



OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING Redding, CA

March 23, 2013

STAFF REPORT: Visitor Attendance
STAFF: Natalie Lohi, State Park Ranger
SUBJECT: SVRA Visitor Attendance/California State University
Sacramento Study

Summary

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) requires that all park units collect and report visitor attendance data. The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division regularly reports the State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs) attendance data as per DPR policy. With the approval of SB 742, the OHMVR Division has the additional responsibility of reporting SVRA attendance data to the legislature to be considered as a factor in determining possible adjustments to OHMVR Program funding. In 2012, the Division established a contract with California State University Sacramento (CSUS) to complete a study which will satisfy the requirements of SB 742 and provide attendance-related information from visitors to support management decisions.

Discussion

Senate Bill 742 made several revisions to the OHMVR Program. One of those changes involved the Program's funding. The Revenue and Taxation Code was modified to stipulate that the amount of funds transferred as a percent of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Account shall be equal to the percent transferred in the 2006-07 fiscal year. Every five years, starting in the 2013-14 fiscal year, the percent transferred may be adjusted. One of the factors that shall be a basis for that adjustment is visitor attendance at the SVRAs. For this reason, and to ensure the most accurate data possible is available for sound management decisions, the OHMVR Division has contracted with CSUS for an SVRA Visitor Attendance Study. The study is in effect through April of 2014. The goal is a comprehensive review of the SVRA attendance program. The study includes three priorities:

- Priority #1 - Review, evaluate/assess, update, establish, and/or confirm SVRA conversion factors:

Conversion factors are defined as a method used to convert measures of attendance (e.g., number of people per car) to an individual park visit. At the

SVRAs where fees are applicable, visitors are charged a fee per vehicle, not per person. When reporting attendance data, however, the key information is how many individuals are visiting the park (reported monthly and compiled per calendar year or fiscal year). To convert the number of vehicles into a number of individuals, a formula is created using a scientific method. This is a conversion factor.

- Priority #2 - Establish and confirm day-to-day methodologies for measuring SVRA visitor attendance:

The study will confirm that the methods the SVRAs are using to collect attendance data are the most efficient and effective methods possible and are yielding the most accurate data possible. Otherwise, recommendations will be made to improve the methods and increase efficiency and accuracy.

- Priority #3 - Visitor Survey Information:

Visitor surveys are being administered in every SVRA. Questions include topics related to facilities, recreation, use patterns, economics, and others. While similar in format and content, management at each SVRA has had the opportunity for input and customization of the survey. This will allow for the collection of data specific to each SVRA, maximizing the value of the information with regards to management decisions at each location.

The inherent complexities of operating an SVRA can make collecting attendance data particularly challenging. Some SVRA managers contend with evolving technology, ever-changing regulations, mandates to provide specific information, the need to collect data on multiple vehicle types, registration verification, etc. – all of this while the line to get into the park may threaten to back up onto a main road or highway. On the other hand, the challenge at another SVRA would be the lack of an entrance station at all and multiple entry points into the park. Regardless, SVRA staff has been diligent in collecting and providing attendance data according to DPR policy. Through the CSUS study, we will be able to identify the most effective methods being used right now and improve and streamline those areas where opportunity exists to do so.

