

Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study

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Executive Summary

The Oceano Dunes SVRA is the second most visited destination in San Luis Obispo County with 3.4 million annual visitors in 2019. Following the decision by the California Coastal Commission in March 2021 to end off-road vehicle use at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA), the development and improvement of Oceano Dunes is vital to improving and growing the visitor experience while supporting the surrounding communities.

In an effort to plan the future of Oceano Dunes, Visit SLO CAL cooperatively funded an independent study of the Oceano Dunes SVRA, with funding support provided by surrounding municipalities – the City of Pismo Beach, the City of Grover Beach, the City of Arroyo Grande and the County of San Luis Obispo. Resonance Consultancy was engaged in October 2022 to quantify the direct and indirect economic impact of the Oceano Dunes SVRA, identify a range of future use scenarios to ensure the economic, environmental, recreational, and cultural stewardship, and develop potential recommendations for tourism, independent of the final outcome of off-road vehicular use.

To quantify the potential economic impacts of the closure of the Oceano Dunes SVRA, an economic and fiscal impact study was developed in partnership with Tourism Economics to quantify the impacts arising from Oceano Dunes visitor spending at local businesses and establishments throughout the regional economy. Spending by visitors to Oceano Dunes originating from outside SLO CAL generated a total economic impact of \$511.2 million in San Luis Obispo County in 2019 – \$336.9 million in direct spending by visitors to Oceano Dunes generated \$174.3 million in indirect and induced business sales.

The Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study provides 20 recommendations for consideration of the future development, management, and promotion of Oceano Dunes and surrounding communities – despite the outcome of current lawsuits. The recommendations are informed by research and local stakeholder input, including stakeholder interviews, a visioning workshop, and a stakeholder open house. Recommendations are organized across five main categories: Regional Stewardship, Infrastructure and Investment, Product and Experience Development, Park Management and Operations, and Marketing and Communications.

Regional Stewardship – Create an Oceano Dunes Stewardship Committee; Improve visitor monitoring, reporting, and data use; Provide capacity-building support for tourism workforce.

Infrastructure and Investment – Improve accessibility for all abilities; Increase alternative transportation options; Enhance and expand trail systems and walkways; Create and update directional and interpretive signage; Improve bathroom and campsite facilities and access; Upgrade Dunes welcome capacity; Diversify accommodations; Develop more event venues, restaurants, and retail spaces.

Product and Experience Development – Create unique OHV experiences; Diversify visitor activities and services; Create cultural heritage experiences; Expand eco-experiences and programs; Develop new equestrian facilities.

Park Management and Operations – Update the Park’s fee and reservation system; Strengthen Park management operations & programs.

Marketing and Communications – Improve promotion and education of Oceano Dunes; Develop responsible visitation resources.

All recommendations will require continued action and coordination amongst partners. The Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study provides implementation timelines, case studies, potential actions, and KPIs for consideration as a result of stakeholder engagement. The creation of an Oceano Dunes Stewardship Committee, comprised of diverse stakeholders, will provide collaborative leadership for the future development and management needs of Oceano Dunes and guide the advancement of recommendations. The future of the Oceano Dunes stewardship planning process, including additional research, priority-setting, and funding, will ultimately be decided by California State Parks and other state agencies, the County of San Luis Obispo, and the three surrounding municipalities, with approval from the California Coastal Commission.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

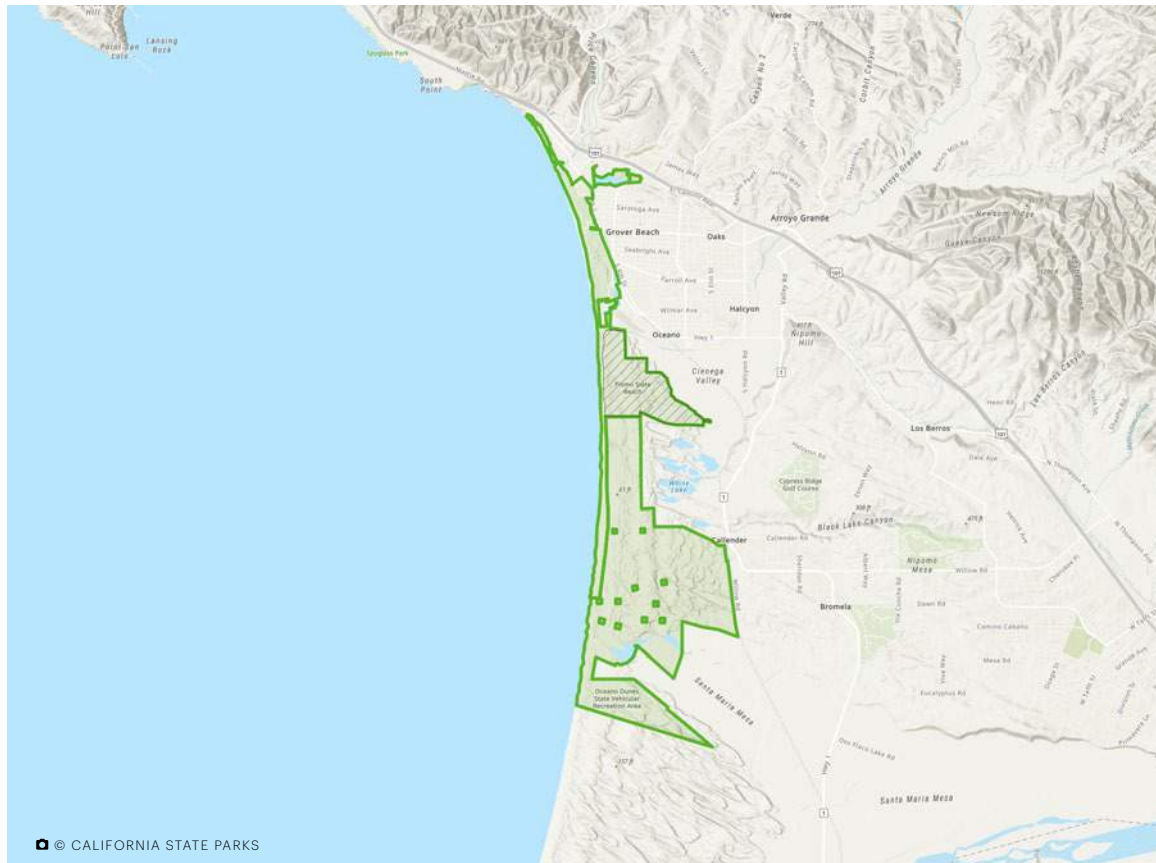
An overview of the context and the approach of the Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study.

Context

Tourism is a powerful force in the growth and development of the County of San Luis Obispo, developing employment opportunities for residents and driving community improvements. Positioned along the Central Coast between Pismo Beach and Oceano, Oceano Dunes is the most extensive coastal Dunes in California and a unique destination in the County. The Oceano Dunes SVRA is the second most visited destination in San Luis Obispo County with 3.4 million annual visitors. The development and improvement of Oceano Dunes are vital to improving and growing the visitor experience while supporting the surrounding communities.

The OHMVR Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation operates the 3,500-acre State Park which extends along eight miles of beach, shoreline, and Dunes, and some two miles inland, fronting the community of Oceano. The Park provides a mix of uses including beach day use, birdwatching, horseback riding, fishing, hiking, and driving off-highway vehicles (OHVs) on the beach and in the Dunes. The recreational park is the only remaining drive-on beach in the State of California. In March 2021, the California Coastal Commission ordered an end to off-road vehicle use at the Oceano Dunes State

Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) to protect eight miles of coastline in San Luis Obispo County. The Commission's off-road vehicle 'phase-out' decision generated multiple lawsuits, many of which have been consolidated and are ongoing. To date, court rulings have resulted in a partial lift of the off-road vehicle restrictions at the SVRA. The future of off-road vehicle use at Oceano Dunes will ultimately be decided by the courts—and final rulings could be years away.



In an effort to plan the future of Oceano Dunes, Visit SLO CAL cooperatively funded an independent study of the Oceano Dunes SVRA, with funding support provided by surrounding municipalities – the City of Pismo Beach, the City of Grover Beach, the City of Arroyo Grande and the County of San Luis Obispo. Resonance Consultancy (Resonance) was engaged in October 2022 to conduct an independent study to:

1. Quantify the direct and indirect economic impact of the Oceano Dunes SVRA
2. Identify a range of future use scenarios to ensure the economic, environmental, recreational, and cultural stewardship of the State Park
3. Develop potential recommendations for tourism in the Oceano Dunes SVRA, independent of the final outcome of off-road vehicular use.

The Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study provides potential stewardship recommendations for stakeholders to consider despite the outcome of current lawsuits based on an assessment of the area, stakeholder and community aspirations, and future opportunities. The future brings enormous opportunities for the stewardship development of tourism in the Oceano Dunes SVRA and San Luis Obispo County.

¹ The [Coastal Commission](#) is responsible for enforcing the state's Coastal Act which requires the state to maximize public recreation on coastal land "consistent with sound resources conservation principles."

² [Visit SLO CAL](#) is the countywide non-profit destination marketing and management organization (DMMO) for San Luis Obispo County (SLO CAL).

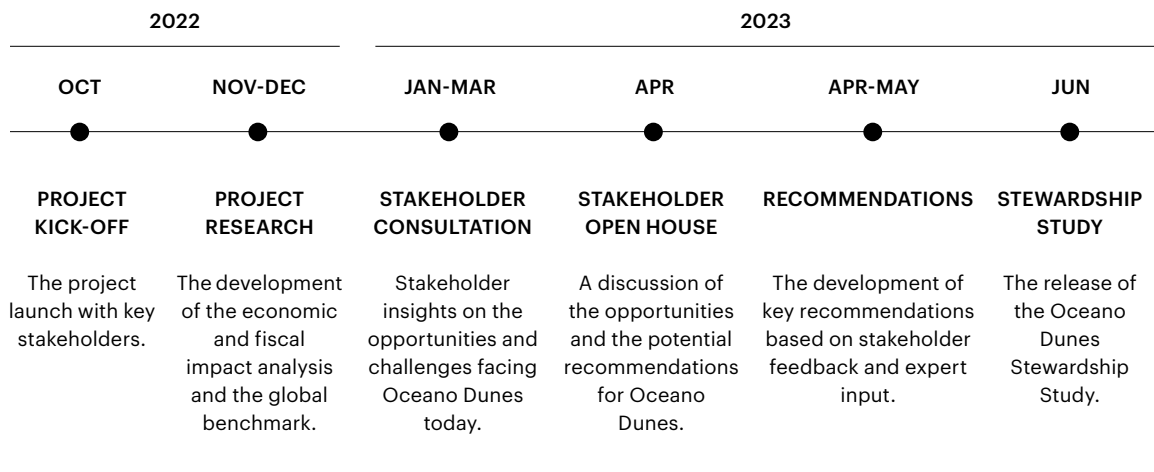
³ [Resonance](#) is a leading authority and advisor on economic development and sustainable tourism to the world's best destinations, cities and communities.

Approach

Resonance’s approach ensured a balance between environmental sensitivity, history in terms of past policies (maps, documents, agreements), recreational access and usage, community connection, culture, and economic viability. Resonance sought broad perspectives and opinions from many stakeholders about the complexities, challenges, priorities and potential future-use scenarios for the Oceano Dunes SVRA. The research process was unbiased, inclusive, and transparent. The development of the Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study was specifically designed to help stakeholders and community-based organizations articulate and share a clear vision for the future by:

- Creating an “apolitical” project environment with an independent and unbiased approach to build consensus around the trends/events impacting tourism in Oceano Dunes and the threats and opportunities they represent.
- Assessing and defining the destination management needs of Oceano Dunes, its tourist attractions, services, facilities, and transportation.
- Introducing several methods of input, collaboration, and communication with stakeholders to formulate, draft, and finalize potential recommendations.

The different phases of the project were executed between October 2022 and May 2023. Each phase helped identify and articulate the issues facing the destination and its residents; understand the complexities, nuances and priority of those issues; and use that information to identify potential scenarios for tourism in Oceano Dunes to consider and/or elect to move forward into the future. The development of recommendations was informed by stakeholder input, along with project-specific economic impact analysis and third-party research, to ensure an insights-based and data-driven approach.



BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The combination of site research and global benchmarks of other Dunes around the world informed potential opportunities and challenges to consider, as well as best practices in the management and use of environmentally sensitive areas.

International

- Atacama, Chile
- Badain Jaran Dunes, Mongolia/China
- Cabo San Lucas, Mexico
- Cerro Negro, Nicaragua
- Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Erg Chebbi, Morocco
- Great Dune of Pyla, France
- Huacachina Oasis, Peru
- Lençóis Maranhenses National Park, Brazil
- Libyan Desert
- Medanos de Coro National Park
- Mingsha Shan, China
- Mount Tempest, Australia
- Rub' al Khali, The Arabian Peninsula
- Samalayuca, Mexico
- Simpson Desert, Australia
- Sossusvlei Desert, Namibia
- Tottori Sakyu, Japan

United States

- Bruneau Sand Dunes State Park, Idaho
- Cape Cod National Seashore
- Coral Pink Sand Dunes, Utah
- Death Valley, California
- Dumont Dunes, California
- Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado
- Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, California
- Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, California
- Jockey's Ridge State Park, North Carolina
- Kelso Dunes, Mojave National Preserve
- Little Sahara State Park, Oklahoma
- Little Sahara Recreation Area, Utah
- Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes, Death Valley
- Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan
- White Sands National Monument, New Mexico

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STUDY

As part of the stewardship study, an economic and fiscal impact study was completed to quantify the economic impacts of visitor spending at Oceano Dunes. Resonance partnered with Tourism Economics to prepare a comprehensive model to quantify the impacts arising from Oceano Dunes visitor spending at local businesses and establishments throughout the regional economy. The results of this study show the scope of Oceano Dunes' ongoing impacts in terms of

spending by visitors to Oceano Dunes, as well as total economic impacts, including total business sales, employment, labor income, and fiscal (tax) impacts. The analysis presents estimates of visitor spending in 2019 in order to capture the economic impacts of Oceano Dunes prior to the effects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND OPEN HOUSE

To ensure an inclusive and transparent process, Resonance engaged with local and regional stakeholders and community leaders in order to identify and discuss challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for the sustainable management of tourism within the destination. Stakeholders included California State Parks, representatives from local government, tourism industry leaders, Northern Chumash tribal leaders, off-road enthusiasts, economic development sector leaders, local business owners (retail, SVRA concessionaires, etc.), environmental, equestrian, historical interests, and residents. As a cooperatively funded study, Visit SLO CAL acted as a neutral and third-party convener of stakeholders throughout the project.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

More than 40 stakeholders were invited to participate and provide their unique, individual perspectives, of which more than 30 individuals agreed to participate in one-on-one interviews. Stakeholders included the agencies that represent surrounding communities, cities, and county government, the interests of travel and tourism in the County, and the State Park. The stakeholder insights were summarized in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) framework.

WORKSHOP AND OPEN HOUSE

In February, stakeholders convened for a one-day in-person visioning workshop led by Resonance to put Oceano Dunes under a strategic microscope to create and discuss a variety of potential scenarios for the future of tourism in the destination. Key challenges, opportunities, and future considerations were identified as part of the process. Based on insights gleaned from the workshop, Resonance developed a series of potential recommendations for stakeholders to consider. All recommendations were presented as part of a stakeholder Open House held on April 19, 2023 for further feedback, comments, and prioritization. As a result, a total of 20 recommendations organized across five strategic areas were identified to guide the development, management, and marketing of Oceano Dunes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights gleaned as part of the research and engagement, a series of potential recommendations were developed with input from stakeholders in the following five categories: Regional Stewardship, Infrastructure and Investment, Product Experience and Development, Park Management and Operations, and Marketing and Communications. The 20 potential recommendations set forth are organized by suggested implementation timelines for stakeholder consideration.

