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Pilot Projects Begin at Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area

A team of scientists from the Desert Research Institute (DRI) and staff from the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and State Parks gathered at Oceano Dunes last week to install three, small-scale pilot projects that will be evaluated over the next thirty (30) days to assess their effectiveness and long-term viability in reducing particulate matter emissions from the Dunes. High winds and dry conditions provide an ideal environment for measuring the movement of sand upwind, within and downwind of the projects.

The three pilot projects include:

- 1) **Surface Roughness with Straw Bales:** Approximately 400 hay bales were arranged over a half hectare of dunes to assess how the change in sand surface will impact sand movement;
- 2) **Effects of Vegetation:** A robust sampling network was installed around existing vegetation to measure the effectiveness of vegetation in reducing sand movement; and,
- 3) **Vehicle Activity vs. Undisturbed Area:** Measurements using multiple methods will be taken to compare the rate of sand movement in adjacent disturbed and undisturbed open dune areas of the park.

DRI scientists designed the pilot projects and are overseeing their implementation to ensure proper configuration and a robust sampling strategy that produces high quality data. The pilot projects will be monitored daily over the next 30-days, with a report on the results due in mid-summer. To date \$100,000 in funding has been allocated to the pilot project effort, with the County contributing \$25,000 to get project started, and State Parks funding the remaining \$75,000; this cost does not include the staffing and other resources provided by each of the agencies involved in this effort.

Initiation of the pilot projects marks a significant milestone towards the development of a long-term Particulate Matter Reduction Plan (PRMP) for the Dunes. The PMRP will be developed by technical experts overseen by State Parks, in consultation with APCD and the County, to meet the requirements of an APCD Fugitive Dust regulation currently under development. The public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the draft regulation through public workshops and Board hearings expected to begin in late summer or early fall of this year. For more information on the elements of the pilot project visit the APCD's website (www.slocleanair.org).

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