

APPENDIX D

Additional Comments

Additional Comment Letters

Tina,

In the three options presented there is an underlying decision that seems to already have been made and taken away from the stakeholders. That decision is that each area that is currently distributed OHV use can be, by the three choices provided, limited to trails only riding through the use and implementation of this General Plan. This has been done by including into each of the three options that every area can be limited to trails only OHV. For the options to be truly a choice for the stakeholders and the public one of the options must be that the General Plan will protect the distributed OHV use of the park in the future.

Regardless of whether or not those areas can now be limited to trails only OHV use, a General Plan option that intends to protect the continued distributed OHV use must be offered to present a balanced set of options to chose from.

That balance would be:

- 1 More protection of the public's use of the land
- 2 Continued balance of protection between the public using the land and special interest groups attempting to limit that use.
- 3 Opening the door in the General Plan to further limit the public's use of the designated OHV area for it's intended use.

Currently the three options all appear to be falling under the third option above.

The current choices of Legacy, Rugged, and Developed only offer three different degrees of limiting the future use by the public as a OHV and camping area.

The simple correction to this is to have the Legacy option not allow any area that is currently distributed OHV use to not allow a future possibility of trails only OHV use. This would then provide three balanced choices going forward. Thus the General Plan under the Legacy option would offer some level of protection to the public's continued use of the park as they do now.

I strongly urge you and the team working on the document to consider revising the DRAFT one more time prior to the meetings and presenting a more balanced set of options to the public.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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January 7, 2014

11-IMP-VAR
PM VAR
Ocotillo Wells SVRA
Draft Working Papers 2, 3 & 4

Ms. Tina Robinson
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Ocotillo Wells District
5172 Highway 78, Box 10
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Dear Ms. Robinson:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) General Plan Update (GPU) Working Paper #2 Draft Existing Conditions documents, Working Paper #3 Draft Issues and Analysis, and Working Paper #4 Draft Planning Alternatives. Caltrans understands that this document is part of an informational process, and is not part of the formal environmental review. Caltrans has the following comments:

Working Paper #2 states... "Other access points are not marked or controlled. SR-78 has open shoulders that lead into Ocotillo Wells SVRA, allowing entrance and exit at the discretion of the visitor."

Working Paper #3 states... "Access to Ocotillo Wells SVRA is not restricted to designated access points, and visitors can easily enter from many uncontrolled points from State Route (SR) 78, SR-86, and S22."

- Though these statements are describing existing visitor behavior, legal ingress and egress to state highways should only be at permitted access points.

If you have any questions on the comments Caltrans has provided, please contact Leila Ibrahim of the Development Review Branch at (619) 688-6802.

Sincerely,

JACOB M. ARMSTRONG, Chief
Development Review Branch

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"

Additional Comment Letters

Manager Robinson,

The text below bids goodbye to those who submitted input on the online forum.

This survey instrument had no provision (apparent) for the respondent to receive a copy of the answers he submitted.

Will you please revise the instrument to provide this capability.

Also, the goodbye message indicates that OHMVR will provide only a "summary" of the input received on the online survey. While that is appropriate and expected by everyone, it is also likely that we --the community concerned about how the data are interpreted (analysed)-- know that providing access to the entire response set for each survey submitted (less personal identifying information for which legal or ethical constraints are in play) is a necessary part of having the capability for additional and/or alternative analyses to be performed.

Contextualization of a person's responses to individual questions, examined across all respondents' responses, can be quite revealing.

Will you please supply also the raw data, i.e., the responses to each question in the context of all the other responses from the same individual (same submission).

If either of these requests is not possible for some technical or legal reasons, please let me know what those limitations are; if it is just an issue of "didn't plan for such a level of access and transparency" or "this was not budgetted for and is too costly to provide", or perhaps "your request is not seen as having any value in informing either the respondent and public communities, or the OHMVR, that would be very useful to learn as well.

Peter Rauch

Thank you for participating in our Online Input Forum. Your input will help to identify the Preferred Planning Alternative for the Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan Update.

A summary documenting the input received through this forum and the December 2013 and January 2014 Public Workshops will be posted to the project website in Spring 2014. Thank you!

Hello, Tina,

After several failed attempts to put in a comment about the Ocotillo Wells general plan, I decided to just send you an email instead.

I found the map and zones to be very confusing. This strategy seems too complex for riders to navigate and even know what they are supposed to do in each zone and when the zone changes. The logical plan should be to have clearly marked designated roads and trails that are mapped for the whole area.

