

UNIT 610

DOHENY STATE BEACH

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

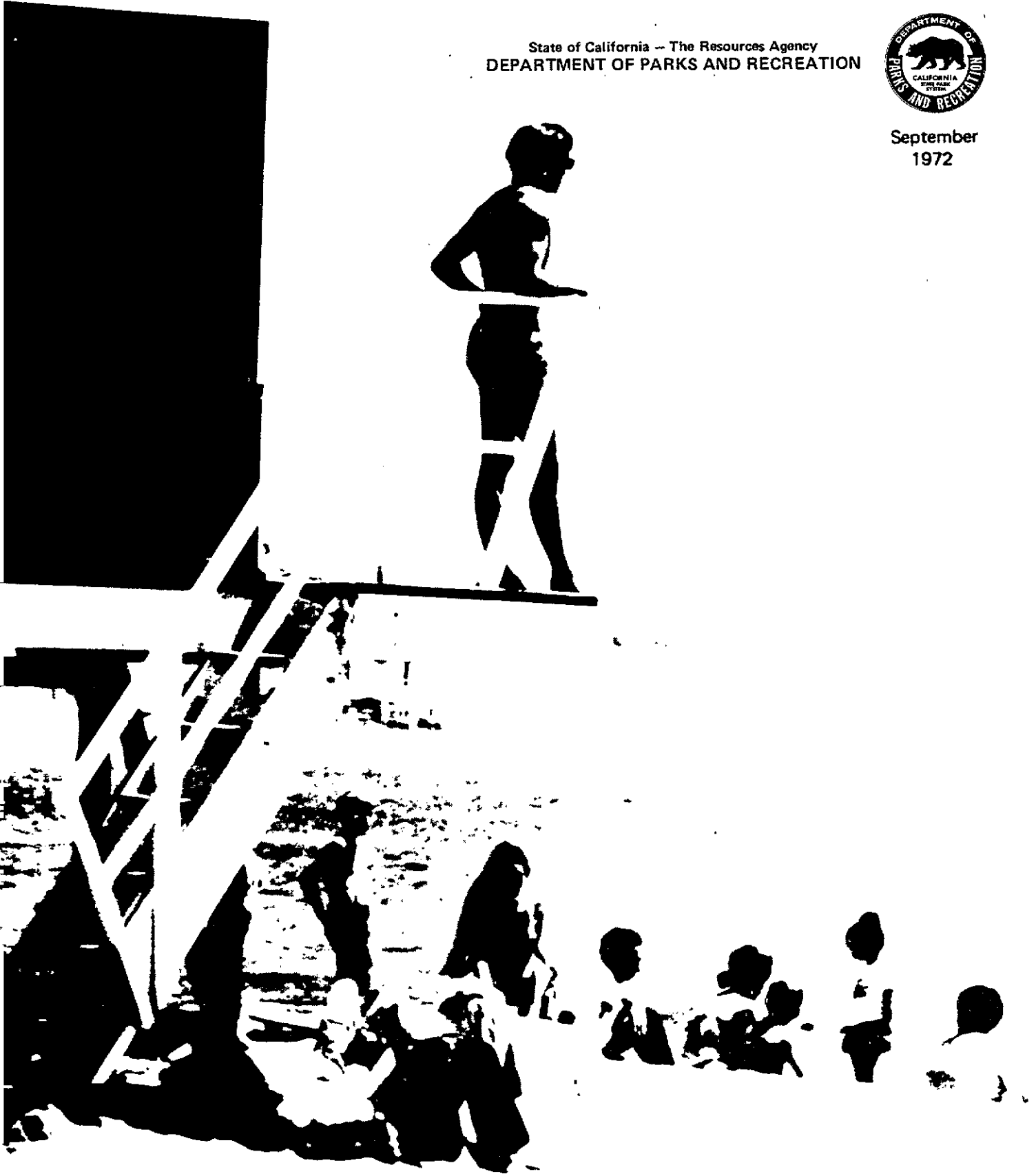
October 1972

Resource Management Plan and General Development Plan for DOHENY STATE BEACH

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



September
1972



**DOHENY STATE BEACH
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AND
GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

September 1972
Reprinted December 1972

Ronald Reagan
Governor

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Secretary for Resources

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Director
Department of Parks and Recreation



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STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 942896, SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001

EXCERPTS FROM THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 1972

Doheny State Beach

Resource Management Plan and General Development Plan

At 10:10 a.m. Vice Chairman Lutz announced the public hearing to consider the resource management and general development plans for Doheny and San Onofre State Beaches.

