

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Supervisor Ashley

SUBMITTAL DATE:
December 6, 2005

SUBJECT: Status Report Concerning the Prospective State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) at Laborde

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Authorize the Board Chairman to reconfirm the County's commitment to the SVRA by executing the attached letter to State Parks (Attachment 1);
- 2) Direct a member of the Executive Office and the General Manager for the Riverside County Park and Open Space District to work with the 5th District office and act as the point-of-contact to facilitate communication with State Parks and secure their recommitment to the Laborde site, and;
- 3) Direct staff to report back to the Board periodically.

BACKGROUND:

For more than a decade, the County has worked cooperatively with State Parks to develop an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) facility in the Badlands Area. In November of 2002, a Feasibility Study was prepared that examined the feasibility of developing a SVRA at Laborde Canyon. The study found that development of an OHV facility at that site was feasible and the environmental planning process was initiated by the State.

Departmental Concurrence

Marion Ashley, Supervisor
Fifth District

Dept't Recomm.: Consent Policy
Per Exec. Ofc.: Consent Policy

Prev. Agn. Ref.:

District:

Agenda Number:

3.1

Form 11 – Status Report - SVRA
Page 2
December 7, 2005

The commitment to an SVRA was further memorialized in the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) which provides for incidental take coverage on the 600+ acre facility. The MSHCP was executed both by the County, State Parks, and others in the Summer of 2003.

In November of 2004, the Board of Supervisors approved a \$500,000 option agreement with the owner of the Laborde site. This option is due to expire on May 2, 2006.

At present, the environmental work for the prospective Laborde SVRA is approximately 60 – 70% complete. Provided that key policy issues can be resolved, staff estimates that a park could be opened in approximately three years. This would be considered significant progress given that there are more than 200,000 licenced OHV riders in Southern California and it has been more than two decades since a SVRA was opened anywhere in the State.

At this critical juncture, it is important for the Board to reconfirm its support for the SVRA and communicate that commitment to the State. The SVRA is an essential component of our overall strategy to provide for authorized OHV use in the region and ensure that fundamental commitments to the MSHCP are met.

County of Riverside



SUPERVISOR MARION ASHLEY FIFTH DISTRICT

December 7, 2005

Ms. Ruth Coleman, Director
Dept. of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296

Ms. Daphne Greene
State Parks – OHV
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816

Subject: Riverside County State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) at Laborde

Dear Ms. Coleman and Ms. Greene:

On behalf of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, I would like to reiterate our commitment to developing a SVRA in the Badlands area of Western Riverside County. Our open space areas continue to attract OHV riders from throughout Southern California.

The number of riders in Southern California alone is staggering. There are over 48,000 registered OHV's in Riverside County with an additional 150,000 registered OHV's in the neighboring counties of San Bernardino, Orange, and San Diego. As these numbers rise, the reality is clear--there are simply not enough SVRA's in Southern California to support these enthusiasts. If we do nothing to provide a legitimate regional facility for these riders, more of our sensitive habitat and open space resources will be destroyed by unauthorized OHV use.

Three years ago, a mutual commitment was made between the County and the State to create a SVRA in the Badlands Area of Riverside County. Laborde Canyon was selected for environmental review since it is optimally situated between two major freeways and within driving distance of the State's largest population of riders.

Riverside County State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) at Laborde
December 7, 2005
Page 2

The planning work for this SVRA is approximately 60-70% complete and a park can be opened within 3 years. History indicates that other options will require OHV riders to wait at least 8-10 years before dirt can be turned.

Please know that Riverside County is actively investigating other public and private OHV opportunities. While these opportunities may address some of our local riders' needs, my colleagues and I agree that a SVRA is critical to address the larger, regional needs of OHV riders in Southern California. We ask that you stay the course on this endeavor and ensure that a SVRA is opened in Riverside County in the very near future. Specifically, we recommend that State Parks complete the environmental planning for the Laborde site, proceed with and finalize the design of the SVRA, and initiate acquisitions that would secure the site for SVRA purposes. The County will be happy to lend whatever assistance it can to achieve these goals.

Very truly yours,



Marion Ashley
5th District Supervisor

cc: Bob Buster, First District Supervisor
John Tavaglione, Second District Supervisor
Jeff Stone, Third District Supervisor
Roy Wilson, Fourth District Supervisor
Jim Battin, California State Senate – 37th District
Russ Bogh, California State Assembly – 35th District
Mike Chrisman, California Resources Agency Secretary
Ryan Broddrick, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Tony Carstens, Director, Riverside County TLMA
Carolyn Syms Luna, Environmental Programs Department
Tom Mullen, Regional Conservation Authority
Kathy Gifford, Executive Office
Paul Frandsen, Riverside County Park and Open Space District