Open area riding should be prohibited so that the park can begin to restore itself. There could even be "restoration days" planned so that recreationists could participate in protecting their park. The education programs that are going on now would be great lead-ins to these days. The users might begin to understand the value and beauty of the desert.

Pam Nelson
Conservation chair, Santa Margarita group
San Geronio Chapt./Sierra Club

Additional Comment Letters

Dear Ms. Robinson,

I visited the web site to add comments for the draft plan for Ocotillo Wells SVRA, but found it very difficult to do. I did go through the process but didn't find an opportunity to make the following points:

1. Every alternative for each zone included both open riding and trail riding. There was no alternative in any zone for just trail riding. Many people would prefer to ride on a trail so as not to get lost, and to enjoy the ride. Not all visitors want to destroy all the habitat. It is up to the management to ensure that the visitor who want to "tour" the area and enjoy its natural resources has that opportunity.
2. If there is open and trail riding within the zone, how will the visitor know where the open riding ends? Will it be fenced? to date signs saying closed are largely ignored.
3. I didn't find any information about the specific natural and cultural resources for each zone and how each alternative might impact those resources, so how could I make adequate comments?
4. How will the zones be marked on the ground? Will the visitor know what the special characteristics in each zone, and how will you convey that message to the visitors so that they can appreciate the wildlife and their habitat?
5. **The alternative that I would prefer would be:** The entire area should be limited to riding on designated roads and trails so that the sensitive natural and cultural resources are largely protected. Even with such an alternative the management would be hard pressed to maintain the roads and trails and keep people from straying off the designated route.
6. The management strategy that is being suggested by the on line comment format would be very complex and difficult to manage and it would be very costly.
7. Any management strategy that is adopted should have the funding in place to implement it within a set time frame and should not be subjected to funding that is available one year and not the next.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Hello Ms. Robinson:

I am writing to you to offer my comments on the public planning process under way at OWSVRA. I was shocked to learn the EIR scoping and study have yet to be completed for the OWSVRA General Plan Update.

I attempted to navigate the Web site for the 11 planning zones and found it was pre-disposed to off-highway vehicle use and did not provide any information on how resources would be managed in the areas or, for that matter, what resources are located in the areas and to what extent they are already ruined or protected.

Please accept this note as my official comments and forward the following suggestions to into the record.

The public is long overdue in having the full information available regarding the resources at OWSVRA, how they will be protected in the future, and a full range of alternatives for such protection.

Any General Plan Update should not be broken up into confusing planning zones that have no effect in the field. How are people to know which zone they are in and which planning area they are in?

The range of alternatives should include trails-only riding in the entire SVRA. It is so disheartening to see what has happened east of pole line in areas that were previously trails only.

The range of alternatives should also include closing the park to all riding to allow for a proper soil standard study, to allow time for trails to be designated and marked, and to save money for the amount of patrol that will be needed to protect the park's resources going forward.

I appreciate your efforts but ask that the process move expeditiously toward the full EIR. The public can not comment without being given the expected impacts faced by the park.

Additional Comment Letters



March 8, 2014

Tina Robinson
General Plan Project Manager
California Department of Parks & Recreation
Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
Ocotillo Wells District
5172 Highway 78,
Box 10 Borrego Springs, CA 92004

By email to: tina.robinson@parks.ca.gov

Comments on Ocotillo Wells SVRA Draft Alternatives

Dear Ms. Robinson:

We submit this comment letter “off line” rather than using the Department’s “input forum” web page because of the limited opportunity provided there for the public to comment on the OWSVRA General Plan. We have three main points to make:

1. The Draft Planning Alternatives document is narrowly focused on use and facilities under three alternatives for each planning zone and the “input forum” doesn’t provide for comments beyond those narrow categories.
2. The Working Papers lack sufficient information and analysis of environmental issues to inform public comment.
3. The request for the public to choose alternatives now, without the required analysis, is arbitrary and delays the CEQA and General Plan processes unnecessarily, allowing violations of law and regulation to continue and the ongoing damage to park resources to go unchecked.

We have reviewed the available General Plan working documents, including:
Working Paper #1: Major Themes from Initial Public Outreach;

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- Working Paper #2: Existing Conditions;
- Working Paper #3: Draft Issues and Analysis;
- Working Paper #4: Draft Planning Alternatives.