Director Mott presented the plan for Doheny State Beach and explained the problems to be overcome, including that of sand depletion.

Commissioner Starkey said he would like to see the beach developed with shrubbery to provide more privacy between camping units. The Director explained that one particular part of the beach would be developed with a minimum amount of shrubbery to enable maximum use by campers whose main desire is to get to the beach. To have shrubbery in this area would require the deletion of approximately every other camping site. Anyone desiring more privacy or a more natural beach area would use the older part of the park or could go to one of the other state beaches in the vicinity. Trees will be used to provide shade and the railroad tracks will be screened from view with plantings. The Director pointed out that this extension to the camping facilities at Doheny would be primarily for mechanical camping equipment rather than tenters.

Commissioner Bonnicksen suggested that an independent study should be prepared or a hearing held to learn what people really want at this beach.

Commissioner McMillan suggested that the setting aside of such a large portion of the beach for campers in vehicles would discriminate against people who use tents, or backpack in or some in for the day. Mr. Mott indicated on the map an area to be used for day use and tent camping. He explained that the day-use areas are used for overflow camping when necessary, and that such campers must leave before 9 a.m. in the morning. He suggested that backpackers usually prefer not to stay at such a crowded beach and would probably use the wilder, less developed beaches such as San Onofre. Doheny is an example of an intensively developed beach while San Onofre will be maintained as a natural or wild beach, thus giving balance to the program.

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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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Director Mott added that the Department's turnaway figures indicate a far greater need for camping units than for day-use facilities. Doheny State Beach has had to be closed by reason of camping areas being filled for approximately 88 out of 90 days during the summer. Under such circumstances, however, walk-in users are still permitted to use the beach, but no additional cars are permitted in the park.

It was moved by Commissioner Bonnicksen, Chairman of the Recreation and Park Use Committee, seconded by Commissioner Starkey and carried unanimously by roll call vote that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation has presented to this Commission for approval the proposed Resource Management Plan and General Development Plan for Doheny State Beach; and

WHEREAS this reflects the long-range development plan so as to provide for the optimum use and enjoyment of the unit for ocean-oriented recreational activities, including the perpetuation of the extent of the beach and the protection of its quality;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Commission approves the Department of Parks and Recreation's "Resource Management Plan and General Development Plan for Doheny State Beach", dated September 1972, subject to such environmental changes as the Director shall determine advisable and necessary to implement carrying out the provisions and objects of said plan.

I SUMMARY

Doheny State Beach, an attractive year-round ocean beach in Orange County, is located midway between the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas.

It is situated at the mouth of Capistrano Valley off Highway 1 and is divided by San Juan (Ortega) Creek. This division has been used to separate the day use area from the overnight area.

This 62-acre park has been a unit of the State Park System since 1931. Development has occurred periodically through the years. In 1970 the day use area was completely redeveloped and now includes a beautifully turfed and landscaped picnic area, parking for 700 cars, sanitary buildings, and a service area.

The existing camping area includes 120 permanent sites and approximately 100 temporary sites.

In addition to the existing facilities the General Development Plan proposes an interpretive center in the day use area, 235 permanent campsites, and improved vehicular circulation.

It is estimated that these additional facilities will increase attendance by 185,000 visitors annually.

The capital investment for this proposed development will be \$1,017,790 and annual operating costs will be increased by \$64,600. The revenue resulting from the increased capacity will amount to \$141,000 annually.

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II INTRODUCTION

Location and Use

Doheny State Beach is located just south of historic Dana Point midway between the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas.

