

## STAFF REPORT

**AGENDA ITEM:** San Luis Obispo South County Particulate Matter Study

**STAFF:** Tim Lafranchi

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**Background:**

Prevailing winds along the central California coast blow inland from Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) at the coastal dunes towards the Nipomo Mesa. The Nipomo Mesa is a massive sand dune resulting from centuries of sand being blown inland.

Air quality monitoring over the past 20 years has revealed particulate concentrations on the Mesa to be significantly higher than other areas of the County, thus presenting a public health concern. From April 2004 through March 2005, a monitoring study of both fine (PM 2.5) and coarse (PM 10) particulates documented a serious particulate problem and attempted to evaluate the potential impacts from off-highway vehicle activities at the SVRA; but, the data was inconclusive.

In 2007, the APCD proposed further study to more fully identify the source(s) of the particulates and to investigate the effects of off-highway vehicle activities in contributing to the elevated PM levels measured on the Mesa and what mitigation efforts are reasonable and feasible to reduce those impacts. The APCD approached the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (Division) to participate and assist in funding this study. During design of the study, however, the Division and the APCD were unable to agree on the sampling methodology and the APCD proceeded with its study without the Division's participation.

**Report:**

From the SLO APCD Website: The Air District continues to work earnestly to finalize the Phase 2 Particulate Matter study that was conducted over the 2008 – 2009 to determine the sources of particulate impacting the Nipomo Mesa region. It is anticipated the final report will be published in early February, followed by a workshop to present the results to the public; the APCD will issue a press release announcing the workshop as soon as a date and location has been set.

Press Release from SLO APCD attached.

**Status:**

The final report has not yet been released. It is scheduled to be presented to the APCD Board at their March 24 meeting.

**Commission Action:**

For information only.



**NEWS RELEASE:** January 12, 2010

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### **SOUTH COUNTY PARTICULATE MATTER STUDY UPDATE**

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) staff continue efforts to finalize the South County Particulate Matter Study. The study was conducted to determine the cause of high levels of airborne particulate matter impacting air quality and public health on the Nipomo Mesa, and whether offroad vehicle activity on the Oceano Dunes is a contributing factor. Sophisticated air quality monitoring and sample collection was performed in the study area over a year using three independent analytical approaches; over 2 million data points were generated, requiring detailed statistical analysis and interpretation. Per direction from the APCD Board, the entire report, including all raw data, will be made available for public review prior to conducting workshops and presenting the report findings to the Board. “This is not a matter that can be rushed,” states Larry Allen, Director of the APCD, “Given the magnitude of data collected, the complexity of the analyses performed and the importance of the findings, it is imperative that a comprehensive review of the data and study findings is completed prior to publishing the report.”

Final review and editing of the report is nearly complete. Peer review of the study results was performed in early December by six leading scientists in this field. The reviewers recommended APCD incorporate additional data collected during the study but not available for the draft report due to significant delays in sample analyses at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory; that situation has since been corrected. The additional data has now been incorporated into the report, and the same scientists who conducted the initial peer review will review the updated information over the next few weeks. The final report, peer review comments, and raw data from the study will then be posted for public review on the APCD’s website ([www.slocleanair.org](http://www.slocleanair.org)).

It is anticipated the final report and associated information will be published in early February, followed by a workshop to present the results to the public; the APCD will issue a press release announcing the workshop as soon as a date and location has been set. The final report is scheduled to be presented to the APCD Board at their March 24 meeting.

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