A link identified as “Environmental Documents” takes one to a list of these same documents, none of which can credibly be called an environmental document. Working Paper #3, titled Draft Issues and Analysis, in fact, includes no analysis; it is simply a list of issues and assumptions. Working Paper #2, despite being titled Existing Conditions, is wholly inadequate presenting quantitative data sets on the existing conditions in Ocotillo Wells. Perhaps those data exist, in which case they should be available as part of this process for public review.

You are asking the public to recommend alternatives when you have yet to provide any general or site-specific information regarding how those alternatives will affect natural or cultural resources. This flies in the face of environmental planning laws, which intend that the public be presented with a project and alternatives that are provided in the context of their environmental impacts and benefits. Indeed, CEQA requires a lead agency to explore all feasible alternatives that would avoid or lessen significant environmental effects. (Public Resources Code §§ 21002, 21002.1(b).) To this end, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required to consider a range of potentially feasible alternatives, that would feasibly attain most of the project’s basic objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening any of the project’s significant environmental impacts. (Save Round Valley Alliance v. County of Inyo (2007) 157 Cal.App.4th 1437, 1456.) The Department, in this case, is way off base to ask the public to choose alternatives without any information and analyses at all about those environmental impacts, including how the alternatives comply with local, state and federal laws. Since these, or other, alternatives must be analyzed in an EIR, we have to wonder what is the purpose of asking the public to choose alternatives now, except to promote expectations for a decision that allows use to continue pretty much as it does currently. Or, is it simply to add steps to a process that is already years overdue, in order to delay making a decision at all, while natural and cultural resources continue to be destroyed?

By identifying only three alternatives in each zone, the input forum discourages any comment outside those alternatives, even if none of those three alternatives appeals to the commenter. A full range of alternatives would include ending all ORV use and restoring the park, or ending open riding and restoring the park. Only one zone (Lake Shore) would prohibit both open and trail riding, in Alternative 2 (Rugged) for that zone. One zone (Gas Domes) proposes to end open riding under all alternatives, but permits trail riding under all alternatives. A single alternative (Rugged) in the Palo Verde, Arroyo and Truckhaven zones prohibits open riding. Trails-only riding is proposed in one or more alternatives in fewer than half of (5 of the 11) zones. Trail riding only is not proposed in the other 6 zones, under any alternative. The public is not given any information as to the rationale behind these alternatives.

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Additional Comment Letters

In zones (Headquarters, OW South, Shell Reef, Pumpkin Patch, Tarantula and Hot Springs) where every alternative provides for both open and trail riding, how will someone know which policy applies in the area in which they are currently riding? Will the plan include even smaller subzones? Currently, riding is limited to “trails only” east of Pole Line Road, yet the park staff appears unable to enforce that policy. How will it enforce a management strategy infinitely more complex? The multiple proposals will create a management nightmare, and are unlikely to result in the protection of yet-undefined natural and cultural resources. As a practical matter, how would a user know when he moved from one planning zone to another? Within a zone in which open riding and trail riding are both permitted, how would a user know which was permitted in a particular area of that zone? Working paper #3 identifies the complexities of managing the area as an issue, yet the management strategy that appears to be emerging will be many times more complex and difficult...and unmanageable.

The State is asking the public to make site-specific recommendations but provides no site-specific information to inform those recommendations. The information provided to the public on the “input forum” and General Plan documents lacks sufficient detail regarding many important issues the General Plan must address. Lead agencies must ensure adequate environmental information is gathered and that the environmental impacts of a proposed action are fully identified and analyzed. “To conclude otherwise would place the burden of producing relevant environmental data on the public rather than the agency and would allow the agency to avoid an attack on the adequacy of the information contained in the report simply by excluding such information.” (Kings County Farm Bureau v. City of Hanford (1990) 221 Cal. App. 3d 692, 724.) Environmental review documentation

is more than a set of technical hurdles for agencies and developers to overcome. [Its] function is to ensure that government officials who decide to build or approve a project do so with a full understanding of the environmental consequences and, equally important, that the public is assured those consequences have been taken into account.” (Laurel Heights I, supra, 47 Cal.3d at pp. 391-392.) For the [environmental review documentation] to serve these goals it must present information in such a manner that the foreseeable impacts of pursuing the project can actually be understood and weighed, and the public must be given an adequate opportunity to comment on that presentation before the decision to go forward is made. (Vineyard Area Citizens for Responsible Growth, Inc. v. City of Rancho Cordova (2007) 40 Cal.4th 412, 449-450.)

