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State of California – The Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**  
of an Environmental Impact Report for the  
Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area  
General Plan Update

**Date:** February 20, 2026

**To:** State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Individuals and Organizations

**Subject:** Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan Update

**Lead Agency:** California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Strategic Planning and Recreation Services Division  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001  
Contact: Erik Taylor, General Plan Project Manager

**Consultant:** AECOM  
401 West A Street, Suite 1200  
San Diego, CA 92101

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is preparing a General Plan Update (Proposed Project) and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). State Parks has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines. This

California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report  
Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan Update

NOP informs agencies and the public that an EIR is being prepared to address potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the Proposed Project.

The CEQA scoping process was previously completed for different iterations of the Proposed Project. An NOP was distributed on December 13, 2007, for a General Plan for the Ocotillo Wells District, including Ocotillo Wells SVRA, Heber Dunes SVRA<sup>1</sup>, and the Truckhaven/Desert Cahuilla area (State Clearinghouse #2007121057). Additionally, an NOP was distributed on March 6, 2015, under the title of Ocotillo Wells General Plan/Recreation Area Management Plan/Land Use Plan Amendment, following the inclusion of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a cooperating agency in the project (State Clearinghouse #2015031024). Since that time, the Proposed Project was paused due to interagency coordination and BLM land use actions are no longer included in the Proposed Project. Because of the time that has elapsed since initial NOP publication and updates to the Proposed Project, re-release of the NOP was determined to be necessary to inform regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and the general public of the upcoming environmental review process and allow for an additional opportunity to submit comments related to the environmental analysis scope. This current scoping period undertaken by State Parks is limited to state environmental review requirements under CEQA.

## **RESPONSES TO THIS NOP**

Because of the time limits mandated by state law, written responses must be sent at the earliest possible date but no later than March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026.

Comments may be submitted via hard copy mail to the following:

Erik Taylor, General Plan Project Manager  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Strategic Planning and Recreation Services Division  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Or submit written comments digitally via the following options:

Email: [info@planocotillowells.org](mailto:info@planocotillowells.org)  
Project website: [planocotillowells.org](http://planocotillowells.org)

## **PROJECT TITLE**

Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan Update

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<sup>1</sup> Heber Dunes SVRA was ultimately removed from the Proposed Project and subject to a separate General Plan and environmental review process.

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

Ocotillo Wells SVRA is an off-highway vehicle (OHV) park, operated by State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVR Division). Ocotillo Wells SVRA encompasses more than 85,000 acres and lies just west of the Salton Sea, in the Colorado Desert in Southern California in Imperial and San Diego counties. It is located approximately 90 miles northeast of the city of San Diego, near the intersection of State Route (SR) 78 and SR 86. The community of Ocotillo Wells is adjacent to Ocotillo Wells SVRA to the south, and the community of Salton City is adjacent to the east. Figure 1 shows the regional location of Ocotillo Wells SVRA.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Proposed Project would provide broad policy and program guidance to direct the long-term management, development, and operation of Ocotillo Wells SVRA, and would be an update to the 1982 Ocotillo Wells SVRA General Plan. This proposed comprehensive update would incorporate new management strategies and include new areas that have been added to Ocotillo Wells SVRA since 1982.

The Proposed Project has been informed by and developed from input gathered at public outreach events, evaluation of existing conditions, and consideration of various draft planning alternatives. Stakeholder interviews have also guided the development of the General Plan Update. The Proposed Project would foster a comprehensive management approach for Ocotillo Wells SVRA and include specific policies and guidelines related to OHV recreation, camping, concessions, special events, and facility development. It would reflect the state-mandated requirements to protect natural, cultural, and physical resources at Ocotillo Wells SVRA, seeking to balance resource management with recreation opportunities. The Proposed Project would also consider the varied land ownership in and adjacent to the SVRA through the establishment of goals and guidelines focused on land use compatibility. Figure 2 shows existing land ownership in Ocotillo Wells SVRA.

