DRAFT

OHMVR COMMISSION PROGRAM REPORT

2011

California State Parks – Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

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INTRODUCTION

California's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Program has as its primary goal and legislative intent the dual central themes that (1) off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation be managed to provide high quality opportunities for OHV recreation, and (2) balanced with protecting the state's natural and cultural resources. These dual commitments are accomplished through the provision of recreational opportunities directly at State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRA) owned and operated by the California State Parks through the OHMVR Division (Division) and by financial and technical assistance to other public and non-profit entities who provide and manage opportunities as well as enforce the laws associated with motorized recreation.

As required by Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5090.24(h), Duties and Responsibilities of the Commission, this report is submitted by the OHMVR Commission (Commission) to inform the Governor and Legislature of progress and developments in the state's OHMVR Program:

> *Prepare and submit a program report to the Governor, the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water, and the Committee on Appropriations of each house on or before January 1, 2011, and every three years thereafter. The report shall be adopted by the commission after discussing the contents during two or more public meetings. The report shall address the status of the program and off-highway motor vehicle recreation, including all of the following:*
>
> 1. *The results of the strategic planning process completed pursuant to subdivision (1) of Section 5090.32.*
> 2. *The condition of natural and cultural resources of areas and trails receiving state off-highway motor vehicle funds and the resolution of conflicts of use in those areas and trails.*
> 3. *The status and accomplishments of funds appropriated for restoration pursuant to paragraph (s) of subdivision (b) of Section 5090.50.*

4. *A summary of resource monitoring data compiled and restoration work completed.*
5. *Actions taken by the division and department since the last program report to discourage and decrease trespass of off-highway motor vehicles on private property.*
6. *Other relevant program-related environmental issues that have arisen since the last program report.*

Program Overview

When it established the OHMVR Program, the Legislature recognized that the growing popularity of off-highway motor vehicles requires effectively managed areas and adequate facilities to accommodate the demand for recreational activity of off-highway motor vehicles along with conservation and enforcement to achieve ecologically balanced recreation that addresses potential deleterious impacts on the environment, wildlife habitats, native wildlife, and native flora.

In 1971, through enactment of the Chappie-Z'berg Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Law (the Law), the Legislature addressed the growing use of motorized vehicles off-highway by adopting requirements for the registration and operation of motor vehicles used off-highway. In addition, the Law provided funding for administration of the program along with providing facilities for off-highway motor vehicle recreation. (California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 38000, et seq.)

The Law was founded on the principle that managed OHV use is essential for conserving and protecting the environment. The Law required maintenance and oversight to allow for sustainable OHV use consistent with good environmental stewardship.

In 1982, these principles were expanded upon through enactment of the Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act, which has been amended numerous times and is now referred to as the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act of 2003 (OHMVR Act) (PRC Section 5090.01, et seq.).

The OHMVR Act intends that existing OHV areas be expanded, added to, and managed to sustain areas for long-term motor vehicle recreation and that the OHMVR Program support motorized off-highway access to non-motorized recreation opportunities. The Act requires the OHMVR Program be given equal priority with other programs administered in the State Park System.

With the OHMVR Act, the Legislature created a separate division within California State Parks, the OHMVR Division, which has the exclusive authority for administering the OHMVR Program. The Division is charged with all aspects of managing the OHMVR Program.

Most recently, in 2007, Senate Bill 742 was introduced by Senator Steinberg and co-authored by Assembly Member Wolk. This legislation made a number of significant changes to clarify and strengthen the OHMVR Program related to funding, responsibilities of the Commission and Division, and the allocation of grant funds. It also extended the OHMVR Program sunset to January 1, 2018, the longest sunset in the history of the OHMVR Program. The bill received strong bi-partisan support from the Assembly and the Senate as it passed through the Legislature by a vote of 114-5.

The OHMVR Commission

The OHMVR Act also established the OHMVR Commission to provide a public body of appointed members having expertise in various areas related to off-highway recreation and environmental protection. The Commission is dedicated to reviewing and commenting on Program implementation, encouraging public input on issues and concerns affecting the OHMVR Program, considering and approving general plans for SVRAs, and providing advice to the Division on the OHMVR Program.

The Commission is a nine member body consisting of five members appointed by the Governor, two by the Senate Committee on Rules, and two appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly. The Commission has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Be fully informed regarding all governmental activities affecting the OHMVR Program.
- Meet at least four times per year at various locations throughout the state to receive comments on the implementation of the OHMVR Program. Establish an annual calendar of proposed meetings at the beginning of each calendar year. The meetings shall include a public meeting, before the beginning of each Grants Program cycle, to collect public input concerning the OHMVR Program, recommendations for program improvements, and specific project needs for the system.
- Hold a public hearing to receive public comment regarding any proposed substantial acquisition or development project at a location in close geographic proximity to the project, unless a

hearing consistent with federal law or regulation has already been held regarding the project.

- Consider, upon the request of any owner or tenant, whose property is in the vicinity of any land in the system, any alleged adverse impacts occurring on that person's property from the operation of OHVs and recommend to the Division suitable measures for the prevention of any adverse impact determined by the Commission to be occurring, and suitable measures for the restoration of adversely impacted property.
- Review and comment annually to the director on the proposed budget of expenditures from the fund.
- Review all plans for new and expanded local and regional vehicle recreation areas that have applied for grant funds.
- Review and comment on the strategic plan developed by the Division pursuant to Section 5090.32.
- Prepare and submit a program report to the Governor, the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water, and the Committee on Appropriations of each house on or before January 1, 2011, and every three years thereafter. The report shall be adopted by the Commission after discussing the contents.
- Additionally, the Commission approves general plans and amendments to general plans for the SVRAs pursuant to Public Resources Code section 5002.2.

The OHMVR Division

The Division operates eight SVRAs located throughout California and supports local, state and federal OHV recreation areas through financial and technical assistance and professional guidance.

The Division has exclusive duties and responsibilities for:

- Planning, acquisition, development, conservation, and restoration of lands in the SVRAs.

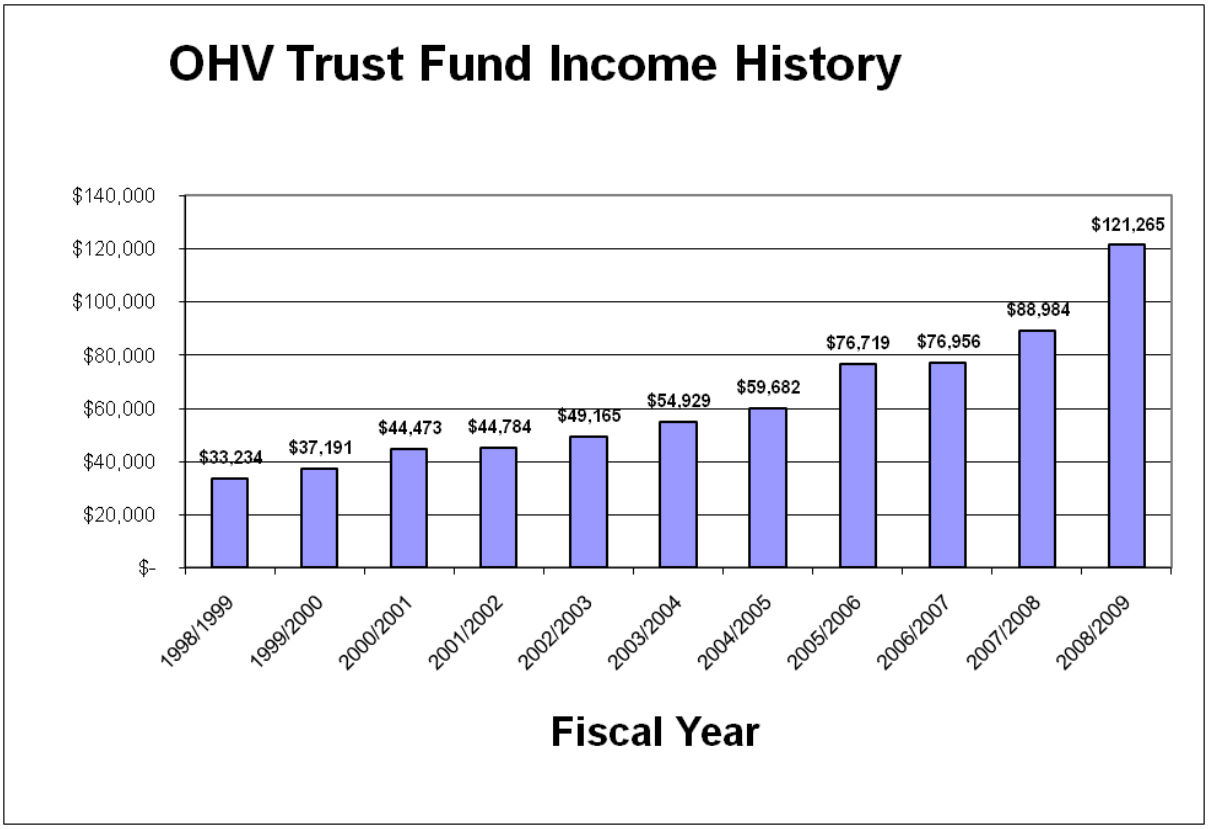
- Management, maintenance, administration, and operation of SVRAs.
- Law enforcement and public safety activities.
- Preparing and implementing plans for SVRAs.
- Surveys and studies.
- Volunteer programs.
- Safety and education programs.
- Strategic planning.

Program Funding

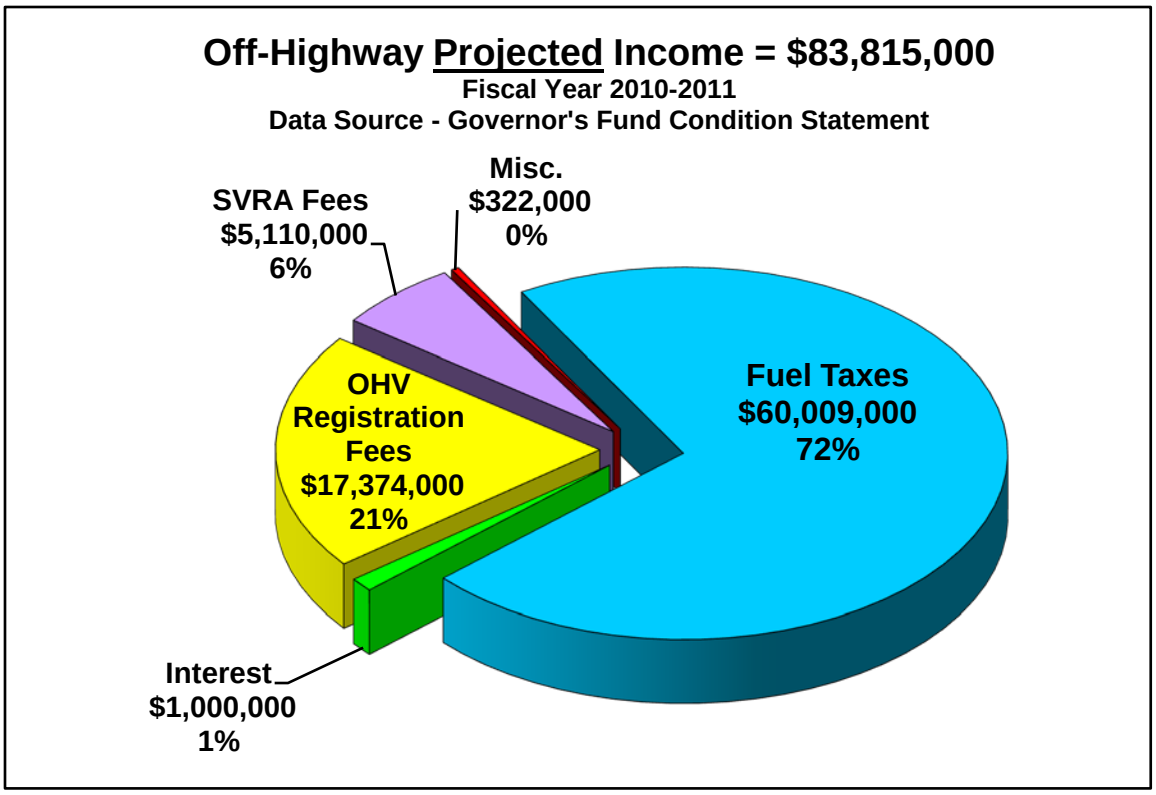
The OHMVR Program receives no support from the state's General Fund. All funding is directly generated by the recreational community the OHMVR Program serves. Funding comes primarily from three sources:

- Fuel taxes from gasoline consumed in off-highway recreation on public lands
- OHV registration fees
- Entrance fees generated at the SVRAs

A history of income to the OHV Trust Fund over the past 10 years is provided in the chart below:



NOTE: A significant increase can be seen beginning in 07/08. SB 742, enacted in 2008, increased OHV registration fees from $25 to $50, payable every two years. The portion of these registration fees directed to the OHV Trust Fund therefore rose from $8 of the former $25 registration payment, to $33 for every $50 registration payment.



Acquisitions and capital improvement projects are funded from any excess revenue to the OHV Trust Fund over the amount budgeted for routine program expenses. For several years funds available for acquisition and capital improvement projects accumulated and remained unallocated while the Division and the Commission worked on the OHMVR Strategic Plan to develop a shared vision for the OHMVR Program and establish priorities for the goals and objectives for the future of the program, including acquisition priorities for additional facilities and areas. Despite agreement with and adoption of the Strategic Plan, however, these funds are not currently available to meet program objectives due to recent budget actions which transferred OHV Trust Funds to the state's General Fund. The budget action provides that these transfers are a "loan" to be repaid at a future date.

Reporting Requirements

REPORT REQUIREMENT 1:

The results of the strategic planning process completed pursuant to subdivision (1) of Section 5090.32.

In 2008, the Division began the process of developing a shared vision with the Commission, and developing a Strategic Plan to achieve that vision. Based on a series of meetings with the Commission Sub-committee and the public, a Vision Statement was created and approved by the Commission.

Vision Statement

The OHMVR Division will assure ongoing access to a wide variety of high quality OHV recreational opportunities through our commitment to prudent resource management, outdoor recreation, community education and environmental stewardship.

Through an extensive process that included internal staff workshops and public meetings, the Division conducted a comprehensive assessment of external and internal factors that affect the OHMVR Program. Based on the information gleaned during this process, the Division developed strategic planning goals and objectives.

Public review meetings, workshops, and focus group meetings were conducted to develop the draft that was submitted to the Commission for review and comment. After incorporating changes based on the Commission comments and Commission meetings, as well as comments from the public, the Strategic Plan was completed and submitted in the fall of 2009 to the Governor and Department of Finance for approval.

