

News Release



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Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area Prepares for Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend

Additional Park Rangers and State Park volunteers will be on hand to assist visitors when the traditionally busy Thanksgiving holiday weekend rolls around this week and families flock to Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area on California's central coast.

The popular Oceano Dunes is the only State Park unit in California where vehicles are permitted to drive and camp on the beach. Out of 1,100 miles of California shoreline, Oceano Dunes represents the last 5½ miles of beach that are accessible by vehicles. In excess of 1.2 million people -- more than the annual attendance of Hearst Castle -- visit the park each year to fish, surf, beachcomb, ride horses, view wildlife, and enjoy Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation.

"State Parks appreciates the work done by the many dedicated volunteers who come to the park to lend a helping hand," said Steve Yamaichi, the new District Superintendent at Oceano Dunes. "We welcome the many families who will enjoy the holiday weekend and their Thanksgiving dinner right there on the beach. Oceano Dunes is a very popular destination, and for many good reasons."

Yamaichi said four additional Park Rangers have been temporarily assigned to Oceano Dunes to augment existing law enforcement staff for the weekend because of the large number of visitors who are expected. Thanksgiving weekend marks the last major holiday of the 2001 tourist season.

In addition, a large number of State Park volunteers from various OHV organizations and clubs from around the State will assist park personnel distribute informative literature, as well as conduct sound tests. The information advises the public that various laws and park regulations are strictly enforced year-round at Oceano Dunes, including 15 mph speed limits, leash laws, and laws against driving under the influence or driving with a suspended or revoked driver's license.

“This is a year-round effort for all of us at Oceano Dunes,” Yamaichi said. “It’s of the highest importance that these laws, rules and regulations, especially those aimed at driving under the influence, leash laws and maintaining safe speed limits, are strictly enforced all the time, and not just during holidays.”

The park’s maintenance staff continues to focus on the repair and replacement of damaged perimeter and vegetation island fencing. It was estimated that about 7,100 feet of island fencing and 145 feet of perimeter fencing have been repaired or replaced over the last several weeks. Vegetation island fencing protects the natural, cultural and archeological resources within the park and is off limits to all motor vehicles. Perimeter fencing delineates the boundary between the park and its neighbors. The repair work took 176 hours of staff time, plus 25 hours of heavy equipment time to complete. Rangers continue to conduct daily checks of the perimeter fencing and report any needs to the maintenance staff.

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