The environmental review documents in which these alternatives and others will be included must “contain facts and analysis, not just the agency’s bare conclusions or opinions.” (Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents (1989) 47 Cal. 3d 376, 404 [and cases cited therein].) The environmental review documents “must include detail sufficient to enable those who did not participate in its preparation to understand and to consider meaningfully the issues raised by the proposed project.” (Id.)

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While we recognize that these “working papers” are not CEQA documents, they are being used to inform the CEQA process and should therefore comply with the CEQA standards. Intensity and manner of use in a particular planning zone must be constrained according to the environmental and cultural resources in that zone, yet the planning documents provided to date fail to provide resource information, zone-specific or otherwise, on which a commenter may construct comments. The descriptions of the zones often include a boundary simply identified as an “existing trail.” How is the public supposed to discern which of many unnamed existing trails is referenced? There is no description of non-ORV recreational resources that may exist in each zone, or which should serve as a constraint to use in any particular zone. The shape and nature of each zone may make sense to the planners, but they have yet to share that information with the public.

The OWSVRA General Plan update has many significant issues to address, including impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species, serious air quality challenges in counties that are in non-attainment for particulate matter, decimation of vegetation that provides crucial wildlife habitat, and inadequate road and trail maintenance. The Planning documents merely allude to the above resource concerns, without any serious attempt to analyze how the various alternatives will address these issues. Continued current and increased use is likely not in compliance with the Public Resources Code §5090.35. The Department must ensure compliance with the PRC when making management decisions; in this case, that will likely require restricting vehicle use to designated routes. Sensitive soils, wildlife and cultural resources of OWSVRA cannot be protected or sustained when open riding continues to be allowed in the park. The EIR must include at least one alternative that limits all riding to designated routes throughout the OWSVRA. OWSVRA should also consider the alternative of completely shutting down those areas of the park that have received considerable damage and need to be rehabilitated and those areas with at-risk cultural and historical resources.

In summary, we believe this solicitation of “votes” for limited alternatives in these zones is an unnecessary and arbitrary step in the General Planning and CEQA process. Given the Department’s claim of insufficient resources to manage OWSVRA currently, we urge you to stop wasting the Department’s money by dragging out the General Plan process with unnecessary and unproductive exercises, and to complete the required and long-overdue environmental analysis and allow the public to comment on alternatives in the context of adequate information to make reasoned choices.

Sincerely,



Karen Schambach
California Field Director

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Additional Comment Letters

TOM BUDLONG
3216 MANDEVILLE CANYON ROAD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90049-1016

Tina Robinson, Project Manager
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation
5172 Highway 78
Ocotillo Wells, CA
92004

Sunday March 9, 2014

By USPS and email to TRobinson@Parks.CA.Gov

Dear Ms. Robinson,

Please accept these comments as requested for the Ocotillo Wells General Plan Update.

I am using Working Papers #3 and #4 to comment, as suggest by your website <http://www.planocotillowells.com/input>.

I sense two fundamental problems that are not adequately addressed.

1. OWSRVA is essentially an open area (the Working Papers use the term 'distributed'). Open riding is allowed in most alternatives for all areas except Truckhaven, and my personal experience is that calling Truckhaven closed and protected is unrealistic. I participated in a Truckhaven event which took me through a large part of the area. It has a high density of trails, many of which do not protect resources, and driving off-trail was common. Realistically, OWSRVA is an open area. OWSRVA's reputation is as an open area, and Working Paper #4 confirms this. Needless to say, intensive open riding has high negative impact on almost all environmental considerations, and Native American cultural and sacred sites, and artifacts.
2. OWSRVA visitation is increasing. This becomes obvious from the planning issues in WP#3. OWSRVA is a 'premier destination'. The local business community has become used to the traffic OWSRVA brings, and will be more than happy to see expansion. Special events drawing large crowds require resources. And increased visitation will bring increased environmental pressure.