The Strategic Plan provides a road map for the OHMVR Division and is based on four strategic themes and five guiding principles:

Strategic Themes

- ✓ Emphasize the Basics
- ✓ The Greening of OHV Recreation
- ✓ Improving Technology
- ✓ The New Gateway

Guiding Principles

- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Transparency in Decision Making
- ✓ Working with Partners and Volunteers
- ✓ Considering the Needs and Concerns of Stakeholders
- ✓ Sound Data for Management Decision Making

Based on these strategic themes and guiding principles, the Strategic Plan adopts a framework of six goals for the OHMVR Program in order to meet its legislative mandates.

GOAL 1 *- Sustain Existing Opportunity: Protect, preserve, and enhance existing OHV opportunities in a manner that ensures well managed, interesting, and high quality experiences, and address the environmental impacts that may be associated with those activities.*

GOAL 2 *- Increase OHV Opportunity: Add new OHV opportunities where appropriate and needed to replace loss of existing opportunities and respond to changing and future demand.*

GOAL 3 *- Staff Development: Enhance the abilities of Program managers and staff dedicated to the development, management, and implementation of the OHMVR Program.*

GOAL 4 *- Develop an Informed and Educated Community: Achieve a highly informed and educated community associated with OHV recreational activities, dedicated to safe and lawful OHV operation and responsible environmental stewardship.*

GOAL 5 *- Cooperative Relationships: Establish and maintain productive relationships between individuals, organizations, industry, and government agencies to cooperatively identify problems and develop and implement solutions to advance the Mission and Goals of the OHMVR Program.*

GOAL 6 *- Informed Decision Making: Improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of information needed to support sound decision making, transparency of administration, and communication with the interrelated groups interested in, and associated with, the OHMVR Program.*

For each of the goals listed above, the Strategic Plan lays out specific objectives to be implemented to achieve the goal. The objectives include anticipated timeframes for completion, and also describe performance measures which can be tracked to verify objectives have been accomplished. Finally, resource assumptions are included for each objective which indicates whether additional resources will be needed in order to achieve the objective.

Report Requirement 2:

The condition of natural and cultural resources of areas and trails receiving state off-highway motor vehicle funds and the resolution of conflicts of use in those areas and trails.

Protecting natural and cultural resources is essential to ensure OHV recreation areas are managed to sustain long-term use. Overall, the condition of natural and cultural resources being managed through financial contributions from the OHMVR Program have benefited from recent changes in the state's OHMVR Program. Though much has been accomplished, the OHMVR Program must continue its efforts to protect lands, maintain habitat, and repair damage caused by both legal and unauthorized OHV recreation.

The Division directly manages eight SVRAs. Below is a brief review of the condition of natural resources in these areas.

Clay Pit SVRA

Clay Pit SVRA is surrounded by the Oroville Airport, ranchland, and a California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) shooting range and Wildlife Area. The bowl-shaped topography has largely been created by past excavation of clay minerals used in the construction of the Oroville Dam. Dredge tailings from gold mining remain, primarily in the southeastern corner of the park, and a canal partially bisects the northern one-third of the park. The northern, upstream end of the canal is fed by a very small, seasonal drainage that arises outside the park to the north, draining part of the adjacent airport and surrounding uplands.

Most of the park consists of upland areas that experience dry, hot conditions during the summer and early fall. Vegetation within the park consists of three distinct plant communities. Upland locations, which are non-wetland areas, are vegetated with low growing grasses. Lowland locations consist mostly of wetland vegetation associated with vernal pool habitat, and a few areas consist of other wetland vegetation such as spikerush. Fremont cottonwoods are also found scattered throughout the park, offering areas of shade for park visitors.

Hydrology and run-on drainage issues from adjacent lands are problematic as the property receives a good deal of stormwater and can also flood from waters of the Feather River. A hydrology study currently underway will assess site conditions and help determine future hydrology management actions.

Prairie City SVRA

Located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada foothills, Prairie City SVRA provides undulating terrain with elevations ranging from 240 – 350 feet. The lands within the SVRA were previously used for a variety of activities such as grazing, dredge mining, and industrial test sites, and similar activities continue today on adjacent lands. Topography on the property ranges from nearly level in the western sections of the property that are generally characterized by old dredge tailings, to gently sloping and steep hills with scattered remnants of blue oak woodlands in the east. Within the eastern portion of the property, a number of branches of, or tributaries to, Coyote Creek are found.

Vegetative communities consist of annual grassland, blue oak woodland, chaparral, and Fremont cottonwood riparian areas, although much of the site comprises exposed soil absent vegetation. The blue oaks are protected from OHV activities by fencing that extends beyond the drip line of each tree. The most common wildlife in the park include black-tailed deer, coyotes, bobcats, striped skunks, California ground squirrels, black-tailed jackrabbits, wild turkeys, and red-tailed hawks. The park is also home to approximately 180 acres of vernal pools and wetlands.

The park is balancing protection of mature native oaks, permanent water sources, and erodible soils with the maintenance of rideable acreage. This park is one of the smallest SVRAs, and the condensed use makes it a challenge to simultaneously improve conditions for both resources and OHV recreation. The protection tools that work the best are often those that incorporate a “recreation” component.

Sediment basins are cleaned out annually or as needed. The park completed a major redesign of the existing sediment basin system in 2009. The basins were redesigned to be shallower and include baffling to slow the water down, which allows the suspended sediment particles to

drop out of suspension. Each sediment basin has been outfitted with a gravity feed skimmer that drains off the top couple inches of water, containing the least amount of sediment, and pipes it to the next sediment pond, where the cycle repeats. At the end of the process, the goal is to have improved the retention time and have clean water leaving the property. To minimize a source of sediment, several hardened crossings were also installed. These designated crossings allow riding in a perpendicular direction across the creek, but not along the creek bottom.

Rotational hill climbs were started in 2005 and are re-worked and rotated every one – two years. The area designated as the hill climb area is approximately 2.5 acres. A rotational hill climb is intended to provide a fun recreational area without generating excess sediment. The area is re-worked with the soils from the sediment basin, which ensures the park continues to use native soils.

The original vernal pool protective measures were completed in 1999, including fencing and an interpretive panel. Without the influence of grazing to control invasive plants, the habitat has degraded. Park staff are working on a vernal pool vegetation management plan, particularly focusing on eradicating the invasive vegetation. A new interpretive panel will be installed in 2010.

The vernal pool vegetation management plan should reduce the amount of invasive weeds, especially Medusahead and yellow starthistle affecting that area. Within the OHV use area, however, managing invasive vegetation, especially starthistle, has proven to be a greater challenge. Starthistle is a difficult invasive weed to eradicate due to its aggressive growth habits and nutrient requirements. Park Environmental Scientists are considering a plan to implement biological controls, such as grazing, for starthistle control this year as they believe it is the most practical application to combat the problem. Herbicide use is not practical as the park is home to several species of sensitive vegetation. Biological control may thus be the best option to get the starthistle population down to a manageable level.

Carnegie SVRA

Located in the coastal hills of western San Joaquin and eastern Alameda counties, the topography of Carnegie SVRA is steep, with several vegetation habitats represented including annual grassland, blue oak woodland, coastal scrub, valley foothill riparian, and lacustrine (lake and lake-like environments). The climate is Mediterranean, with cool, wet winters and hot dry summers.

The park is divided into two areas that are defined by their use type. These are the “open riding” area and the more restrictive “trails only” area. Approximately half of the park, the north side, is “open-riding,” which typically consists of areas that are grasslands with more durable soils. The other half is the “trails only” area, which is within the more sensitive habitats of the park (coastal scrub and oak woodland). These designations were established in the park’s general plan (1980). Orange carsonite markers installed in 2004 clearly delineate the boundary between the two use areas, informing visitors when they cross from one riding area to the other.

The park is home to the federally-threatened California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander. Because of the presence of these listed species and the need to clean out sediment ponds annually, several permits are required. In 2005, the park successfully obtained the authorizations from four state and federal agencies that were required to complete the work.

During this same time period, the park also acquired an industrial storm-water permit from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Tesla mining district. Per the requirements of this permit, over the past few years the park began the process of installing temporary erosion control measures aimed at improving the stormwater runoff. The measures are evaluated and improved each year, a process that will lead to more permanent solutions in the near future.

In 2004-2007, a watershed analysis was conducted of all the state parcels owned within the Corral Hollow Creek watershed, a seasonal drainage running along the northern park boundary. The watershed analysis assessed the park’s water quality issues and identified possible problem areas while proposing small- and large-scale solutions. This

comprehensive study has provided the background needed to plan future improvement projects (e.g., road and trail maintenance and realignment and restoration of Corral Hollow Creek) and has focused management efforts on locating and improving specific issues within the park.

Hollister Hills SVRA

Located just an hour's drive from San Jose, Hollister Hills SVRA is situated in the Gabilan Mountains at elevations from 660 feet to 2425 feet. Adobe and granitic soils are present, predominantly separated by the San Andres fault that runs through the park. This park unit was purchased with funds from the OHV Trust Fund in 1975. Prior to this time it had been operated for OHVs under private management. Topography on the property ranges from the foothills to mountain ridgeline.

Vegetation communities consist of annual grassland conifer forest, pine woodland, riparian-oak woodland, high and low chaparral, neighbored by agricultural areas. Common wildlife in the park include black-tailed deer, feral pigs, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, ground squirrels, bats, red-tailed hawks, western meadowlarks, wild turkeys, western fence lizards, and gopher snakes.

Integrated adaptive resource management practices help address concerns of nearby community members and landowners, such as noise and fugitive dust levels. By taking advantage of the land's natural contours, trails are designed to limit the effects of OHV sounds away from neighboring properties. One benefit in the Adobe area is the high clay content of the natural soils reduces airborne dust and promotes good neighbor relations.

Hollister Hills SVRA seeks to foster partnerships and takes a collaborative approach to address issues and develop methods that sustain OHV recreation. In 2009, a new intern program was initiated that enlisted several local and regional colleges. The interns have an opportunity to work in a variety of program areas at the SVRA up to and including: resource management, interpretation, maintenance and operations; and public safety. Specifically this program has helped increase resource awareness of the dynamic park programs at Hollister

Hills by reaching out beyond the traditional OHV community for ideas, support, and education.

Invasive exotic plant control has been an ongoing effort, currently targeting yellow star thistle, tree of heaven, tree tobacco, and French broom. A primary goal is to deplete the seed banks and/or the root system of the plants. Park staff will continue to partner with the San Benito County Weed Management Area, as this relationship is proving advantageous, and has also produced an educational brochure for park visitors.

Habitat damage from feral pigs has become a big problem. Park staff is working diligently to monitor, control, and maintain the population in the park, and has just initiated a feral pig depredation program. This management program will ensure that habitat for the California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander will be protected from this non-native wildlife species.

The park's proximity to urban areas and its high visibility require the implementation of several management programs as part of daily operations. They include non-motorized open space areas, which have been established both in and around the park, continuous monitoring of dust and sound levels that originate within the park, and a 10-year grazing program, which primarily utilizes the buffer areas of the Renz property. Approximately 1,300 acres are grazed. This multi-use program provides fire suppression, weed management, and scientific data while generating revenue that allows it to be self sustaining.

Oceano Dunes SVRA

Oceano Dunes SVRA lies at the north end of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes complex, a relatively intact coastal dune and dune scrub ecosystem along the central coast. Habitats within the park include coastal foredune, dune scrub, bare sand sheets, dune slack wetlands, coastal estuary, riparian, and freshwater lakes. The SVRA provides habitat for numerous special-status plant and animal species, including valuable nesting habitat for state- and federally-listed endangered California least terns and federally-listed threatened western snowy plovers.

Of the 3,600 acres within the SVRA, approximately 2,100 acres are managed as a resource area, some of which is open to non-motorized recreation. Oso Flaco Lake and the associated habitats are one of the park's best known and biologically important habitats. Numerous other areas provide regionally important habitat, however, including the dune system south of Oso Flaco Lake and the vegetation islands located within the motorized recreation and camping area. Approximately 1,500 acres are open to vehicles and camping. During the western snowy plover nesting season, approximately 50 acres of nonmotorized recreation area south of Oso Flaco Creek and approximately 250 acres of motorized recreation area north of the creek are closed to all public access.

Oceano Dunes SVRA has been working on a Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to cover all park operations under the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts. This HCP will outline specific management and monitoring activities to address covered species.

Oceano Dunes SVRA Environmental Scientists take an adaptive management approach to the task of managing habitats and species at the park. For example, approximately 250 acres of riding and camping area that are closed during the breeding season for plover and tern nesting and chick rearing become degraded from OHV recreation during the winter months (October – February). To mitigate the impacts to breeding habitat, park staff implements a number of habitat enhancement activities designed to improve breeding and chick rearing conditions for these species, such as providing large woody debris to provide for topography and wind protection and spreading wood chips to provide debris patches where the birds can successfully nest. This enhancement program is reviewed and adjusted annually.

Staff is working to control the spread of invasive exotic weeds that threaten to degrade or eliminate sensitive foredune and dune scrub habitat. The two biggest threats to these ecosystems include European beachgrass and veldt grass. Staff has been working with partner agencies and adjacent public landowners to control large infestations of

invasive exotic species throughout the Guadalupe Nipomo Dune System. The most significant effort to control invasive exotic species is approximately 160 acres in the south Oso Flaco dunes. This large area has been treated annually for two years to control the spread of European beachgrass.

In 2007 and 2008, the California Geological Survey prepared a report on options to perpetuate the habitat values of the vegetation islands within Oceano Dunes SVRA. These recommendations will eventually be incorporated into a long-term vegetation islands management plan.

Hungry Valley SVRA

Hungry Valley SVRA is located next to Interstate Highway 5 on the Tejon Pass in the intersection of the Transverse, Tehachapi, and Coastal ranges of Southern California. The park is bordered on the north by Tejon Ranch, on the west by Los Padres National Forest, on the east by the Department of Water Resources, and on the south by Angeles National Forest. Hungry Valley contains four distinct physiographic units. The first is Hungry Valley proper, a large valley in the western portion of the park. The second is Freeman Canyon, a badland-type environment (an area characterized by extensive natural erosion) in the middle of the unit. The third is the Gorman Creek drainage along the north and east sides of the park. The fourth is Canada de Los Alamos, a large, relatively flat area in the southern portion of the park.

Vegetation within the park is diverse due to the convergence of several California floristic regions. Major vegetation communities include chaparral, pinon-juniper woodland, grassland, riparian, juniper-yucca open woodland, oak woodland, and shrubland. The 60-acre Oak Woodland Natural Preserve in the northwest area of Hungry Valley SVRA, which is closed to motorized recreation, protects a natural seep that provides water for immense valley oaks and native

grasses that cannot be found growing together anywhere else in California. The Native Grasslands Management Area, comprising the northern area of the SVRA, protects rare native grasslands by restricting OHVs to designated trails.