Beach activities enjoyed by the public at this park include swimming, surfing, fishing, skin diving, sun bathing, whale and bird watching, picnicking, camping, building sand castles, interpretive study, and boating.

Land Features

San Juan (Ortega) Creek flows through the 62.34-acre park, thus dividing it into two separate parcels of nearly equal size. The entire park, except for a few high spots, is flat and suffers from surf overflow, erosion, and flooding during the winter storms and spring runoffs.

Climate

The weather is pleasant all year. The winter is mild with the temperatures generally ranging from 50 to 70° F. Summer swimming is enjoyable with water temperatures ranging from the 60s to the low 70s and the air temperature ranging from the low 60s to the low 90s.

Urban Development

The newly completed Dana Point Boat Harbor adjoins the northwest side of the park. The main line of the Santa Fe Railroad runs along the entire northeast boundary of the park near the foot of the bluff. Most of the inland areas contain residential developments.

Vegetation

Some of the plant species found within the park are the sycamore, the black walnut, the cypress, the carob, the Chinese elm, the Catalina cherry, the toyon, and the myoporum.

History

Doheny State Beach is named after an energetic American, Edward L. Doheny, who with Charles A. Canfield discovered petroleum in a city lot of Los Angeles in the 1890s. Their discovery caused some 2,300 wells to be drilled in Los Angeles within the next five years.

In 1931 Mr. Doheny deeded to the state, for perpetual public use, a half mile of the beach. State officials estimated the value of this land at that time to be in excess of \$1,000,000.

In the mid 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps imported fill, plants, and trees; built adobe walls around the park; and constructed a park residence and comfort station with picnic tables and campsites, some of which are still in use today.

In 1948 the camping demand was so great that the length of camping was reduced to a 14-day maximum.

Facility replacement and redevelopment have been necessary over the years because of the periodic flood damages, worn facilities, unhealthy and hazardous conditions of the sewer and campground facilities, and the changing needs of the public.

III JUSTIFICATION

Doheny State Beach is located in Orange County within the zero-to-one hour travel time zone of the Los Angeles metropolitan complex (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties). It is also located within the one-to-two hour travel time zone of the San Diego metropolitan area, and within the two-to-four hour travel zones of the Santa Barbara and the Bakersfield metropolitan areas.

The estimated and projected populations* for these metropolitan centers are:

	1970	1980	1990
Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside metropolitan complex	9,549,700	10,980,200	12,899,800
San Diego metropolitan area	1,245,100	1,679,200	2,141,500

*Department of Finance, 9/71

The recreation demand for the residents of these metropolitan areas is increasing faster than the population growth. Between 1960 and 1980 the population of the San Diego metropolitan area is expected to increase 61 percent while the recreation demand is expected to increase 85 percent. During the fiscal year 1971-72 the campground at Doheny State Beach was filled to capacity on 83 nights, and over 80,000 prospective campers were turned away. During the same period, at San Clemente State Beach downcoast from Doheny, the 157 campsites were filled to capacity 143 nights and nearly 50,000 campers were turned away.

The new facilities needed from all suppliers to meet the existing and future recreation demands of these metropolitan areas within their respective travel time zones from Doheny State Beach include:

	1970	1980	1990
Zero-to-One Hour Travel Time Zone			
Los Angeles-San Bernardino-Riverside metropolitan complex			
Camp units	3,678	4,618	7,658
One-to-Two Hour Travel Time Zone			
San Diego metropolitan area			
Camp units	523	933	1,538

IV RESOURCE INVENTORY

Occupying a land area of about 62 acres, Doheny State Beach extends slightly more than half a mile along the coast. Its inland boundary is defined by the Santa Fe Railroad in the south portion and by State Highway 1 from the railroad northward. Doheny State Beach is one of the most intensively developed and heavily used units of the State Park System and has been so for many years.

Cultural Resources

Historical Resources

While Doheny State Beach is noted primarily for its recreational activities, its history is also of substantial interest.

Nearby, within view of the beach, is Dana Point from whose cliffs hide droghers from the ship Pilgrim pitched hides to their shipmates on the beach below, preparatory to the loading of the hides on board for transport to Boston. The cove at the base of the cliff was later to become the embarcadero for merchandise brought to and from the mission.