CHAPTER 2

Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Oceano Dunes

A comprehensive model to quantify the impacts of Oceano Dunes visitor spending at local businesses and establishments throughout the regional economy.

Methodology

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF SPENDING: IMPLAN MODEL

The economic impacts of spending by visitors to Oceano Dunes originating from outside San Luis Obispo County were estimated using regional Input-Output (I-O) models based on customized IMPLAN (www.implan.com) models for the regional economy of San Luis Obispo County. IMPLAN is recognized as an industry-standard in local-level I-O models. An I-O model represents a profile of an economy by measuring the relationships among industries and consumers to track the flow of industry revenue to wages, profits, capital, taxes, and suppliers. The supply chain is traced as dollars flow through the economy, representing indirect impacts. The model also calculates the induced impacts of spending. Induced impacts represent benefits to the economy as incomes earned as a result of direct spending are spent in the local economy, generating additional sales, jobs, taxes, and income.



The modeling process aligns the direct expenditure measurements with the related sectors in the model (e.g. hotels, restaurants, retail, and recreation). The model traces the flow of these expenditures through the economy, and the inter-relationships between consumers and industries generate each level of impact. IMPLAN calculates three levels of impact – direct, indirect, and induced – for a broad set of indicators. These include the following:

- Business sales (also called gross output)
- Household income (including wages and benefits)
- Employment
- Federal taxes
- State and local taxes

The model is iteratively adjusted to balance the results with known industry measurements. IMPLAN is flexible, allowing for adjustments in coefficients. This ensures that the results of the model are consistent and reasonable compared with other sources of specific tourism sector employment and taxes.

OCEANO DUNES VISITORS

Mobile geolocation data was used to determine the total number and the origin of visitors to the Oceano Dunes SVRA. For the Oceano Dunes SVRA, Near data provided insights on the number of mobile devices that appeared/pinged in 2019, as well as the common evening location (CEL) zip code of each mobile device, which provided insights on the origin/residence zip code of each mobile device. Visitors to the Oceano Dunes SVRA are defined as visitors who visited the geographic area as part of their trip. The mobile geolocation data also shows cross-visitation between Oceano Dunes and surrounding areas.

Economic Impacts Of Visitor Spending

DIRECT IMPACT OF VISITOR SPENDING

Based on mobile geolocation data from Near, Oceano Dunes welcomed a total of 3.4 million visits in 2019, approximately 2.2 million visits (66.5%) originated from outside SLO CAL, while the remaining 1.1 million (33.5%) originated from within the county. The 2.2 million out-of-county visits represented approximately 30% of the total 7.6 million visits to the County of San Luis Obispo in 2019.

Nearly 85% of Oceano Dunes visitors who originated from outside SLO CAL also visited Pismo Beach during their stay in SLO CAL. Approximately 48% of Oceano Dunes visitors who originated from outside SLO CAL also visited Grover Beach during their stay in SLO CAL. Nearly 44% of Oceano Dunes visitors who originated from outside SLO CAL also visited Arroyo Grande during their stay in SLO CAL.

Based on Tourism Economics' previous research on the economic impact of tourism in San Luis Obispo County, Oceano Dunes originating from outside San Luis Obispo County spent an average of \$150 per visit. Based on this average, total spending by visitors originating from outside San Luis Obispo County, who visited Oceano Dunes as part of their trip amounted to \$336.9 million in 2019. More specifically, total spending by visitors originating from outside San Luis Obispo County, who only visited Oceano Dunes as part of their trip, represented \$50.5 million in 2019. The \$336.9 million in spending by the 2.2 million visitors originating from outside San Luis Obispo County was spread across a number of industries:

\$70.8 MILLION

on **food and beverage** (i.e. full-service restaurants, fast food, bars, food trucks)

\$64.0 MILLION

on **lodging** (i.e. hotels, short-term/vacation rentals, and other lodging)

\$57.3 MILLION

on **transportation** (i.e. taxis, buses, parking, public transportation, rideshare, gasoline)

\$53.9 MILLION

on **retail** (i.e. souvenirs, general merchandise, malls, local retailers)

\$53.9 MILLION

on **other purchases** (i.e. day use fees and other purchases and expenses)

\$37.1 MILLION

on **recreation and entertainment** (i.e. amusements, theaters, entertainment, and other recreation)

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VISITOR SPENDING

Spending by visitors to Oceano Dunes originating from outside SLO CAL generated a total economic impact of \$511.2 million in San Luis Obispo County in 2019. Based on an analysis of the inter-relationships between consumer expenditures and industries, the \$336.9 million in direct spending by visitors to Oceano Dunes generated \$174.3 million in indirect and induced business sales – \$83.5 million in indirect business sales and \$90.8 million in induced business sales – resulting in a total economic impact of \$511.2 million in San Luis Obispo County in 2019.

The total economic impact of \$511.2 million included \$128.5 million in total labor income, supporting more than 5,600 total jobs throughout the county in 2019, and generated \$31.8 million in state and local taxes in 2019 based on a detailed tax analysis.

⁶ *Near* collects data on the location of mobile devices for specified geographies.

⁷ Tourism Economics conducts quarterly visitation tracker models for SLO CAL and estimates that SLO CAL welcomed 7.6 million total visits in 2019.

⁸ Tourism Economics, 2018. "Economic Impact of Tourism in San Luis Obispo County, California"

CHAPTER 3

Oceano Dunes Assessment

The following assessment was established based on community engagement, all assets, issues, and future opportunities were either identified or informed by stakeholders.

OCEANO DUNES TODAY:

Key Assets and Issues

To better understand the state of the destination, interviews with more than 30 stakeholders informed the assessment. The primary purpose of these discussions was to identify participant opinions, aspirations and ideas for the future of Oceano Dunes. The stakeholder engagement was designed to identify the opportunities and the issues facing the destination and its residents; understand the complexities, nuances and priority of those issues; and use that information to articulate potential recommendations for tourism in Oceano Dunes to consider and/or elect to move forward into the future. Stakeholder insights are grouped between assets (strengths), issues (weaknesses), and opportunities by theme, and will serve as a basis for defining and setting forth key issues and opportunities.

KEY ASSETS (STRENGTHS)

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Accessibility	Access for all and affordable to all
Accommodation	Camping Short-term rentals in the surrounding communities
Activities	Diverse recreational destination Events and celebrations OHV access (Oceano Dunes SVRA)
Culture	Chumash heritage
Environment	Unique flora and fauna
Visitor Experience	Landmark experience in SLO CAL

KEY ISSUES (WEAKNESSES AND THREATS)

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Community	Traffic Limited development opportunities Lack of investment in the community
Environment	Preservation of the flora and fauna is at risk Air quality and dust concentration
Visitor Experience	Safety Over-tourism Limited resources to enforce park regulations Pollution and cleanliness

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Accommodation	<p>Allow more vacation rentals in the surrounding communities</p> <p>Glamping</p> <p>Hotel development in Grover Beach (Grover Beach Lodge) and Oceano Dunes</p>
Activities	<p>Activities to connect Oceano Beach, and Pismo Beach</p> <p>Recreational destination for adventure sports: horseback riding, surfing, fishing, kite, etc.</p> <p>More curated, off-road experience</p> <p>Oceano Dunes hiking trails</p> <p>Eco-adventure park</p> <p>Safari tours on Oceano Dunes</p> <p>Equestrian tourism</p> <p>Education: learn responsibility on Oceano Dunes</p> <p>Oso Flaco Lake eco-destination</p> <p>Environmentally friendly OHVs</p>
Accessibility	<p>More access points to the Dunes (Oso Flaco)</p> <p>Increase street parking on Pier Avenue, increase parking area at the end of Pier Avenue</p> <p>Boardwalk and ramp access to the beach</p>
Community	Affordable housing in surrounding communities
Connectivity	Bike trail connecting all five cities
Culture	Chumash-driven experiences, and protection of historic sites
Environment	Eco-center and protected area of interest
Visitor Experience	<p>Boardwalk from Grover Beach all the way to the Dunes</p> <p>Beach town, an end-point destination beach plaza and main street (restaurants, etc.), the gateway to the Dunes for pedestrians, connected to boardwalks</p> <p>Main street development</p>

OCEANO DUNES TOMORROW:

Key Implications and Opportunities

To explore potential recommendations for Oceano Dunes, Resonance identified a range of future use scenarios for compatible tourism in the Oceano Dunes area. The scenarios created were directional only to allow stakeholders to consider implications, opportunities, and potential recommendations for Oceano Dunes in each case and align on common initiatives shared by all three scenarios.

Scenario planning provides a strong foundation for decision-making in times of great uncertainty. It enables decision-makers to anticipate the future and design future-proof, yet flexible strategies by reducing complexity and adding dynamic capabilities to achieve long-term goals. To inform the process, three scenarios were developed and shared with stakeholders for consideration:

- A. New Normal: Limited Access** – Vehicular capacity is limited in Oceano Dunes.
- B. Continuation: Back To The Future** – Oceano Dunes is back to pre-pandemic capacity.
- C. Transformation: New Eco-Region** – Vehicular access is limited in most areas of Oceano Dunes and the SVRA is closed.

FUTURE SCENARIOS⁵

Scenario planning helps create stakeholders' consensus on the trends/events impacting tourism in Oceano Dunes and the threats and opportunities they represent. By understanding the different opportunities and challenges, the process includes a balance between environmental sensitivity, history in terms of past policies, recreational access and usage, community connection, culture, and economic viability.

NEW NORMAL: LIMITED-ACCESS

In 2019, Oceano Dunes received a record number of visitors. Today, vehicular access is limited and closely monitored by State Parks. The SVRA is reduced and fenced at the summit to minimize the impact of traffic on the surrounding flora and fauna – and electric-powered vehicles are now the norm. In fact, environmental measures in real time events influence the level of traffic and capacity. With a limited number of camping sites left for overnight visitors, camping in Oceano Dunes has become more exclusive, and reserved to California residents. As the clam capital of the world, Pismo Beach is growing as a beach town while Oceano and Arroyo Grande have become more residential, and only legacy tourism businesses have stayed open. Off-road aficionados have moved away from Oceano Dunes to larger vehicular recreation areas in surrounding states, and mostly international visitors seek a sand thrill while on their Californian trip.

CONTINUATION: BACK TO THE FUTURE

Oceano Dunes is back to full capacity after a recent court ruling, and attracts more than 3 million visitors every year. Traffic along Pier and Grand avenues is common every weekend as off-roaders ride on the Dunes and families gather. More people equals more businesses, but more of the same in this case. At the same time, Oceano and surrounding communities are ill-prepared for tourism and currently lack the infrastructure capacity or products to make people comfortable. Once an element of pride, the quality of life of residents is at risk.

CONTINUATION: BACK TO THE FUTURE

In this potential scenario, the SVRA is now closed and Oceano Dunes has become a State Natural Reserve. After the closure, the diversity of landscapes is celebrated by locals and visitors. Already recognized as a Natural Wonder of the World by Californians, it is on the path to be recognized by UNESCO. The types of activities have shifted from being motorized to lower-impact outdoor activities. New audiences – from researchers to cultural enthusiasts – flock to the Dunes and enjoy low-impact infrastructure to explore the Dunes. An integrated boardwalk now connects all coastal communities with access to different types of experiences and environments. Eventually, visitors have become more out-of-state, as the world recognizes the importance of Oceano Dunes.

⁵Please note that all scenarios are fictional, including data points.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

In response to the implications of each scenario, future opportunities were identified across all three scenarios under five focus areas. To determine these focus areas, Resonance analyzed all stakeholder input and identified common themes and shared concerns. Carefully categorizing and grouping these ideas based on their similarities through a systematic approach, allowed us to

ensure recommendations address the most significant and pressing issues faced by the Park and surrounding communities, setting a solid foundation for sustainable growth and long-term responsible management and promotion of the destination. For additional details, the implications, opportunities, and initial recommendations are listed in the appendix.

Regional Stewardship	Infrastructure and Investment	Product and Experience Development	Park Management and Operations	Marketing and Communications
Stewardship Committee	Points of entry upgrade	OHV products and services	Fee and reservation system	Regional marketing plan
Pool resources	Traffic infrastructure	Recreation activities and services	State Park management operations	New target markets
Visitor monitoring and data	Alternative transportation options	Cultural heritage experiences	Concessionaires agreements/ management procedures	Responsible visitation resources
Park advocacy	New type of accommodations	Education programs and ecotourism experiences	Environmental conservation plans and programs	Community engagement
	New trail systems and walkways	Business and workforce support		
	Event venues, restaurants, and retail spaces			
	Wayfinding and interpretive signage			
	Bathroom and campsite facilities			
	ADA accessibility			
	Visitor welcome infrastructure			

CHAPTER 4

Stewardship Recommendations

The key stewardship recommendations to plan the future development, management, and promotion of Oceano Dunes and surrounding communities.

Stewardship Recommendations

The Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study sets forth 20 recommendations for consideration of the future development, management, and promotion of Oceano Dunes and surrounding communities. The recommendations are informed by research and local stakeholder input, and are organized across five main categories: Regional Stewardship, Infrastructure and Investment, Product and Experience Development, Park Management and Operations, and Marketing and Communications.

Suggested implementation timelines are also included. Short-term (1-3 years) recommendations have the strongest stakeholder support and will provide a stabilizing foundation for regional collaboration to implement longer-term recommendations. Medium (4-6 years) and

long-term (7+ years) recommendations are more complex and more susceptible to changes based on the court's determinations and factors such as government priorities and funding, requiring even greater collaboration by key stakeholders to actualize. Recognizing that most recommendations will take many years to actualize and will require continued action, the suggested timelines presented are intended to provide strategic guidance for when initial actions to implement recommendations should occur. Potential actions, KPIs, and case studies inform each recommendation, which can be taken forward by local stakeholders as a collaborative effort to address the future management, economic, social, and environmental needs of Oceano Dunes and surrounding communities.

The future of the Oceano Dunes stewardship planning process, including additional research, priority-setting and funding, will ultimately be decided by California State Parks and other state agencies, the County of San Luis Obispo, and the three surrounding municipalities, with approval from the California Coastal Commission. Recommendations will require a collective approach between partners and in some cases public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships play a crucial role in destination stewardship and will be essential to advance the presented recommendations. These partnerships

involve collaboration and cooperation between public entities (such as government agencies and local authorities) and private organizations (such as businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups) to jointly work towards balanced management and development of the destination. The role of public-private partnerships in advancing the following stewardship recommendations may include resource sharing, planning and decision-making, funding, capacity building, sustainable development, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation.



CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE
Regional Stewardship	RS.1 Create an Oceano Dunes Stewardship Committee RS.2 Improve visitor monitoring, reporting and data use RS.3 Provide capacity building support for tourism workforce	Short Short Medium
Infrastructure and Investment	II.1 Improve accessibility for all abilities II.2 Increase alternative transportation options II.3 Enhance and expand trail systems and walkways II.4 Create and update directional and interpretive signage II.5 Improve bathroom and campsite facilities and access II.6 Upgrade Dunes welcome capacity II.7 Diversify accommodations II.8 Develop more event venues, restaurants, and retail spaces	Short Medium Medium Medium Medium Med/Long Long Long
Product and Experience Development	ED.1 Develop unique OHV experiences ED.2 Diversify visitor activities and services ED.3 Extend cultural heritage experiences ED.4 Expand eco-experiences and programs ED.5 Develop new equestrian facilities	Short Short Short Short Medium
Park Management and Operations	PM.1 Update the Park's fee and reservation system PM.2 Strengthen Park management operations & programs	Short Short
Marketing and Communications	MC.1 Improve promotion and education of Oceano Dunes MC.2 Develop responsible visitation resources	Short Short

Regional Stewardship

Destination stewardship creates a balanced approach to tourism development, management and promotion by minimizing negative impacts on natural and cultural resources while enhancing the benefits to local communities and visitors. It involves actively managing and preserving a destination's natural, cultural, and social attributes while also meeting visitors' needs and expectations. The aim is to maintain the destination's authenticity and uniqueness while also ensuring that it remains attractive and accessible for future generations of visitors. Destination stewardship for the Oceano Dunes State Park and surrounding communities will involve a collaborative effort between government agencies, tourism operators, local communities, cultural/historic leaders, and visitors to balance the economic, social, and environmental needs and interests of the destination.