This diverse habitat supports diverse wildlife and maintaining habitat for special-status species (such as coast horned lizard) is always a priority. Monitoring activities at Hungry Valley have identified 38 species of mammals, 112 species of birds, 25 species of herpetiles, and 234 vegetative species.

The six exotic pest plants of greatest concern—yellow starthistle, giant reed, pampas grass, Dalmatian toadflax, tree of heaven, and perennial pepperweed—exist in limited areas at Hungry Valley SVRA. All six species are within or along the edge of the Grassland Management Area, which underscores the importance of controlling these plants.

Two invasive wildlife species have been found in the park, and only one—the European starling—has made it to the habitat monitoring plots. European starlings have been increasing in numbers at the north and south ends of the park and into the Grassland Management Area.

The invasive, exotic weed program goal of the Hungry Valley Five Year Resource Management Plan is complete elimination of these plants from the SVRA. In fiscal year 2005-2006 extensive work began to limit the spread of and treat these infestations. The work is ongoing, as control and elimination of invasive plant is almost never achieved in one year.

Ocotillo Wells and Heber Dunes SVRAs

Ocotillo Wells SVRA is located in the Colorado Desert approximately 90 miles northeast of San Diego in both the Imperial and San Diego Counties. The park manages approximately 85,000 acres of park land, lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private in-holdings.

Habitats include mesquite, ironwood, desert willow, smoketree and Palo Verde woodlands, four-winged saltbush scrub, Creosote-burro-bush scrub, desert buckwheat, Ocotillo, brittle-bush scrub, Galleta grass-indigo

scrub, goldenbush, sunflower barrens, and woody aster badland wash benches.

Ocotillo Wells SVRA receives approximately 1.2 million visitors per year. Heber Dunes SVRA is much smaller unit; visitation is approximately 22,000 visitors per year, primarily coming from the local area. Both parks offer a combination of open riding and trail opportunities. Camping is allowed in the open riding area throughout Ocotillo Wells SVRA, while Heber Dunes SVRA is day-use only. The general plan process, currently underway, will address future open riding, camping, and designated trail policies.

Monitoring of vertebrate elements of both units has yet to produce analyzable results. The reptile survey has been revised to produce more meaningful data, but the bird and mammal data will require many more years to reach a statistically analyzable value.

The flat-tailed horned lizard, proposed for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, occurs in various habitats throughout Ocotillo Wells SVRA. The Ocotillo Wells District has been funding studies since 1991 to determine the species' population, density, hibernation factors, and life history. Much new information has come from these annual studies. In the last three seasons a valuable and useful protocol for flat-tailed horned lizard monitoring has been implemented. While a comprehensive statistical analysis is still several years away, environmental scientists are confident this system will provide meaningful data on the relative condition of the population of this species. In June 1997 the California Department of Parks and Recreation signed a Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Management Strategy Plan that established Ocotillo Wells SVRA as a Research Area for the species. This Strategy Plan is an Arizona-California Conservation Agreement. As signatories of this plan, Ocotillo Wells District funds annual studies to monitor and gain more information about the species.

One resource concern at both district units is invasive exotic plants. The three plants of greatest concern at Ocotillo Wells SVRA are tamarisk, Russian thistle ("tumbleweed"), and Sahara mustard. At Heber Dunes SVRA, the primary species of concern is the invasive saltcedar species of tamarisk. The noxious weed program goal is complete elimination of the invasive tamarisk species. Tamarisk is a frequent and invasive large shrub to small tree in major washes and numerous tributaries in Ocotillo Wells SVRA and along the boundaries of Heber Dunes SVRA. Since 1988 the Ocotillo Wells District has been reducing the tamarisk population in the unit through cutting, spraying, and removal. Future plans are to continue with the removal of tamarisk throughout the unit depending on funding. Yearly inspections for re-sprouts are done at past removal locations.

Lack of annual plant production and general plant recruitment has been noted in all areas sampled. For some sampled habitats, this has meant substantial loss of vegetation, soil, and general habitat integrity. For the mesquite dune habitat at Barrel Springs in Ocotillo Wells SVRA, which has been closed to public access, substantial improvement has been documented in annual plant production and perennial plant recruitment. This area has been used as a restoration model for this habitat throughout the park where it occurs.

At Ocotillo Wells SVRA, a recently established trails management team, part of an effort to improve trails maintenance, has been assembled to begin the designation process in collaboration with the environmental review team. A trails designation and enclosure plan has been proposed for a portion of Heber Dunes SVRA as part of the park's general plan which is currently under development.

Brochures for the flat-tailed horned lizard, guides to wildflowers and reptile species, park newsletter, as well as interpretive events at various locations and times with varied themes, have all been implemented in all areas of park management, primarily at Ocotillo Wells SVRA. To analyze the effectiveness of the education program in protecting park resources, continued monitoring is taking place at various locations within Ocotillo Wells SVRA. The placement of information signs at restoration sites and enclosures is now standard practice.

Federal Natural Resource Management

Changes to OHMVR Program Benefiting Natural and Cultural Resource Management

As California's population continues to grow, and the number of people choosing to recreate on OHVs increases accordingly, recent changes to the OHMVR Program have increased the Program's effectiveness in meeting this demand and the legislative mandate for resource protection.

Additional funding was made available by the enactment of SB 742 which among many other changes, increased OHV registration fees from $25 to $50 for a two-year registration which provides a greater level of program support. Since 2004, funding available for the Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program has increased from $18 million to $27.1 million. This increase allows for a far greater level of resource protection through preventive maintenance and conservation activities on trails and areas used by OHVs, improved levels of enforcement to prevent trespass and operation of OHVs in closed areas, and increased restoration efforts on lands damaged by OHV recreation activities.

Changes to Grant Regulations

Over the past four years, numerous changes have been made to the regulations which govern the Grants Program to promote and encourage agencies that manage lands and provide opportunities for OHV recreation to adopt an holistic approach to land management practices and maintain the natural resources in good condition.

The grant application and scoring process now looks at both project specific information and general information about the applicant's overall program. Applicants with fully developed programs that include education on responsible OHV recreation, sustainable land management practices and enforcement efforts, are given additional consideration and are more likely to be awarded funding.

This approach encourages program managers to address all aspects of managing OHV recreation. Funding specific projects has a direct impact on the lands or activities which are funded. Rewarding applicants for

conducting holistic programs provides positive indirect impacts to areas and activities not directly funded by the program.

New Soil Standard: In order to provide for and ensure that soil conservation activities are being performed effectively in areas affected by OHV activities, the 1991 Soil Conservation Guidelines and Standards required updating (PRC 5090.35 (b)(1)). The OHMVR Division brought together a number of other agencies to assist in developing a new soil standard, including: The California Department of Conservation, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Through public workshops, input was also obtained from representatives of other governmental organizations, OHV recreation groups, OHV industry consultants, and environmental communities.

These efforts produced the "2008 Soil Conservation Standard and Guidelines" (Soil Conservation Standard). The Soil Conservation Standard was incorporated into the 2009-2010 OHV Grant Regulations, and approved by the Office of Administrative Law. Under the 2009-2010 OHV Grant Regulations, grantees must develop a Soil Conservation Plan, which details soil monitoring and conservation practices for any projects which involve ground disturbing activities.

The new standard and guidelines is also being implemented in the SVRAs managed by the Division.

To ensure soil conservation issues are being appropriately addressed, and that the Soil Conservation Standard is being correctly implemented, the Division has contracted with the California Geological Survey to train staff from the Division and grantee agencies, and to provide recommendations and prescriptive solutions for trail maintenance and repair activities to prevent soil loss.

Addition of Grant and Audit Staff

The increase in grant funding, from $18 million in 2007 to $27.1 million in 2008, has resulted in a greater number of funded projects. Additional

grant administrators and auditors have been hired to cover the increased workload associated with this increase.

Grant administrators review project proposals and score applications. During this review, environmental staff ensures that Wildlife Habitat Protection Plans and compliance with the Soil Standard and Guidelines are included in projects as required by statute.

Once projects are approved for funding, the grant administrators perform desk reviews and site visits to monitor progress. Grant administrators verify projects are being completed in compliance with regulations, and that project deliverables are fully achieved, including the requirements for protection of natural and cultural resources.

A minimum of 20% of completed projects are selected for additional review and auditing. Audits consist of both financial reviews, to ensure funds were spent and accounted for appropriately, and a performance review to verify that all project goals were achieved. If irregularities are discovered, grantees are required to correct any deficiencies or, as a last resort, to pay back the OHV Trust Fund.

Habitat Management Program

USFS and BLM grantees with projects involving ground disturbing activities must implement a Wildlife Habitat Protection Program (WHPP), known as a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) under the Grants Program. The HMP requires grantees to identify special-status plant and animal species that could be at risk from OHV recreation and monitor for potential impacts to those species. As an adaptive management plan, the HMP includes management objectives and actions to address the risk, success criteria to gauge the effectiveness of each management action, and “triggers” for management change. Each grant application cycle, grantees report on the results of the previous year’s HMP, including any management actions taken based on monitoring results. The Division developed the WHPP/HMP over several years of working with BLM and USFS environmental staff. The forms, which were largely finalized in 2005, are incorporated into the Grants Program regulations.

In addition projects with ground disturbing activities must implement activities outlined in the 2008 Soil Standard and Guidelines in projects supported by grant funding. The Soil Standard and Guidelines were incorporated into the regulations governing the 2009-2010 grant cycle.

U.S. Forest Service National Resource Conditions

Within California, USFS Region 5 includes all or part of 19 national forests, and each of these forests has received Grants Program funding during the 2004-2009 period. The natural resources within these 19 national forests are unique. Of the more than 8,000 vascular plant species occurring in California, well over half are known to occur on national forest lands. This pattern is due to topography, geography, geology and soils, climate, and vegetation-the same factors that account for the exceptionally high occurrence of endemic (i.e., found nowhere else) flora in California. Over 100 plant species are endemic to national forest lands. National forests supply 50% of California's water, forming the watershed of most major aqueducts and more than 2,400 reservoirs throughout the state. More than 600 of the 800 species of fish and wildlife in California inhabit the national forests, making the USFS the single largest habitat manager in the state. Although California's 19 national forests are characterized by unique and diverse habitats, they are often categorized into three large geographic areas: the Northern/Klamath Province, Southern California, and the Sierra Nevada.

Northern/Klamath Province: Habitats on the four Northern/Klamath Province forests (Six Rivers, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity, and Mendocino National Forests) are broadly represented by the following tree types: ponderosa pine, eastside mixed conifer, westside mixed conifer, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, eastside true fir, westside true fir, and hardwoods. In addition, the non-forested areas share the following vegetation and habitat characteristics: western juniper/big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass, riparian woodlands, oak woodlands and savannah, scrub oak mixed chaparral, ceanothus mixed chaparral, montane shrubland, bitterbrush, montane meadows, alpine grassland, perennial grass glades, wet meadows, wetlands, and aquatic systems (lakes, streams, ponds, and springs). Riparian communities occur around streams, lakes, ponds, wet meadows, springs, and wetlands throughout the area. Terrestrial habitats tend to be the driest in the southern and eastern portions of this area.

Sierra Nevada: Habitats on the eleven Sierra Nevada Forests (Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Humboldt-Toiyabe, El Dorado, Stanislaus, Sierra, Inyo, and Sequoia National Forests and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit) vary greatly across the range. Ecosystems present themselves in the landscape as a patchwork of forests, shrublands, rock outcrops, aquatic features (lakes, rivers, and reservoirs), wet and dry meadows, and other vegetation types that form complex mosaics. In the broadest context, vegetation alliances in the Sierra Nevada are both elevation and latitude sensitive and are distinctly different at the lower elevations between the east and west sides of the Sierra Nevada crest. Yellow pine (ponderosa and Jeffery pines), lodgepole-red fir, and subalpine forests are represented on both sides of the divide, and on most national forests south of the Modoc, although the yellow pine belts on the east and west slope are distinctly different. Alpine vegetation alliances are found where elevations exceed 11,000 to 12,000 feet. On the west side, the lower elevation alliances include chaparral, and foothill woodlands (including mixed evergreen forests) are mixed with valley grasslands at the lowest points. On the east side, the lowest elevation is occupied by sagebrush scrub with pinyon-juniper woodlands found between the sagebrush and yellow pines. There are virtually no oak woodlands on the east side. Streams and associated riparian vegetation occur throughout the area, and wet meadows occur primarily on the eastern slope.

Southern California: The complex interaction of climate, geology, and topography has created an unusually rich array of vegetation types on the four Southern California national forests (Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests) that range from dry desert scrub to humid coastal redwood forests. Specific habitats of importance include alpine/subalpine, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, desert mountain, desert scrub, Gabbro outcrops, lakes and reservoirs, limestone/carbonate outcrops, lower montane forest, montane conifer forest, montane meadows, Monterey coastal, oak woodland/savanna/grassland, pebble plain, riparian, serpentine outcrops, and vernal pools.

Bureau of Land Management Natural Resource Conditions

To ensure natural resources are maintained in good condition, the BLM is actively managing OHV recreation. Of particular concern is maintaining

and protecting populations of sensitive desert reptiles. The Division has awarded the BLM a grant to study the effectiveness of current management practices allowing OHV activities in some of the desert washes within Desert Wildlife Management Area of Critical Environmental Concerns (ACEC) in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

The BLM is also ensuring natural resources are maintained in good condition by controlling invasive exotic plants. The BLM Barstow and Hollister Field Offices have been especially active in removing noxious invasive weeds. In Afton Canyon ACEC, a popular recreation destination east of Barstow, BLM staff has been vigilant in its efforts to control the spread of tamarisk to allow and promote the growth of native willows and mesquite in the canyon riparian woodland. In southern San Benito County, the BLM has been undertaking prescribed burns to promote growth of rare native plants and halt the spread of yellow starthistle into OHV recreation areas.

Keeping trails repaired and in good condition by reducing soil erosion, and developing staff expertise for rapid response to erosion problems caused in connection with OHV trails, is a major goal for BLM OHV recreation programs. The BLM is partnering with the Division and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service to train BLM staff in new improved methods in erosion control for OHV and in monitoring and diagnosing potential erosion problems in advance, allowing staff to act early to avoid erosion.

Cultural Resources

SVRA Cultural Resource Management

The lands owned and managed by the Division contain valuable cultural resources that provide insight into California's prehistory and history. A wide range of state laws and regulations govern cultural resource protection and preservation of resources within the SVRAs (including archeological and historical) for current and future generations.

