

Ocean Protection Council Virtual Public Meeting, 6/19/20 - Item 11 - Public Comments

My name is Bonita Ernst, Oceano CA - a founding member of the Oceano Beach Community Association and home owner, resident of Oceano since 2002.

When virus concerns prompted the closure of the ODSVRA to all motor traffic on March 28th, we were presented with a rare opportunity to see this unique coastal land in a way which has been unavailable for decades. We also saw the extent of the destruction done by motorized recreation and the many attempts to control it.

Locals say they have relished the break from off-road vehicles and traffic. Newcomers to this long stretch of beach say it's been like discovering a hidden gem.

Most said they steered clear because of all the huge campers, monster trucks, four-wheelers and ATV's. Some mentioned sirens, fireworks and confederate flags.

But now, you can see all ages walking, cycling, surfing, fishing, riding horses and just enjoying the open space. Kids are able to run free and explore and seniors walk without fear.

Oceano Beach evolved from a place for dune-buggies and clamming decades ago, to a multi lane highway of monster trucks, RV's that cost more than some of the homes nearby, trucks and trailers hauling dozens of off-road toys back and forth at the water's edge or thru a creek, and no shortage of accidents. In the summer of 2019 there were 6 deaths and a shooting.

But for the last 3 months, mother nature has breathed a sigh of relief, and the natural beauty of this pristine stretch of California Coastline is emerging again. Oceano has a chance, for the first time in decades, to become a vibrant beach & beachtown for everyone to enjoy - without fear of accidents or intimidation.

I know too well that some of you have endured endless testimonies, countless meetings and thousands of passionate letters.

The decision makers of this incredible stretch of coast and ocean have kicked the can down the road for decades. Everyone concerned is weary. The differences are stark. A resolution is needed.

Will it be a world class state park, home to a vast variety of living plants and animals or a machine dominated, stark landscape stripped of vegetation, detrimental to all living creatures that often resembles a scene from Mad Max. If your mission truly is to protect the coast & oceans – I ask for your support.

I also invite you to please take this unique opportunity to visit and see the transformation that has begun and with your help - will be allowed to continue.

Thank you for your efforts, your time and attention.

Attached are links to photos and videos:

OBCA YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCULI-rfvBBQEoKxJMStlALw>

Before and after closure video: <https://youtu.be/5pVgykKSupM>

Google photos - after closure: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/E1wEwpSg21NvDc1w7>

Google photos - vehicles: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/gWnnmTsvSvH8LFU37>

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