RS.1: CREATE AN OCEANO DUNES STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Creating an Oceano Dunes Stewardship Committee would provide a new framework for stakeholders to have collective responsibilities to support the long-term management of Oceano Dunes, ensuring that its natural resources are preserved for future generations while balancing the needs and interests of local businesses, residents and visitors. Participating stakeholders expressed strong support for the creation of a stewardship committee.

Oceano Dunes previously had a management committee, the Oceano Dunes District Advisory Committee (DAG), between 2001 and 2017 to manage the Oceano Dunes SVRA on issues related to the Park's management and operations. The DAG comprised 12 members, including representatives from various stakeholder groups such as environmental organizations, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, local business owners,

and community members. The purpose of the DAG was to provide advice and recommendations to California State Parks. Unfortunately, the DAG dissolved in 2017 due to disagreements over the management of the Park.

Although many of the circumstances that resulted in the dissolution of the DAG are still present today, through this project's engagement process, diverse stakeholders expressed support for revitalizing a working group in the form of a Stewardship Committee for Oceano Dunes. As seen in this report, numerous opportunities for regional collaborations can be implemented within the next 1-3 years, regardless of the court's determinations. Revitalizing a collective leadership working group will give the region the most robust foundation to implement projects and build local capacity.



The purpose of the Stewardship Committee for Oceano Dunes would be to provide collaborative leadership for the future development and management needs of Oceano Dunes and to guide the advancement of recommendations presented in this report. It would be tasked with long-term consensus-building and prioritization of future actions. Functions of the committee may include overseeing the development, implementation, and management of plans for the Park, advocating for Park and regional development needs, pooling resources and fundraising for new projects, as well as maintaining open and transparent communications and engagement with residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders.

To ensure adequate representation and diverse perspectives, the committee should include stakeholders from various backgrounds, such as California State Parks management, local government officials, environmental organizations, park users, native tribal leaders and residents, and representatives from relevant industries such as tourism, economic development and off-road vehicle suppliers. The committee members should have appropriate expertise and experience in environmental science, resource management, recreation management, law enforcement, and public outreach.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Convene important stakeholders to discuss and determine which organization is most appropriate to oversee and administer the Stewardship Committee.
- Identify financial resources needed and potential funding sources for the committee.
- Develop a clear mission and goals for the Stewardship Committee.
- Identify and invite diverse stakeholders to be on the committee.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of committee members.
- Establish regular meeting schedules that allow for effective communication and collaboration.
- Develop a plan of action that outlines the steps required to achieve the committee's goals; the plan should be regularly reviewed and updated as required.
- Consider establishing sub-committees to focus on specific issues or projects.
- Develop communication strategies to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about the committee's activities and progress. Communication strategies may include newsletters, social media updates, and regular meetings with stakeholders.
- Explore opportunities to pool resources and fundraise for new projects. This may include applying for grants, soliciting donations from local businesses, and exploring partnerships with other organizations.
- Advocate for the needs of the Park and the surrounding region. This may include lobbying for funding or policy changes that support the committee's goals.
- Maintain open and transparent communication with residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders regularly to ensure that their perspectives are heard and to build support for the committee's activities.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many stakeholders from diverse groups and backgrounds have been represented on the committee to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Oceano Dunes?
- How effectively has the committee been able to facilitate communication and collaboration between stakeholders in the community and local officials?
- What percentage of park management decisions have been informed by recommendations from the committee?
- How effectively has the committee addressed and resolved Oceano Dunes' management and use conflicts?
- What is the level of satisfaction of stakeholders and the community with the committee's work regarding transparency, accountability, and effectiveness?
- What measurable improvements have been achieved in the management of Oceano Dunes and the surrounding community since the committee's creation?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are collaborating on destination stewardship:

- [Hood-Willamette Resource Advisory Committee](#)
- [Oregon North Coast Tourism Management Network](#)
- [San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Advisory Committee](#)

RS.2: IMPROVE VISITOR MONITORING, REPORTING AND DATA USE

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Improving visitation data monitoring, reporting, and use are crucial elements for destination stewardship of Oceano Dunes and the surrounding communities. Accurate and up-to-date data on visitation patterns can provide valuable insights into how the Park is being used and impacting the surrounding environment and communities. By improving data monitoring, park managers and local officials can make more informed decisions about how to manage and promote the Park in a sustainable and beneficial way for all stakeholders.

Overall, improving visitation data monitoring, reporting, and use is critical to effective destination stewardship. For example, many destinations, especially gateway communities to natural areas, have created online dashboards to provide transparent reporting on visitor data more effectively. This was particularly helpful during the pandemic and in the years since, given the unpredictable fluctuations in visitation.



Participating stakeholders support a new approach to visitor data collection, analysis, and reporting to improve the overall management and promotion of the Dunes. Much data is already being collected and reported on by Visit SLO CAL, State Parks, the City of Pismo Beach, the City of Grover Beach, the City of Arroyo Grande, the County of San Luis Obispo, and local businesses, while other information is less frequently or not currently monitored. There is also no centralized location where stakeholders can find all visitor-related data reporting for Oceano Dunes.

The Oceano Dunes Stewardship Committee should lead the process of creating an effective monitoring and reporting framework that meets the specific needs of the Park and nearby communities. General types of visitor data that should be improved or monitored include visitor demographics, traffic patterns, and economic impact data. State Parks should continue to report on environmental impact data and work with Visit SLO CAL to refine visitor counts and origin. Ideally, a report is produced at least once a year, with an eventual goal of reporting every quarter. Suppose there is limited capacity and funding to monitor and report on all desired indicators at the onset. In that case, it is recommended for the group to start with what they have and create a good monitoring and reporting process with existing accessible data. More indicators can be added to the monitoring framework and live data collection implemented when stakeholders are ready and resources are available.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Consider creating a sub-committee within the Stewardship Committee to focus on data monitoring and reporting.
- Conduct an assessment of what data is already being collected, analyzed and reported on (and by whom), and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Prioritize the specific indicators and metrics to be monitored and reported based on the needs of the park and surrounding communities and data availability.
- Create a centralized location, such as an online dashboard, where all visitor-related data is reported and accessible to stakeholders.
- Develop a data collection system that is efficient, accurate, and standardized.
- Hire or train staff to collect and analyze data, ensuring they have the expertise and resources to do so effectively.
- Create a system for regular reporting and analysis of visitor data.
- Engage with stakeholders to ensure that the data being collected and reported is relevant and useful to them and to foster collaboration and buy-in for destination stewardship efforts.
- Continuously review and update the monitoring and reporting framework as needed based on feedback from stakeholders, changes in visitor behavior or preferences, and new technology or methods for data collection and analysis

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many visitor data points are collected per day/week/month/year?
- How is the data collected (e.g., automated counters, cell phone geolocation, surveys)?
- What is the percentage of visitors and residents participating in data collection efforts?
- How frequently is data analyzed and reported?
- How is the visitor data used to inform management decisions?
- How open and honest do local stakeholders perceive the reporting of visitor data to be?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are conducting regional data monitoring and reporting:

- [Destination British Columbia's Tourism Industry Dashboard](#)
- [Zion National Park Visitor Monitoring System](#)
- [Queenstown, New Zealand Destination Management](#)
- [Sedona, Arizona Sustainable Tourism Plan Monitoring](#)

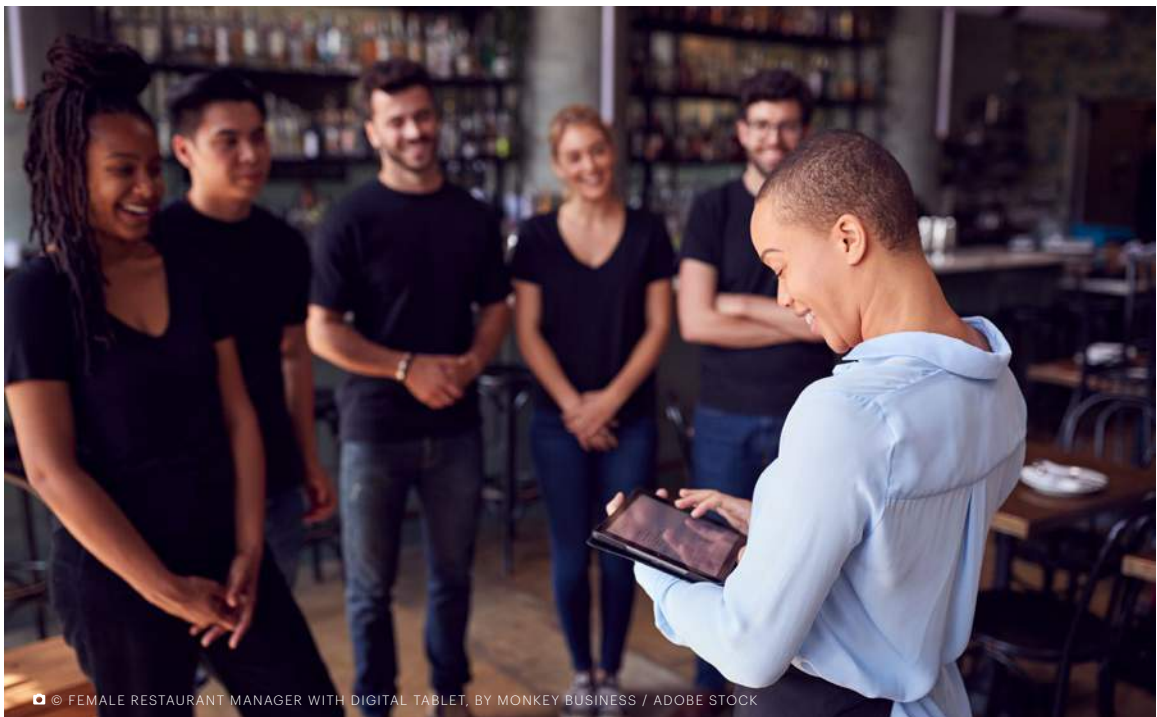
RS.3: PROVIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING SUPPORT FOR THE TOURISM WORKFORCE

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM-TERM

Before the pandemic, Visit SLO CAL completed its 2050 Destination Management Strategy (DMS) known as Experience SLO CAL 2050 (ESC 2050), which included several recommendations to address workforce challenges. The pandemic exacerbated local tourism workforce challenges, including talent attraction, retention, and customer service. Tourism businesses in neighboring communities and the Park need more staff capacity to provide exceptional experiences and manage the impacts of visitors. Regional stakeholders should continue collaborating on projects to address tourism workforce challenges. The development of a Workforce Development Study is already underway by Visit SLO CAL with the plan to develop a workforce strategy and roadmap by 2025.

SLO CAL's new certified, custom online customer service learning program, "SLO CAL Welcome" designed specifically for the SLO CAL tourism industry, is a valuable tool for employers to add to their workforce development resources. This self-paced program is designed to provide customer-facing employees or volunteers in SLO CAL's tourism and hospitality industry with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to be experts in customer service.

It is also recommended that Visit SLO CAL launch and lead a countywide incubator and network for SLO CAL visitor experience startups. Businesses have considerable potential to provide new experiences in the Dunes, including cultural heritage, recreation, and educational experiences.



However, there is a high barrier to entry for businesses to develop, promote and provide new visitor experiences. The incubator will bring together Visit SLO CAL, tourism industry experts, Cal Poly's Department of Experience Industry Management, and participating startups to co-create unique and inventive new experiences for SLO CAL visitors. The proposed incubator program would provide businesses and individuals with the tools and resources to develop innovative brands, products, services, events, and activities in and around Oceano Dunes.

Talent attraction, development, and careers were also presented as an area of opportunity within the Experience SLO CAL 2050. As part of Visit SLO CAL's Strategic Direction 2026 Plan, a Tourism Workforce Development Strategy will be created to help advance future tourism employment. Visit SLO CAL will partner with local and regional workforce development organizations to create more interest for Jr High and High School students in pursuing careers in the tourism industry. Additionally, Visit SLO CAL launched a \$75,000 endowment scholarship fund in 2023 to support individuals seeking careers in travel and tourism.

We recommend that Visit SLO CAL and industry partners continue to monitor and report on sector-specific employment data (see RS.2) to enable business and tourism organization leaders to make data-informed decisions to improve workforce conditions in SLO CAL. Visit SLO CAL should also continue to work with industry leaders and the groups mentioned above to promote the scholarship fund, training programs and new workforce development opportunities geared toward individuals who are currently or planning to work in the Park, or provide experiences and services in park-adjacent communities.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Consider creating a sub-committee within the Stewardship Committee to focus on workforce needs.
- Encourage tourism businesses to participate in SLO CAL's "SLO CAL Welcome" program. Identify potential partners, resources, and leadership capacity to establish a countywide experience startup incubator and network for SLO CAL.
- Promoting the scholarship fund specifically for individuals who are currently or plan to work in and near the Park.
- Collaborate with community colleges and universities to develop relevant degree programs and coursework.
- Partner with local organizations to promote and provide internships and job shadowing opportunities for students and young professionals interested in the industry.
- Work with industry leaders to develop a regional job board or placement service for travel and tourism-related careers.
- Advance Visit SLO CAL's Tourism Workforce Development Strategy.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many employees or volunteers have enrolled in the “SLO CAL Welcome” program?
- What is the completion rate of the “SLO CAL Welcome” program?
- Have customer service scores or ratings improved since the program was launched?
- How many startups are participating in the incubator?
- How many new visitor experiences have been created and launched?
- What is the revenue generated by new visitor experiences?
- What is the customer satisfaction rating or feedback on new visitor experiences?
- Have workforce conditions improved based on data-informed decisions?
- How many individuals have been connected to businesses and career opportunities?
- How many scholarships have been awarded, and what is the impact on individuals pursuing a travel & tourism-focused pathway?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are conducting regional data monitoring and reporting:

- [The Tourism Innovation Lab](#)
- [Nova Scotia Experience Development Program](#)
- [Hawaii Tourism Authority Workforce Development Programs](#)
- [Park City Chamber Workforce Development Services](#)

Infrastructure And Investment

As the second most visited destination in the county, infrastructure investments in the Park and surrounding areas are essential to provide necessary facilities and services for visitors, enhance the overall tourism experience, and ensure sustainable growth in the long term. The assessment revealed capacity gaps and identified short and long-term infrastructure improvements to consider to increase overall capacity management, accessibility, safety, and security, as well as the supply of accommodation and amenities.

II.1: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL ABILITIES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Accessibility of the Oceano Dunes SVRA is a shared value by the community and visitors that aligns with State Parks' commitment to inclusivity and providing equal opportunities for all visitors. While the Park is accessible by car, State Parks should evaluate current accessibility standards across all facilities to identify improvement areas and funding opportunities to support upgrade programs under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The North Beach campground facility improvements project in the Public Works Plan included ADA-compliant standards for the new entrance kiosk at the North Beach.

In Oceano Dunes, accessibility for all starts with accessible parking, featuring designated accessible parking spaces close to park entrances, with appropriate signage and markings, while accessible pathways throughout and to the Park will improve the experience for wheelchairs and other mobility devices. To extend accessibility, all facilities, such as visitor centers, restrooms, picnic areas, and campsites, should be accessible to people with disabilities. This includes providing ramps, elevators, or lifts where necessary, widening doorways, installing accessible signage, and ensuring that facilities have appropriate accessibility features.