Cultural Resource Inventories and Monitoring

Cultural resources are inventoried and protected through Cultural Resource Inventory Reports prepared by Division Associate State Archaeologists. These reports include pre-field research, the results of the fieldwork, site records, detailed maps, and evaluations of the cultural resources eligible for either the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

Having an up-to-date cultural resource inventory of an SVRA allows the cultural resource specialist to identify areas of the park that contain or may contain resources that will require protection or mitigation because of a Division project. To be consistent with best management practices, a Cultural Resource Inventory Report should be no more than five years old. In recognition of the growing need to identify and protect cultural resources in the SVRAs, and as a result of increased funding per SB 742, the Division currently has two State Archeologists who in 2008 proposed and are moving forward with updating the Cultural Resource Inventories for each of the SVRAs.

Data collected during a cultural resource inventory help determine which resources in the SVRA require annual monitoring for adequate preservation and management. Archaeological monitoring is an important component of the Division's ongoing efforts to ensure or verify the avoidance of effects on known cultural resources.

Division Archeologists and Division staff also partner with volunteers from the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP) to perform additional cultural resource monitoring. CASSP is utilized by a multitude of state and federal agencies to involve members of the public to help monitor, preserve, and manage archaeological sites throughout California. CASSP volunteers require training and guidance from the District or Division Cultural Specialist to adequately monitor cultural resources. Carnegie and Ocotillo Wells SVRAs hosted CASSP training in 2009. Training is proposed for Hollister Hills and Oceano Dunes in 2010 and for Hungry Valley in 2012.

Cultural Resources Management on Federal Lands Receiving Grant Program Funding

When Grant applicants request funding for ground disturbing activities, potential impacts to cultural resources must be considered. Federal agencies are responsible for identifying and protecting cultural resources and avoiding unnecessary damage to them. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) provides comprehensive direction to federal agencies about their historic preservation responsibilities, and compels federal agencies to consider the effect of their undertakings on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for, inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, also includes direction about the identification and consideration of historic properties in federal land management decisions. Several other federal laws direct federal agency protection and management of cultural resources, including resources that are of state or local significance.

The USFS and the BLM work under a Memorandum of Understanding with the California State Historic Preservation Officer to protect cultural resources and sites across public lands.

Specific to the USFS, the 2005 Travel Management Rule also requires that the effects on cultural resources be considered, with the objective of minimizing damage, when designating roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use on National Forest System lands.

The Grants Program provides important funding for federal agencies to implement cultural resource management and protection projects.

There are challenges inherent in managing use in designated OHV areas where cultural resources are also present. Maintaining cultural resources can best be accomplished by first locating and inventorying cultural sites, and then implementing specific protection measures. Effective measures to reduce the risk of adverse effects to cultural resources, including annual monitoring have been developed to help ensure the resources remain protected. Long-term monitoring and active management of popular OHV areas is needed to ensure protection measures continue to be effective.

Condition of Cultural Resources on USFS Lands

Many designated OHV areas on USFS lands have had cultural resource surveys (e.g., Cleveland and Angeles National Forests). The recorded cultural resource sites within these designated OHV areas and trails are monitored on an annual basis to ensure that any protection measures continue to be effective. Although few national forests in California have completed entire cultural resource inventories of all motorized recreation trails, the Mendocino National Forest has completely inventoried its designated OHV system of trails.

When inadvertent effects to cultural sites are noted, or sites are affected by encroachment off designated system trails, new protection measures are implemented. Region 5 has used regional programmatic agreements for NHPA Section 106 compliance to help manage OHV system uses and provide needed protection to cultural resource sites.

Several forests in Region 5 have effectively implemented site protection measures since 2004. For example, more than nine miles of barriers and fences have been used in the Corral Canyon OHV area on the Cleveland National Forest since 2004 to confine OHV use to authorized roads and trails and to protect numerous prehistoric archaeological sites in the area. The overall condition of cultural resource sites in the Coral Canyon OHV area ranges from fair to excellent.

In 2006, Region 5 entered into a separate programmatic agreement with the California State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding NHPA Section 106 compliance for motorized recreation projects. This agreement includes a variety of management measures that can be implemented to protect cultural resource sites from the effects of OHV use (e.g., barriers, reroutes, fencing, signs, and closures). Long-term monitoring on the Mendocino National Forest, for example, indicates that most cultural resource sites are in fair to excellent condition and are rarely affected by OHV uses.

Past protection efforts in the Rowher Flat OHV Area have concentrated on placing fencing and pipe-cable barriers to exclude traffic and protect significant cultural resource sites. Monitoring in 2007 involved inspection of 12 archaeological sites considered potentially susceptible to effects from OHV-related activities. This monitoring revealed that a number of

archaeological sites were being impacted, primarily from OHV intrusion into archaeological sites by circumventing fenced areas, causing soil disturbance and displacement and breakage of cultural materials. A wildfire that burned through the OHV areas in 2007 caused increased risks to cultural resources resulting from the burning of all barrier vegetation within Rowher Flat and damaged or fallen fencing at several places in both Rowher and Drinkwater flats. Monitoring at 54 cultural resource sites in 2008 showed several archaeological sites, particularly within the Rowher Flat OHV Area, continued to be at-risk from OHV access through the sites. Based upon this monitoring, additional protective measures similar to those implemented in the past were recommended to protect cultural resources, including placement of sturdy cable barriers and fences to prevent further trespass and replacement of damaged barriers and fencing. Directive or prohibitive signage was also suggested as a means to inform the OHV-using public.

Condition of Cultural Resources on BLM Lands

From the start of the 2004 OHV Grant year, through the end of the grants issued in 2009, BLM received almost $527,000 in grants for management of cultural resources. A majority of the cultural resource funding provided during this period ($324,000) has been utilized by the Archeological Site Stewardship Program. Similar to the CASSP, this statewide program is a partnership between BLM, USFS, California State Parks, and the Society for California Archeology to train and utilize volunteer site stewards. These volunteers adopt specific cultural resource sites and work with agency archeologists to monitor and stabilize these sites.

An additional $202,000 has been used to fund specific cultural resource surveys in Ridgecrest and throughout the California Desert District. An example of a grant funded project to manage cultural resources is a project at the Olancha Dunes OHV Open Area, within the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office. The grant was to conduct sample inventory of cultural artifacts and conduct an ethnographic study of Native American use of the area involving Paiute and Shoshone people.

Resolution of Use Conflict

The population of California has nearly doubled since the OHMVR Program was created in 1971. Today, many in the OHV community, as they have done for decades, head to rural areas in search of OHV recreational opportunities. However, in recent years the population in rural areas has increased as people relocate from urban communities in search of peace and quiet. At the same time, areas traditionally available for OHV recreation have been shrinking. This increase in demand, coupled with the loss of available land for OHV recreation, has created a situation where competition for resources leads to land use conflicts. The clash between OHV enthusiasts and those who oppose OHV recreation near their homes and communities varies from small disagreements to outright hostility, and in a relatively small number of extreme cases, violence.

The conversion of lands previously available for OHV recreation has exacerbated the tensions between individuals. Lands which once were open to OHV use are now closed. Lands which were never open but were not fenced or signed by land owners are now clearly marked. In-holdings once available for OHV recreation are now being developed for other uses. In some instances communities of interest are working together to solve these conflicts. However, in other areas the tensions continue to mount, leading to damage to private property, hostile attitudes and sometimes violence between individuals. Local law enforcement cannot always respond quickly enough due to competing priorities.

Additionally, on federal public lands, as the BLM and USFS implement designated route decisions, private property owners sign and fence their lands, and lands once open to OHV use are closed, the OHV community will continue to be displaced resulting in further conflicts between OHV activities and demand and other land uses. The development of additional managed areas must keep pace to off-set these losses so as to reduce conflicts among people and landscapes; but, this will take time. In the meantime resources are being dedicated to address these issues.

To meet these challenges, the Commission and Division have taken an active role to reduce land use conflicts. Efforts range from general education and outreach, to specific conflict resolution between

communities of interest, and focused enforcement efforts. All too often, there seems to be a lack of knowledge and understanding about where and when motorized use is allowed on public lands. In recent years, the Division has reached out in a variety of ways to:

- ✓ Provide information on the Division website about OHV Laws and a Frequently Asked Questions page specific to OHV use
- ✓ Create a process where members of the public can direct comments and questions directly to the Division (ohvinfo@parks.ca.gov) or to the Commission (OHVcommission@parks.ca.gov) regarding OHV recreation, and receive responses from Division and Commission staff
- ✓ Develop an OHV quick reference handbook for law enforcement officers statewide
- ✓ Work with local, state and federal law enforcement organizations on education and enforcement efforts
- ✓ Increase presence and participation at community outreach events to educate the public about the OHMVR Program and to learn their concerns
- ✓ Educate private property owners on steps to take to reduce illegal OHV use on their lands
- ✓ Provide funding for conflict resolution facilitation efforts throughout the state
- ✓ Provide technical assistance to local counties considering ordinances related to recreational OHV use
- ✓ Outreach to interested communities about the OHMVR Program and funding available for projects in their area

In concert with the OHMVR mission to provide statewide leadership, there are several instances where the Division has facilitated outreach efforts to address issues of land use conflict. The Division will continue to work with communities and organizations who are interested in conflict resolution and consensus building. It will also continue to work with local, state and federal law enforcement. At the foundation of these efforts is the belief that citizens care deeply about their public lands, and although it may be difficult at times, they also welcome the opportunity to engage

one another productively and safely, to learn the concerns of other communities of interest, and to have others hear and appreciate their own concerns. A few examples of the Division efforts include:

HOPE VALLEY

Hope Valley, located in the Sierra just south of Lake Tahoe, is an area surrounded by high peaks, beautiful meadows and stunning vistas. Those who live in the area and those who visit Hope Valley are passionate about the land and how it is managed. With various ideologies and viewpoints, getting a disparate group of people to agree on an approach to winter travel and use in Hope Valley seemed virtually impossible. The Division believed it was essential to get people together to initiate a dialogue to see if consensus on the issues could be achieved. Given the groups' shared passion for Hope Valley, the Division believed there was strong potential for finding common ground and agreement. The Division reached out to the Center for Collaborative Policy for assistance.

Representatives from the USFS, Alpine County, local friends groups, and various motorized and non-motorized groups came together to discuss issues regarding appropriate access to public lands. Cross-country skiers wanted to ski without the sound and smell of snowmobiles. Snowmobilers wanted access to closed lands outside of wilderness areas. Over time, initial disagreement and polarization was replaced by understanding and agreement. At the end of the process, a set of recommendations, and a series of steps to address use conflicts was presented to the USFS for incorporation into the winter management plan.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

In 2008, local stakeholders were in conflict regarding decisions under consideration which would affect the USFS Travel Management Process in the Inyo National Forest. The Division requested the services of the Center for Collaborative Policy to facilitate a local stakeholder discussion working through the difficult issues.

With over 5,000 individually numbered routes making up a network of over 3,700 miles of route, arriving at a sustainable and manageable system of roads, trails and areas for motorized use across lands managed by the Inyo National Forest presented a significant challenge. A broad group of local stakeholders were brought together in March. Participants were promised that, if they were able to agree on an alternative, the Forest Service would give it serious consideration through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The "Travel Management Collaborative Alternative Team" (CAT) met intensively over a two month period to determine if there were mutually acceptable options for trail routes on the Inyo National Forest that would provide for safe and environmentally responsible use. With professional facilitation provided by the Center for Collaborative Policy (made possible through a contract with the Division), the CAT was successful in their effort. A slightly revised version of their proposal was implemented by the Inyo National Forest and the decision was not appealed by any of the involved parties. One of the participants noted that the CAT was successful because they agreed that "it's not about winning or losing, but about the need to create a system that protects land and satisfies everyone's needs." Another participant observed this experience demonstrates that when stakeholders are brought together, they are likely to be successful.

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WONDER VALLEY

In December 2008, the Commission and Division received letters and emails from a number of residents of Wonder Valley, located in unincorporated San Bernardino County, describing OHV conflicts and private property trespass. The area is a desert landscape with a system of dirt roads. Most private property is not fenced or signed. The authorized BLM OHV routes are generally not signed.

Throughout 2009, the Division Public Safety Team met with local residents, representatives from BLM, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, County Code enforcement, and California Highway Patrol (CHP) in an effort to improve communication and initiate collaboration amongst the local residents as well as law enforcement agencies. On several occasions, State Park Rangers from the Division assisted by providing public safety coverage and patrol.

Irrespective of whether local residents are OHV enthusiasts or opposed to OHV recreation, all parties have expressed appreciation for the Division's efforts to help educate residents and visitors about appropriate OHV use, and their efforts to reduce conflict in the area.

PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

In the spring of 2010, the Division Public Safety Team was contacted by a number of individuals and agencies with concerns about reported trespass by dirt bikes along the Pacific Crest Trail, in and around the Tehachapi Mountains. The Division contacted the BLM, USFS and Kern County regarding these reports and offered its assistance to address the situation. Subsequent site visits by State Park Rangers revealed that trespass into closed areas, as well as on private property, was occurring. Over the following weeks the agencies coordinated their efforts, meeting with one another as well as with local community groups, to help facilitate education and law enforcement.

Law enforcement's efforts were highlighted over the Easter holiday, when law enforcement personnel from the Kern County Sheriff's Office, California State Parks, USFS, and the BLM conducted a joint law enforcement effort targeting illegal OHV activity on the Pacific Crest Trail and on private property. Their efforts were successful as they resulted in the capture of three riders along the Pacific Crest Trail. Additional combined efforts are planned for the area.

FOLSOM LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

In 2009 a horse was severely injured, and had to be destroyed after being spooked by dirt bikes operating illegally at Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. The incident shocked the motorized and non-motorized communities alike. Working under the facilitation of Americans for Responsible Recreational Access, a group came together and worked cooperatively to develop a strategy to improve relationships and improve trail-sharing techniques between equestrian, OHV, mountain biking, and hiking groups on a local, state and national level. The Division was an active participant in suggesting corrective actions, educational efforts, and other activities to direct OHV recreation to appropriate areas. The commitment of the group to this project was unwavering. In a short period of time, the groups produced: Sharing Our Trails – A Guide to Trail Etiquette. The guide represents the efforts of a broad range of trail enthusiasts working together to develop an understanding and respect of each other's needs, and a guide that specifically tells trail enthusiasts what steps to take when they meet on the trail to minimize use conflict, increase safety, and enhance enjoyment of our public recreation opportunities.

REPORT REQUIREMENT 3:

The status and accomplishments of funds appropriated for restoration pursuant to paragraph (s) of subdivision (b) of Section 5090.50.

