

State of California – The Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR
HEBER DUNES STATE VEHICULAR RECREATION AREA GENERAL PLAN**

Date: August 26, 2011

To: All Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Persons

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division of California State Parks has directed the preparation of and intends to adopt an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Heber Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) General Plan, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State CEQA Guidelines. OHMVR Division is the lead agency for the proposed project under CEQA.

PROJECT LOCATION

Heber Dunes SVRA, Heber, California, south of Interstate 8 and west of State Route 7

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

OHMVR Division of California State Parks has developed a proposed General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Heber Dunes SVRA in accordance with Public Resources Code §5002.2 referencing General Plan guidelines, and Public Resources Code §21000 et seq. and California Administrative Code §15000 et seq. concerning CEQA.

Heber Dunes SVRA is an existing SVRA that offers a unique recreational experience located within the agricultural area of southern Imperial Valley. The cities and communities of Imperial Valley, including El Centro and Calexico, are located within a short drive to Heber Dunes SVRA, which provides off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation in a family-friendly atmosphere. A California State Park must have a general plan prepared prior to the development of new facilities that may result in the permanent commitment of a resource. The proposed General Plan analyzed in this DEIR is the first prepared for Heber Dunes SVRA. The proposed General Plan outlines goals and guidelines that apply to the entire Heber Dunes SVRA to address existing issues and to provide ongoing guidance to management that can be implemented to achieve the long-term vision for Heber Dunes SVRA to provide a responsible and convenient place for friends, families, and groups to enjoy the outdoor recreational setting through OHV activity and other compatible recreational uses.

In addition to long-range planning provided through the proposed General Plan, the project includes multiple improvements to provide basic park facilities related to administration, maintenance operations, and recreation opportunities in the near term (within 2 years). The

proposed facilities would provide physical improvements necessary for adequate maintenance and operations and enhanced recreation at Heber Dunes SVRA. Proposed near-term facility improvements include an entrance station, staff residence area, maintenance facility and ranger/staff station, picnic areas, training track, and associated upgrading of utilities and roads.

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The analysis of biological resources found that construction activities or operation of Heber Dunes SVRA could result in potentially significant impacts to western burrowing owl under the proposed General Plan and near-term facility improvements. Mitigation provided in the DEIR would reduce the potential impact to this species to less than significant. No other issue areas were found to have potentially significant impacts.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

The DEIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days, beginning August 26, 2011, and ending October 10, 2011.

The proposed General Plan and Draft EIR may be viewed online at the following websites:

http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=26080

or

http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=983

Copies of the documents are available at the following locations during normal business hours:

El Centro Public Library
Community Center Branch
375 South 1st Street
El Centro, CA 92243

Camarena Memorial Library
850 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231

Heber Dunes SVRA Ranger Station
1610 Heber Beach
Holtville, CA 92250

Ocotillo Wells District Office
5172 Highway 78
Borrego Springs CA 92004

Your comments on the environmental analysis presented in the DEIR are welcomed. Written comments should be postmarked or submitted by email no later than October 10, 2011, to the following address:

Kirk Shea, State Parks Superintendent II
OHMVR Division, Ocotillo Wells District
5172 Highway 78
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Email comments to:
kshea@parks.ca.gov