With a number of recreational opportunities available in the Park, State Parks should train park staff on ADA requirements and disability awareness to better understand how to assist visitors with disabilities and address their specific needs. The development of new trails should be made accessible to all when possible, and if not, ensure all trails are clearly marked as accessible based on their difficulty level. Accessible recreational access could be improved by introducing adaptive recreational programs and providing equipment, such as beach wheelchairs, in collaboration with partners and with disability advocacy organizations.

When implemented, accessibility features should be included as part of all assets and communications on Oceano Dunes to raise awareness about the park's accessibility features, amenities, and services.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Evaluate current accessibility standards to identify improvement areas and ensure that all facilities meet accessibility standards to cater to individuals with disabilities.
- Identify funding opportunities to support accessibility improvements.
- Develop or modify existing trails and facilities to make them accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Train park staff on ADA requirements and disability awareness.
- Ensure that all signage adheres to the accessibility guidelines outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Prioritize and include universal access in the development of new park amenities, especially between trailhead parking areas and new programmed buildings.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many designated accessible parking spaces have been created near park entrances, and what is the utilization rate of these spaces?
- How many facilities, such as visitor centers, restrooms, picnic areas, and campsites, have been made fully accessible to people with disabilities?
- How many accessible signage installations have been completed across the park to provide clear guidance for visitors with disabilities?
- What is the satisfaction level of visitors with disabilities regarding the accessibility improvements implemented within the park's facilities and amenities?
- How many park staff members have received training on ADA requirements and disability awareness?
- What is the number of new accessible pathways and trails developed within the park, and what is their utilization rate?
- How many adaptive recreational programs have been introduced, and what is the participation rate of visitors with disabilities in these programs?
- What is the frequency of availability and utilization of equipment such as beach wheelchairs for visitors with disabilities?
- How effectively are accessibility features and amenities communicated to visitors through assets and park communications, and what is the level of awareness among visitors about the park's accessibility?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are implementing accessibility initiatives:

- [Indiana Dunes National Park Dune Succession Trail](#)
- [Greece Beach Accessibility](#)
- [Miami Beach, Florida Wheelchair Accessibility](#)
- [Oregon Accessible Adventures for All](#)

II.2: INCREASE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM-TERM

To improve access to Oceano Dunes and reduce congestion in surrounding areas, participating stakeholders identified alternative transportation initiatives. Today, the Amtrak Transit Station acts as a regional multi-mode transportation hub, connecting Oceano Dunes and surrounding communities to the coastal rail line. Recent investments in the station improved safety and convenience for regional passengers.

Local authorities have the opportunity to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and from Oceano Dunes to better connect visitors and residents to surrounding communities. Such improvements along Grand Avenue and Pier Avenue will assist pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian access to existing trails.

Local authorities and transportation should work together to define public transportation capacity and demand between the different communities and Oceano Dunes. To grow geographic dispersion within the Park, State Parks should evaluate the feasibility of a shuttle service between one of the main entrance points (Grand Avenue/Pier Avenue) and Oso Flaco.

When planning future parking improvements, the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations should be considered to accommodate visitors with electric cars, as well as the development of designated carpooling areas or pick-up/drop-off points to improve traffic flow.





POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Establish a bicycle rental program in partnership with local communities to provide visitors with the opportunity to rent bicycles for exploration and transportation in the area.
- Develop well-maintained pedestrian and bike paths connecting to each entry point to encourage walking and cycling.
- Implement a shuttle service within the park to transport visitors to different points of interest.
- Encourage visitors to carpool or use ride-sharing services to reach the park by planning designated carpooling areas or pick-up/drop-off points.
- Install electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to accommodate visitors who drive electric cars.
- Collaborate with local public transportation agencies to improve access to the Dunes and explore the feasibility of bundled transportation tickets for park visitors using public transportation.
- Communicate about the alternative transportation options available to connect from surrounding communities to points of entry.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many pedestrian and bicycle access improvements have been implemented along Grand Avenue, and what is their impact on enhancing connectivity between Oceano Dunes and surrounding communities?
- What is the utilization rate of the pedestrian and bike paths connecting to each entry point at Oceano Dunes?
- How many visitors have utilized the shuttle service within the park to access different points of interest, and what is the satisfaction level of the shuttle service?
- What is the percentage increase in the use of bicycles through the bicycle rental program in partnership with local communities?
- What is the utilization rate of designated carpooling areas or pick-up/drop-off points at Oceano Dunes, and how have they contributed to improving traffic flow and reducing congestion?
- How many EV charging stations have been installed within parking areas, and what is their utilization rate?
- What is the percentage increase in the use of public transportation to access Oceano Dunes through collaboration with local public transportation agencies?
- What is the level of awareness among visitors about the alternative transportation options available to access Oceano Dunes, and what is their perception of the communication efforts?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are implementing alternative transportation options:

- [City and County of Honolulu Sustainable Transportation](#)
- [Charleston Improved Transportation Plan](#)
- [Traverse City, Michigan Mobility Action Plan](#)

II.3: ENHANCE AND EXPAND TRAIL SYSTEMS AND WALKWAYS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM-TERM

A park's trail system is the backbone of all interpretation and recreation. They enable individuals and communities to appreciate and learn about natural and cultural heritage while fostering environmental awareness and providing economic benefits by attracting visitors and supporting local businesses, while also providing spaces for relaxation and mental rejuvenation. Overall, trails play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life in communities, providing a platform for outdoor enjoyment, education, and preservation of natural resources.

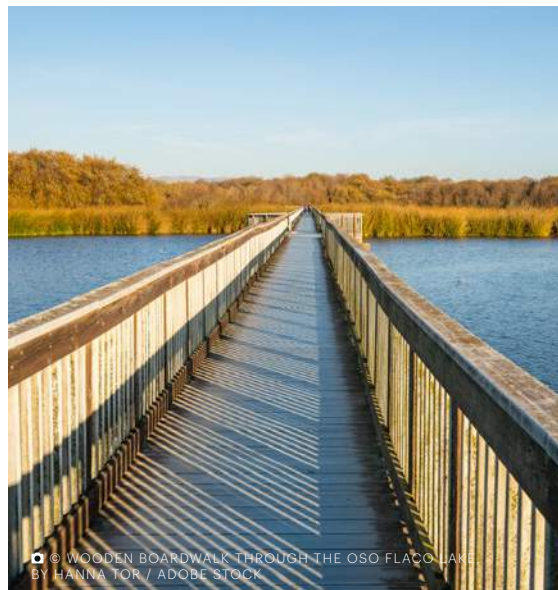
Park users have expressed a desire for more kinds of trails within and expanding from the park. Depending on the community, there are walkways and trails connecting to existing entrances to the Dunes. There are opportunities to enhance existing trails and walkways, as well as develop new trails to create more connectivity to adjacent communities and improve how visitors and residents experience and understand the natural ecosystems of the park.

Trail network enhancements provide greater diversity for walkers and bicyclists of all abilities, and all trails and walkways and facilities should be ADA accessible. Ensuring trail expansion or development initiatives prioritize environmental conservation and follow sustainable practices, will help to minimize the impact on sensitive habitats and ecosystems.

All existing trail systems within and near the Dunes should be assessed to determine areas for improvement, expansion, or new trails. A development plan should be created based on assessment results to outline all infrastructure opportunities, prioritized by what enhancements or developments are most important.

To enhance trail systems in the area, several key measures can be implemented. First, installing well-maintained signposts, trail markers, and information boards along the trails would provide clear directions, safety guidelines, and valuable information about the local flora, fauna, and history. Secondly, constructing durable footbridges or boardwalks in vulnerable areas would protect against erosion and safeguard delicate ecosystems like wetlands. Additionally, strategically located rest areas equipped with seating, shade, and trash receptacles would improve visitor comfort and encourage longer exploration.

To ensure safety for both visitors and residents, it is important to implement appropriate measures. Regular maintenance and inspections should be conducted to identify and address any potential hazards such as loose rocks, fallen trees, or unstable terrain. Signage indicating potential



© WOODEN BOARDWALK THROUGH THE OSO FLACO LAKE
BY HANNA TOR / ADOBE STOCK

dangers, such as steep slopes or high-tide areas, should be placed to inform visitors and advise caution. Furthermore, collaborating with local authorities to develop an emergency response plan would ensure timely assistance in case of accidents or emergencies.

Engaging the community is crucial for the success of the trail systems. Engaging stakeholders like local authorities, park management, environmental organizations, and community members can provide valuable insights and expertise. Community events, guided walks, and workshops can be organized to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the Dunes and the benefits of outdoor activities. Establishing partnerships with local schools, environmental organizations, and volunteer groups would involve the community in the maintenance, clean-up, and restoration efforts of the trail systems. Promoting responsible outdoor behavior through educational materials and campaigns, emphasizing the principles of Leave No Trace, and encouraging respect for the environment and wildlife, would further enhance the overall experience.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct a thorough evaluation of the current trail systems within the park to identify areas for improvement, expansion, and potential new trails.
- Identify and designate additional areas suitable for new trails to provide a wider range of options for pedestrians.
- Collaborate with environmental experts to ensure the preservation of sensitive habitats and wildlife corridors while designing new trails.
- Connect existing trails and create a comprehensive network to facilitate easy navigation and improve overall user experience.
- Provide strategically located rest areas and points of interest with seating, shade, and information to enhance visitor comfort and encourage longer exploration.
- Allocate resources and establish regular maintenance schedules to ensure existing trails are well-maintained, safe, and accessible for visitors.
- Assess the accessibility of existing trails and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Install informative and engaging interpretive signage along the trails to provide educational information; develop educational programs or guided tours.
- Implement safety measures, such as clear signage, emergency contact information, and designated rest areas along the trails.
- Educate visitors about responsible trail usage, including Leave No Trace principles.
- Seek feedback from park visitors and the local community on trail experiences, preferences, and suggestions for improvement.
- Explore partnerships, grants, and fundraising opportunities to secure sustainable funding for trail enhancement and expansion projects.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many trails and walkways have been made ADA accessible?
- How many new trails have been developed or existing trails expanded?
- What is the increase in connectivity between the park and adjacent communities?
- What are the diversity of trail types and difficulty levels offered to walkers and bicyclists?
- What measures have been taken to minimize the environmental impact of trails?
- What is the satisfaction level of visitors and residents of the new trail and system?
- How many signposts, trail markers, and information boards have been installed?
- What is the overall visitor satisfaction with the provided amenities along the trails?
- How many safety hazards have been identified and addressed?
- What is the level of awareness and understanding among visitors and residents about the importance of preserving the Dunes and engaging in responsible outdoor behavior?
- How many community events, guided walks, and workshops have been organized to promote awareness and involvement in trail maintenance and preservation efforts?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are implementing immersive trail systems and walkways:

- [Perry Lakes Park, Marion, AL](#)
- [Path of Perspectives, Innsbruck, Austria](#)
- [Cape Lookout State Park, OR](#)

II.4: CREATE AND UPDATE DIRECTIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM-TERM

Oceano Dunes is renowned for its diverse ecosystems, scenic beauty, and rich cultural heritage. However, inadequate or outdated signage can often lead to confusion among visitors, compromising their safety and impairing their ability to appreciate the unique features and historical significance of the parks.

Stakeholders acknowledged the opportunity and importance to invest in more wayfinding and interpretive signage to better inform visitors about Oceano Dunes. By investing in high-quality directional and interpretive signage, California State Parks can create a more welcoming and informative environment for visitors, fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural and cultural wonders they encompass. Such improvements

would enhance the overall visitor experience by providing valuable information to educate, engage, and inform people about the significance, history, and context of different areas and specific points of interest.

Interpretive signage would serve as an educational tool, offering opportunities for learning and expanding knowledge. It would help visitors gain a deeper understanding of natural, cultural, or historical resources and foster appreciation and stewardship. By highlighting the importance of natural and cultural resources, interpretive signage would also raise awareness about conservation and preservation efforts, including information on flora and fauna, historical landmarks, indigenous peoples, and any other



relevant topics. It would provide a platform to tell stories, share narratives, and connect people to the history, culture, and significance of Oceano Dunes. State Parks should ensure that the signage guidelines incorporate accessibility standards, and emphasize consistency in color, typography, and symbols to assist visitors in navigating the parks efficiently. Signage should be used to promote responsible visitation information such as Leave No Trace Principles and other local guidelines (see recommendation MC.2). To engage with diverse visitor demographics, the use of interactive maps, digital displays, or QR codes should also be considered to provide real-time information and updates.

As Oceano Dunes attracts a diverse range of visitors and is one of the most visited places in the county for international visitors, it is essential to provide clear and accessible navigation assistance to accommodate their needs effectively. By providing clear directions and information in multiple languages, visitors will be able to easily navigate through the Park regardless of their language proficiency, which will also enhance safety, inclusivity, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Initiate an assessment of existing signage to evaluate the condition, legibility, visibility, accuracy, accessibility and compliance of directional and interpretive signs.
- Identify areas that require immediate attention and prioritize them based on their impact on visitor experience and safety.
- Update standardized design guidelines for directional and interpretive signage in collaboration with local environmental and cultural experts.
- Replace/install clear and concise directional signage at key park entrances, major intersections, and trailheads.
- Expand the interpretive signage throughout the parks to enhance visitors' understanding of natural and cultural resources.
- Ensure that all signage adheres to the accessibility guidelines outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Identify the languages that are most commonly spoken by visitors or the ones most relevant to future target audiences and create integrate translation with existing and new wayfinding systems.
- Explore potential partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and philanthropic foundations to fund signage projects.
- Implement a regular maintenance schedule to ensure that signage remains in good condition and is updated as needed.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How satisfied are park visitors with the new signage in terms of clarity, usefulness, and aesthetics?
- Are visitors able to navigate the parks more easily and efficiently with the new directional signage?
- How effectively do visitors engage with and understand the park's natural and cultural resources through the interpretive signage?
- Have there been fewer safety incidents, accidents, injuries, or search and rescue operations attributed to improved signage?
- Does the signage meet accessibility guidelines outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensuring equal access for visitors with disabilities?
- What is the impact of the improved signage on visitor spending patterns, park attendance, length of stay, and revenue from interpretive programs or merchandise sales?
- What feedback do park staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders provide regarding the effectiveness of the signage in enhancing visitor experiences and achieving park management goals?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are implementing interpretive signage:

- [Baruwei Loop in Nimiluk National Park, Australia](#)
- [Great Smoky Mountains National Park Visitor Engagement to Improve Signage](#)
- [Livingston County, New York Wayfinding Initiative](#)

II.5: IMPROVE BATHROOM AND CAMPSITE FACILITIES AND ACCESS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM-TERM

Providing well-maintained bathroom and campsite facilities ensures that visitors have a cleaner, safer, and more enjoyable experience overall. Adequate bathroom facilities help maintain hygiene standards within the Park and prevent unsanitary conditions, such as improper waste disposal, which can lead to environmental contamination and health hazards.

Upgrades to existing campgrounds are currently underway, however, stakeholders indicated there are more opportunities to improve or develop new bathroom and visitor facilities in and near the park. All campsite and bathroom facilities should be ADA-approved and reflect a design that is harmonious with the surrounding natural

ecosystem. Wherever possible, enhancements should be measured by sustainability standards to ensure a minimal environmental impact. Facilities should be considered near each entrance point, areas of consistent foot/bike/OHV traffic, and campgrounds and designated camping areas.

Appropriate signage should be created to guide visitors to use the facilities. Leave No Trace principles and other responsible visitation guidelines should be featured prominently so that visitors and residents understand their role in keeping the Dunes and surrounding communities clean and beautiful.



POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of existing bathroom and campsite facilities to identify areas that require improvement or renovation. Upgrade infrastructure, including plumbing, electrical systems, and structural elements, to ensure functionality and safety.
- Evaluate the capacity of existing facilities and determine if additional restrooms and campsites are needed to accommodate visitor demand.
- Construct new facilities or expand existing ones to provide adequate space for visitors.
- Incorporate energy-efficient and water-saving features into bathroom and campsite facilities. Install motion-activated lighting systems and efficient heating and cooling systems. Use renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, to power the facilities where feasible.
- Clearly label and provide signage to direct visitors to restroom and campsite facilities and provide instructions on proper waste disposal and recycling to promote responsible use of the facilities

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- What is the level of satisfaction of visitors with bathroom and campsite facilities?
- Are the existing bathroom and campsite facilities well-maintained and in good working condition?
- Have all campsite and bathroom facilities been assessed for ADA compliance and harmonious design with the natural ecosystem?
- Are the bathroom and campsite facilities strategically located near entrance points, high-traffic areas, and campgrounds?
- Has the capacity of existing facilities been evaluated to determine if additional restrooms and campsites are needed?
- Have energy-efficient and water-saving features been incorporated into the facilities?
- Are there clear and informative signage in place to guide visitors to the restroom and campsite facilities?
- Have sustainability goals been set, and how are they being measured and tracked in relation to the facilities' environmental impact?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are implementing facilities improvements:

- [Michigan State Parks Facilities Upgrades](#)

II.6: UPGRADE OCEANO DUNES WELCOME CAPACITY

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM/LONG-TERM

With millions of visitors per year, the surrounding communities have been negatively impacted by congestion and landscape degradation in key areas closer to the main Oceano Dunes entry points. The improvement of current Oceano Dunes entry points and the evaluation of new ones were identified by stakeholders as an opportunity to improve the visitor experience and address crowding issues.

First, the reconfiguration of the circulation system with improved wayfinding to help orient visitors to appropriate areas of the Park should be studied to

optimize access. The development of a universally accessible circulation system prioritizing access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists, while designating localized areas for vehicular access to park destinations and trails will help mitigate traffic congestion and better orient visitors towards specific points of interest based on the type of activity. Traffic calming measures should also be considered to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. The implementation of a traffic and circulation plan will create welcoming park entrances, manage public vehicular access, prioritize park patron safety, and provide primary





and secondary roads, maintenance and service roads, and visitor parking areas. Limited parking capacity has become a challenge in surrounding communities relative to the number of visitors in the area. The traffic and parking capacity around each entry point to Oceano Dunes should be monitored, and visitation forecasted, to inform future parking improvements and expansions.

As visitation to Oceano Dunes to SLO CAL's South County communities continue to grow, there is a need to improve visitor traffic infrastructure to reduce congestion, ensure an efficient visitor experience and improve local quality of life. As such road and parking infrastructure upgrades around the three points of entry to Oceano Dunes would be required to increase overall capacity. The Pier and Grand Avenue entrance improvement project is an opportunity to support Park operations, safety, and public access to the Park and its coastal resources. The replacement of the current kiosks will allow Park staff to improve operational efficiencies and better assist Park visitors. In Oso Flaco, the Oso Flaco improvement project will expand coastal access, lower-cost coastal camping opportunities, and non-motorized recreational facilities. It would also support increased recreational activities in the southern portion of Oceano Dunes and reduce pressure on other main entry points.

In the long-term, the Phillips 66/Southern entrance project represents a new opportunity to increase overall welcome capacity and access to Oceano Dunes. If the project were to be implemented, it would support new recreational facilities, camping, educational programs, concessions, special events, and additional OHV and non-motorized recreation.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Study current traffic patterns and develop a universally accessible circulation system.
- Invest in wayfinding solutions to manage traffic and inform visitors.
- Expand and improve existing facilities and infrastructure around the three existing entry points, including parking and welcome facilities.
- Enhance existing trails and develop new ones to provide more access options for visitors.
- Support new entrance projects to increase overall carrying capacity.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- What is the carrying capacity of each entry point?
- How many visitors are recorded at each entry point?
- How does the current traffic volume compare to historical data or established benchmarks?
- How much time, on average, does traffic congestion exceed a certain threshold at the monitored location or roadway segment?
- How effectively do the wayfinding solutions manage traffic and guide visitors?
- Are the parking and welcome facilities effectively meeting the needs and expectations of visitors?
- What is the proportion of trips made by different modes of transportation (e.g., private vehicles, public transportation, cycling, walking) at the monitored location or roadway segment?
- How effectively is the expanded capacity being utilized to accommodate more visitors?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are improving welcome capacity:

- [Golden Gate Park, San Francisco California Circulation System](#)
- [Ottawa Traffic Calming Design Guidelines](#)

II.7: DIVERSIFY ACCOMMODATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: LONG-TERM

Oceano Dunes already offers many things to do for Park visitors, but there is unmet demand for more overnight and diverse accommodation in surrounding communities. In recent years, new hotel developments have mainly been concentrated in Pismo Beach.

Today, a key opportunity is the development of a new hotel in the City of Grover Beach between the Pacific Ocean and State Highway One, at the end of West Grand Avenue. Local stakeholders should support the development of the Grover Beach Lodge to expand overnight accommodations and catalyze infrastructure improvement along West Grand Avenue. The proposed project consists of a 150-room hotel and would also include improvements to the existing public plaza area within the State Park, including new walkways and paths, and the redesign of the existing parking area.

As one of the most trafficked of the two main entrances into the Oceano Dunes, the development would improve the sense of arrival and the overall visitor experience. The planning of West Grand Avenue would provide a focal point entry into the community and better define Grover Beach as a coastal community to visitors accessing Pismo State Beach and the Dunes. It would create a strong visual and pedestrian connection between the future Grover Beach Lodge and the east side of Highway 1, as well as the Amtrak station.

Camping at Oceano Dunes is a popular activity either on the Dunes or at one of the State Park campsites. Both the Oceano and North Beach Campground improvement projects will



improve existing developed campsites and enhance circulation and park maintenance access. The continuous monitoring of capacity and accessibility should be a focus for State Parks to improve the overall experience. Based on the level of demand for camping, local stakeholders identified opportunities to pilot new types of accommodation such as glamping options to expand existing capacity and attract new audiences. Such opportunities should be evaluated as part of future development programs, including the Oso Flaco Improvement Project.

Short-term rentals can have significant implications for local communities. One of the most prominent effects is the impact on housing affordability and availability, making it more challenging for locals to find affordable homes and in some cases resulting in the displacement of long-term residents from their neighborhoods. The strain on local infrastructure, increased noise disturbances, and regulatory challenges further compound the implications of short-term rentals on local communities. To better manage the supply of short-term rentals, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande and Oceano have introduced a short-term rental permit application process and a maximum number of total non-owner-occupied short-term rental permits. More recently, the same communities, apart from Grover Beach, have imposed a moratorium on the issuance of short-term rental licenses. Based on increased visitation to the area, local authorities should continue to monitor short-term rentals to find a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the preservation of the community's well-being.

HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

- Evaluate the current lodging inventory to identify lodging gaps
- Conduct a lodging assessment to determine new market opportunities
- Create a hospitality development program to guide development in specific areas through zoning and permit exemptions complementary to existing inventory
- Support new hotel development projects to meet visitor demand and expectations

RV AND CAMPING CAPACITY

- Analyze current camping capacity
- Improve and expand designated areas within the park for group camping
- Establish designated backcountry camping options for visitors seeking a more remote and immersive experience, while respecting environmental conservation guidelines
- Improve RV and campervan amenities (electrical, water, and sewage connections) to optimize capacity and limit environmental impacts

NEW TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

- Conduct research and analysis to identify the demand for new types of accommodation based on visitor preferences, demographics, and trends in the tourism industry
- Develop a pilot to test new lodging options in character areas
- Introduce glamping options within the park, designed to blend with the natural surroundings and provide a unique and upscale camping experience

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

- Continue to align and streamline regulatory codes for short-term rentals

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many visitors have visited Oceano Dunes and stayed overnight in San Luis Obispo County?
- What is the level of satisfaction of visitors who stayed overnight?
- How much overnight capacity has been created?
- What is the demand level for new lodging options?
- What is the percentage increase in economic impact generated by new lodging options?
- What is the resident sentiment towards short-term rentals?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are diversifying lodging options:

- [Dome Tent in Rub' al Khali, United Arab Emirates \(glamping\)](#)
- [Orman Ranch, Crescent City, California \(equestrian camping\)](#)

II.8: DEVELOP MORE EVENT VENUES, RESTAURANTS, AND RETAIL SPACES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: LONG-TERM

The communities near the Dunes have varied options for event venues, restaurants, and retail spaces. Pismo Beach has the highest concentration of entertainment infrastructure, whereas other communities, like Oceano, have far fewer. Stakeholders suggested various ideas for the future development of retail and entertainment locations to increase the economic impact of visitors who are visiting the Dunes. New entertainment, food, and retail services will incentivize visitors to the area to stay longer and spend more. Developing more event venues, markets, eateries, breweries/wineries, and retail stores near the Dunes helps bolster local economies.

Additionally, as the Park explores and develops new experiences and services for visitors and residents who visit the Dunes, there will be additional retail and restaurant needs. For example, the Dunes are currently under-utilized for non-motorized recreation activities, and there is an opportunity for more retail/rental companies providing gear, courses, and guided experiences for activities such as surfing, kiteboarding, windsurfing, sandboarding, fat-tire biking, fishing, hiking and more.

The development of new accommodations, trails, walkways, and Dunes entrances will have an impact on the most strategic locations for additional developments. With their proximity to the Dunes, Oceano and Grover Beach could have the greatest boost of economic activity from Dunes visitors with the development of more entertainment and food establishments. The proposed hotel on Grand Avenue (see II.7) will create a favorable business environment,

encouraging entrepreneurs and investors to establish complementary businesses to the area, such as restaurants, cafes, retail shops, and entertainment venues, further boosting economic development.

San Luis Obispo County including Oceano and the cities of Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande, and Pismo Beach should conduct market research to understand the demand for entertainment venues, restaurants, and retail stores in the area. By analyzing the demographics, visitor profiles, and spending patterns of both residents and tourists the county and city officials can help to identify potential gaps or opportunities in the market. Local stakeholders, including community



© SVIEW ON BEACH BAR, BY OXANA STEFANIA / ADOBE STOCK

members, business owners, developers, and relevant government agencies should be involved to provide input and gather feedback on the types of entertainment venues, restaurants, and retail stores they would like to see. It is important to maintain each community's unique character and balance the needs of residents and tourists.

It is critical to support local businesses and entrepreneurs by providing resources, incentives, and support programs for individuals and small businesses interested in starting new ventures. This can include access to funding, business mentorship programs, and streamlined permitting processes (see recommendation RS.3). Public and private partnerships may be required to facilitate the development process. Developers, investors, local governments and potential business owners should collaborate by discussing partnerships, joint ventures, and incentives that can help attract new businesses to the area.

Sustainability and resilience should be considered with any new developments to ensure that new venues, restaurants, and retail stores adhere to environmental regulations, energy efficiency standards, and sustainable design principles. Ideally, locally sourced products, eco-friendly practices, and waste reduction measures are utilized in new development.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Identify potential development opportunities based on zoning regulations.
- Conduct market research to understand the demand for entertainment venues, restaurants, and retail stores in the area.
- Establish a process to involve local stakeholders in providing input and feedback on potential new developments to ensure new businesses reflect the unique character of communities and the local quality of life is protected and improved by future developments.
- Provide resources, incentives, and support programs for local businesses and entrepreneurs interested in starting new ventures.
- Facilitate collaborations between public and private sectors to attract new businesses by encouraging developers, investors, and potential business owners to discuss partnerships, joint ventures, and incentives that can help attract and support new establishments.
- Identify sustainability goals and standards to measure so that new developments adhere to environmental regulations, energy efficiency standards, and sustainable design principles.
- Determine strategic locations for additional developments based on proximity to the Dunes and potential economic impact.
- Develop marketing strategies to create awareness and attract visitors to the new entertainment venues, restaurants, and retail stores.
- Continuously monitor the performance of the new establishments and evaluate their impact on the local economy and community.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- What is the level of demand for entertainment venues, restaurants, and retail stores in the area based on market research?
- To what extent were local stakeholders involved in the decision-making process for new developments?
- How many new ventures have been started by local businesses and entrepreneurs with the provided resources, incentives, and support programs?
- How satisfied are community members, business owners, and government agencies with the types of establishments that have been developed?
- What is the increase in visitor spending and length of stay in the area due to the presence of new establishments?
- To what extent do the new venues, restaurants, and retail stores adhere to environmental regulations, energy efficiency standards, and sustainable design principles?
- How effectively are locally sourced products, eco-friendly practices, and waste reduction measures implemented in new developments?
- What measurable environmental and social benefits have been achieved through sustainable development practices?
- How well are the new establishments performing in terms of customer satisfaction, revenue generation, and overall business success?
- What is the overall impact of the new developments on the local economy, job market, and community well-being?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are developing more assets:

- [Pismo Beach, CA](#)
- [Cannon Beach, OR](#)

Product & Experience Development

Experiences are at the core of a destination and provide the primary purpose for a person's travels to a specific location. The research and stakeholder engagement process revealed a wide variety of opportunities for new experiences within and around the Dunes that can be developed to provide diverse activities for visitors and residents to enjoy on the Dunes while also increasing visitor contributions to local economies. From recreation activities like fat-tire biking, sandboarding, kiteboarding, surfing, and OHV curated tours to new cultural experiences to introduce visitors to the Chumash culture and people, there are many opportunities to enhance the overall visitor experience at the Dunes.

ED.1: DEVELOP UNIQUE OHV EXPERIENCES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Although the long-term future of vehicle use on the Dunes is still being determined, there are some short-term opportunities that the Park and local businesses could consider in order to provide new experiences and services for OHV activities on the Dunes. OHV rental and tour companies could offer more curated experiences, taking visitors to more far-reaching areas of the SVRA (within the designated perimeters) through guided tours targeted at reaching specific points

of interest like the Chumash protected spaces and iconic vista lookouts. Curated off-road tours could take visitors to hidden gems and lesser-known areas of the destination, providing a more intimate and educational experience. Other OHV experiences could include creating and curating a recreation course for visitors to explore on their own and introducing new riding competition events.





POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct targeted research on visitor preferences and interests in OHV experiences to determine which experiences appeal most to visitors to Oceano Dunes.
- Collaborate with local OHV rental and tour companies to develop new experiences that align with visitor interests, such as guided tours, off-road courses, and riding competitions.
- Promote the Experience Incubator as an avenue for businesses and entrepreneurs to develop new OHV-related experiences.
- Provide experience development resources and opportunities for seed funding to boost the development of new experiences.
- Promote the new OHV experiences through targeted marketing campaigns that reach potential visitors through social media, email marketing, and other digital channels.
- Monitor the impact of the new OHV experiences on the environment and the visitor experience, using data and feedback to make adjustments as needed.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many new OHV experiences have been created?
- What is the percentage increase in revenue generated by OHV rental and tour companies after implementing the curated experiences?
- How many visitors have participated in the new OHV experiences?
- What is the level of satisfaction of visitors who participated in the new OHV experiences?
- What is the impact of the new OHV experiences on the Park's environmental conservation efforts?
- Has the local community seen any positive economic impacts from the increased OHV experiences?
- What is the ROI of implementing the new OHV experiences, considering operational costs, revenue generation, and visitor satisfaction?
- How has the Park's overall reputation and brand perception changed due to the new OHV experiences?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are providing innovative OHV experiences:

- [Sandland Adventures in Florence, Oregon](#)
- [Mac Woods Dune Rides in Mears, Michigan](#)
- [Sossusvlei Dune Tour in Namibia](#)

ED.2 DIVERSIFY VISITOR ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Based on stakeholder input, local businesses and the Park should develop new low-impact activities to provide visitors with more activity options on the Dunes. These products and services should include land and water-based recreation activities, culinary events, and wellness experiences.