## **POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

Based on the proposed land uses and management direction for Ocotillo Wells SVRA, environmental impacts may occur from implementation of the Proposed Project and continued recreational use within the park. Potential environmental effects on the following resource areas are anticipated to be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology, Soils, and Paleontological resources

- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

## **INTENDED USES OF THE EIR**

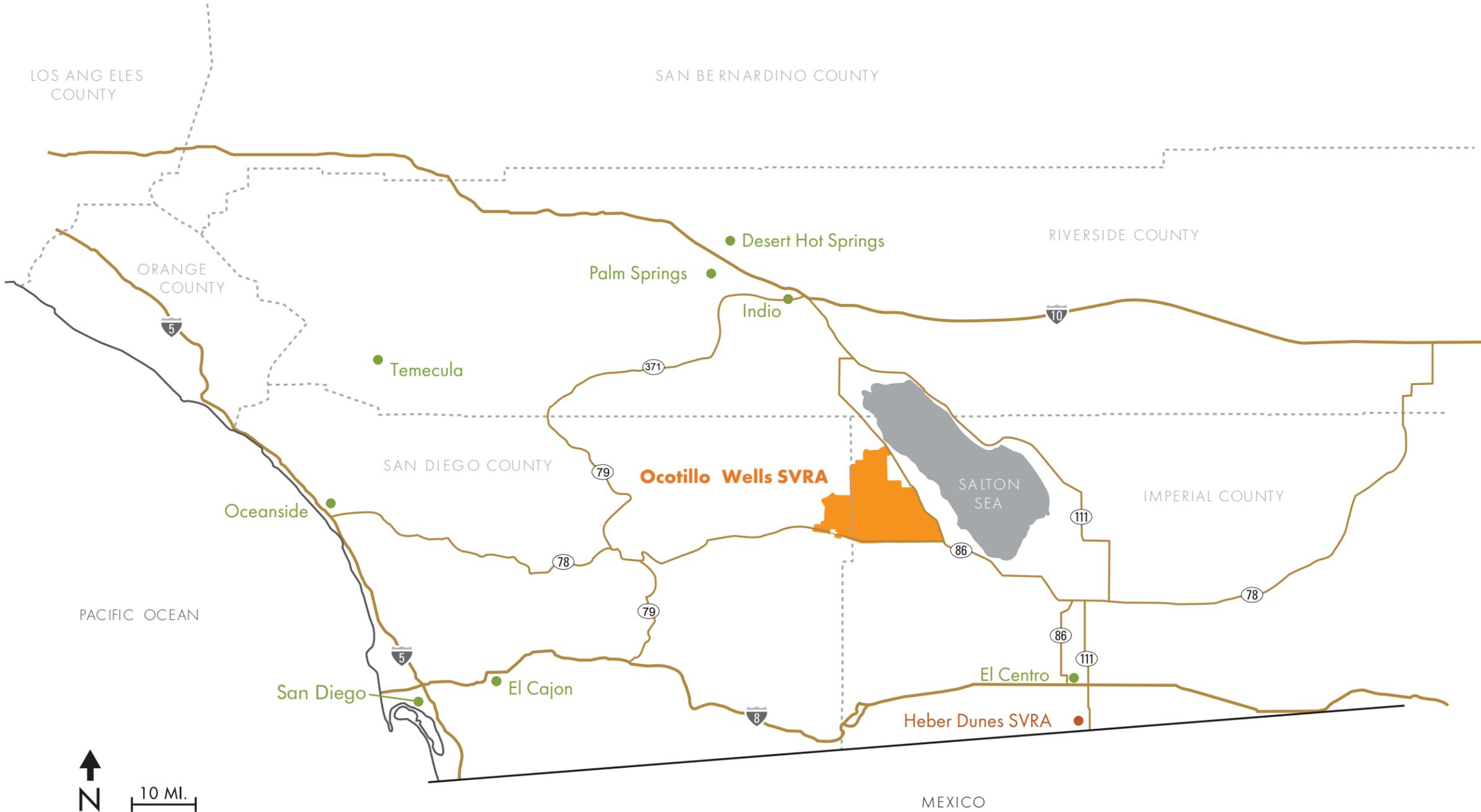
State Parks would use the EIR to consider the environmental effects of the Proposed Project; to provide mitigation measures, if needed; to reduce potential impacts resulting from General Plan implementation; and to evaluate alternatives for site use and management strategies. The OHMVR Commission would use the EIR to support decisions made related to its administrative authority. The EIR would serve as the CEQA compliance document for adoption of the General Plan. It also would serve as a program-level document that may be referenced when implementing future actions in Ocotillo Wells SVRA. Subsequent project-level activities would be examined within the scope of the Program EIR to determine whether additional environmental documents must be prepared before such activities could be approved and implemented (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[c]).