In numerous places the Working Papers present environmental protection as a major goal. Typical are:

- "The rich and varied history... may require targeted protection". (How will you protect these fragile biological and historic resources?)
- "Many different types of habitats in OWSRVA help sustain diverse wildlife"
- "CSP will continue to provide educational programs, trail guidance, and enforcement efforts that enhance OHV recreational opportunities while conserving, restoring, and protecting natural, cultural, and physical resources at Ocotillo Wells SVRA"
- "...different types of habitats...sustain diverse wildlife..."
- "Significant cultural and prehistoric resources..."
- "THE PURPOSE OF OCOTILLO WELLS SVRA: ... to manage and protect fragile, rare, and irreplaceable natural and cultural resources"
- "Tread Lightly!® principles encourage responsible OHV use and provide protection for OWSRVA's wildlife, natural habitats, and remnants of prehistoric and historic cultures and activities." (The Tread Lightly ethic and open riding are incompatible opposites.)

Popular open areas and environmental protection are incompatible. They cannot exist together. This is the fundamental problem of the Working Papers. I am especially concerned by the statement in WP #3 that "Visitors are expected to recreate responsibly", and later in the

same paragraph, "Visitors are expected to follow all applicable rules and regulations in good faith..." My experience is that too many OHVs ignore this expectation to make the expectation reasonable and viable. The Working Papers have very limited information on how visitors will be kept from off limits locations.

I can understand the dilemma, and sympathize with it. Realistic management for environmental protection would be strongly resisted by the current users. Yet it would be problematic to present a management plan that does not recognize the importance of environmental protection. Continuing the open policy and ignoring the consequential environmental impacts will continue the criticism that the Parks division cannot properly manage its OHV parks. This is a very difficult conflict for management, but ease of management is not a management goal. The OHV division must be bold enough to recognize the conflict as primary and use it as the basis for planning. Despite the words about environmental protection, the Papers do not frontally recognize the problem, nor adequately address it. Instead they 'paper over' it by proclaiming environmental protection as a goal, without describing how the goal will not be reached.

I am also critical of the content of the Paper. Meaningful substance appears lacking. Perhaps these will come later, but the planning process has been going on for over seven years. The glacial pace is frustrating. Meanwhile, the problems can only grow. According to OW environmental resources staff reports, damage to habitat and soils is increasing. Some specifics:

- Missing are descriptions of current management policies, where they work and where they don't. For people like me, not intimately familiar with operations at OWSRVA, lack of detail can't be the basis for specific intelligent comment. Instead, WP #4 reads like a visitor's brochure, telling where you can and cannot do the various activities.
- Nothing describes why the various policies and facilities in WP#4 are chosen for the various areas. I can only guess. This does not invite insightful comment.
- Visitor compliance with management regulations is not discussed. Nothing describes the current degree of visitor compliance and if this is considered acceptable or needs improvement. The words comply and compliance do not appear in WP #4. Compliance is mentioned once in WP#3 under Planning Issue #15, where the Paper states merely that the "Education Program ... has improved...rule compliance", with no supporting evidence. High visitor compliance rate is not on the list of goals.
- An obvious problem is inadequate staffing, unless the OWSRVA has somehow become immune to this problem that exists at almost all other government operated recreational facilities. Staff efficiency does not show up as a goal. Short staff is mentioned in the Papers, but nowhere do I see consideration that user fees might be considered to help alleviate the problem.

I will paraphrase the above. The Paper is heavy on lofty goals, thin on detail. It is a poor example of an attempt at effective management, and speaks poorly of the OHV division. To be no further along after seven years is not complimentary.

These comments are highly critical, but I believe necessarily so. I sincerely hope they help.

Regards,



Tom Budlong

Voice: 310-963-1731

Fax: 310-471-7531

email: TomBudlong@RoadRunner.com

Ocotillo Wells General Plan Comment

Budlong, March 9, 2014


Additional Comment Letters

VICE CHAIR
OF THE FOLLOWING
COMMITTEES:
HEALTH
PUBLIC SAFETY
JUDICIARY
ELECTIONS & CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENTS

SENATE
California Legislature
JOEL ANDERSON
SENATOR
THIRTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT

MEMBER
OF THE FOLLOWING
COMMITTEES:
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW

MEMBER
OF THE FOLLOWING
SUBCOMMITTEE:
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL
CONSTRUCTION, PUBLIC SAFETY
& THE JUDICIARY



March 10, 2014

Tina Robinson
Senior Park and Rec Specialist
Ocotillo Wells District
5172 Highway 78, #10
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Dear Ms. Robinson,

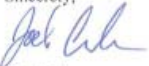
I am writing to comment on the draft planning alternatives for the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) General Plan update.

