported that State Parks has hired GrowthWise Search Partners to help recruit the best qualified candidates for the District Superintendent position.

- b. Beach Clean-up Activities: Roger Jacobs reported that there had been several clean-ups since we met in January. District staff supported community efforts with social media outreach and on-site assistance for the Friends of Oceano Dunes, Starbucks, and San Luis Obispo Ski Club. CAL Fire crews also helped out and worked with the maintenance team.
- c. Dust Control Measures: Jon O'Brien reported that his team is focused on the annual report and work plan. The draft plan is due to the Scientific Advisory Committee on June 30 and the initial draft plan is due to the San Luis Obispo APCD on August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- d. Straw Investigation Results: ~~Jon O'Brien~~ [State Parks](#) hired a consultant in February, 2023 to test the rice straw and sand for mercury and other contaminants. No mercury or other contaminants exceeded detection limits. Two fungicides were found elevated in the rice straw but both were below the US Environmental Protection Agency ~~(or Department of Agriculture?)~~ safety thresholds for food.
- e. Survey 1,2,3 App Update: Jeff Findlay reported that he has hired staff to fill vacancies for the dust mitigation and Snowy Plover programs. His team is continuing to use the Survey 1,2,3 app to report issues in the park such as graffiti and safety hazards. He said he is ready to partner with CORVA and the FoOD to expand the app's use.
- f. Public messaging on Access, Campgrounds and Enforcement: Kevin Pearce reported that his team has been applying lessons from the January storms to the March storms, updating the website with daily and weekly information, adding more mobile message boards, created more content about reservations, operations, and overall expanding the website to make it. More useful and timely. Kevin also hired a new member of his team (Jennifer) to assist Roger in Planning, social media, operations information and continuing to expand public information improvements on the park.

**Public Comments:**

- Appreciate information on rice straw sampling.

- Would like to have a detailed accounting on all of the ODSVRA mitigation and what has been charged to the OHV Trust Fund.
- Request the OHMVR Commission review the two-minute rule for public comments – seems arbitrary and is too short.
- Question about overall head count for ODSVRA District staff over time. Request for more rangers on the beach.
- Suggestion to consider re-assigning a superintendent from another State Park to fill in at ODSVRA.
- Concern about restroom closures and over use of the remaining ones open.
- Questions about the rice straw testing results which were addressed by Jon O’Brien. Straw for the vegetation areas is purchased from rice grown in Sacramento. Samples for the testing were collected from 4 new and one old location. The samples were tested for multiple different contaminants and only two items showed up at extremely low levels. The report has been posted on the OHMVR Division website.
- Questions about the earwig infestations. Ronnie Glick responded that earwigs are not just found in straw but can be widespread and has been more severe than previous years. It was a mass hatching event and a natural phenomenon and not related to dust mitigation.

VII. **ODSVRA Safety Issues/Law Enforcement Update:** Kevin Pearce provided an update on staffing for the District Law Enforcement. He has hired two new rangers who are doing field training and he lost one ranger to a transfer to another park. There are a total of 17 law enforcement officers in the District. Kevin has been trying different approaches to cover the peak weekends, such as volunteer staff working on their day off, volunteers from other parks and summer help. Kevin also reported that his team is working on some way to manage the use limits with people and vehicles coming and going, such as additional infrastructure or a formula to test out in the park soon.

VIII. **Draft Letter to the CA Air Resources Control Board Regarding PM10 Components and OHV Impacts:**

- a. Dr. Lynn Russell discussion on “Differences and Similarities between Scripps Institute of Oceanography Study and the Desert Research Institute Study” at the ODSVRA: Dr. Lynn Russell expressed her interest in ODSVRA air quality concerns as more interested in how to move forward and not to fund additional research. She presented a slide deck (attached?) that compared the Scripps Study and the DRI Study – there are clear similarities and clear differences. The purpose and scope of the two studies are different. Scripps purpose was to quantify dust during acute health risks (high PM2.5 in afternoons). DRI’s purpose, in collaboration with the APCD, was to monitor the dust during 8 days of high PM10 for regulatory standards. It’s not a surprise that the results of these two studies would be different. The two studies are similar because they both quantify dust at the CDF monitoring station, they both have limited chemical sampling of high PM to identify dust. The findings of the studies show that: most PM was not dust and not attributable to the ODSVRA; dust was less than 50% on average; and sea spray contributed to high PM10.

**Public Comment:**

- Concerns about impact to the SVRA and riding areas with further reductions due to the total PM10 requirements.
- Regulations for PM10 doesn’t say who is responsible to mitigating. You have to know the chemical components to figure out how to reduce it and who is responsible to pay for it.
- It would have been ideal to quantify what is contributing to the overall PM10 prior to assigning or assuming responsibility for the cause. We don’t actually know how much dust there used to be. All we know is that we have a reduced fraction of dust but not sure how much. Burden now may be on others to reduce other sources outside of the ODSVRA.
- The APCD has an important job to verify the components of PM10 are getting reduced, not just monitoring the PM10. The chemical attribution of the PM allows you to reduce the sources.
- Clarification of would there be exceedances if all the dust was gone? Dr. Russell explained that 50% of the samples were

“other things” and even if you removed all of the dust you would still have PM10 and may have exceedances. Sea spray is a large part of this but it’s not unhealthy.

- Comments that the APCD website mentions an emissions inventory for the natural background. SVRA could be a source of material or a path of the source. OHV is the smallest contribution with the dust. Dust could come from agriculture, dirt roads, etc.

b. Summary of draft and next steps: Commissioners Ross-Leech and Whettam reviewed the plan to draft a letter that will be posted and on the agenda for the next OHMVR Commission meeting on July 27 in Sacramento. Both Commissioners thanked everyone and Dr. Russell for their questions, comments and input to the draft letter.

IX. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.