Local businesses should consider offering experiences such as kiteboarding, sandboarding, hiking, and fat-tire biking for outdoor activities on the sand. Businesses could provide guided experiences and lessons or rent or sell gear to visitors to enjoy. These activities will give visitors unique opportunities to explore the destination's natural landscape. Particularly for visitors who have not brought their equipment to play on the Dunes, this can enhance their experience while providing an economic boost to local businesses.

The Park should also consider hosting more events to celebrate outdoor sports, such as kiteboarding or sandboarding competitions, which will attract both participants and spectators. Other Dunes areas are also exploring the creation of frisbee golf courses. These events will allow visitors to engage with the local community and learn more about the destination's outdoor offerings.

For water-based activities, the destination should offer visitors more opportunities through tours, rentals, and sales of personal watercraft, surfing, and fishing experiences. These activities provide a unique destination perspective and encourage visitors to explore beyond the shoreline.



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© PARACADUTE, BY MICHELE PAUTASSO / ADOBE STOCK

Increasingly Dunes destinations are providing various wellness-oriented activities that could be of interest to visitors to Oceano Dunes. Some examples of Dunes-based wellness activities include yoga and meditation sessions, wellness retreats, nature-element, and open-air pop-up spas. Careful consideration would need to be made regarding the locations for these activities to ensure a quality experience while not limiting other activity opportunities elsewhere on the Dunes.

The Dunes are well known for being an excellent place to socialize around a bonfire and enjoy the relaxing beach atmosphere. With the support of local businesses, the Park should consider adding additional resources and companies to provide more turn-key services for groups to enjoy bonfires on the beach. .. The Park, Visit SLO CAL, and associated businesses should coordinate more promotion of bonfire services as a unique experience. Additional offerings could include culinary and event experiences highlighting local culture and cuisine. This could include partnering with local restaurants and chefs to provide unique dining experiences, hosting food festivals or cultural events, and offering culinary workshops or classes.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Destination Organizations, State Parks and local businesses should research and assess the demand for various land and water-based activities, culinary events, and wellness experiences.
- Businesses should develop business plans and budgets to determine the feasibility and profitability of new offerings.
- The Park should assess the feasibility of hosting events and new vendors and the necessary permits or agreements needed to do so (see PM.2).
- Local businesses should identify potential partners and suppliers for equipment rental, guided experiences, and other services.
- The Park should work with businesses to identify suitable locations for new activities, to ensure environmental responsibility and limit negative impact on other activities.
- Local businesses should consider offering packages that include multiple activities and experiences to enhance the visitor experience and provide value for money.
- Visit SLO CAL, other Destination Organizations and local businesses should market and promote new activities to visitors.
- Monitor visitor feedback and regularly evaluate new offerings' success.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many new activities have been developed and offered to visitors on the Dunes?
What is the overall satisfaction level of visitors participating in new activities?
- What is the economic impact of these new activities on local businesses in terms of revenue and job creation?
- How many outdoor sports events have been organized, and what is the level of participation and attendance?
- What is the impact of these events on the local economy in terms of visitor spending and job creation?
- What is the visitor return rate, and how has it changed after introducing these new experiences?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are diversifying recreation Dunes experiences:

- [Tottori Sakyu, Japan Sand Dunes Activities](#)
- [Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area Activities](#)
- [Samalayuca Dunes in Chihuahua Activities](#)

ED.3: EXTEND CULTURAL HERITAGE EXPERIENCES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

For over 10,000 years, the Northern Chumash people have sustainably lived and stewarded the San Luis Obispo County area, and the Dunes have remained an essential part of their ancestral homeland, cultural identity and heritage through current times. The Chumash have a rich and unique history, including engaging in regional trade utilizing coastal resources like shell beads or fine-grained stone tool materials. The Chumash are also known for their stunning basketry, incorporating intricate details created with mathematical precision. Today, the yak titʼu titʼu yak tilhini Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region (YTT Tribe), the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC), and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians (Santa Ynez) provide a strong foundation for the Chumash people to protect and celebrate their culture and heritage, creating dignity in the people and educating the public about the Chumash’s history and current way of life. Today, descendants of the Northern Chumash continue to live in the same area as their ancestors and carry on their language, traditions, and ecological knowledge to protect and conserve the cultural and natural resources of San Luis Obispo County.

The development of new cultural heritage experiences, including those that would educate and engage visitors about the Chumash people’s culture and history, received strong support from stakeholders throughout the engagement process. Currently, limited activities and educational resources are dedicated to the dune’s unique history with Native American people. There is strong support for creating more experiences and interpretive signage to educate visitors and engage them about the Chumash people and their significant contributions to the Oceano



Dunes area and to the broader San Luis Obispo County and Central Coast region.

The Oceano Dunes Visitor Center provides information for a historical tour with a deeper look at the Chumash and the unique individuals called the Dunites. With guidance from local Indigenous leadership, stakeholders should explore creating new visitor experiences and educational resources featuring the Chumash people’s unique history and cultural connection to the Dunes. Indigenous cultural heritage tourism is a growing sector in the tourism industry, providing new opportunities for Native American communities and individuals to share their culture and history through their voices while creating new economic opportunities.

Some examples of new experiences could include historical walking/biking/OHV sightseeing tours of historical sites, culinary and native plant engagement workshops, and overnight star knowledge experiences. All experiences could include storytelling by representatives of the Northern Chumash people and tribes, as well as engagement activities to demonstrate and share the knowledge and stewardship values of the Chumash people with visitors. The representatives should approve all sites, knowledge and activities included in a visitor experience featuring Chumash history and culture.

The Dunes are also well-known as the home for the “Dunites,” a collection of cabin-dwellers who inhabited the Oceano Dunes for nearly a century. Famous for championing creativity, expression, and freethought above all other attributes. These qualities were reflected in their community on the Dunes. At the height of its influence, the Dunite community attracted a hundred visitors monthly and was a host to valuable American figures, including John Steinbeck, Upton Sinclair, Ansel Adams, Ella Young, and John Cage. New tour experiences could include information about the Dunites and their unique way of life.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- With the NCTC/YTT/Santa Ynez, develop new cultural heritage experiences, including guided tours, workshops, culinary and overnight experiences; promote the Experience Incubator for businesses and entrepreneurs to develop new experiences.
- Ensure that the representatives approve all visitor experiences featuring Chumash’s history and culture and include storytelling and engagement activities.
- Create interpretive signage throughout the Dunes to educate visitors about the Chumash people and their contributions to the San Luis Obispo County area (see II.4).
- Explore creating new visitor experiences and educational resources featuring the Dunites and their unique way of life, including tours and interpretive signage.
- Partner with local businesses and organizations to develop and promote cultural heritage tourism in the area.
- Expand collaborations with local schools and educational institutions to enhance educational resources and programming on local history and culture.
- Promote the exhibit at the Oceano Dunes Visitor Center dedicated to the Chumash.
- Work with the NCTC/YTT/Santa Ynez to develop and implement sustainable tourism practices that respect and protect cultural and natural resources (see MC.2).

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- What is the current level of awareness among visitors about the Chumash people’s cultural heritage in the San Luis Obispo County area?
- How many new cultural heritage experiences feature the Chumash people?
- What is the expected economic impact of the new experiences for the Chumash people?
- What is the approval process for sites, knowledge, and activities in an experience?
- How will the success of the new cultural heritage experiences be measured?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are creating Indigenous-led cultural heritage experiences:

- [North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance Experiences](#)
- [Indigenous Tourism Experiences, Canada](#)
- [Māori \(New Zealand\) Experiences](#)
- [Navajo Nation \(Arizona and Utah\) Guided Tours](#)

ED.4: EXPAND ECO-EXPERIENCES AND PROGRAMS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Oceano Dunes is a cherished natural destination for residents and millions of visitors from around the world. Stakeholders agree that the Park and surrounding communities must be stewards of this unique ecosystem so it can continue to be enjoyed for generations to come. The Park offers a range of ecotourism experiences that allow visitors to explore and appreciate the unique natural resources of the Dunes while minimizing negative impacts on the environment, including hiking, bird-watching, nature-viewing, horseback riding, visiting the butterfly grove, interpretive programs, and volunteering opportunities such as beach clean-ups or vegetation projects. Specifically, the Oso Flaco Lake Natural Area, just north of Guadeloupe, is part of the SVRA and the 22,000-acre Guadalupe Nipomo Dunes Complex and provides access to the Dunes by foot featuring stunning natural views and wildlife by way of a boardwalk. This area is designated for hiking, fishing, bird watching, nature study, and other non-motorized uses.

Throughout the engagement process, stakeholders identified opportunities to increase eco-experiences and programs in the Dunes. Although discussed for many years, significant ecotourism developments have yet to occur within or near the Dunes, and the economic impact of ecotourism is still being determined. The Park, tourism businesses, and key regional stakeholders should develop new eco-experiences and programs to diversify activities and improve the sustainable use of the Dunes.

The Park and key stakeholders should assess the current ecotourism experiences and programs to determine the level of visitor readiness (how easy it is for a visitor to find, book, and participate in the experience) and decide what opportunities need

to be implemented to their greatest potential. For example, how many bird-watching and nature-viewing experiences are currently provided throughout the year? Are these experiences being sufficiently promoted online, and do businesses have the capacity to run tours consistently? Although it is wonderful to ensure access for visitors and residents to enjoy the natural wonders of the Dunes on their own, it is important to consider ways to create economic impact from eco-experiences through tours and programs.

Additionally, a future development assessment of the Oso Flaco Lake Area should be conducted to understand future experiences and services, including more hiking trails and expanded lake use for recreation activities (e.g., kayaking, paddle



boarding, etc.), parking, bathroom facilities, and educational signage. Oso Flaco has excellent potential for more visitor activities but would require appropriate infrastructure to ensure the natural areas are not negatively impacted by increased visitor recreation.

The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) also provides a unique opportunity for educational visitor experiences that contribute to the preservation of endangered marine ecosystems. The CHNMS is a one-of-its-kind opportunity to advance the first Tribal-nominated national marine sanctuary designation in the U.S. and would help to accelerate nature-based solutions through inclusive partnerships and collaborations. The potential could help promote the region's uniqueness and importance to local communities.

Increasingly, visitors seek authentic experiences where they can appreciate a destination's unique culture through food. The Pismo Beach and Oceano Dunes area is well-known for its clam population, which visitors and residents can enjoy with a proper permit. Another experience could be an "Ocean-to-Table" culinary adventure, where visitors participate in a guided experience to harvest clams and prepare local dishes. This is a unique experience where visitors can learn about the unique ecosystem of the Dunes area, as well as local cultures and history.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Assess current ecotourism experiences and programs to determine the level of visitor readiness and decide what opportunities need to be developed.
- Determine how many bird-watching and nature-viewing experiences are provided throughout the year and whether these experiences are sufficiently promoted online.
- Assess the current and potential economic impact of eco-experiences.
- Conduct a future development assessment of the Oso Flaco Lake Area to understand future experiences and services, including more hiking trails and an expanded lake used for recreation activities, parking, bathroom facilities, and educational signage.
- Support the proposed CHNMS as a unique opportunity for educational visitor experiences that contribute to preserving endangered marine ecosystems.
- Explore potential visitor interest in an "Ocean-to-Table" culinary adventure.
- Allocate more resources and capacity to promote volunteering opportunities such as beach clean-ups or vegetation projects for visitors and residents.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many new eco-experiences and programs have been developed in the Park and surrounding area, and what is their economic impact on the local tourism industry?
- How many visitors have participated in eco-experiences and programs, and what is their level of satisfaction?
- How many bird-watching and nature-viewing experiences are currently available, and how can businesses run tours consistently?
- What is the level of online promotion and marketing for eco-experiences and programs, and how effectively is it attracting visitors?
- How many hiking trails and other recreational facilities have been developed in the Oso Flaco Lake Natural Area, and how do they impact the natural environment?
- What is the visitor demand and satisfaction level for an “Ocean-to-Table” culinary adventure?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are creating ecotourism experiences:

- [Bruneau Dunes State Park, Idaho](#)
- [Lençóis Maranhenses National Park, Brazil](#)
- [Walking with Nomads Tours, Erg Chebbi, Morocco](#)

ED.5: DEVELOP NEW EQUESTRIAN EXPERIENCES AND FACILITIES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: MEDIUM-TERM



Oceano Dunes offers equestrian experiences for visitors who bring their horses. There are specific areas for equestrian use, and visitors must stay within designated trails and avoid sensitive habitat areas. Additionally, the Park has a staging area for horse trailers and a watering trough for horses. Visitors must also obtain a horse-use permit to use the equestrian facilities. There have been some companies that provide horseback riding tours of Oceano Dunes. Online reviews show a mix of visitor satisfaction with some exceptional experiences and poor reviews stating poor customer service and ride limitations due to vehicles on the beach.

Stakeholders identified the potential for more equestrian experiences and facilities in/near the Park to diversify visitor activities. Horseback riding on the beach and coastal trails can be an excellent and unique activity to offer visitors of all riding abilities. It is recommended that stakeholders conduct an assessment of current facilities and tours to determine potential needs to improve equestrian experiences within the Dunes. Considerations should be made for equestrian-oriented campgrounds, staging areas, and in-park horse-riding tours.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct an assessment of the current equestrian facilities and tours to identify potential areas for improvement.
- Determine the potential need for additional equestrian facilities within the Park, such as equestrian-oriented campgrounds and staging areas.
- Assess the current horse-riding tours companies offer to determine potential areas for improvement and ensure they follow sustainable tourism practices.
- Develop new in-park horse-riding tours that showcase the unique natural resources of the Dunes while minimizing negative impacts on the environment.
- Develop educational materials for visitors to inform them about the sensitive habitats in the Park and the importance of staying on designated trails during equestrian activities.
- Work with local equestrian organizations to promote the equestrian experiences available in/near the Park and encourage their members to participate in eco-friendly activities such as beach clean-ups and vegetation projects.



POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many visitors participate in equestrian experiences in Oceano Dunes each year?
- What is the average satisfaction rate of visitors who bring their horses to the Park?
- What is the current availability of equestrian-oriented campgrounds and staging areas?
- How many companies currently provide horseback riding tours in Oceano Dunes, and what is their level of customer satisfaction?
- How many visitors express interest in equestrian experiences?
- What is the economic impact of horseback riding tours and equestrian facilities?
- What improvements can be made to current equestrian facilities to enhance visitor experience and safety?
- What additional services or amenities can be added to equestrian facilities to attract more visitors?
- Are there any sustainability concerns related to increasing equestrian experiences in the Park, and how can they be addressed?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are offering equestrian experiences:

- [White Sands National Monument, New Mexico](#)
- [Oregon Beach and Dunes Trail Rides](#)
- [Sahara Desert, Morocco](#)

Park Management And Operations

The SVRA has had to remain adaptive to the various changes to park access and available activities to ensure visitors and residents continue to have quality experiences within the Dunes. Park staff continues to maintain and enhance the infrastructure of the Park, including access points, roads, trails, parking, waste stations, and restroom facilities. Due to its proximity to and agreements with nearby communities, park staff coordinate with numerous local and state government agencies to maintain the operations of the Park. Regardless of how the courts decide, the SVRA must continue to adapt its management and operations to sustain staff capacity and provide a quality visitor experience.

