



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

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**OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING
Kings Beach, CA**

August 6, 2026

STAFF REPORT: Senate Bill 249 Compliance Updates

STAFF: Scott Soares, Environmental Program Manager, OHMVR Division

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 249 Environmental Compliance Update at State Vehicular Recreation Areas

Summary

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division staff with support from the Natural Resources Division (NRD) of State Parks continue to progress towards full compliance implementing the updated environmental requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 249 (2017). Of the nine State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs), six have completed the updated Wildlife Habitat Protection Plans (WHPP) and five have completed updated Soil Conservation Plans (SCP).

Discussion

In 2017, the Governor signed SB 249 into law which made revisions and added several sections to the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act (Public Resources Code [PRC] § 5090.01 *et seq.*). Notably, the bill emphasized natural and cultural resource protection and conservation measures at SVRAs through revisions to multiple statute provisions. Further, SB 249 defined the roles and responsibilities of the OHMVR Division and the Department in ensuring compliance with specific new requirements. The following list summarizes the amended SB 249 requirements as they pertain to natural resources at SVRAs:

- Prepare and implement WHPPs that conserve and improve wildlife habitats and contain an updated wildlife inventory and inventory of native plant communities (PRC § 5090.35(c)(1)),
 - developed in consideration of state and regional conservation objectives (PRC § 5090.32(g)),

- Update the 2008 Soil Conservation Standard and Guidelines by December 31, 2020 (PRC § 5090.35(b)(1)),
 - Completed in late 2020 and adopted,
- Monitor annually for compliance with the Soil Conservation Standard through the development of a SCPs (PRC § 5090.35(d)),
- WHPPs and SCPs apply the principles of best available science (PRC § 5090.39(a)(1)),
 - Best Available Science Guidelines developed by the NRD of the Department
- WHPPs and SCPs provide opportunities for public comment (PRC § 5090.39(a)(2)),
- Post plans, reports, and studies related to off-highway vehicle recreation on the Division webpage (PRC § 5090.32(m)).

As noted above, SB 249 requires WHPPs, SCPs, or other monitoring plans to be developed using the Best available Science. The Department, through NRD, defines Best Available Science, and reviews and ensures WHPPs, SCPs, and other monitoring programs are drafted using the principles of best available science throughout the entirety of the development process.

OHMVR and NRD staff began working with SVRA staff in 2021 to update WHPPs and SCPs pursuant to changes from SB249. In 2022, the OHMVR Division finalized and adopted WHPPs from Prairie City, Clay Pit, and Heber Dunes SVRAs. The OHMVR Division anticipates starting the five-year review and update process on the WHPPs completed in 2022. We expect this review and update to be completed in the spring of 2027.

All completed WHPPs, SCPs and associated annual reports are available online at: https://ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=31610

WHPPs Status

Completed:

- Clay Pit - approved in 2022, planned update for 2027
- Heber Dunes - approved in 2022, planned update for 2027
- Prairie City - approved in 2022, planned update for 2027
- Hungry Valley - approved 2025
- Oceano Dunes - approved in 2025
- Onyx Ranch - approved in 2025

Pending:

- Hollister Hills – Undergoing revisions related to best available science review

In Preparation:

- Carnegie – Approaching Internal Peer Review
- Ocotillo Wells – Completed Internal Peer Review, incorporating comments

SCP Status

Completed:

- Heber Dunes - approved 2025
- Prairie City - approved 2025
- Ocotillo Wells – approved 2026
- Hungry Valley – approved 2026
- Onyx Ranch – approved 2026

Pending:

- Carnegie - Addressing best available science review comments, expect finalization late summer 2026
- Oceano Dunes - Completed public comment, staff are revising draft based on comments received, expect finalization fall 2026

In Preparation:

- Clay Pit – Assembling a complete draft for internal peer review, anticipate peer review summer 2026
- Hollister Hills – Assembling a complete draft for internal peer review

Commission Action

For information only.

Attachments

None