



News Release

For Immediate Release:

January 5, 2022

Contact Info:

Jim Suty
President, Friends of Oceano Dunes
805-994-9309

San Luis Obispo Court Rejects the State of California’s and Coastal Commission’s Effort to Deny Trial In Friends of Oceano Dunes’ Case to Establish OHV Recreation Rights

Today, the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court rejected a motion by the State of California, the California Department of General Services, and the California Coastal Commission to throw out a lawsuit (without a trial) filed by Friends of Oceano Dunes. The lawsuit was filed in May 2021 to establish a property right for the public to drive Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) and camp at Oceano Dunes SVRA.

On March 18, 2021, the Coastal Commission purported to change the permit for Oceano Dunes SVRA to require (a) closure of the SVRA by 2024, (b) closure of the Pier Avenue entrance by July 1, 2022, (c) a prohibition against crossing Arroyo Grande Creek immediately when even a trickle of water is present, and (d) a host of other interim restrictions on SVRA OHV recreation and camping. Friends has filed four lawsuits to overturn the Commission action.

Friends’ May 2021 lawsuit seeks to “quiet title” against the State by establishing an “implied dedication” in favor of the public for OHV recreation, camping and beach driving.

In response, the State filed a lengthy motion to dismiss trying to persuade the Court that the law doesn’t allow Friends’ quiet title lawsuit. The Court rejected all of the State’s legal and policy arguments and set the case for trial in March 2023. Friends is taking as many as 20 depositions of “duners” who drove sandrails and dune buggies on the dunes during the 1950s and 1960s.

Friends’ Board of Directors have made clear that Friends will continue to pursue all legal remedies to protect beach driving, camping and OHV recreation at Oceano Dunes SVRA the way it has been occurring for the last 100 years.

Friends of Oceano Dunes is a 501(C)(3) California not-for-profit corporation expressly created in 2001 to preserve camping and off-highway vehicle recreation at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area (ODSVRA). Friends is a grass root volunteer organization which represents approximately 28,000 members and users of the Oceano Dunes SVRA. www.oceanodunes.org

###