From the start of the OHMVR Program, the Legislature has recognized the importance of the partnerships that are shared by the Division statewide. Financial assistance for these entities is provided for in PRC Section 5090.50 Grants and Cooperative Agreements.

This importance is specifically stated in statute:

> *Off-highway motor vehicle recreation should be managed in accordance with this chapter through financial assistance to local governments and joint undertakings with agencies of the United States and with federally recognized Native American tribes.*

Since 1971 when the first grant was awarded, the financial assistance program is an important component of the statewide OHMVR Program.

Since the 2004-2005 fiscal year, approximately $28,000,000 of OHV Trust Funds have been awarded to eligible entities to fund restoration activities throughout the State of California. In the 2009-2010 fiscal year, pursuant to the legislative changes discussed below, $7.6 million is available with approximately $8 million in applications that are designed to provide approximately 2,872 miles and/or 1,549,000 acres of restored habitat.

Between 2004 and 2009, in California the USFS received $9,256,248 in Grants Program restoration funding to address habitat fragmentation or degradation, hill climbs, and illegal use in meadows and other sensitive areas.

Legislative Changes

SB 742, which went into effect in 2008, changed the language in PRC Section 5090.50 (b)(2)(A) to provide for:

- Consistent funding: In past years, the amount of grant funding directed to restoration efforts was set by the Commission each year. In order to stabilize funding levels and ensure sufficient funding was directed to restoration activities in the future, SB 742 establishes that 25% of funds appropriated by the Legislature for the Grants Program are allocated for restoration projects.
- Appropriate Use of Restoration Funds: SB 742 specifies that restoration funds are to be used for projects that provide ecological restoration or repair to habitat damaged by legal or illegal OHV use.

Loan of Previously Dedicated Restoration Funds to California's General Fund

When SB 742 was enacted, it included changes to the Conservation and Enforcement Services Account (CESA) described in Revenue and Taxation Code (RTC) Section 8352.8 which had previously dedicated a percentage of fuel tax revenues to restoration. As a result of the changes, no new funds are deposited into the CESA. The funds remaining in the CESA are to be spent as directed by the section until they are depleted. RTC Section 8352.8 (b)(2) states that up to $1.1 million of the remaining funds may be made available in each grant funding cycle to increase the amount of funding available for restoration grants.

However, the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 state budget acts borrowed a total of $112 million from the OHV Trust Fund, which included the remaining CESA funds. The ability to increase the level of funding to future restoration grants above the 25% level identified in Section 5090.50 (b)(2)(A) will be dependent on these funds being repaid to the OHV Trust Fund.

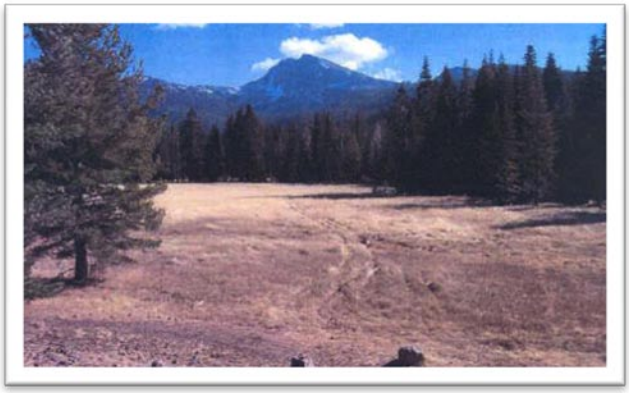
Restoration Achievements

Through financial assistance to federal agencies for restoration project cooperative agreements, the USFS and the BLM have achieved significant results in repairing and restoring lands that have been impacted by OHV recreation activities.

U.S Forest Service

Improving and restoring the health of its watersheds and ecosystems is a national priority for the USFS, which typically implements two types of restoration: passive and active. Passive restoration methods can include blocking routes, such as with boulders, or vertical mulching, where native plant materials are placed throughout the route to 'disguise' it and allow natural re-vegetation. In active restoration projects, ground-disturbing activities such as 'ripping' or scarifying the ground make the route impassible. Culverts and other engineered structures are removed and in some instances, seeding and planting strategies combined with noxious weed abatement activities are implemented.

Between 2004 and 2009, in California the USFS received $9,256,248 in Grants Program restoration funding to address habitat fragmentation or degradation, hill climbs, and illegal use in meadows and other sensitive areas. During this time, most of the nineteen national forests in California had at least one major restoration project, and several forests had multiple projects. In many cases, the forests leveraged OHV Trust Fund dollars with watershed funding resulting in tangible results on the ground, and promoting land stewardship and volunteerism on the forests.



Most of the restoration projects have been in the Six Rivers, Mendocino, Plumas, Tahoe, Sierra, Inyo, Sequoia, Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests. The typical projects included hill climb and illegal route removal, slope and stream bank stabilization, slope recontouring, meadow

restoration, fencing, barriers, native plant revegetation, and boulder placement. Monitoring is a key component of restoration projects and is typically accomplished through the resource and recreation (OHV) programs. Field specialists are frequently onsite for the implementation of restoration projects to ensure project success and support any necessary project mitigations.

Monitoring has multiple aspects in restoration projects, and monitoring visits have provided quality baseline data for future implementation of projects. The USFS focuses on the "Three E's" methodology (Education, Engineering, and Enforcement) for managing OHV recreation and assuring the success of restoration projects.

- Education efforts include signs, personal contacts and printed information. Through these methods of contact, staff educates the public regarding why it is important to respect project boundaries, and the ways restoration projects benefit of the overall health of the system, thus ensuring recreational opportunities be managed for the long term.

- Engineering includes vertical mulching to stabilize restoration sites, and installation of barriers to prevent incursion into restored areas.
- Enforcement actions (contacts and citations, etc.) is another tool leading to increased restoration success in those instances when

education and engineering have not proven to be successful in preventing vehicle incursions into restored areas.

Bureau of Land Management

With strong support from the Division, the BLM has accomplished restoration of 322 miles of non-designated OHV trails across California and 484 acres of vehicle-disturbed lands since 2004. The BLM focuses most intensively on lands in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts.

Restoration has accelerated the process of reconnecting fragmented desert vegetation and has set the stage for recovering blocks of uninterrupted habitat for threatened and endangered species such as desert tortoise and Mohave ground squirrel, and for BLM sensitive species such as the flat-tailed horned lizard.

The principal strategy for vegetation restoration and habitat enhancement has been to create conditions on the ground that redirect OHV recreation away from unauthorized OHV trails and areas so that natural desert ecosystems can initiate the process of recovering vegetation communities and habitat continuity impacted by OHV recreation.

Desert techniques generally involve:

- Vertical mulching to create a visual barrier of dead and down vegetation to the line of sight that disguises a former trail and or make use of rock work and fencing to create a physical barrier.
- Texturing the bare soil with small pits which are then filled with seeds found in the plant litter beneath nearby shrubs. These pits act as rainfall traps that concentrate water to the seeds at the bottom of the pit and give seeds a more favorable microsite for germination.

Significant projects underway are: fencing the wildlife-rich Dos Palmas ACEC near Indio; landscape restoration for the hyperarid Yuha Desert near El Centro; and rehabilitation of vehicle damage in the Alabama Hills, a popular scenic recreation destination in the Owens Valley. Restoration crews patrol the boundaries of all 67 BLM desert wildernesses and secure wilderness boundaries by mending fences, disguising old mining

roads, and creating needed parking areas for OHV recreationists at wilderness edges.

An important change to the OHMVR Grants Program provided for funding to non-profits for restoration and trail maintenance. In 2009, Friends of Jawbone took advantage of this opportunity and applied for and received a grant for restoration work on BLM land in the Jawbone-Butterbredt ACEC, near California City, in Kern County. BLM will continue to expand its partnerships with Friends of Jawbone and other OHV clubs and advocacy groups who share a concern for land stewardship and responsible use.

Monitoring restoration projects is a key element for evaluating the success of various restoration techniques and engaging in adaptive management to adjust approaches to restoration as needed. The BLM California Desert District has established a uniform protocol to document the installation of restoration projects so that a historic record of baseline conditions is available for evaluating future work. Following initial restoration actions, the project managers, park rangers, and law enforcement officers check on restoration sites at least quarterly. If storm erosion, inadequate vegetation taking hold, or illegal riding cause the site to depart from desired conditions, the restoration project managers can respond quickly with remedial treatments. Both site photography and quantitative monitoring of vegetation cover and species composition take place every year for at least five years.

The BLM has also been the beneficiary of grants that help agency restoration ecologists conduct adaptive management testing with new techniques in restoration methods and review past results of restoration projects. Two major projects have been completed: (1) experimental restoration trials on serpentine (magnesium-rich) barrens and adjacent serpentine riparian areas in the Inner Coast Range; and (2) a retrospective view of rates of natural and facilitated regeneration along the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Currently, the staffs of the BLM Needles and Lake Havasu field offices are collaborating on restoration methods to jumpstart regeneration of saguaros in OHV riding areas in eastern San Bernardino County, one of two sites where saguaros still occur in California.

ALABAMA HILLS

An example of a project that received a national award is the Alabama Hills restoration project completed by the BLM Bishop Field Office. The project involved the re-alignment and restriction of parking areas; closed motorized "challenge" areas; restored habitat damaged by irresponsible and illegal OHV use; developed and printed maps, rules and regulations; and monitored restored impacted areas. The OHV Trust Fund contributed $120,000 to this project.

This project was a partnership effort between the BLM Bishop Field Office and the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group, a local community group. In recognition of outstanding conservation achievements attained through collaboration and partnership with others, the BLM Bishop Field Office and the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group received the United States Department of Interior Cooperative Conservation Award. The award recognizes cooperative conservation achievements that involve collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities that may include federal, state, local and tribal governments, private for-profit and non-profit institutions, other non-governmental entities, and individuals.

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Report Requirement 4:

A summary of resource monitoring data compiled and restoration work completed.

State Vehicular Recreation Areas

Monitoring data are essential for understanding and addressing the natural resource needs of an SVRA. Monitoring may provide targeted data, such as determining the presence of specific special-status species, or answer broader questions about species diversity and biological trends. The WHPP, mandated by PRC section 5090.35, and the Habitat Monitoring System (HMS) developed by the Division are a major part of each SVRA's resource monitoring and evaluation program.

The Division helps guide resource management for the entire SVRA system, and each SVRA's HMS includes standardized protocols tailored for the needs of the particular SVRA. In addition, each SVRA prepared a WHPP, which focused on habitat management, and is supported by the HMS.

The goals of the WHPP are to monitor and manage wildlife and plant populations and restore habitats where necessary to sustain a viable species composition for each area. The data collected through monitoring help answer a range of questions, such as: What habitats need additional protection; where should funds be expended; where should fencing be located to protect sensitive habitats; which habitat types are more resistant to OHV use and which are not; which OHV use patterns are sustainable and which are not? These plans enable adaptive management, allowing management practices and strategies to change, or "adapt," as warranted by the new monitoring information.

Environmental Scientists for each SVRA conduct and oversee the monitoring based on the HMS and other monitoring protocols. Environmental Scientists monitor wildlife and plants. Since 2004, funding for monitoring has increased. In some instances, park resource staff has increased as well.

Examples of the monitoring activities in the SVRAs are listed below:

Clay Pit SVRA

A wetland delineation completed in 2005 located 154 wetlands, including vernal pools, and a follow up delineation was conducted in 2007. Together the two delineations identified almost 200 separate wetlands. Surveys of the vernal pools identified various aquatic flowering plants and biota, including the federally-threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp. Additionally, a bird survey and vegetation survey for sensitive plant species have been completed. A hydrological study is also underway and is estimated to be completed in 2011. As the second phase of the WHPP/HMS revision is completed, ongoing annual monitoring will be implemented. Beginning in 2010, such monitoring may include birds, aquatic invertebrates, reptiles, and plants.

Prairie City SVRA

For the past several years, park Environmental Scientists have conducted a variety of surveys measuring various aspects of the park's ecosystem, including vegetation, birds, amphibians, and mammals. The goal of these monitoring efforts is to establish an inventory of the various species and measure changes in their abundance or composition over time. The data are then used to help inform management decisions in the park. The surveys have documented the park is visited or home to over 93 species of birds. Of particular interest are the common yellowthroat, lark sparrow, and Lewis's woodpecker, populations which, according to the Audubon Society, are considered to be in decline, but use the open space provided by the SVRA.

In addition, these survey efforts have revealed and confirmed the presence of several special-status species, including the federally-threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle and vernal pool fairy shrimp, the state-threatened Swainson's hawk, and two California species of special concern, the western spadefoot toad and the western pond turtle. The park supports and sustains two habitats designated as critical by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): elderberry trees and vernal pools. Past wildlife surveys have helped establish the locations of these special-status species and their critical habitats leading to the implementation of protection measures such as fencing, trail re-routes, and seasonal closures.

Carnegie SVRA

For the past several years, wildlife surveys on areas of the SRVA have been conducted for birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Throughout the year, the park is visited or home to more than 120 bird species. Additional wildlife typically seen on or near the unit includes black-tailed deer, tule elk, coyotes, red-tailed hawks, and California ground squirrels. Eight special-status animal species are known to inhabit the park, including foothill yellow-legged frogs, California red-legged frogs, western spadefoot toads, California tiger salamanders, western pond turtles, golden eagles, prairie falcons, and Townsend's big-eared bats. In addition, potential habitat exists for Alameda whipsnakes and San Joaquin kit fox—both state- and federally-listed species.

A great deal of the species monitoring has taken place on the Alameda parcel, an area of the park where public access is currently not allowed. These efforts include bird transects, mammal trap lines, and pond surveys. Interestingly, California red-legged frogs and California tiger salamanders, both federally-listed species, are fairly common in the ponds located on the Alameda parcel.

Hollister HIlls SVRA

Vegetation and wildlife monitoring, including monitoring for invasive species, is ongoing at the park. The most recent amphibian surveys indicate high populations of federally-threatened California red-legged frogs, state- and federally-threatened California tiger salamanders,

Pacific chorus frogs, western toads, and California newts in the park's ponds.

Monitoring for nonnative plants is done on a continuous basis to determine if invasive species control measures have been effective or need to be modified. Significant data are also obtained through a grazing lease that requires monitoring plant species as part of the contract. The park has retained expertise from U.C. Berkeley to review and obtain data in association with the grazing program, with a focus on adaptively managing the grazing program to reduce non-native plant dispersal.

In 2009 with the assistance of the CDFG the park began an aggressive pig monitoring and depredation program. Non-native feral pigs have negative effects on the park ecosystems, specifically the California red-legged frog. The program, which will be reassessed after three years, will also help protect the California tiger salamander.

The monitoring data have influenced the development on the Hudner and Renz properties, which has yielded increased OHV opportunity while protecting wildlife and maintaining biodiversity. Sound and air quality monitoring is also conducted.

