

California State Parks – Prairie City SVRA

Wet Weather Closure Policy and Process

12/13/2022

State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRA) are to be managed and maintained for sustained long term use. When areas or trails cannot be maintained to appropriate established standards for sustained long-term use, they should be closed to use and repaired to prevent accelerated erosion, closed until they can be managed within soil conservation standard or should be closed and restored. Management of SVRAs includes anticipating and preventing accelerated and unnatural erosion (PRC 5090.02, 5090.35, 5090.53).

The 2020 Soil Conservation Standard is:

“Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation facilities shall be managed for sustainable long-term prescribed use without generating soil loss that exceeds restorability, and without causing erosion or sedimentation which significantly affects resource values beyond the facilities.”

The Prairie City SVRA 2016 General Plan includes goals and guidelines that provide for the protection of natural resources while maintaining a quality OHV recreation experience. These goals and guidelines include:

4.4.2.1 Wetlands, Water Quality, and Water Supply (Water)

- Water Goal 1: Manage the SVRA for the protection of jurisdictional waters of the United States, including wetlands, and waters of the state, while maintaining a quality OHV recreational experience.
- Water Goal 2: Manage the SVRA for the protection of water quality while maintaining a quality OHV recreational experience.
 - Water Guideline 2.2: Implement best management practices (BMPs) in operating the SVRA, consistent with the most current water quality management prescriptions. Monitor water quality regularly and implement adaptive management practices as warranted. Adaptive management practices used may include permanent or *seasonal area closures*, facility redesign, and hillside restoration.

The 2007 OHV BMP Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control provides guidance for selecting and implementing BMPs at OHV Areas. One erosion prevention BMP is a wet weather closure which can be implemented to protect water quality, trail treads, road surfaces, and drainage from damage during wet weather. This policy is designed based on information provided in the 2007 OHV BMP Manual and the 2020 Soil Conservation Standard. This policy is consistent with Department’s Operations Manual, the Park’s 2016 General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and the 2022 Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan.

Wet Weather Closure Process

Wet weather closures will be implemented in mid-January 2023. The wet weather closure policy will be implemented based on soil conditions, weather conditions and forecast. Recommendations for closures will be made by a Prairie City SVRA Staff Team consisting of:

- Environmental Scientist
- Special Event Coordinator
- Park Maintenance Supervisor
- Supervising Ranger
- State Park Interpreter

The team will make a recommendation to the Sector Manager who will make the final closure decision. Interpretation staff will post the closure information on social media.

Criteria for Wet Weather Closure

The team will make recommendations on wet weather closures based on current conditions and weather forecast. Factors considered will include seasonal precipitation totals to date, soil type, soil saturation and soil conditions, presence of standing water, safety, and the imminent weather forecast.

Wet Weather Closures and Special Events

Promoters will have the option of identifying an alternate rain date for their event when they submit a Special Event Permit Application. Depending on the soil conditions and location of the event, the team may identify alternative areas or reroutes instead of resorting to a rain date.

In the event of a potential wet weather closure or reroute suggestion, the team will conduct site visits to key areas and make a recommendation on wet weather closure by noon on the Wednesday before the event. The special event coordinator will notify the event promoter of the closure decision.

Wet Weather Closures Locations

Only portions of the park will be subject to wet weather closures (see attached map). Zone 1, portions of Zone 2 and 3, and the 4x4 Obstacle Area will remain open to the public and special event use. Zone 4, portions of Zone 3, and the Oak Hill Trail Area will be closed. The attached map depicts proposed fencing to further control closures of highly saturated areas in the future. These location decisions were determined from past water quality monitoring and special event monitoring during rain events. Closure signs will be placed at the entrance of roads and trails when wet weather closure has been determined. Any closures will be posted on social media and links to these can be found on the [Prairie City SVRA Website](#). A message board will also be utilized at the entrance kiosk to inform visitors of closures when they enter the park. Once a wet weather closure is enacted, the team will assess conditions daily until the closure is lifted.

Adaptive Management

“Adaptive management” is a common strategy and fundamental component of implementing the best available science in natural resource management. As this is a new policy for the park, details and execution of the policy may change in the future based on monitoring or observations during implementation in the field.

Wet Weather Closures



Yost

Vernal Pool M. A.

VP M. A.

Zone 4

PCMX Track

4x4 Obstacle Area

Zone 3

Oak Hill Trail Area

Main Staging

ATV & MX Practice Tracks

Zone 1

Ehnisz

ETC

Kids' Tracks

Intermediate Practice Track

Quarter Midget Track

Go Kart Track

Zone 2

Legend and Information

- Closed to Public and Special Events
- Closed to Special Events Only
- Concession Area Not Subject to this Closure
- Areas to Remain Open
- Zones



Motorcycle:
Zone 1, Zone 2,
Zone 3



ROV:
Zone 1, Zone 2,
Zone 3, Zone 4



ATV:
Zone 1, Zone 2,
Zone 3



4x4:
Zone 4

Date: 12/21/2022

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet