Managing Director’s Report, February 2021

We continue to fight battles all over the state with Oceano Dunes, Carnegie and the Forest Service OSV planning analysis taking top billing.

At the last special OHMVR Commission meeting on February 18th, the commission voted to send letters to both Parks and the Coastal Commission regarding the problems with the draft Public Works Plan. The problem with that approach is that the PWP has little to do with OHV recreation, and is much more about improvements to the butterfly Grove, new lighthouses and a boardwalk.

The elements that would affect OHV, such as changing the capacity limits for entry and camping, and ending on beach concessions, are not part of an alternative open for comment but presented as decisions that haver already been made. That means the off-road community isn't being asked to weigh in on those specific items.

Otherwise, the PWP depends on the Particulate Matter Reduction Plan, the Habitat Conservation Plan, and the Biodiversity Management Plan to deal with the contentious issues of dust, endangered species and creek crossing. Most importantly, the PWP rejected the Coastal Commission request to include an alternative that phases out OHV use at Oceano Dunes.

Because of this, the Coastal Commission has decided to bypass the PWP and instead propose their own version of 'recommendations', 180 pages that propose to phase out OHV use at Oceano Dunes. They're encouraging people to weigh on their plan on a special website, and convened a meeting on March 18th to take public comment. What the Coastal Commission is proposing exceeds their statutory authority, and Parks isn't buying into the plan.

There's a new Carnegie bill introduced by Senator Glazer this year, for this legislative session. We also have our Off Road Vehicle Legislative Coalition bill, AB 232/ Gallagher, which is about reciprocity for off-road registrations. Basically, we are proposing fairness for off-road recreation enthusiasts. Those stated that recognize California greenstickers will also have their off-road registrations recognized in California. Residents of states that require Californians to purchase out-of-state registrations when visiting their states, will be also be required to purchase out-of-state registrations when visiting California.

The proposed amendment to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan released on January 15th has been been pulled by the Biden administration. Recreation stood to loose a significant amount of access in the desert had the amendment moved forward.

We had an important issue arise in Anza Borrego State Park this past week. Street legal rock crawlers had been trespassing into an area for some time, but Parks personnel did not stop the activity. After a Fish and Wildlife Ranger discovered a 200 year old Ocotillo tree had been chain-sawed and winch anchors installed, park rangers in Anza Borrego officially closed the area. The outrage on social media exploded, but the pictures we were sent by Parks showed clear abuse of the area. OHV use in Anza Borrego is street legal only, and the community needs to follow the rules and not abuse any travel privileges that exist. We're working with Parks now, and there are possibilities of strengthening contact with the local communities.

All issues with the Forest Service are moving forward, including the Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Collaborative and Northwest Forest Planning Revision effort. But the over snow planning, specific for the Plumas National Forest has hit some considerable snags and the OSV community logged a protest with the Forest Service. I believe the plan is going to be reevaluated, which is a win for the OSV community.