Oceano Dunes SVRA

Oceano Dunes SVRA conducts annual HMS monitoring that includes monitoring of vegetation, shoreline birds, terrestrial birds, and herpetological resources. Surveys are also conducted for small and large mammals, but not on an annual basis. Every year, Oceano Dunes SVRA spends a significant amount of time and staff resources monitoring the nesting and fledgling success of California least terns and western snowy plovers.

Park staff conducts fisheries surveys of Arroyo Grande Creek on a quarterly basis to document trends of native fish populations. These surveys include seining to collect information on the federally-endangered tidewater goby and electrofishing to document populations of the federally-threatened steelhead trout. Surveys of other water bodies within the park are conducted infrequently and have focused on the Pismo Creek estuary and portions of Oso Flaco Lake.

In 2009, Oceano Dune SVRA entered into a two-year contract with the Department of Water Resources Environmental Site Assessment Section to conduct water quality and soil surveys of the SVRA. These surveys are designed to assess pollution risks from various park activities, including OHV riding, camping on the beach, and vehicles crossing Arroyo Grande Creek.

In 2009, Oceano Dunes SVRA also entered into a multi-year contract with the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District to assess water quality in Oso Flaco Lake. This effort concentrates on assessing sediment inputs into the lake from adjacent agricultural activities. The effort also complements the water quality monitoring being conducted by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and agricultural interests in the Oso Flaco watershed.

Hungry Valley SVRA

Habitat monitoring has resulted in an extensive inventory of species and habitats including 38 species of mammals, 112 species of birds, 25 species of herpetiles, and 234 vegetative species. Habitat monitoring has also helped clarify several issues related to sensitive species. For a long time, staff thought Hungry Valley was in the range of the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, a state- and federally-listed endangered species. However, through the monitoring conducted at the park, biologists determined that the leopard lizard found in Hungry Valley is actually the long nosed leopard lizard, a non-listed species. Another issue clarified by monitoring was the density and range of the coast horned lizard, a CDFG species of special concern. Monitoring continues to add to the information base of the biological resources in the park.

The HMS is conducted annually for vegetation, herptiles, and large mammals, and biannually for birds and small mammals. The program is assessed annually and changes are made as needed. For example, in 2004 satellite images replaced aerial photos, and a GIS/GPS protocol was added for monitoring the coast horned lizard and raptor nest sites. Data from specimens found are placed in a GIS database to determine species range and population health. In 2007, staff began the GIS Exotic Plant mapping database, and in 2008, staff updated and increased the number of wildlife cameras in the park during large mammal monitoring.

The analysis of these data helps inform management decisions in the park and provide hard scientific data to back these decisions. In 2009, staff reviewed the monitoring data from 1997 to 2009 and made graphical representations of the data collected. These graphical representations make it easier to understand and visually see any long-term changes that are occurring at the park and make appropriate management responses. For example, monitoring data suggest degradation of the habitat due to recreational activity. The data are being examined and management options and strategies being considered and prepared as to how to best manage for "Open Camping" and "Open Riding." Monitoring also helps demonstrate and document how the valuable resources of the park are being managed and protected. The data identifies trends that can be modified to better support the resources. Monitoring also helps demonstrate and document how the valuable resources of the park are being managed and protected. Management actions are outlined in yearly reports. Monitoring data are being used to plan management strategies.

Ocotillo Wells SVRA/Heber Dunes SVRA

Monitoring for habitat and presence of special-status species is a major component of the Ocotillo Wells District (District) resource management program and is conducted at both SVRAs. Protocols for most monitoring surveys have been adapted over the last decade to improve sampling numbers. Monitoring data are designed to drive resource management decisions by the means of adaptive management.

The flat-tailed horned lizard, a CDFG species of special concern found within Ocotillo Wells SVRA, but believed locally extinct (extirpated) in Heber Dunes SVRA, is the subject of a multi-agency conservation agreement with a management strategy that includes a substantial monitoring component. For the last four summer seasons park staff has been utilizing an occupancy protocol. This species is also very often observed during the twice-a-year herptile surveys portion of the HMS. Data from individuals found are part of the developing GIS database for the park

The HMS is completed on as many as 24 habitat monitoring plots for vegetation, herptiles, large mammals, birds, and small mammals once or

twice a year. Four of these plots are located in Heber Dunes SVRA; the remainder are in Ocotillo Wells SVRA.

From 2004 to 2009, the funding for monitoring has increased, including the addition of two Environmental Scientist positions and one upgrade to a Senior Environmental Scientist. The increased staffing has allowed the District to expand the monitoring program at both units, particularly reptile surveys. Reptile monitoring increased from two one-week surveys on a limited number of plots to two three-week surveys on twice as many plots. Flat-tailed horned lizard surveys were expanded to cover the number of plots recommended by the Interagency Coordinating Committee. Additionally, vegetation surveys were done in a timelier manner, and bird surveys could be better synchronized from year to year. Environmental Scientists also greatly expanded the remote wildlife camera program at Ocotillo Wells SVRA and started revegetating some areas in that unit as well, all of which would not have happened without the expanded staffing.

Over time, habitat monitoring at the District has provided an inventory of species and habitats and aided in the design of special-status species monitoring protocols, such as flat-tailed horned lizard and Colorado fringe-toed lizard at Ocotillo Wells SVRA (believed locally extinct at Heber Dunes SVRA). The data will inform the general plan process regarding potential adaptive management decisions on how best to manage the park in the future.

Program Improvement

In an effort to ensure the Division is conducting a quality OHMVR Program, in 2008 the Division contracted with the University of California at Davis to provide an independent peer review of the existing HMS program. The review was completed in 2009.

Among the recommendations of this review is the suggestion to design a second generation WHPP/HMS that better supports efforts at the SVRAs to fulfill the goals set forth in PRC Section 5090.35 as well as meet legal obligations described in state and federal statutes. The second generation WHPP/HMS would also modify the existing plans of habitat

protection and monitoring with an emphasis defined by natural resource management needs at each of the SVRAs.

Monitoring in BLM and USFS Areas

Habitat Management Program

USFS and BLM grantees with projects involving ground disturbing activities must implement a WHPP, known as a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) under the OHMVR Grants Program. (PRC Section 5090.53) The Division developed the WHPP/HMP over several years of working with USFS and BLM environmental staff. The forms, which were largely finalized in 2005, are incorporated into the Grants Program regulations.

The HMP requires grantees to identify special-status plant and animal species that could be at risk from OHV recreation and monitor for potential impacts to those species. As an adaptive management plan, the HMP includes management objectives and actions to address the risk, success criteria to gauge the effectiveness of each management action, and "triggers" for management change. Each grant application cycle, grantees report on the results of the previous year's HMP, including any management actions taken based on monitoring results

U.S. Forest Service

Within California, USFS Region 5 includes all or part of 19 national forests, totaling approximately 20 million acres, each characterized by unique and diverse natural resources. All of these forests have received Grants Program funding sometime during the 2004-2009 period. Of the more than 8,000 vascular plant species occurring in California, well over half are known to occur on national forest lands.

Monitoring for wildlife, fish, and plants has been accomplished through a tiered approach, consisting of local monitoring, including HMPs, focused studies, and regional monitoring. The focus is generally on local monitoring to ensure habitats are maintained and protection measures are implemented. In addition, four focused studies were funded through the OHMVR Grant Program to assess the effects of OHV use on northern spotted owl, northern goshawk, American marten, and the vertebrate

assemblage (including prey of these three species). Through 2005, there was an additional focus on developing and testing a regional monitoring protocol that would supplement the local monitoring. However, beginning in 2006, it was determined that the focused studies should be completed before fully implementing the regional monitoring. Each of these programs is described in more detail below.

Local Monitoring: Local monitoring is conducted at the forest level to ensure that the standards, guidelines, and protection measures identified in WHPPs/HMPs are being implemented on the ground. Three checklists are used to focus this monitoring: the Wildlife Habitat Monitoring Checklist, the Over Snow Vehicle Monitoring Checklist, and the OHV Stream Channel Crossing Wildlife Habitat Checklist. Examples of items monitored include OHV use off designated routes, widening of routes or stream crossings, and impacts of vehicles on vegetation. In addition, many forests conduct inventories of species/habitat and monitor threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Some forests also use photo points in conjunction with the checklists.

Field personnel complete the checklists, which are then reviewed to determine if there are any indications of potential problems. If needed, a field visit to the trail segment is scheduled to review the problem, and a team then reviews the problem area and determines what correction actions, if any, are needed. For some problems, such as unauthorized (user created) routes, corrective actions (closure, signing, limited operating periods, etc.) are taken without the need for additional analysis.

Focused Studies: During 2004 to 2009, the OHMVR Grants Program helped fund four focused studies, each designed to address specific management questions for species at risk and determine if OHV/OSV activity caused any adverse impacts. Of the four studies, the American marten study has been completed. The other three will be completed in 2010. All four are described in more detail below.

American Marten Focused Study: The marten focused study was finalized in 2007. This study evaluated the effects of OHV/OSVs on American martens by comparing marten occupancy rates and probabilities of detection in areas where OHV/OSV use is legal and encouraged (Use

Areas) and in designated wilderness areas where OHV/OSV use is prohibited (Non-Use Areas). The study was conducted in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Sierra National Forest using remote sound level meters, track stations, remote camera stations, and field observations. The study also assessed the potential effects of OHVs/OSVs on marten sex ratios and circadian (e.g., 24-hours) patterns of activity. The study found that martens were ubiquitous in Use and Non-Use Areas, and there was no effect of OHV/OSV use on marten occupancy or probability of detection. It is possible, however, that OHVs/OSVs have effects, alone or in concert with other activities (e.g., timber harvest), that were not quantified in this study. The two study areas also had low OHV/OSV use levels impacting only a small percentage of a marten's home range. The application of these results to other locations is thus only appropriate if OHV/OSV use at the other locations is no greater than reported in this study.

Northern Goshawk Focused Study. This study, conducted on the Plumas National Forest, evaluates OHV/OSV use and noise around Northern goshawk nests and nest stands and uses experimental manipulations designed to evaluate the bird's sensitivity to direct disturbance by OHV/OSVs during the nesting, post-fledging, and winter (non-breeding) seasons. The study will estimate the relationship between goshawk reproductive success, post-fledging survival rates, nesting behavior, and likelihood of nesting relative to OHV/OSV use and noise.

Vertebrate Assemblage Focused Study. This study, conducted on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Sierra National Forest, and Stanislaus National Forest, assesses the effects of OHV use and roads on forest songbird communities, forest-associated small mammal species and communities, and forest-associated bird and mammalian carnivores, including prey-base implications for top carnivores. The study pairs OHV use areas with similar areas not receiving OHV use, within which habitat and recreational use were measured and species surveys were conducted.

Northern Spotted Owl Focused Study. The objectives of this study, conducted on the Shasta-Trinity and Mendocino National Forests, are to: (1) describe northern spotted owl stress levels, behavior, and nesting success and OHV use at selected northern spotted owl nest and/or roost

sites over time; (2) determine whether OHV use affects northern spotted owl stress levels, behavior, or nesting success, and, whether observed effects vary with reproductive state over time; and (3) determine the need for disturbance-specific management considerations to minimize potential adverse effects of OHV use on spotted owls that reside on national forest system lands. Experimental treatments were used to expose northern spotted owls to simulated OHV use events, and stress levels were measured via corticosterone analysis of collected scat.

Regional Monitoring: Regional monitoring is designed to assess randomly selected OHV use sites on national forests in California. Each OHV use site is paired with a similar non-OHV use site to interpret conditions observed at OHV use sites. At each of the sites, OHV use, habitat, and plant and wildlife species are monitored, similar to the methodology used in the Vertebrate Assemblage focused study. The regional monitoring protocol was pilot-tested for summer and winter seasons; additional data were collected in association with the Vertebrate Assemblage Focused Study. This project was not funded between 2006-2009 because of limited funding and a priority on the focused studies. Analyses and conclusions from the Vertebrate Assemblage Focused Study will be used to finalize the protocol, and phased implementation onto the 19 national forest in California is anticipated once the focused studies are complete.

Bureau of Land Management

Natural Resource Conditions and Monitoring

With consistent funding support since 2003 from the Division, the BLM has been able to initiate long-term monitoring of several guilds (ecologically related species) of wildlife species and a number of rare plants. Indicator species, or guilds of similar species, serve as indicators for “ecosystem health,” and they provide BLM with a report card on the flora and fauna on OHV recreation lands. These species, or guilds of species, can furnish the most information about responses by species in OHV-recreation landscapes. BLM focuses its OHV monitoring principally in the California deserts and the Inner Coast Range. Focal species are: migratory bird species, resident raptors, bats, desert lizards, desert tortoise, and foothill yellow-legged frog. Vegetation communities of

greatest concern where OHV recreation is popular are desert dunes, creosote scrub, and Sonoran Desert thorn woodlands. The BLM staff has also studied individual plant species such as the Mecca woody-aster, native only to the Meccacopia Special Recreation Area just above the northern end of the Salton Sea.

All monitoring supported by the Division on BLM OHV-recreation lands takes place according to detailed written protocols. Project managers train monitoring crews in the field to make sure crew members have the requisite skills, and that results are comparable year to year. With multiple years of consistently reproduced data, BLM biologists can analyze trend data and adjust management to safeguard wildlife and their habitat.

In the coming years, the BLM is expecting to give greater attention to mapping and monitoring non-native invasive plants in OHV recreation areas. More remains to be learned about the impacts of OHV riding on wildlife and vegetation, especially as the spectrum of available vehicle types expands. BLM will work with OHV recreation partners to ensure that OHVs do not become major vectors in the spread of weeds.

Future collaboration between the Division and the federal agencies could ensure the agencies are monitoring similar variables and species under uniform protocols. In this way, interagency efforts can build a stronger base of information about wildlife responses to OHV-riding environments in the varied ecosystems of California.

Restoration work completed at the SVRAs

In the past four years, the challenges facing land managers have been particularly difficult due to increasing demands for managed OHV areas providing high-quality recreational experiences, balanced with the protection of resources. As the demand for areas available for OHV use continues to increase, the impacts to the land can be significant. In some instances, the impacts are due to overuse while in other areas it may be due to ingress into closed areas. Superintendents and Environmental Scientists must work closely to balance the provision of OHV opportunities while protecting the environment. Overall, restoration

projects in the SVRAs have greatly enhanced the health of the park's ecosystem and density of habitat.

The purpose for restoration is to repair and restore habitat that has been impacted by OHV activity in order to provide appropriate ecological balance between the provision of OHV recreation and sustaining a viable species composition. Restoration is one of many responses to the ongoing monitoring of resources.

