

# News Release



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## HUNGRY VALLEY SVRA RE-OPENS JUST DAYS AFTER THE GRAND FIRE

### *Firefighters Save Ancient Oaks*

California State Parks, Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division, will be re-opening the family friendly Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) on Wednesday May 22<sup>nd</sup> after the park suffered damage as a result of the Grand Fire.

“Memorial Day weekend is one of the most popular times to visit the park and we will be back open to the public for this exciting weekend”, said Superintendent Kent Miller. “The re-opening is the result of a tremendous amount of quick work from a park staff that is dedicated to providing this recreational opportunity to the off highway community that loves this park while protecting California’s valuable resources,” Miller added.

Hungry Valley offers a dynamic opportunity to enjoy off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and is located in Los Angeles, Kern and Ventura areas. Sweeping vistas, meadows, steep canyons and quiet oak woodlands for solitude await the returning public to the park. Unfortunately, the Native Grasslands Management Area will remain closed, as well as Sterling Canyon Trail and Coyote Trail, due to the extra sensitive state of those burned areas. These trails are connectors to the USFS East Frazier and Tejon trails which are also closed. The rehabilitation work in those areas will take more time to repair.

As the park reopens, there is good news and a big “THANK YOU” to firefighters. Despite some damage to State Park lands, Cal-Fire led heroic efforts to protect a stand of native Oak trees that were probably alive before Columbus came to America.

“Repeatedly through the course of this fire, we knew it was possible to lose this ancient stand of oak trees,” said Superintendent Jeff Gaffney. “However, the commitment of CalFire, Ventura County Fire, Kern County Fire, and firefighters from the Los Padres National Forest, did not waiver in their determination to save it from the flames and we wish to extend our thanks for this victory. Many fire agencies were involved but Cal-Fire is responsible for protecting State Park Lands and they took that commitment to a new level by saving these icons of California.”

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Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) was closed as a result of the fire, but managers of the popular Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) area were most concerned about the Oak Woodland Natural Preserve which has become an iconic stop for many OHV enthusiasts who are also nature lovers. The stand of trees is also visited by hundreds of school children from Los Angeles and Kern counties each year.

The team of firefighting agencies committed significant resources and effort to protecting this amazing grove of historic trees over the course of three days as the fire kept doubling back to try to wipe out the trees. Firefighters were also able to keep the fire from burning any structures within the park and reduced impacts of the burning in a native grassland within the SVRA.

Part of the success is attributed to the fact that Cal-Fire worked closely with State Park managers and used their "on-the-ground" knowledge.

Although this fire was not started by any type of activity associated with Off-Highway Vehicles or use of the park, the public is reminded that all vehicles must have approved spark arrestors in the park, especially during this severe fire season.

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