During the Mexican-American War, a detachment of troops under command of Commodore Robert F. Stockton camped on ground probably within the limits of the present state beach. Major W. H. Emory recorded this occasion on January 1, 1847, with a description of a location approximating that of Doheny Beach.

In 1937 enrollees in the Civilian Conservation Corps moved into the Doheny Beach area and began improvements which made possible the opening of a number of campsites. The popularity of the beach has since increased, prompting acquisition of additional land, first by lease and then by purchase.

Archeological Resources

The area now embraced within Doheny State Beach was once occupied by the Diegueno Indians, specifically the northern dialect division. Geographically Doheny State Beach is at the extreme northern limit of the Diegueno claimed area, less than 10 miles south of the Diegueno-Luiseno tribal boundary.

A brief survey of the ethnogeographical literature reveals no recorded site locations in the unit. A. L. Kroeber notes the village (or regional name) of Hakutl somewhat southeast of San Juan Creek. More thorough research may reveal additional ethnographic site locations at or near the mouth of San Juan Creek.

Field review of Doheny State Beach in the past by our staff, as well as review of recorded sites in the vicinity, revealed no archeological values within the unit.

The closest recorded site (CA. Ora-188) is located east of the unit and has sustained damage from the railroad right-of-way and the freeway. Other sites located in the vicinity are situated on high ground above San Juan Creek or along the ocean bluff some distance upcoast from the Doheny Beach area.

Environmental Resources

Scenic Resources

Scenically the coastline at Doheny is average in interest and attractiveness. The only special scenic features are the beach and the ocean itself. This unit was established because of its great recreational use values.

Geological Resources

No special geological features, other than the shoreline as such, are included within this unit. The soils are sandy alluvium from the outwash of San Juan Creek, with pure sand along the beaches. No rock outcroppings are exposed in the land portion. Some rock reefs are a feature of the offshore zone, but these are not available or visible to the average park visitor as geological features.

Floral Resources

Because of its intensive development, Doheny State Beach contains less in the way of natural vegetation than almost any other unit of the State Park System. Some natural growth occurs from time to time in the basin of San Juan Creek itself, but this has been heavily modified by flood control works, and is frequently disrupted by high water. Virtually all the rest of the land area consists either of sandy beach or of intensively developed facilities with artificial plantings.

Under these circumstances there are no endemic species and no rare or endangered plant species in the area.

Faunal Resources

As might be inferred from the description of vegetation, this unit contains virtually nothing in the way of natural habitat for animal life. Except for insect life, and small animal species (such as rodents) along the banks of San Juan Creek, nothing in the way of a wildlife population inhabits this area.

Bird life is present in the introduced trees planted in the recreation development area, and shore birds frequent the sandy beach. The California Brown Pelican, a rare and endangered species, can be seen flying offshore from the beach, but does not frequent the land area.

Paleontological Resources

As in the case of most beach units without upland, there is little opportunity within this property for the exposure of any paleontological deposits. There are no such deposits within this unit of the State Park System.

Recreational Resources

As mentioned above, recreational use of this important and strategically located beach is the primary value of the area. Not only is the beach itself of very high quality – the cause of its great popularity – but the configuration of the ocean bottom offshore provides excellent waves for surfing in at least a portion of the coastal zone involved, and this activity is accordingly very important here. Provision for intensive utilization of the entire area for ocean-oriented recreational activities in high-quality and aesthetically pleasing surroundings seems to be the most important function that this unit can serve.

V RESOURCE ANALYSIS AND ALLOWABLE USE INTENSITY PLAN

Resource Analysis

The major resource at Doheny State Beach is the ocean beach. The shoreline of this beach is subject to continual fluctuation and is often suddenly and significantly modified by storms and high surfs. To explain these changes, it is necessary to understand the natural history of the beach.

Periodic storms and floods are a natural occurrence at Doheny. Such storms are the source of sand for the beach. During winter, sea storms erode away the sand beach and carry it downcoast. During the summer season, some sand is redeposited on the beach; however, the winter loss is usually greater than the summer deposit and results in a net loss of beach land.