Each SVRA is unique in the recreational opportunities it provides and the natural resource environment in which the recreational activity takes place. Equally, each SVRA is different in the impacts the habitat can withstand. When it is determined that conservation or management options are not sufficient to address OHV impacts on habitats or soils, affected areas within the SVRAs are closed for restoration of the land as nearly as possible to its natural condition.

These restoration activities may include:

- Re-contouring land or drainage areas to disperse concentrated flows, reduce hydraulic energy, and prevent soil transport
- Installing water control features such as check dams to slow water
- Revegetating the area with native plants by hand or by hydro-seeding

Although the SVRAs are diverse and complex, and restoration solutions and plans are unique to the given park and region, many of the same techniques used to ensure a restoration project is successful are used throughout the SVRAs. Techniques include but are not limited to:

- Closing of the area with protective fencing, barriers, or rock to prevent intrusion.
- Planting programs often with plants raised from SVRA greenhouse facilities
- Determining methods for watering plants (when appropriate) which have yet to be fully established

- Monitoring the area to ensure restoration project success. This could be once a week, several times a month, or even annually for established restoration areas

Examples of successful restoration projects at the SVRAs are below:

- At Carnegie, due to the steep terrain and dense vegetation, trail crews and environmental scientist staff have collaborated regarding the implementing of restoration work. This work required tooling out large ruts, re-contouring trail tread, and installing water control features. Significant restoration projects that have greatly enhanced the health of the park's ecosystem and density of habitat include Rocky Knob, Dead Cow Canyon, and Los Osos.
- At Carnegie, the Los Osos drainage area had been experiencing incising. In 2009, crews re-contoured the drainage to help disperse the concentrated flow, installed several rock check dams to slow the water, and hydroseeded the uphill slopes to help with infiltration.
- At Prairie City, park staff installed protective fencing around a sensitive stand of native blue oaks. Staff planted seedlings and will continue to collect acorns and plant oaks in the area.
- At Hollister Hills, sediment depositing into Tule Lake was alleviated upon completion of a two year, three-part restoration project. Areas were closed, fencing installed in areas where trespass was a concern, and the entire watershed was carefully revegetated by hand using seeds that had been cultivated from native plants.
- At Hollister Hills, a project involved recontouring the drainages in and around the GP track, strategically placing several hundred tons of boulders, and revegetating the area, successfully dispersing the hydraulic energy and preventing soil transport into the watershed.
- At Oceano Dunes, staff has undertaken one large restoration project every year since the early 1990s to manage sand movement into this native dune and dune scrub habitat. Since 2004, approximately 140 acres of actively eroding sand dunes have been restored.

- At Oceano Dunes, in 2007, a restoration project resulted in the restoration of 28 acres of active sand sheet. This project helps control the movement of sand into Oso Flaco Lake.
- At Hungry Valley, park staff focused on the restoration of a hill climb. Recontouring of the slope, rehabilitation, hydro-seeding, and fencing were used to successfully complete this project.
- At Hungry Valley, in 2007 a major erosion control project was carried out on the stretch of Maxey Wash behind Smith Forks Campground. The wash was hard surfaced with carefully placed 3-foot to 5-foot diameter boulders, which eliminated soil loss and erosion adjacent to the campground.
- At Ocotillo Wells, the largest fencing and restoration project took place in 2006 and 2007, when a large area of mesquite dune habitat was enclosed east of Devil's Slide road to Wolfe Well Road and in the dunes northeast of Benson Lake after showing signs of serious degradation due to OHV activity.
- Current restoration efforts include a planting program using plants raised at the park greenhouse facility

Report Requirement 5:

Actions taken by the division and department since the last program report to discourage and decrease trespass of off-highway motor vehicles on private property

Preventing trespass onto private property and other areas closed to OHV recreation is one of the central objectives of the OHMVR Program. The OHMVR Program was founded on the principle that providing "effectively managed areas and adequate facilities for the use of off-highway vehicles and conservation and enforcement are essential for ecologically balanced recreation" (PRC Section 5090.02 (b)). When adequate areas for OHV recreation are provided, people are far less likely to trespass onto private lands and closed areas.

Ensuring enthusiasts recreate in legal, managed areas requires:

A. Providing appropriate areas which are readily accessible and provide an interesting recreational experience
B. Maintaining areas in good order
C. Educating the public on how to discourage and prevent OHV trespass, the location of legal recreational opportunities, and the negative impacts which result from recreating in unmanaged or closed areas
D. Enforcement of applicable laws

Providing appropriate areas which are readily accessible

The popularity of OHV recreation has continued to rise, while the areas available to legally recreate have decreased over time.

Acquisition of new OHV opportunity is a key component of the legislative intent for the OHMVR Program to keep pace with increasing demand for recreational opportunity. Replacing these lost opportunities with new areas has not kept pace with the growing demand for additional OHV recreation.

One notable exception was the development and opening of the Renz property in Hollister Hills SVRA. This area had been purchased in 1989. After extensive study and planning, a trail system was constructed which provides a high level of rider interest while at the same time minimizing impacts to the environment. Trails were also constructed to minimize sound impacts to neighboring property owners. In 2007, the California Biodiversity Council toured the newly opened trail system and considered it a model for future OHV recreation developments.

Redirection of trust funds as a result of budgetary and fiscal problems ($90 million in 2008-2009 and $22 million in 2009-2010) has exacerbated the problem by tying up funds that could otherwise be directed towards acquisition and development of new OHV recreation opportunities.

Maintaining areas in good order

Maintaining trails and areas in good order is important not only to prevent environmental degradation, but also to keep OHV areas from becoming undesirable to recreationists.

The OHMVR Program has increased the amount of grant funding available for trail maintenance and repairs significantly in recent years. In 2006-2007, only $326,800 was directed to trail projects. By 2008-2009, that amount has risen to approximately $7.9 million.

Educating the public on how to discourage and prevent OHV trespass, the location of legal recreational opportunities, and the negative impacts which result from recreating in unmanaged or closed areas

The Division has taken an active role in educating the public on ways to discourage and reduce OHV trespass. Staff from the Division has been invited to, and participated in, meetings and conferences in local communities who have concerns about illegal trespass and impacts in their communities from OHV use. For instance, when residents from Yucca Valley reported to the Commission their concerns regarding OHV trespass occurring in their community, Division staff visited the area and met with local residents to discuss the issue. Topics such as appropriate signage, identification of property boundaries, and ways to increase law

enforcement patrols were discussed with residents, land managers, and local law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement personnel from the Division also assisted local law enforcement agencies in patrolling the area and contacting OHV recreationists to inform them about appropriate areas in which to recreate.

Additional educational efforts to discourage and decrease trespass on private property have been taken by the Commission and Division. These include:

- ✓ Providing an internet link to, as well as hard copies of, the OHV Laws Book
- ✓ Providing a Frequently Asked Questions web page specific to OHV use
- ✓ Educating private property owners on steps to take to reduce illegal OHV use on their lands
- ✓ Increased presence and participation at community outreach events to educate the public about the OHMVR Program and to learn their concerns
- ✓ Creating a process where members of the public can direct comments and questions directly to the Division (ohvinfo@parks.ca.gov) or to the Commission (OHVcommission@parks.ca.gov) regarding OHV recreation, and receive responses from Division and Commission staff
- ✓ Developing and distributing an OHV quick reference handbook for law enforcement officers statewide
- ✓ Working with local, state and federal law enforcement organizations on education and enforcement efforts
- ✓ Providing technical assistance to local counties considering ordinances related to recreational OHV use
- ✓ Reaching out to interested communities about the OHMVR Program and funding available for projects in their area

The importance of education was acknowledged in SB 742 by the creation of a specific category in the Grants Program dedicated to Education and Safety. This category receives 5% of available grant funds. Education

projects competing for funding in this category must include a comprehensive education curriculum that teaches, among other things, respect for private property and environmental responsibility.

Enforcement of Applicable Laws

Active law enforcement is an essential element in the effort to discourage and decrease trespass by OHV enthusiasts onto private lands. There will always be a need for law enforcement activities to address those who are uninformed of, or choose to ignore, laws relating to responsible OHV recreation.

Financial Support of Law Enforcement Efforts

The provision of law enforcement patrols to enforce OHV laws and prevent trespass into private lands and closed areas has, at times, been made a low priority by agencies who could not afford to commit funds to the effort. Two sources of OHV funding are available to law enforcement agencies from the OHMVR Program: In-Lieu funds and Grants from the OHV Trust Fund

Change in In-Lieu Funding Distributions

A $4 fee is imposed for the issuance or renewal of identification for each off-highway motor vehicle subject to identification [registration] in-lieu of all taxes on value levied for state or local purposes (CVC Section 38230). These in-lieu funds are to be used by local agencies to provide OHV opportunities and facilities, including law enforcement efforts. In-lieu funds are now directed to counties based on how much OHV activity occurs in the county. These funds were previously distributed based on the population of a county. This resulted in some counties with very little OHV enforcement needs receiving large amounts of funding based on their high population (e.g., San Francisco). By directing funds to counties based on the level of OHV activity, counties with smaller populations that are visited by large numbers of OHV recreationists (e.g., Imperial County) are now receiving a more appropriate share of the available funds.

Grant Funding

Grant funding has now been stabilized to provide improved certainty for local and federal law enforcement efforts from year to year.

Due to the competitive nature of the grant application process, law enforcement agencies were never certain from year to year if they would be successful in securing funding from the OHMVR Grant Program.

This issue was addressed in SB 742 by changing the way in which law enforcement grant funds are distributed. Law enforcement funds are now distributed on a non-competitive basis proportionate to the off-highway motor vehicle needs under each entity's jurisdiction. Also, the level of funding was set at 20% of grant funds available in each grant cycle, thus creating a predictable and consistent level of funding support for law enforcement activities. These changes ensure that each agency that demonstrates a need for addressing OHV related issues can rely upon receiving some consistent level of funding every grant cycle. While this will provide a level of stability in OHV law enforcement programs, requests from law enforcement agencies indicate that funding available is far short of the level needed to fully address law enforcement needs statewide.

Division has taken a leadership role in coordinating local, state and federal law enforcement to address issues

The Division Public Safety Team works statewide with counties and federal agencies to provide tools, techniques and assistance to help prevent the occurrence of trespass. Law enforcement officers provide expertise and training in the applicability of OHV laws. Where OHV trespass and violations of closed areas have become particularly problematic for local agencies to address, the Division Public Safety Team provides assistance in planning focused enforcement actions, and supplementing local law enforcement staff by directly participating in enforcement actions to detour and apprehend violators.

Report Requirement 6:

Other relevant program-related environmental issues that have arisen since the last program report.

Green Initiatives

The OHMVR Commission is committed to supporting sustainable OHV recreation opportunities while at the same time reducing effects on the environment by encouraging environmentally responsible choices. Likewise, the Division is committed to becoming a leader in environmental responsibility and resource protection within the OHV community.

Accordingly, the Division fulfills its commitments through various means, including actively pursuing opportunities to implement its green program initiatives as outlined in its Strategic Plan. In addition, the Division is developing, analyzing, and implementing responsible green program management strategies and environmentally sustainable land management solutions. The Division is dedicated to efforts and actions related to improving technology, reducing use of fossil fuels, increasing energy efficiency, and enhancing the overall environmental sustainability of its operations.

The Division's efforts and on the ground strategies include the purchase of renewable energy and alternative fuels and vehicles, energy-efficiency improvements for new and existing facilities, and the procurement of less energy-intensive and more environmentally responsible goods and services. Moreover, the Division actively pursues actions to reduce its carbon footprint, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), toxic substances, and waste from its operations. Ongoing research, strategies, and long-term goals include developing green specifications for equipment, facilities, and vehicles.

Overview of USFS Travel Management in California

In 2000/2001 through the Grants Program the Division began awarding funding to individual forests for route designation. As OHV recreation continued to increase, the USFS recognized that the impacts from cross

country travel on open forest lands throughout California were resulting in an unacceptable level of environmental damage. It became increasingly evident that a managed system of roads, trails and areas was necessary on Forest Service lands.

In August 2003, the USFS entered into a Memorandum of Intent (MOI) with the Commission and the Division for the purpose of establishing a common goal to achieve route designation and the regulation of motorized vehicles within USFS managed lands in California.

In 2005, the USFS issued a national framework for local forests to designate a sustainable system of roads, trails and areas for public motor vehicle use. In order to align with the new national framework, route designation became Travel Management.

Currently, the USFS in California is working through a Travel Management process. This process is the "first step" in implementing the national Travel Management Rule which is resulting in the publication of a Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs) that identify the roads, trails and areas open to public motor vehicle use on every national forest. The MVUM maps are required to meet a national standard showing only designated roads, trails and areas.

National Forests throughout California have been working with the motorized, access, environmental, and other non-motorized communities to identify existing routes, trails and areas, and to develop changes to motor vehicle use on the existing National Forest Transportation System.

Management decisions and MVUMs represent the first in the long term objective of implementing the Travel Management Rule to reduce the environmental impacts associated with public motor vehicle use on national forests, and develop a sustainable system of roads, trails and areas for public motorized use.

For the past seven years the Commission and Division, in collaboration with Region 5 of the USFS, have supported the inventorying and travel management planning through grant funding. To date approximately $12 million has been awarded through the cooperative agreement process.

The USFS recognizes that Travel Management rules will change the way that people access and experience national forests. Nevertheless, this change must occur in order to allow long term OHV opportunities and protection of natural and cultural resources.

The majority of forests in Region 5 have either finished their Final EIS and Record of Determination (ROD), or are in various stages of the NEPA process in the preparation of their Environmental Impact Statements (EIS).

Global Warming and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Commission shares concern over GHG emissions and the recognition of their significant adverse impact on the state's climate and environment state and federal policies and regulations have been developed requiring or promoting reductions in GHG emissions. In 2006 California's Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) was passed. AB 32 recognizes the significant effects of GHG emissions and the threats to public health, natural resources, and the environment of California resulting from global warming. The Division and its SVRAs comply with AB 32 and other state, federal, and county policies and regulations concerning GHG emissions.

In keeping with the carbon emission reduction goals of AB 32, the Division's Strategic Plan outlines the following long-term objective: Using the 2009/2010 fiscal year as a baseline, achieve a 25% reduction in carbon footprint from management of the SVRAs by 2020. The Division is currently working with SVRA staff to implement strategies and solutions to achieve this goal.

Solar Development

In 2001, the Commission established a policy that new projects constructed in SVRAs were to incorporate renewable energy technology. The use of solar systems at some of the SVRAs is one of several strategies the SVRAs are using to reduce their carbon footprint. Some of the SVRAs are successfully meeting a portion of their electrical demand through on-site generation.