PM.1: UPDATE THE PARK'S FEE AND RESERVATION SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

The Park should update its fee system, with the consideration of adding a new reservation component. The SVRA offers day-use passes (\$5 per vehicle) sold on a first-come, first-served basis at the beach entry kiosks at Grand Avenue and Pier Avenue. Additionally, at this time, the only online reservation system in place is for camping, which is available up to six months in advance of a visit and must be made through the Reserve California website.

To improve the efficiency of park operations and management, the Park should update their existing fee and reservation system. The reservation interface should be easy to find and

navigate online and include various services to reserve. The reservation system could include day-use pass fees, camping, and event staging space. Putting in place an online reservation system for visitors to purchase their day-use passes could help to reduce unnecessary traffic congestion at the Grand and Pier Avenues entrances.

The new system would allow visitors to book their day-use pass while increasing revenue for the Park. In this scenario, the Park could provide an "Online Fast Pass Rate" in which visitors will need to book online at least 24 hours before their visit and receive a lower rate. The "Day-Of Pass Rate" would be similar to the fee system used today, and



visitors would wait in line and pay for their day-use pass the day of their visit. It is recommended that the Park raises vehicle rates. Residents should have the greatest accessibility and pay the least amount possible.

By incentivizing visitors to book online, the Park can better understand future visitor numbers and collaborate with regional stakeholders for improved promotion and visitor management. Careful considerations will need to be made regarding how the new system will be developed and rolled out to ensure equal access for seasoned and new visitors.

Day-use passes are a critical funding source for the SVRA and support not only park operations, but also robust environmental programs focused on rehabilitating native vegetation and protecting breeding sites for two special-status ground nesting birds—the state and federally endangered California least tern and the federally threatened Western snowy plover. Whatever the outcome of the court case, it is essential for the Park to effectively evolve to meet visitor needs, reduce negative impacts within surrounding communities and ensure long-term operational stability.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct research to identify the best online reservation system that can integrate with the existing website and payment processing system.
- Develop a new fee and reservation system that includes day-use passes, camping, and event staging space.
- Determine the optimal rates for the new fee system, taking into account the need to incentivize online bookings while ensuring accessibility for all visitors.
- Develop and launch a user-friendly reservation interface on the Park's website that includes clear instructions, pricing information, and any relevant policies.
- Train park staff on managing and administering the new fee and reservation system, including monitoring and updating availability in real-time.
- Collaborate with regional stakeholders to implement a promotional campaign to raise awareness of the new reservation system and incentivize online bookings.
- Monitor the new system's usage and effectiveness and adjust based on visitor feedback and operational needs.
- Consider adding a feature to the reservation system that allows visitors to purchase annual passes or bundles that include multiple days of use.
- Evaluate the impact of the new reservation system on the Park's revenue and visitor traffic, and use this information to inform future decision-making.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- What is the current revenue generated by the day-use pass system, and how much revenue could be gained with the proposed fee and reservation system?
- How many visitors use the Oceano Dunes SVRA and are expected to use the Park with the proposed reservation system?
- How will the new fee system affect visitor demographics, including the number of residents and out-of-town visitors?
- How will the reservation system impact traffic congestion at the beach entry kiosks?
- How will the new system be evaluated and adjusted over time?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are using online reservation systems:

- [Rocky Mountain National Park Timed Entry Permit System](#)
- [Haleakalā National Park, Hawai'i Reservation System](#)
- [Washington State Park Discovery Pass](#)
- [Indiana Dunes National Park Fees](#)

PM.2: STRENGTHEN PARK MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

The Park should review all existing park management operations, challenges, and available resources and make strategic changes to improve the efficiency of staff roles, responsibilities, and coordination with other agencies and organizations. Managers need to have an up-to-date understanding of priority needs and opportunities for the Park, including safety and security, infrastructure, facilities, environmental conservation, and visitor education. Understanding the SVRA brings in critical funding to enable staff to manage the Park effectively; it is recommended the Park develop a plan for the highest priority needs in case the function of the SVRA should alter dramatically.

DIVERSIFYING AND MANAGING CONCESSIONAIRES

Overall, becoming a concessionaire at SVRA is competitive. It requires interested parties to demonstrate their ability to provide quality services while adhering to the Park's rules and regulations. To become a concessionaire, a business must submit a proposal addressing the Request for Proposals developed and announced by the Park. State Parks maintains nine concessionaire agreements, most of which provide services geared towards vehicular use on the Dunes, including four OHV rentals, one Hummer tour, a towing service, a mobile pump service, and the Pismo State Beach Golf Course and Fin's Bar and Grill. This does not represent the diversity of current and potential activities that residents and visitors can enjoy on the Dunes, including but not limited to water-based activities, surfing, sandboarding, kiteboarding, fishing, hiking, bonfires, fat-tire biking, equestrian riding, and wildlife viewing. New businesses have strong potential to rent/sell gear, give tours, and provide hospitality services. State Parks should revisit its current concessionaire program to assess the potential for new businesses to include in the following Request for Proposals.

It is also vital for all parties involved in a concessionaire agreement to have the information and resources necessary to be successful and be held accountable for their responsibilities. The process to become a concessionaire should be transparent and adhere to updated policies. In coordination with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Park should improve its procedures for engaging with potential and existing concessionaires. For instance, there is currently only one formal concessionaire registered to provide vehicle towing services within the SVRA, and visitors are instructed to use this company's services in case of vehicle mishaps. However, other groups outside the concessionaire agreements provide towing services, and enforcement must be enhanced to ensure visitors use the agreed-upon concessionaire. As such, there should be a process to determine if any additional companies should be added and how to enforce the agreed-upon service providers best.

BOOSTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

State Parks boasts impressive conservation programs at Oceano Dunes, primarily funded by day-use pass fees, that help protect the unique ecosystem and wildlife of the Dunes. The Dunes is a popular breeding site for two special-status ground nesting birds—the state and federally-endangered California least tern and the federally threatened Western snowy plover. Through the nesting program, park staff monitors, maintains, and enhances critical nesting habitats, color-bands chicks for further research, manages predators, educates visitors, and enforces resource protection regulations. The Park also has a revegetation program where park staff and volunteers plant native plants to rehabilitate and repair areas damaged from uncontrolled recreational use. Unfortunately, as the number of vehicles admitted to the beach has been reduced, so has the funding that directly supports these programs.

Numerous and varied stakeholders recognize the need for these programs to be better funded, promoted, and celebrated. Areas for further improvement include habitat preservation and restoration, air quality management, waste reduction and management, and education and outreach. Although the Park is actively addressing these areas, with limited funding and capacity and an uncertain future for OHV use of the Park, these programs will need additional support.

Updating the existing fee and reservation system could bring more funding for these programs. If a Stewardship Committee were to be created, this group could also support the Park in fundraising and advocate for more resources for these programs. Additionally, creating paid visitor experiences connected to these programs (see ED.4) could provide another funding stream and amplify outreach regarding the program's conservation successes. The Park could also increase the use of renewable energy sources and promote sustainable practices throughout the Park. Overall, continued efforts to protect and preserve the Park's natural resources are essential to ensure its long-term sustainability and maintain its status as a beloved recreational area for future generations.



POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct a thorough review of existing park management operations, challenges, and available resources to identify areas for improvement and prioritize needs and opportunities for the Park.
- Develop a plan for the highest priority needs in case the function of the SVRA should alter dramatically to ensure the Park can still be effectively managed.
- Revisit the current concessionaire program to assess the potential for new businesses to include in a Request for Proposals and ensure the process is transparent and adheres to updated policies.
- Improve procedures for engaging with potential and existing concessionaires in coordination with the California Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Boost funding, promotion, and celebration of the Park's conservation programs, including habitat preservation and restoration, air quality management, waste reduction and management, and education and outreach.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- 1 What is the visitor demand for diverse recreational activities within the Park, and what are the priority opportunities for new businesses to provide these services?
- 2 What is the vendor's satisfaction with the process of becoming a concessionaire?
- 3 What measures can be put in place to enforce the agreed-upon service providers?
- 4 What funding is allocated to conservation programs, and how has it changed over time?
- 5 How effective is the current outreach and education program for visitors to understand the importance of conservation efforts?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are improving park management operations:

- [South African National Parks Public Private Partnership Opportunities](#)
- [Zion National Park, Utah Commercial Use Authorizations](#)
- [Lachine Canal National Historic Site, Canada Request for Proposal](#)
- [A Plan for Sustainable Practices within NYC Parks](#)

Marketing and Communications

Joint promotion and visitor communications can benefit all stakeholders of the Park and surrounding communities by increasing visibility, improving the visitor experience, promoting stewardship, and creating economic opportunities. A coordinated approach to communications and promotion is important to provide visitors and residents with the most current information about available activities, rules, and regulations for visiting the Park and supporting stewardship.

MC.1: IMPROVE PROMOTION AND EDUCATION OF OCEANO DUNES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM

Numerous websites provide varied information about visiting the Dunes and surrounding communities. Visit SLO CAL in collaboration with State Parks, other Destination Organizations, city and county leaders, and other key stakeholders should revisit their Dunes-specific promotion and education strategy that includes resources everyone can use to interact with and educate visitors and residents. Stakeholders expressed strong interest in the region engaging in projects to identify existing and potential target visitor markets, promote existing and emerging businesses, increase overnight visitation, grow low-season visitation, and educate people more widely about the unique geography, culture, and history of the region.

For visitor-related aspects of this strategy, it is recommended to conduct additional market research to identify existing and potential visitor

markets to the Dunes. Understanding what visitors are looking for during their visit to the Dunes and what new activities they would be interested in could guide experience and infrastructure development. Research findings could inform SLO CAL's marketing efforts to ensure promotional content reaches desired markets and features unique and authentic activities and programs.

Additionally, as existing experiences are enhanced and new activities and services are developed, there is an opportunity to create itineraries and experience/resource maps to provide collaborative marketing materials while improving how visitors navigate all the region offers.

Stakeholders felt that there needs to be more and better promotional content about the current environmental conservation efforts within the Park.



The nesting and revegetation programs have been successful and could be featured more. Successful promotion can ensure visitors and residents continue to know about and support these critical programs as they change and grow.

For resident-focused engagement and outreach, it is recommended for State Parks, with the support of the Stewardship Committee and other Destination Organizations, to provide regular and transparent updates to residents and business owners of local communities with information about current park news, including available activities, volunteer opportunities, and ways they can participate in supporting stewardship of the region. Stakeholders should consider creating an online resident portal that provides Dunes-related updates, celebrates local projects and individuals, and provides a framework for residents and business owners to contribute their ideas to tourism-related opportunities.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct market research to identify existing and potential visitor markets to the Dunes. Share research findings with local businesses and the Park to support the development of unique and authentic activities and programs based on findings.
- Create itineraries and experience/resource maps to provide collaborative marketing materials to DMOs, tourism businesses, and the Park.
- Engage in targeted marketing and promotional efforts to attract visitors during off-peak times or encourage weekday visits.
- Boost promoting environmental conservation efforts within the Park, including nesting and revegetation programs.
- Provide regular and transparent updates to residents and business owners of local communities about current park news, available activities, volunteer opportunities, and ways they can support stewardship of the region; consider creating an online resident portal to centralize communications and outreach.
- Engage the Stewardship Committee to support resident-focused engagement and outreach.
- Work with city and county leaders and key stakeholders to revisit Dunes-specific promotion and education strategy.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many new target visitor markets were identified through market research, and how successful were marketing efforts in reaching these markets?
- How many new activities and services were developed based on market research findings, and what was their impact on visitor satisfaction and park revenue?
- How many new itineraries and experience/resource maps were created, and how effective were they in guiding visitors to different parts of the region?
- How successful was the promotion of environmental conservation efforts within the Park, and what was the impact on visitor awareness and support for these programs?
- How many residents and business owners were reached through regular updates and information about park news and stewardship opportunities, and what was their level of engagement and participation?
- How many ideas and suggestions were contributed by residents and business owners through the online portal?
- How did visitor numbers and revenue change during the low season as a result of the promotion and education strategy?
- What was the level of visitor satisfaction as a result of the strategy, and how did this impact the region's overall economic and environmental sustainability?
- What is the resident sentiment towards tourism in the area?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are communicating with visitors and residents:

- [Breckenridge, Colorado's 'B like Breckenridge' campaign](#)
- [Go Hawaii's 'Malama Hawaii' campaign](#)
- [Jackson Hole, Wyoming marketing and promotion](#)
- [Sonoma County, California's sustainability homepage](#)

MC.2: DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE RESPONSIBLE VISITATION RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: SHORT-TERM



The SVRA website provides a comprehensive list of safety recommendations to ensure visitors recreating with vehicles in the Park have a safe and enjoyable visit. The site also links to the Tread Lightly website, which provides additional tips for recreators to enjoy outdoor spaces respectfully. That said, there are other opportunities for the Park and regional partners to promote more responsible visitation messaging geared towards all visitors, not just those visiting the Park for vehicle recreation. For example, many nature-based destinations throughout the United States promote Leave No Trace Principles and more destination-specific guidelines for responsible recreation. Beyond the exact content that is created, destination marketing organizations are finding new and varied ways to share responsible visitor resources beyond homepages, signs, and flyers. Social media campaigns continue to provide new opportunities to educate visitors before they

arrive at the destination and can be more engaging than a homepage by featuring influencers or providing quizzes with discount incentives.

It is recommended for State Parks, Visit SLO CAL, and regional stakeholders to assess all responsible visitation messaging resources currently existing and identify any gaps or opportunities for improved content. This could be an excellent project to be spearheaded by the Stewardship Committee. Additionally, stakeholders should determine how to educate visitors and residents in different ways about responsible visitation guidelines to the area. Visitors frequently need to see content numerous times to understand and adhere to suggestions and guidelines. Providing more proactive outreach, including social media and coordinated efforts with tourism businesses (accommodations, tour guides, marketing agencies), is recommended.



POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Assess all responsible visitation messaging resources available in the Park and the region, identifying any gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Develop destination-specific guidelines for responsible recreation and promotion of Leave No Trace Principles, with input from stakeholders.
- Identify different ways to educate visitors and residents about responsible visitation guidelines, such as social media campaigns.
- Provide proactive outreach to tourism businesses, including accommodations, tour guides, and marketing agencies, to promote responsible visitation guidelines and ensure they are integrated into marketing efforts.
- Enhance and promote the safety recommendations provided on the SVRA website, including those for vehicle recreation, to ensure visitors are aware of potential risks and take necessary precautions to stay safe.
- Consider developing a reporting mechanism for visitors to report any violations of responsible visitation guidelines, and ensure that this information is effectively communicated to relevant authorities for appropriate action.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of responsible visitation messaging efforts.

POTENTIAL KPIS:

- How many responsible visitation messaging resources currently exist?
- What is the current level of visitor adherence to responsible visitation guidelines?
- How effective are the existing responsible visitation messaging resources?
- How many visitors engage with responsible visitation messaging on social media?
- How many businesses in the area actively promote responsible visitation messaging?
- Has visitor behavior and adherence to responsible visitation guidelines improved since implementing new messaging strategies?
- What is the level of visitor satisfaction with responsible visitation messaging?
- Are there any gaps in the existing responsible visitation messaging?
- How does the level of responsible visitation messaging in the SVRA compare to similar destinations in the region/state/country?
- How much funding and resources are being allocated towards implementing new responsible visitation messaging strategies, and what is the return on investment?