### **Attachments**

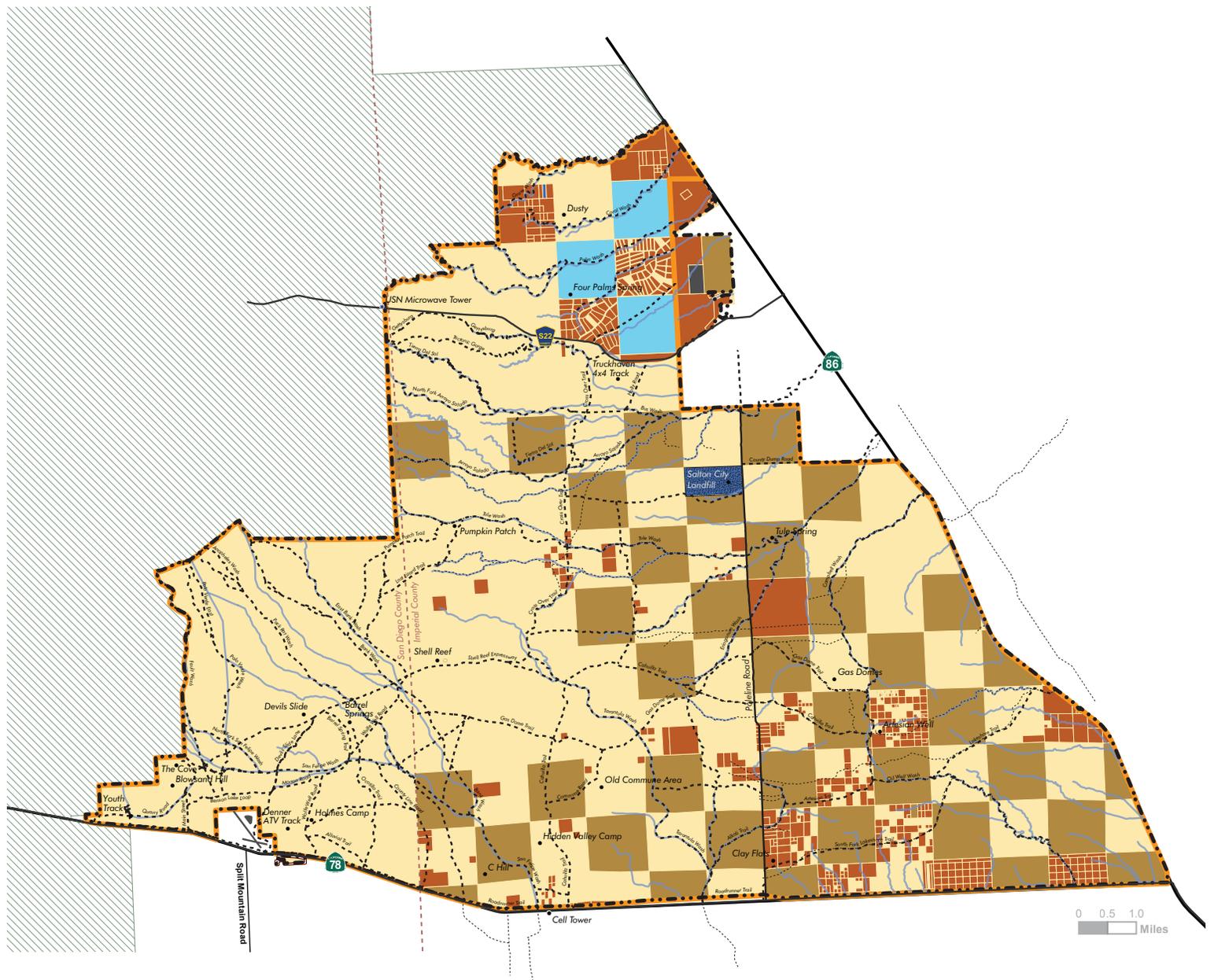
Figure 1: Regional Location Map

Figure 2: Land Ownership Map

Figure 1 - Regional Location of Ocotillo Wells SVRA



# Figure 2 – Ocotillo Wells SVRA Land Ownership Map



-  Ocotillo Wells SVRA Study Area Boundary
-  Ocotillo Wells SVRA Boundary
-  Existing Primary Trails  
Major OHV routes of travel that are shown for orientation purposes only.
-  WECO Routes of Travel  
Open OHV routes of travel identified in the BLM's Western Colorado Desert Routes of Travel (2003)
-  Major Washes
-  Salton City Landfill
-  Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

- ### Land Ownership
-  California State Parks, OHMVR Division
  -  California State Lands Commission
  -  Bureau of Land Management
  -  Private
  -  Imperial County
  -  Department of Defense

Disclaimer: Not all trails may be included on this map.