



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
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OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLE COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT COVER PAGE

West Sacramento, CA

April 2, 2025

STAFF REPORT: Planning Program Update
STAFF: Katie Metraux, Strategic Planning and Recreation Services Division
SUBJECT: Status of Planning Efforts for State Vehicular Recreation Areas

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No Action Needed. For information only.

II. BACKGROUND

Katie Metraux of the Department of Parks and Recreation Strategic Planning and Recreational Services Division will present a report highlighting several planning efforts underway within State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs).

The update includes information regarding Ocotillo Wells and Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan projects, Prairie City Road and Trail Management Plan, and the OHV Access Initiative.

III. ATTACHMENTS

- Staff Report
- SVRA General Plans Chart



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SUBJECT: Status of Planning Efforts for State Vehicular Recreation Areas

Summary

Several planning projects are underway within State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs). Ocotillo Wells and Hungry Valley SVRAs are updating their park general plans, and Prairie City SVRA is finalizing its Road and Trail Management Plan. The OHV Access Initiative also examines the potential for expanding OHV recreation across the state. This report outlines each project's purpose, process, and current milestones.

At the end of this report is an overview of general plans, management plans, and studies, along with explanations of how they are used for reference.

Discussion

The following summarizes recent SVRA and OHV planning projects and initiatives.

Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update

The Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update will provide a comprehensive management strategy for the park's approximately 19,625 acres. It will serve as a blueprint for future decisions regarding land use, facilities, recreational opportunities, and the management of natural and natural resources. The General Plan Update addresses changing conditions, analyzes the latest information and data, and incorporates lands added to the park since the existing General Plan was approved in 1981.

The Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan has a project website at www.PlanHungryValley.com to facilitate public involvement and communication. Interested parties should visit the project website and register to receive email notifications regarding project progress. The planning team is preparing the Preliminary General Plan and draft EIR for public review in Summer 2025 and the Draft General Plan and Final EIR to the OHMVR Commission in Winter 2025 for review and consideration.

Ocotillo Wells SVRA Plan

Ocotillo Wells SVRA and the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) El Centro Field Office are developing a joint general plan for the Ocotillo Wells SVRA/Ocotillo Wells Special Recreation Management Area. This joint planning document will meet the State Park's General Plan and BLM land management requirements for a California State Park unit General Plan, a BLM Recreation Management Plan, and a California Desert Conservation Area Land Use Plan Amendment. The latter two plans are federal planning documents. The combined Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) will meet the requirements of both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the State and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the federal agency. The core team working on the joint plan comprises staff from State Parks, BLM, and AECOM (consultants).

The Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan project began in 2008 to incorporate properties added to the SVRA and update policies and resource management requirements since the 1981 General Plan. In 2015, State Parks and BLM agreed to develop a joint general plan as described above. The project paused in 2019 due to budgetary constraints and administrative direction. It started up again in 2024 and is expected to be completed in 2026.

Prairie City SVRA Road and Trail Management Plan

The purpose of the Prairie City Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) is to provide specific guidance and direction for implementing the goals and guidelines of the 2016 Prairie City SVRA General Plan. The RTMP is a comprehensive planning document that examines the SVRA's existing system of roads and provides specific direction for their long-term construction, maintenance, and management. It considers current and potential public use, park operations, and the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural resources to ensure recreational trail opportunities are available at their fullest potential. Comprehensive trail planning also considers regional recreational opportunities and connectivity and includes extensive public outreach and input into designing new trails and experiences. The RTMP was completed in December 2024.

OHV Access Initiative

In September 2021, [Senate Bill 155](#) (Ch. 258, Statutes of 2021) amended Public Resources Code (PRC) Section (§) [5090.42](#), directing the California Department of Parks and Recreation, popularly known as State Parks, to explore the acquisition and development of properties and opportunities to expand off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation in new and existing facilities. This bill also recommended prioritizing opportunities that serve large urban areas such as the Bay Area and Central Valley and offer potential recreational opportunities for OHV recreation and motorized access to nonmotorized recreation. State Parks have many options for expanding OHV recreation throughout the state – through acquisition, lease, land swap, partnership, donation, transfer, legislation, and other means as established in PRC §5005, 5006, et seq.

Since November 2022, State Parks has held six public meetings for the OHV Access Project and a workshop with the OHMVR Commission. The last workshop in this series was held virtually in December 2023. State Parks is currently meeting with public land managers (BLM, USFS, etc.) refining a list of potential sites based on the results of the site suitability analysis and feedback from stakeholders. The next steps include preparing a preliminary report and hosting community workshops to report on project outcomes. State Parks has a [website](#) for the OHV Access Project that provides more information about the planning process and ways to participate.

General and Management Plans Overview

The General Plan is the primary management document for a California State Park System unit, defining a framework for resource management, interpretation, facilities, visitor use, and park operations. General Plans define an ultimate purpose, vision, and intent for unit management through goal statements, guidelines, and broad objectives but stop short of defining specific objectives, methodologies, and timelines for accomplishing these goals. Additionally, it serves as the foundation for creating detailed feasibility studies, management plans, specific project plans, and other necessary actions to achieve the goals outlined in the General Plan.

The development of a general plan includes a complete programmatic EIR, considered a project for CEQA (California Public Resources Code (PRC) Division 13. Environmental Quality, Chapter 1, Commencing with [Section 21000](#)). See PRC Section [5002.2](#) and PRC Section [5090.15 - 5090.24](#) about General Plans and related State Park and Recreation Commission and OHMVR Commission's duties for reviewing and approving general plans.

Management plans offer clear guidance and direction for achieving the goals and guidelines outlined in a park unit's general plan. Typically, these plans focus on specific aspects of the general plan, such as managing cultural and natural resources, developing facilities, providing interpretation and education, or maintaining trails. For instance, road and trail management plans assess a park's current road system and outline long-term construction, maintenance, and management strategies. Additionally, an environmental review document may be necessary to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Commission Action

For information only

Attachments

Status of SVRA General and Management Plans

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Status of SVRA General and Management Plans

Park Unit	Adopted	Amended	Plan Status & Updates in Progress
Prairie City SVRA	2016 1991		Approved by the OHMVR Commission in September 2016.
Carnegie SVRA	2024 2016 1981		The OHMVR Commission approved the GP in October 2016 and rescinded it in 2021. The General Plan (GP) Update for the 1533-acre original Carnegie property began in April 2022. The Commission approved the Draft GP and Draft EIR in October 2024.
Clay Pit SVRA	2012		The OHMVR Commission approved GP in June 2012.
Heber Dunes SVRA	2011		The OHMVR Commission approved GP in December 2011.
Hollister Hills SVRA	1978	2003	
Oceano Dunes SVRA	1975	1991	
Hungry Valley SVRA	1981		GP update in progress. Preparing the Preliminary GP and Drafting the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Spring 2025. Potential Commission consideration and action in late 2025.
Ocotillo Wells SVRA	1981		GP EIR/Environmental Impact Statement restarted in September 2023.
Onyx Ranch SVRA			Awaiting project funding.