The Ocotillo Wells SVRA is one of the recreational jewels of the district I represent in the state legislature. As an off-road enthusiast I have personally experienced the park's breathtaking natural beauty and recreational opportunities with my family. Thousands of my constituents have been regularly visiting the park for decades for camping and motorized recreation. It is important to us that the experience we know and love at Ocotillo Wells SVRA is preserved in the General Plan.

Ocotillo Wells SVRA supporters enjoy the undeveloped, natural state of the park. It's important that we preserve raw, open land for the public to access freely and in California we are so fortunate to have this 85,000 acre SVRA with no fees and an open riding policy. It is a rare and unique treasure that we must safeguard for future generations.

There are many existing developed camping opportunities throughout the state and near the Ocotillo Wells SVRA. Therefore based on the feedback I have received from my constituents, it is my understanding that Draft Alternative 3, known as "Developed," is mostly inappropriate for the 11 zones included in the General Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the General Plan update and I look forward to being involved in this process as it moves forward. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (619) 596-3136 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Joel Anderson
Senator, District 36

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From: CourtCoyle@aol.com [CourtCoyle@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 10:09 PM
To: Robinson, Tina@Parks
Cc: ds_nahc@pacbell.net; Stratton, Susan@Parks
Subject: Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan, Draft Planning Alternatives

Dear Ms. Robinson,

The following comments are submitted on behalf of Carmen Lucas, Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Indians.

General Concerns:

Ms. Lucas remains concerned about the extensive amount of time it takes for management plans to be completed and executed. She has been providing comments on management of the SVRA for many years, including providing written comments dated January 8, 2007; April 22, 2008; and March 15, 2010. (Please note, correspondence may be exempt from public disclosure pursuant to CEQA and the Public Records Act).

Specific Management Actions:

Ms. Lucas would like to draw your attention to the letters referenced above for specific input on how to improve long term management. The recommendations therein are still valid and Ms. Lucas requests that they be carried forward into planning alternatives selection and analyses, as well as direct, indirect and cumulative impacts analysis in the upcoming EIR.

Ms. Lucas is generally satisfied with the fencing efforts as they have been implemented to date. However, she remains concerned about the many areas that have not been subject to cultural resource survey or management efforts and are being exposed to permanent damage.

Ms. Lucas is particularly concerned about the handling of ancestral human remains and the need to integrate the indigenous cultural landscape into the management framework across each of the planning zones.

She remains available to consult on how Parks can make further improvements.

Draft Planning Alternatives:

Ms. Lucas understands that Draft Planning Alternatives have been developed to illustrate different scenarios for how the Ocotillo Wells SVRA may be managed for the long term. Her general comments and recommendations apply to each of the planning zones.

We note that the draft Planning Alternatives document does not consistently spell out biological or cultural resource management goals for each planning area or provide management detail. For example, will Cultural Preserves or ACECs be created? How and when would the management plans for them be available? Have California and National Register eligibility determinations been made for any of the recorded resources? Are areas on the NAHC sacred lands file being

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protected? Without such information, it makes it difficult to provide meaningful comments and assess if prior recommendations by Ms. Lucas have been honored in each of the provided alternatives.

We are also concerned that Working Paper # 2 Existing Conditions, contained an abbreviated Cultural Resource section that completely lacked a tribal voice. For example, the "Ethnographic section" was really a short archaeology section, lacking any relation to ethnographic reports or tribal perspectives. Moreover, the variety and sensitive nature of the known cultural places are not referenced in the paper's text. Nor was reference made to indigenous cultural landscapes despite Ms. Lucas's prior input.

Accordingly, Ms. Lucas requests that the Cultural Resource section of the Plan and the EIR be expanded and improved. Further, the Plan may benefit from an Ethnographic Report being completed by qualified preparers prior to selection of a preferred alternative.

Ms. Lucas may also submit additional comments based upon her further review of the draft materials.

Native Monitoring and MLD:

Ms. Lucas would like to confirm that she is available as a Native Monitor and as a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the area. She would, however, like to update her recommendations on appropriate firms to perform additional archaeological surveys.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Best regards,
Courtney Coyle

Copy to NAHC and SHPO

Courtney Ann Coyle
Attorney at Law
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"Protecting and Preserving Tribal, Cultural, Biological and Park Resource Landscapes"

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Additional Comment Letters

March 15 2010

I would like to thank State Parks for the opportunity to comment on Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan. These comments are from the San Diego Off-Road Coalition and the California Off-Road Vehicle Association. Ocotillo Wells is a premier recreational resource to the off-roaders of Southern California. Hundreds of thousands of people treasure camping in and traveling throughout the park. I have personally enjoyed hundreds of trips to Ocotillo Wells in the last 33 years. The high recreational resource value of Ocotillo Wells comes both from the wonderful topography in the park as well as the dedicated work of the park staff to maintain a first class recreational destination. I hope these comments can help Ocotillo Wells SVRA create a general plan that will preserve motorized recreation and the natural environment.