The area most vulnerable to sand erosion is that part of the park known as the Los Nietos Tract. In 1957, this 1,500 foot long section was approximately 150 feet deep at the eastern point and 350 feet deep at the western end. By 1964, over half of this section had been washed away, making the eastern section unusable. In many places the ocean had eroded the beach up to the property line fence. In 1965, beach fill was hauled into the park, adding some two hundred feet of width to the beach.

A sand replenishment program must be used in the future to maintain a stable beach for recreational use and development. Continual study of the beach may indicate other measures which might be implemented to stabilize the beach.

Shrubs, trees, and turf always enhance such recreational uses as camping, picnicking, and sun bathing. Therefore, selective plants that tolerate seacoast conditions will be introduced to replenish the limited existing vegetation.

The off-shore tidepools were designated a marine refuge on March 18, 1969. Unfortunately, an extended and intense rainy season that year caused tidal and flood damage which completely obliterated the tidepools under several feet of mud and debris. However, at present, the beach line is steadily moving back toward its original line before the 1969 storms. Therefore, the tidepools may soon be available for the public to enjoy.

Sea life ecology will be one of the foremost considerations in the development of the interpretive center.

The existing day use facilities have enhanced this unit. All future development will be undertaken in a manner which will preserve and enhance the scenic and esthetic qualities of the area while providing the facilities necessary to accommodate the recreating public.

Allowable Use Intensity Plan

Our standard limit of people per square feet of beach is one person per 100 square feet. With this standard, the day use beach will be at capacity when the existing 700 parking spaces are full; however, this should never occur because some people will be in the picnic areas and others in the water.

Camping density is light compared to day use; therefore, the maximum use density of the beach will not be reached in the overnight area. This, of course, is based on the assumption that minimum acceptable width of beach is maintained.

VI RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Declaration of Purpose

Doheny State Beach is established to make permanently available to the people, for their recreational use and enjoyment, the sandy beach, the ocean environment, and the inspirational qualities of the Orange County coast south of historic Dana Point, including the mouth of San Juan Creek.

Declaration of Management Policy

The Department of Parks and Recreation will manage the lands and their resources at Doheny State Beach so as to provide for the optimum use and enjoyment of the unit for ocean-oriented recreational activities, including perpetuation of the extent of the beach and the protection of its quality.

VII THE PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

Design Objectives

The principle resources of this park unit are the sea, surf, and sandy beach areas.

The design objective is to provide facilities to accommodate the public through development for day and overnight use. Careful planning has been employed to retain and preserve the environment. Emphasis will be placed on water- and beach-oriented activities.

Day Use Area

After some 41 years of service to the public, the entire picnic area was redesigned and constructed to satisfy increasing public demands and reduce the maintenance and repair work. This redevelopment of the day use facilities was officially opened to the public on May 16, 1970.

The following were some of the problems that made the redevelopment necessary:

- A. The elevation of the front beach line is too low, allowing high tides and surf to crest the top of the beach and inundate the parking and picnicking areas.
- B. The sanitary buildings and picnic furnishings were worn out with constant heavy use and were in dire need of repairs.
- C. Landscape plantings were slowly deteriorating because of the heavy use of the area, lack of adequate irrigation, and generally poor landscape design.
- D. Lack of adequate parking made it necessary to turn many visitors away.
- E. The entrance station area took visitors off the very busy Highway 1 with very little back-up space, thus producing a dangerous traffic situation.

The new day use facilities include a 20 foot wide promenade along the beach front, two 7000 series comfort stations with dressing rooms and cold showers, a central lifeguard tower, picnic facilities designed to meet a variety of needs and group sizes, five acres of turf, and large-group facilities provided for on a reservation basis.

The day use area at this unit incorporates well-defined walks and large open turn areas surrounded by shrubs and trees. The buildings are of a bold and modern architectural design.