Commission Action

For information only

Attachments

Revenue & Taxation Code Section 8352.6

Graph – SVRA Attendance Compared with Job Availability

Revenue and Taxation Code

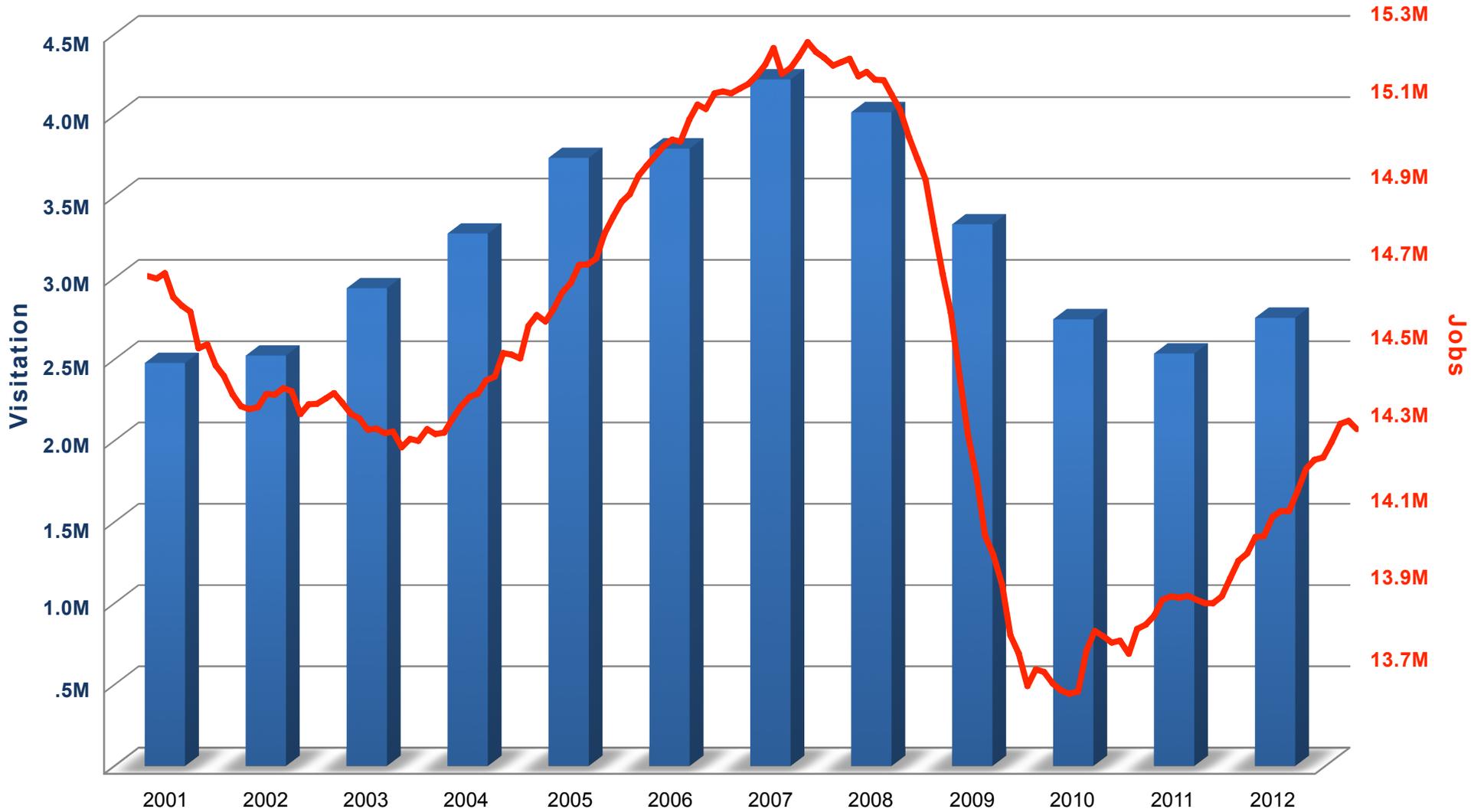
§ 8352.6. Fuel Tax Transfers to the OHV Trust Fund

- (a)
 - (1) Subject to Section 8352.1, and except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), on the first day of every month, there shall be transferred from moneys deposited to the credit of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Account to the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund created by Section 38225 of the Vehicle Code an amount attributable to taxes imposed upon distributions of motor vehicle fuel used in the operation of motor vehicles off highway and for which a refund has not been claimed. Transfers made pursuant to this section shall be made prior to transfers pursuant to Section 8352.2.
 - (2) Commencing July 1, 2012, the revenues attributable to the taxes imposed pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 7360 and Section 7361.1 and otherwise to be deposited in the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund pursuant to paragraph (1) shall instead be transferred to the General Fund. The revenues attributable to the taxes imposed pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 7360 and Section 7361.1 that were deposited in the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 fiscal years shall be transferred to the General Fund.
 - (3) The Controller shall withhold eight hundred thirty-three thousand dollars (\$833,000) from the monthly transfer to the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund pursuant to paragraph (1), and transfer that amount to the General Fund.
- (b) The amount transferred pursuant to subdivision (a), as a percent of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Account, shall be equal to the percent transferred in the 2006-07 fiscal year. Every five years, starting in the 2013-14 fiscal year, the percent transferred may be adjusted by the Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Adjustments shall be based on, but not limited to, the changes in the following factors since the 2006-07 fiscal year or the last adjustment, whichever is more recent:
 - (1) The number of vehicles registered as off-highway motor vehicles as required by Division 16.5 (commencing with Section 38000) of the Vehicle Code.
 - (2) The number of registered street-legal vehicles that are anticipated to be used off-highway, including four-wheel drive vehicles, all-wheel drive vehicles, and dual-sport motorcycles.
 - (3) Attendance at the state vehicular recreation areas.
 - (4) Off-highway recreation use on federal lands as indicated by the United States Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring and the United States Bureau of Land Management's Recreation Management Information System.
- (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that transfers from the Motor Vehicle Fuel Account to the Off-Highway Motorized Vehicle Trust Fund should reflect the full range of motorized vehicle use off-highway for both motorized recreation and motorized off-

road access to other recreation opportunities. Therefore, the Legislature finds that the fuel tax baseline established in subdivision (b), attributable to off-highway estimates of use as of the 2006-07 fiscal year, accounts for the three categories of vehicles that have been found over the years to be users of fuel for off-highway motorized recreation or motorized access to nonmotorized recreational pursuits. These three categories are registered off-highway motorized vehicles, registered street legal motorized vehicles used off-highway, and unregistered off-highway motorized vehicles.

- (d) It is the intent of the Legislature that the off-highway motor vehicle recreational use to be determined by the Department of Transportation pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), be that usage by vehicles subject to registration under Division 3 (commencing with Section 4000) of the Vehicle Code, for recreation or the pursuit of recreation on surfaces where the use of vehicles registered under Division 16.5 (commencing with Section 38000) of the Vehicle Code may occur.

SVRA Attendance Compared with Job Availability



Job data from Employment Development Department, State of California