There are private holdings on the north, south and east sides of OWSVRA. Much of this land contains terrain that is of high quality for motorized recreation. The Ocotillo Wells Plan must guide the OWSVRA to develop a procedure to bring this land into the park, should it come up for sale or become available for donation. Several prime parcels have come up for sale in recent years and the State Park was unable to acquire this land. Some of this land has been closed to off-roading and developed. This procedure must guide State Parks to act quickly, as many sellers lack the patience to wait months or years for a sale to close escrow.

Land to the east of Ocotillo Wells is owned by the BLM and other entities. This land is managed by Ocotillo Wells under an MOU. Travel in the east between Pole Line Road and Highway 86 is limited to a few designated routes. The Ocotillo Wells Plan must include language that directs the park to develop a plan to designate more routes in this area. This plan needs to be implemented as soon as practical.

There are a variety of threats to recreation in Ocotillo Wells SVRA. OWSVRA must act to minimize these restrictions to motorized recreation.

This would include, but are not limited to;
Renewable energy generation
Endangered species designations
Archeological findings

The Ocotillo Wells Plan must include language that states that the park's first priority is to provide maximum motorized off-road vehicle opportunity. This state park is not a place to make wind, solar, geothermal or other types of energy, renewable or not. The Plan must contain language that states efforts to bring energy generation to Ocotillo Wells must be opposed. If such projects cannot be opposed, their impact to recreation must be minimized as much as possible and mitigation in the form of suitable land for motorized recreation must be provided to the off-road community at a cost entirely carried entirely by the entity bringing the project.

The Ocotillo Wells Plan must include language that states that the park will participate in any public process that attempts to list any species that lives in the park as endangered or threatened. The Plan must recommend that solutions other than restriction to recreation be studied and exhausted regarding any species of concern before any restrictions of recreation be agreed upon or recommended by Ocotillo Wells SVRA.

The Ocotillo Wells Plan must include language that states that the park will protect the maximum amount of motorized recreation possible when managing archeological resources within the park.

While off-road opportunities abound in the park, some users enjoy riding motocross on a closed course. The Ocotillo Wells Plan should direct OWSVRA to study the possibility of constructing a pay for use groomed motocross track for motocross practice and racing.

The Ocotillo Wells Plan should urge OWSVRA to study the possibility of constructing a dedicated special event area. Such an area could be used to host off-road vehicle events such as poker or fun runs, concerts, rally's or other permitted events.

There is a growing need to have a safe and quick way for Ocotillo Wells SVRA staff to cross the park to reach the north side (near S22) for safety, law enforcement or other issues. Construction of such a route must be made to have the least effect on motorized recreation and on the environment. I would like to suggest a route that uses as much existing wash as possible. Take the Shell Reef Expressway to Bank Wash north. From there a way may be found, and/or improved, to connect to the North Fork Arroyo Salada Wash to Holly Road or the Arroyo Salada Wash followed by a reasonable way to Holly Road. The way north from the Bank Wash area may skirt the border of Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Ocotillo Wells SVRA may want to consult with ABDSP about a route in this area.

Law enforcement in the past has been something that OWSVRA can be proud of. Peace has been kept and resources have been protected. The role of law enforcement in OWSVRA should continue to prioritize education over enforcement whenever possible. Seldom has the off-road community heard of improper behavior by park rangers. Most visitors consider OWSVRA rangers friendly and helpful. I hope that their role in park management can continue as it has in the past.

Many off-road vehicle areas charge fees to enter or operate within. OWSVRA should oppose charging fees to enter or operate a vehicle within its boundary. There is sufficient money from green/red sticker fees and fuel taxes to cover operating costs of the park. The collection of fees in other areas has proven to be extremely inefficient. Some prominent areas spend as much as 1/3 of the fee money collected in the collection of fees.

I hope these comments will help to maintain and improve recreation in Ocotillo Wells SVRA. I am very interested in the positive outcome of this project and will make myself available to assist at any stage of these proceedings.