Campground Area

Since Doheny was opened to the public in 1931, the campground has undergone piecemeal improvements, the most recent of which were completed in 1972. Although these additions have been important in improving the health standard of the campground, they have not improved the quality of the camping experience or the total environment. Over the years 100 temporary and 120 permanent campsites have been developed for public use.

The General Development Plan redesigns the existing campground and provides an additional 235 campsites in the southeastern part of the park. All of the new sites will have complete utility hookups to conform to the State Board of Public Health Standards for trailers or camping vehicles. In addition to the hookups, sanitary facilities will be constructed. All sites will have the standard camp table, stove, and refuse units. Although the sites will be designed principally for recreation vehicles, many sites will allow space for tents.

Other Facilities

Interpretive Center

The permanent interpretive center will be located in the day use area. This site was selected in lieu of other sites for its close proximity to available parking areas, orientation to beach activities, and its compatibility with existing features and facilities.

Landscaping

Landscape plants will be used primarily as a means of screening out the railroad tracks. Other plantings will be used to aesthetically enhance the buildings and walks.

Sewage

The present sewage system is tied into the treatment and disposal facilities of the Capistrano Beach Sanitary District. The existing lift station is adequate to transport all sewage generated by the additional sites.

Utilities

All electrical and other utilities are to be installed underground to give the visitor an unobstructed view of the beach and ocean. Hopefully, all the existing utility lines adjacent to the unit will eventually be placed underground.

VIII ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

A. The environmental impact of the proposed action

The area of beach proposed for development has been used as an interim day use facility since 1968. It has also been used to accommodate overflow camping. The existing facilities include an oil paved surface on the sand and chemical toilets. No landscape planting has been included to reduce the visual impact.

The proposed development will include an 80-foot wide asphalt roadway stretching along the beach for three-quarters of a mile. Development will also include parking, restroom facilities and a concession building. The entire development will be landscaped.

The greatest impact of the proposed development will be the visual impact of the development itself.

B. Any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the proposal is implemented

The 80 foot wide asphalt roadway, parking areas, and buildings will cause visual impact which cannot be avoided.

C. Mitigation measures proposed to minimize the impact

Impact of the roads, parking areas, structural improvements, and buildings will be screened through plantings of trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Selective colors and style of buildings will be used to soften their impact.

Utilities will be underground, eliminating the objectionable lines and poles that have adverse visual impact to the scenic quality of the site.

Disposal of sewage generated on the site will be by connection to the local sewer sanitation district.

D. Alternatives to the proposed project

The only alternative to the proposed development would be no development.

This area was acquired by the State for recreation purposes. The existing facilities are being used at capacity 83 days per year and nearly 80,000 campers are being turned away annually because of limited facilities. Additional facilities must be provided to satisfy a portion of this demand.

E. Relation between short-term use and long-term productivity of environment

In pursuing the proposed project, no significant sacrifice of long-term productivity is foreseen.

F. Any irreversible environmental changes involved

None are recognized.

IX FACILITY AND COST SUMMARY

Preliminary estimate by Department of Parks and Recreation

The cost of development of Doheny State Beach including the staffing and interpretive center is \$1,017,790.

General Work	\$458,931
Electrical	94,500
Mechanical	164,100
Irrigation	18,000
Public Address System	10,000
Construction Contingency	76,969
Total Construction Cost	\$822,500
Architectural and Engineering Services including supervision and Contract Administration	\$110,000
Facilities Cost	\$932,500
Equipment Cost	\$ 16,690
Projector and Equipment	2,000
Interpretive Display	2,000
Staffing	64,600
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$1,017,790
X OPERATION EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE	\$ 16,690
XI STAFFING NEEDS	
1 Permanent Lifeguard	\$ 8,400
Seasonal Lifeguards	10,000
Seasonal Maintenance, Operation, Etc.	28,000
Visitor Services	17,800
Total	\$ 64,600
XII ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE	
Existing Attendance	675,000
Additional Attendance (Campground)	185,000
Total Estimated Attendance	860,000
XIII ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REVENUE	
Additional Revenue (Campground)	\$121,000
Additional Revenue (Concession)	\$ 20,000
TOTAL	\$141,000

