



Air Pollution Control District
San Luis Obispo County

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SLO County APCD Releases a Frequently Asked Questions Guide Related to Air Quality and the Temporary Closure of Oceano Dunes

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA: – SLO County APCD staff has received several inquiries by the community regarding air quality downwind of the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area (Oceano Dunes), SLO County APCD has developed a Frequently Asked Questions Guide (FAQ Guide) to help answer questions and help the public understand what immediate and long-term impacts may be realized from the COVID-19 related temporary closure of the Oceano Dunes.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Governor of California ordered the temporary closure of all camping at California State Parks. Currently, recreational access to the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area (Oceano Dunes) is limited to non-campground and non-vehicular uses of outdoor areas. The sole motivation for these temporary changes is the need to reduce crowding and disease transmission to address the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. However, since closing, there have been ongoing concerns and measures in place to protect the nesting snowy plover population.

This 2020 spring season has been the windiest of the previous 6 years, while 2019 was the least windy. The Oceano Dunes only generates dust when conditions are windy. It is common to assume that the current absence of OHVs will result in improved air quality, or that the temporary cessation provides an opportunity to test the impact of OHV activity on air quality. However, these assumptions are based on a common misunderstanding about the connection between OHV activity and dust.

Overall, the SLO County APCD has seen real, significant improvements in air quality, especially at the CDF monitoring station, especially after taking the wind into account. However, this improvement is not due to the temporary cessation of the OHV-activity, but rather to the large mitigation projects installed prior to the Oceano Dunes closure to vehicles. This is explained in detail in the new FAQ Guide developed by SLO County APCD. Staff remain committed to supporting State Parks in an adaptive management process for ODSVRA dune restoration to maximize these PM emission reductions while minimizing impacts on any future off-highway vehicle recreation opportunities.

To see the complete FAQ Guide developed by SLO County APCD, or to find out more about the efforts to mitigate dust emissions from the Oceano Dunes, visit SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality/oceano-dunes-efforts.

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