For example, in 2008, Prairie City SVRA installed a solar-electric system on the roofs of its Environmental Training Center (ETC) and the visitor services entrance station. The solar units come with real-time digital meters allowing Prairie City staff to monitor facility performance and track energy usage. Total power generated, peak day, and total CO2 savings is recorded. The solar panels at Prairie City save over 14,000 KWH annually and, to date, over 62,000 lbs of CO2 emissions has been saved due to facility energy upgrades.

Hungry Valley and Ocotillo Wells SVRAs are also using the benefits of solar panels to generate power for various park facilities within their SVRAs.

Wind Energy

Wind generated electrical power offers advantages and opportunities for the Division to reduce carbon footprint at the SVRAs. In looking at its portfolio of options to reduce its carbon footprint, staff at Ocotillo Wells SVRA is currently analyzing the feasibility of using wind turbines to produce energy to power several of its facilities. The goal is to use wind energy to offset power usage for as many buildings as possible. The wind generators being considered will produce energy for less than the average cost of electricity

Alternative Fuel Vehicles

The last several years have seen an increase in development and use of alternative fuel OHVs. In addition, highway-legal vehicles designed for off-highway use are now being offered by many manufacturers in flex-fuel and hybrid configurations. Some manufacturers are now offering fully electric motorcycles and four wheeled vehicles for off-highway use. These electric vehicles provide important opportunities for the public, the Division, and the future of OHV recreation. They produce minimal noise,

use no fossil fuels directly, can be operated near urban areas with little sound disturbance to surrounding residents, and may present opportunities for development of OHV recreation areas in locations near urban centers.

California's Management Memo 06-03, Vehicle Purchase and Lease Policy, was released in 2006 as part of the state's efforts to meet ambient air quality standards and reduce the state fleet's petroleum use and impact on the environment. This policy applies to the purchase and lease of light-duty, alternative fuel, gasoline, hybrid-electric, sport utility, and four-wheel drive vehicles. The Division and its SVRAs meet and exceed this mandate.

The Division recently purchased a small fleet of electric dual-sport motorcycles and electric Recreational Utility Vehicles (RUVs). These vehicles provide fuel efficient, safe, and durable transportation for SVRA staff.

The purchase of these electric vehicles is an early step in the right direction and is in line with the Division's education efforts and long-term strategy to meet the Governor's mandates, fulfill its Strategic Plan goals, and reduce its own-as well as California's-carbon footprint. The Division, the SVRAs, and its staff are in an ideal position to promote zero emission OHVs to the public and educate the public on reducing their own carbon footprint through such mechanisms as purchasing electric vehicles.

Air Quality

In recent years, concerns have been raised about the contribution of OHV recreation to diminished air quality. Potential air quality impacts include dust emissions, including particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and fugitive dust. The Division, its SVRAs, as well as federal and local agencies are under legal mandate and increasing pressure to lessen these potential public health impacts where OHV activity is determined by appropriate study to contribute to exceedences of maximum allowable ambient air quality standards.

The Division is determining approaches for minimizing air quality impacts while working with industry and other public agencies to improve system

performance of OHVs, improve public health, and maintain and protect essential natural resources.

For example, Hollister Hills SVRA staff developed and implemented a noise and air quality monitoring program which provided baseline information on the sources and amount of dust and noise from OHV activities. Staff monitor dust impacts at locations selected in consultation with the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District. Sound monitoring is on-going with the assistance of park staff and park vendor. This information is used for an adaptive management program, including a menu of feasible possible management responses in areas identified as producing excessive dust or sound emissions.

Asbestos

The potential environmental hazards and associated public health and safety risks related to exposure to asbestos have gained increased regulatory attention throughout California. Correspondingly, OHV recreational opportunities are being adversely affected by land closures related to asbestos.

In addition, the asbestos dilemma has raised significant public concern. Political and scientific debate continues over the perceived versus actual health risks asbestos may present, as well as the validity of sampling and testing methods used during environmental analysis. Conflicting information, data, and research, as well as regulatory positions on the health risks associated with asbestos further promulgates conflict and uncertainty among agencies, stakeholders, and interested parties.

Recycling and Waste Reduction Programs

Since the early 2000s, the Division and its SVRAs have increased solid waste recycling and decreased the tonnage going to landfills. The overall recycling rate has increased from below 20% in 2000 to over 50% in each of the past several years. Staff specialists are researching and looking to further improve recycling and waste disposal opportunities. Opportunities include collecting and evaluating data related to waste and consumption to raise the awareness of staff and visitors. In addition, several of the SVRAs have instituted unique recycling programs. For example:

Hungry Valley SVRA

Hungry Valley SVRA works with a local nonprofit to collect and recycle materials generated at the park. Volunteers from the local Boys and Girls Club collect the contents of the locking recycle bins located throughout the SVRA. . The SVRA is provided with the weight information reported in accordance with AB 75 while the Boys & Girls Club gets to keep the proceeds from the recycling.

Ocotillo Wells SVRA

Many OHV enthusiasts head to Ocotillo Wells SVRA to celebrate Thanksgiving Day and participate in the tradition of deep frying a Thanksgiving turkey.

Ocotillo Wells staff collects the used cooking oil and recycles it to power their retrofitted Kubota RUV 1100. Staff drives the Kubota through the SVRA camping areas for trash pickup and onsite grease collection for much of the year. A grease recycling center is located next to the District Office for all visitors who wish to recycle their used vegetable oil.

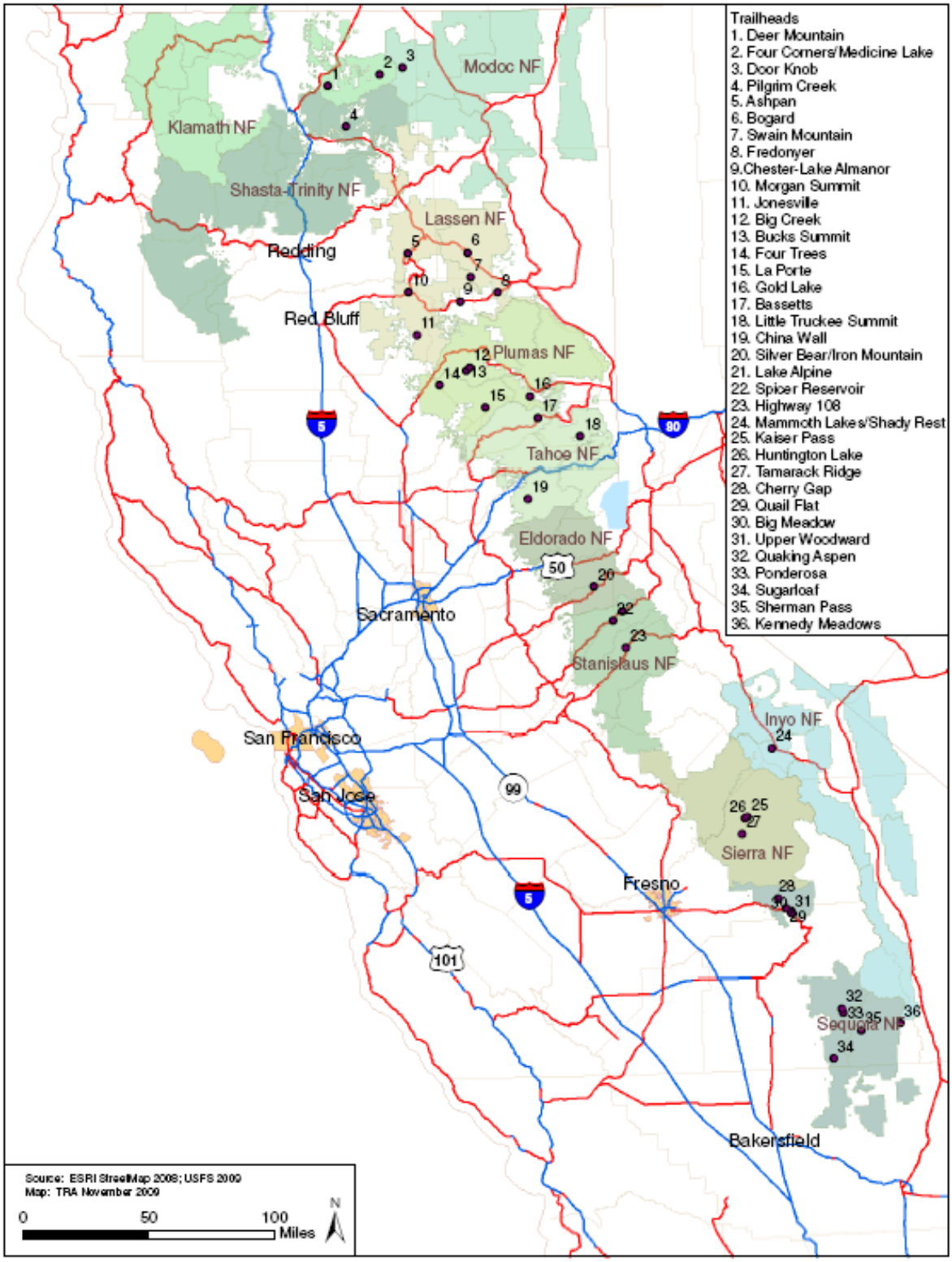
Over Snow Vehicle Program Environmental Impact Report

To support motorized winter recreation, the Division supports a system of trailheads and groomed trails for snowmobile use.

The Division provides funding to 11 National Forests and 3 County Public Works/Road Departments for the operation, maintenance and grooming of winter recreation trails and trailheads within California. The trails are maintained for snowmobile or OSV use; however, Nordic skiers, mushers (driving dog sleds) and snowshoers also use the parking areas and groomed trail systems.

The Division is in the process of completing the OSV Program Environmental Impact Report on the program. During the 2009-2010 winter season, the Division contracted with the California State University Sacramento (CSUS) to conduct a pilot visitor survey at 11 trailheads to obtain accurate baseline information on winter trail use. In all, 4,123 individual visitors to the trailheads participated in the surveys.

The survey will continue through the 2013-2014 winter season at all 35 trailheads in the program. This effort serves both a continuation and expansion of data collection efforts that will provide the Division with critical systematic and complete data related to social and resource impacts of winter recreation in the OSV Snow Program. The EIR will identify any significant environmental impacts of the over-snow activity and provide mitigation measures where feasible and appropriate to the given circumstances.



OSV Snow Program Trailheads

Geothermal Development at Ocotillo Wells SVRA

OHV opportunities on federal lands are under threat of closures and/or under severe use limitations as a result of conversions to renewable energy development including geothermal, wind, and solar. Decisions to allocate public lands for these activities threaten to reduce the amount of land available for OHV recreation and adversely impact other OHV areas in the state.

The BLM owns and manages lands throughout California, a portion of which are being explored and developed for geothermal resources. Over the last several years, the BLM has experienced an increase in demand for permits for energy development on their land. In response, the BLM has issued several permits for geothermal exploration, drilling, and field development in California.

Of interest to the Division is a major energy development project proposed in the Truckhaven lands near the Salton Sea, within the boundaries of Ocotillo Wells SVRA. The Division is concerned geothermal development projects in this area could negatively impact OHV recreational opportunities as well as water resources and ecosystem habitats but continues to work with collaboration with BLM.

BLM is considering developing geothermal leases on 14,731 acres of lands in Ocotillo Wells SVRA. Geothermal development would restrict or reduce OHV access to certain areas of Ocotillo Wells SVRA during construction and operation of proposed geothermal wells.

As a result of these concerns, Ocotillo Wells SVRA staff are working closely with the BLM to assess impacts to OHV opportunity, and to evaluate and develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts on the OHV community. Ocotillo Wells SVRA staff are monitoring this situation closely, and encouraging the BLM to evaluate resource management plans, analyze environmental impacts, and conduct cost benefit analysis to determine the appropriateness of specific project sites.

Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Corps Base

In 2008, the U.S. Navy announced its interest to expand the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corp Base. The military expansion would include

development into Johnson Valley OHV Open Area, located southeast of Barstow. In 2008, the Marine Corps submitted an Application for Withdrawal of Public Lands to the BLM that includes approximately 422,000 acres. The expansion would impact a significant portion of the 188,000 acre Johnson Valley Open Area and have considerable repercussions for the OHV community as Johnson Valley is the largest and one of the most popular OHV destinations in the county.

The Marine Corps is in the process of evaluating its options for base expansion. The BLM and the military are currently conducting an environmental analysis on the proposed use of the land. Expected completion of the draft EIS is 2010, and the final EIS in 2011.

The Division is working closely with OHV recreation groups, BLM, and the military to assess alternatives and seek plausible solutions allowing for continued access to public lands for OHV recreation in the Johnson Valley OHV Open Area.

Urban Encroachment

Urbanization over the last ten years has created conflicts in many existing managed OHV recreation areas which were once far removed from housing and commercial development. As more homes and businesses are built in these remote areas, the remaining lands available for OHV opportunity are receiving increased use, potentially resulting in impacts to recreational opportunity, the outdoors experience, and cultural and natural resources. Conflicts between OHV recreation use and neighboring land owners has become a management issue, particularly in relation to noise, dust, and trespass onto private land. OHV opportunities are increasingly threatened due to land use allocations and regulations, zoning laws, and increased concern for environmental impacts.

Rubicon Trail Assessment / Water Quality Management

The famous Rubicon Trail extends east from the Wentworth Springs area of El Dorado County through to the west side of Lake Tahoe. In 2009, the Rubicon Trail was threatened with potential closure due to a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) for sections along the 12-mile trail located in El Dorado County.

The CAO charged that, among other things, the trail discharged excessive amounts of sediment to water bodies. It required a means by which trail segments in need of improvement be identified, improvements be implemented to minimize sediment discharge, and that the improvements be documented and reported to the Water Board.

Fortunately, nearly a year before the issuance of the CAO, the Division asked the California Geological Survey (CGS) to conduct an assessment of the El Dorado County portion of the trail. CGS surveyed the trail using two different types of Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite signal receivers. The resulting line data was downloaded into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database. CGS then resurveyed the trail, taking note of poor design features and areas of acute erosion and proposing suggested fixes for these areas. This additional data was uploaded to the GIS Rubicon Trail database. The GIS database also contains the regional geology and soils coverage for the area.

El Dorado County now has an electronic map—a GIS database—of their portion of the Rubicon Trail. The map is also an assessment which indicates where fixes to the trail are necessary to prevent erosion. Because it is electronic, it can be updated as trail fixes are made and digital photographs and text documents can be electronically appended to specific spots on the trail. The electronic map has become an essential tool for El Dorado County to meet its obligation under the CAO, and—more importantly—it is an essential tool for the county to maintain the Rubicon Trail in a sustainable, responsible manner.