CASE STUDIES

Examples of how other destinations are promoting responsible visitation:

- [Do Colorado Right Campaign](#)
- [Leave No Trace State Fish, Wildlife and Park Agency Partnerships](#)
- [Visit Yosemite, Madera County, Visit California RESPECT Campaign](#)

Appendix

Appendix: Project Stakeholders

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS BY LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDERS	INTERVIEW	WORKSHOP	OPEN HOUSE
Adam Verdin , Owner Old Juan's Cantina; Member of VACO (Vitality Advisory Council of Oceano)	X		
Allene Villa , President, Oceano Community Services District			
Bonita Ernst , Head of the People for the Dunes	X		X
Brad Snook , Past Chair SLO Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation			
Bruce Van Vort , Owner of Fin's Seafood			
Caren Ray Russom , Mayor, City of Arroyo Grande			
Charles Varni , Director, Oceano Community Services District	X		X
Cheryl Cuming , CBID Board Member and Chief Administrative Officer of Highway 1 Road Trip (unincorporated area of SLO County TBID)			
Christian Juaregi , Retired Fire Battalion Chief for CalFire	X		
Chuck Davison , President and CEO, Visit SLO CAL	X	X	X
Connie Clark , Search & Rescue			
Dena Bellman , District Planning Chief – Senior Park & Recreation Specialist Channel Coast District for California State Parks	X	X	
Edward Waage , Mayor, City of Pismo Beach			X
Fernando Granados , Sales Manager, Envoy Mortgage	X		
Gary Willey , Air Pollution Control Officer, SLO County Air Pollution Control District (APCD)			
George Prats , Manager of Pacific Dunes Ranch RV Resort			
Gina Hunt McMann , Chumash			X
James Worthley , Planning Director at SLOCOG		X	
Jared MacLeod , Vice President of Friends of Oceano Dunes; VP of Education for California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA)			X
Jeff Lee , Mayor, City of Grover Beach	X		
Jennifer Rokes , Secretary/Treasurer, VACO	X	X	X
Jill Quint , Owner of Deltina Coffee Roasters	X		
Jim Lewis , City Manager of Pismo Beach			X
Jim Sutty , President of Friends of the Oceano Dunes (FoOD)	X		X
Jocelyn Brennan , President of HRM Corp.	X		X
Karen White , Resident and former reporter, Santa Maria Times	X		
Kathy McCorry , CEO of South County Chamber of Commerce	X	X	
Keith Smith , CEO/President of United Spinal Association Central Coast of California Chapter	X		

STAKEHOLDERS	INTERVIEW	WORKSHOP	OPEN HOUSE
Kevin Pearce , Superintendent III, California State Parks	X	X	X
Laura Fiedler , Economic Development Manager for SLO County	X		
Linda Austin , President at Oceano Depot Association; Member, Vitality Advisory Council of Oceano (VACO)	X	X	
Lyndi Love-Hanning , VP of SLO Coast Wine Collective			
Mary Ciesinski , ECO SLO			
Matt Downing , Community Development Director, City of Pismo Beach		X	X
Matthew Bronson , City Manager of Grover Beach		X	X
Melanie MacDowell , Current Chair SLO Chapter of Surfrider Foundation			
Melissa James , President & CEO of REACH	X	X	
Mona Tucker , yak tityu tityu tilhini Northern Chumash (ytt)	X		X
Nick Alter , Chair & Co-Founder of Oceano Economic Development Council	X		X
Nicole Moore , Past Chair of South County Chambers of Commerce	X		
Roger Jacobs , District Planning Chief, California State Parks	X	X	X
Ronnie Glick , Senior Environmental Scientist, California State Parks	X	X	X
Russ Levanway , Executive Vice President of REACH	X		
Sam Cohen , Government and Legal Specialist The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash			X
Sandy Cheek , Policy and Consultation Advisor, Northern Chumash Tribal Council			X
Scott Lathrop , CEO, ytt Northern Chumash Nonprofit			
Sean Emerson , General Manager of Vons Grover Beach	X		
Sheila Patterson , Executive Director at Ride Nipomo Equestrian Trail Alliance	X		
Steve Dayton , Owner of Steve's ATV Rentals & Golf Course	X		
Trevor Keith , Director of SLO County Dept. of Planning and Building			X
Violet Sage Walker , Tribal Chairwoman for the Northern Chumash Tribal Council	X		
Whitney McDonald , City Manager of Arroyo Grande		X	

Appendix: Stewardship Recommendations

POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE
Regional Stewardship	RS.1 Create an Oceano Dunes Stewardship Committee	Short
	RS.2 Improve visitor monitoring, reporting and data use	Short
	RS.3 Provide capacity building support for tourism workforce	Medium
Infrastructure and Investment	II.1 Improve accessibility for all abilities	Short
	II.2 Increase alternative transportation options	Medium
	II.3 Enhance and expand trail systems and walkways	Medium
	II.4 Create and update directional and interpretive signage	Medium
	II.5 Improve bathroom and campsite facilities and access	Medium
	II.6 Upgrade Dunes welcome capacity	Med/Long
	II.7 Diversify accommodations	Long
	II.8 Develop more event venues, restaurants, and retail spaces	Long
Product and Experience Development	ED.1 Develop unique OHV experiences	Short
	ED.2 Diversify visitor activities and services	Short
	ED.3 Extend cultural heritage experiences	Short
	ED.4 Expand eco-experiences and programs	Short
	ED.5 Develop new equestrian facilities	Medium
Park Management and Operations	PM.1 Update the Park’s fee and reservation system	Short
	PM.2 Strengthen Park management operations & programs	Short
Marketing and Communications	MC.1 Improve promotion and education of Oceano Dunes	Short
	MC.2 Develop responsible visitation resources	Short

Appendix: Future Scenarios Ideation

NEW NORMAL: LIMITED-ACCESS

IMPLICATIONS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of visibility and planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Concession planning • Less vehicles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ More rentals ▸ More capacity required • Parking capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Lack of parking within communities • Traffic chaos (main avenue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Grand/ pier logistics ▸ Conflict between day-use/ overnight ▸ Less OHV trailer-type traffic; more congestion because of reservation system • Capacity tracking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ More data, more programs ▸ Better training capacity • Ineffective community access • Negative economic impact, potential slowed growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Hardship on Dunes businesses ▸ City becoming stagnant without investment ▸ Economic impact on current concessionaires • Decreased revenue for State Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Reduced funds for all programs including those for conservation • Become playground only for the rich • Reduced visitor diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More access points to the Dunes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Development of Oso Flaco and better connection to towns • Diversity of transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Mobility within the Dunes (shuttles) • More accommodation capacity • More dune adjacent activities/ access • Becomes a luxury eco-destination • Business development of new activities/services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Retail for low-impact recreation activities (sandboarding) ▸ Curated off-road tours (more exclusive) ▸ Retreats (education/themed) ▸ Equestrian tourism ▸ Concessionaires run all OHV tours • Develop beach boardwalk to connect all communities • Develop more trails for better connectivity • Develop more parking areas • Develop Grand Avenue • Add more EV charging stations • Promote the park differently 	<p><u>Product/Experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new low-impact activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Outdoor activities (wind and sand) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Kiteboarding, sandboarding, hiking, fat-tire biking, movie sets ◊ More events to celebrate outdoor sports ◊ Curated off-road tours ▸ Outdoor activity (water) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Personal watercraft, surfing, fishing • Organized tours/programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Develop capacity/program ◊ Concessionaire access • Culture: history of Dunites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Remake Dunites ◊ Chumash heritage ◊ Authentic cabins <p><u>Infrastructure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address transportation & parking challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Access points (no vehicles) ▸ Alternative transportation ▸ Better parking and traffic infrastructure • Develop new hard infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ New RV area ▸ Boardwalk connecting communities ▸ New diverse lodging (full service with a range of services that fits OD visitor needs) <p><u>Planning and Communications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new strategic plan with local partner engagement including an updated brand identity, promotion and marketing approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Placemaking of destinations and Dunes access points ▸ Promote overnight stays

CONTINUATION: BACK TO THE FUTURE

IMPLICATIONS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monument access tickets • Welcome kiosks • improve /renovate facilities • Environmental implications - dust • Activity : OHV intensive zone • Overtourism/Carrying Capacity Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Need for more enforcement and management ▸ More traffic, less parking capacity ▸ Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ More vehicles in the area ◊ More accidents • Impact on resident quality of life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Vocal minority that want OHV fully closed will be negatively impacted -> historic tensions will resurface • Need more signage and educational materials • Missed opportunity to diversify tourism offerings because of saturation of OHV market • Need for more lodging becomes urgent • Chumash National Marine Sanctuary -> could have implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create activity zones (active/passive) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Diversify activities (experience zones) ▸ Diversify accommodation (accommodation zones) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Overnight camping concession • New system to manage visitors (reservation and physical infrastructure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Partner with the County and others for infrastructure ▸ More parking capacity (Dunes) ▸ Ticketing: different fee schedule ▸ Shuttle service for day users • Develop more facilities (event venues, breweries, wineries, eateries, etc.) • Develop more lodging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Camping destination • Increase visibility of conservation, education and cultural program efforts that have been impactful/successful 	<p><u>Product/Experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHV management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ OHV trail system ▸ Tier 1/2/3 OHV zones ▸ Fee schedule • Dunes zoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Activity zones ▸ Accommodation zones ▸ Day-use zones • Concession program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Diversify activities <p><u>Infrastructure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infrastructure: parking, lodging, transportation, congestion mitigation, etc. • Invest in development amenities in communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Traffic? /boardwalk • Creating more access points and improving placemaking <p><u>Planning and Communications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Connect coupons with community businesses ▸ Market overnight opportunities ▸ Market off-season ▸ Education-focused campaigns (protection/give back) • Become #1 camping destination in California • Engagement and promotion of the success of the environmental, conservation and education program • Continue to develop and promote new tourism offerings (low-impact) • Better monitoring and communication of visitor data with tourism organizations for better planning and visitor education

TRANSFORMATION: NEW ECO-REGION

IMPLICATIONS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Interest to access the Dunes • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Options from surrounding communities ▸ Different access points • Visitation decrease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Day-use ▸ Overnight ▸ Need to shift regional strategic approach • Ghost-town (Guadeloupe = Oceano) • Simpler State Parks management operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Significant loss of state funding for all programming ▸ Needs are reduced (less staff, less vehicles) ▸ Shifts park focus • Loss of visitor market; • Transportation and access would be challenged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative transportation on Dunes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Access to the beach • New infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Gondola, mono-rail ▸ More investment in developing tourism services in communities around the Dunes ▸ Beach Town (pier/grand) ▸ Develop access points, placemaking, and services • Outdoor activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Low-impact concessions • Themed access points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Play: find inner child • Back of Dunes (more protected) • Camping - additional campgrounds • Become California’s most popular bonfire beach 	<p><u>Product/Experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the low-impact activities (All) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Outdoor recreation = passive recreation ▸ Programming: cultural pop-up, unique events, cultural center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Chumash traditions ◊ Education and culture ▸ Ecotourism (eco resort) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Oso Flaco Lodge (flora/fauna) ◊ Wellbeing ◊ Trails ▸ “Beach Town” Authentic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Oceano (community amenities) (main street) ◊ Oso Flaco (low-impact development) • New development of Oso Flaco (camping, concessions, services) <p><u>Infrastructure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the Dunes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Alternative access points: Refinery, Trails, Shuttle (RV), Bike access • Transportation: Amtrak Station connection hub to all points of entry • Dunes for good <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Refinery = desalination plant ▸ Dunes = biodiversity • Investment in adjacent properties from State Parks • Develop new access points and placemaking • Develop new lodging types: camping, eco-lodge • Create a new Pier and downtown area in Grand; more visitor experiences and services closer to the Dunes <p><u>Planning and Communications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and celebrate gateway communities and spaces • Create a new marketing strategy targeting different visitors • Advocating for state support for new development

Appendix: Dunes Benchmark

LIMITED OHV DUNES

Tottori Sakyu, Japan

- Large dunes located in the San'in Kaigan Geo National Park just outside the Tottori city center, spanning roughly 16 kilometers along the Sea of Japan that can reach up to two kilometers wide and 50 meters high.
- Main Activities: Hiking, paragliding, sandboarding, nature viewing, art exhibitions, camel and horse cart rides
- Facilities/Attractions: Sakyu Center observation deck (via chairlift), Sand Museum
- 1.3 million visitors every year
- Management: San'in Kaigan Geo and National Park Managing Board, Steering Committee and Promotion Council working closely with Tottori residents and business owners

Bruneau Dunes State Park, Idaho

- Boasting the tallest single-structured sand dune in North America, with a peak rising 470 feet above the surrounding desert floor, this state park is a year-round dunes destination for leisure and recreation visitors.
- Main Activities: hiking, sandboarding, nature viewing, fishing, horseback riding, biking, stargazing, camping, RVing, educational excursions, and limited OHV
- Facilities/Attractions: Visitor Center, Observatory, campgrounds, and equestrian facilities
- Roughly 128,000 annual visitors support 60 jobs statewide, and visitor and park spending increased the production of goods and services in the communities around the dunes by \$3.2 million (2018)
- Management: Idaho Parks and Recreation

HIGH OHV USE DUNES

Huacachina, Peru

- The only natural oasis in South America located 5 hours from Lima and 15 minutes from the city of Ica. Home to the most extensive sand dunes in the continent and famous for sandboarding and dune buggy tours, the destination first became popular in the 1960's as a local family resort.
- Main Activities: Sandboarding, dune buggy tours, hiking, camping, lagoon activities, restaurants
- Facilities/Attractions: Lagoon, restaurants, accommodations, event venues
- 120 permanent residents are entirely dependent on the small village's tourism economy
- Management: Community of Huacachina

Imperial Sand Dunes, California

- Located in the southeast corner of California, the Imperial Sand Dunes are the largest mass of sand dunes in the state. A favorite place for OHV enthusiasts, the dunes also offer fabulous scenery, opportunities for solitude, and home to rare plants and animals. Some areas prohibit motorized vehicles.
- Main Activities: OHVs, hiking, sandboarding, camping, movie making, and events/festivals
- Facilities/Attractions: campgrounds, vendors
- 1 million people visit annually generating a little over \$3.1 million in fee program revenue
- Management: Bureau of Land Management; Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Subgroup

MIXED USE DUNES

Sossusvlei, Namibia

- Situated in the largest conservation area in Africa (the Namib-Naukluft National Park), Sossusvlei is one of Namibia’s best-known attractions. The dunes in this area are some of the highest in the world, reaching almost 400 meters, and provide nature and adventure enthusiasts with unique experiences. Home to the Namib Sand Sea, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Main Activities: hiking, sandboarding, nature viewing, photography, camping (budget and luxury), eco-lodges, OHV, and hot air balloons
- Facilities/Attractions: Campgrounds, commercial accommodations, concessionaires
- Around 600,000 tourists visit each year
- Management: Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism

Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area

- One of the largest expanses of temperate coastal sand dunes in the world, the stark, mist-shrouded views of dunes, forests, and ocean is a huge draw for nature and OHV enthusiasts. Designated as a National Recreation Area in 1972, the area follows nesting season restrictions March-September.
- Main Activities: OHV, hiking, paddling, wildlife viewing, birding, camping, picnicking, educational experiences, sandboarding and sand play
- Facilities/Attractions: Visitor Center, campgrounds, ATV vendors
- Estimated 500,000 visitors annually
- Management: United States Forest Service, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Accommodations

- Camping
- Glamping (dome tents, cabins, etc.)
- ADA adaptations

Culture & Heritage

- Photography
- Dark Skies/stargazing
- Sand art/museums
- Culture & heritage

Nature and Wildlife

- Wildlife viewing

Programming

- Events and festivals
- Educational experiences
- Culinary journeys

Sports and Outdoor Activities

- Hiking
- Off-Highway/Road Vehicles
- Sandboarding/sledding
- Paragliding/kiteboarding
- Horse/camel riding
- Fishing
- Fat tire biking
- Organized sports (frisbee golf, bubble soccer)
- ADA adaptations

Wellness & Wellbeing

- Wellness retreats
- Wildlife & wellness walk

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