



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

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**OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLE RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
STAFF REPORT COVER PAGE**

Kings Beach, CA

August 6, 2026

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 on the Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan, the Carnegie SVRA General Plan and EIR Recirculation, and the OHV Access Initiative.

III. ATTACHMENTS

- Staff Report

OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING

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SUBJECT: Status of Planning Efforts for State Vehicular Recreation Areas

Summary

The following summarizes recent State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and OHV planning projects and initiatives.

A. Ocotillo Wells SVRA Plan

The Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan Update project began in 2007 to include newly added properties in the SVRA and to reflect policies and resource management requirements established following approval of the 1982 General Plan. In 2015, Ocotillo Wells SVRA and BLM's El Centro Field Office agreed to develop a joint General Plan and Recreation Area Management Plan for the Ocotillo Wells SVRA/Ocotillo Wells Special Recreation Management Area.

The project was paused in 2019 and resumed in 2024 due to budget constraints and the COVID pandemic. In Summer 2025, BLM changed its administrative direction and withdrew from the project. The Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan Update will continue to focus on providing management guidance for state park-owned lands, as well as 26,000 acres of connected BLM land that State Parks manages as part of the SVRA under an existing memorandum of understanding.

The project website was relaunched in early 2026, <https://planocotillowells.org/>. State Parks filed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on February 20, 2026. The NOP included a 30-day scoping phase and public comment period, which concluded on March 23. Preparation of the Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR is ongoing and is expected to be released to the public for review and consideration in mid- to late-2026. The project is projected to be brought to the Commission for their consideration in early 2027.

B. Carnegie SVRA General Plan and EIR Recirculation

On October 24, 2024, the Commission certified the Final EIR and approved the General Plan Update for the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area. State Parks became respondents in a lawsuit challenging these actions (Connolly Ranch, Inc., et al., v. State of California). In March 2026, the court ruled in favor of State Parks on all issues except for the adequacy of alternatives considered in the EIR. The court found that the EIR did

not meet the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirement for considering project alternatives. As a result, the court ordered State Parks to rescind the 2024 EIR certification and General Plan Update approval (Resolutions OHV-24-01 and OHV-24-02). The Peremptory Writ of Mandate was served on March 26, 2026, requiring compliance through Commission action. The OHMVR Commission rescinded the previous resolutions, general plan approval, and EIR certification on June 17, 2026.

In response to the court's ruling, State Parks will develop two additional alternatives for the EIR. These will explore strategies to reduce air-quality impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Project schedule:

- Fall 2026: State Parks will issue a Notice of Preparation for the recirculation of the EIR alternatives, conduct a virtual scoping meeting for comments, and provide a 30-day comment period.
- Winter 2026/2027: The draft General Plan and EIR, including new alternatives, will be available for 45 days of public review.
- Spring 2027: The Final EIR, addressing public comments, will be submitted to the OHMVR Commission in early 2027.

C. OHV Access Initiative (SB155)

Senate Bill 155 (2021) directs California State Parks to pursue opportunities to expand off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation, prioritizing large urban areas such as the Bay Area and the Central Valley. Potential ways to expand OHV recreation include acquisition, lease, land swap, partnerships, donation, transfer, legislation, and other approaches outlined in the Public Resources Code.

Phase One of the OHV Access Initiative was conducted from 2024 to 2025, concentrating on data collection and community participation, culminating in the development of an OHV Access and Enhancement Plan. This plan incorporated a feasibility assessment of numerous potential sites across federal, private, and state lands.

Commencing in Summer 2025, Phase Two has entailed ongoing research and evaluation, including meetings with representatives from SVRAs and federal entities to discuss potential projects and sites. Projects and sites have been appraised based on criteria such as cost, location, and projected completion timelines, as well as their compatibility with existing OHV Grant projects, ensuring they complement rather than compete with them. These projects have been organized into a phased approach to facilitate the most expedient delivery of benefits to the public: 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 5-10 years. The next step is to prioritize the list of projects for review by State Park Executives.

D. 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 Commission rescinded the 2024 GP and FEIR on June 17, 2026, at the hearing in Bakersfield.
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		The Commission approved the GP on Feb 26, 2026.
Ocotillo Wells SVRA	1981		It is anticipated to be brought to the Commission in 2027 for consideration and action.
Onyx Ranch SVRA			Awaiting project funding.

Commission Action: For information only.

Attachments: N/A