



**Oceano Parks and Recreation Committee Agenda**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2024 – 1:30 P.M.**  
**Oceano Community Services District Board Room**  
**1655 Front Street Oceano, CA**

All items on the agenda, including information items, may be deliberated. Any member of the public with an interest in one of these items should review the background material and request information on the possible action that could be taken.

The Oceano Community Services District strongly encourages your active participation in the public process, which is the cornerstone of democracy. All persons desiring to speak during any Public Comment period are asked to fill out a "Board Appearance Form" to submit to the Board Secretary prior to the start of the meeting. If you wish to speak to an item NOT on the agenda, you may do so during the "Public Comment On Matters Not on the Agenda" period. Each individual speaker is limited to a presentation time of THREE (3) minutes per item. The time limits allocated to speakers may change to facilitate the Board meeting better. Time limits may not be yielded to or shared with other speakers.

The purpose of the Committee meeting is to conduct the business of the community in an effective and efficient manner. For the benefit of the community, the Oceano Community Services District asks that you follow the Board meeting guidelines while attending Committee meetings and treat everyone with respect and dignity. This is done by following meeting guidelines set forth in State law and Board policy. Disruptive conduct is not tolerated, including but not limited to addressing the Committee without first being recognized; interrupting speakers, Committee members, or staff; continuing to speak after the allotted time has expired; failing to relinquish the podium when directed to do so; and repetitiously addressing the same subject.

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

*This public comment period provides an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board on matters of interest within the jurisdiction of the District that are not listed on the agenda. If a member of the public wishes to speak at this time, Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes.*

5. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

**Public comment** Items appearing on the Consent Items are considered routine and may be approved by one motion. Any member of the Board may request to have an item removed from the Consent Items. If an item is pulled, the President has the sole discretion to determine when the item will be heard. Members of the public wishing to speak on Consent items may do so when recognized by the Presiding Officer. If a member of the public wishes to speak at this time, Public comment is limited to

- A. Review and approve the minutes of the Oceano Parks and Recreation Committee meeting of June 4, 2024.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS:

**Public comment** Members of the public wishing to speak on business items may do so when recognized by the Committee Officer. If a member of the public wishes to speak at this time, Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes.

- A. Updates, review, and discussion of Grants
  1. State Parks (Field Trips) - mid-year grant budget report
  2. CDBG Preventative Health Grant – status of grant receipt; use of initial funds for design and engineering; branding project.

- B. OPARC/OES Track & Fundraiser discussion:
  - 1. Review and discuss alternatives for non-profit, tax-deductible fundraising options and develop recommendations for the OCSD Board of Directors as deemed appropriate.
- C. Marketing
  - 1. OPARC logo discussion
  - 2. EZ up purchase for events
  - 3. OPARC landing page review and discussion: <https://ocsd.specialdistrict.org/oceano-parks-recreation-committee-oparc>
- D. Event updates:
  - 1. Day of the Child on June 23, 2024
  - 2. Future events

## 7. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

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This agenda was prepared and posted pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2. The agenda is posted at the Oceano Community Services District, 1655 Front Street, Oceano, CA. Agenda and reports can be accessed and downloaded from the Oceano Community Services District website at [www.oceanocsd.org](http://www.oceanocsd.org)

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**ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED** If you are disabled in any way and need accommodation to participate in the Board meeting, please call the Clerk of the Board at (805) 481-6730 for assistance at least three (3) working days prior to the meeting so necessary arrangements can be made.



# Oceano Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Summary Minutes for  
 Tuesday, June 4, 2024 – 1:30 P.M.  
 Oceano Community Services District

1. **Call To Order:** Member Varni called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM.

2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Charles Varni, Board President OCSD Wanda Monson, Safe Routes to School Chair Ray Monson, Member at Large Jeannie Harper, Habitat for Humanity Nicole Miller, Account Administrator OCSD	Absent: Beverly Joyce-Sunesson, OPARC Chair Andy Stenson, Director of Facilities, LMUSD Jasmine Dexter, Boys & Girls Club Bruce Hilton, Co of SLO Parks Commissioner
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3. **Agenda Review:** Accepted as presented.

4. **Public Comment on Matters not on the Agenda:** None

5A Consent Agenda	Discussion/Action:
Review and Approval of Minutes for the Oceano Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting of June 4, 2024	The minutes were accepted as presented, with a motion from Member Varni, a second from Member W. Monson, and a 3-0 member vote.  Public Comment: None

6A Business Items	Discussion/Action:
Review and discussion of alternatives for non-profit, tax-deductible fundraising options and developing recommendations to the Board of Directors as deemed appropriate.	Committee discussion: •Member Varni advised the application for Ecologistics has been submitted and that there were concerns from members of the OCSD Board of Directors about Ecologistics using the 6% fees received for environmental advocacy.  •Member Varni recommended moving fundraising in-house to OCSD staff due to the proposed 2024-2024 budget adjustment increase to OPARC's administrative line item.  Member W. Monson motioned to approve moving fundraising from Ecologistics to OCSD with a second from Member R. Monson and a 3-0 member vote.  Public Comment: Kerry Langford – Asked if any other outsourcing options were available and asked a clarifying budget question.

<b>6B (1A-B) Business Items</b>	<b>Discussion/Action:</b>
<p>Updates, review, and discussion:</p> <p>1) Grants</p> <p>    a) State Parks</p> <p>    b) CDBG</p>	<p>Committee discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Member W. Monson provided an update stating that the field trips that concluded were successful and that the overall process was very smooth.</li> <li>•A mid-year report is being submitted in July after surveys from teachers and photos are in.</li> <li>•A planning meeting with the Oceano Elementary School principal is scheduled with Member W. Monson and Member Varni to review the program and schedule remaining field trips for Aug-Dec 2024.</li> </ul> <p>•Member Varni noted a response regarding the CDBG grant in mid-July is due. OPARC applied for 50K in funds for the walking/jogging track. The estimated track cost is to be determined; the highest cost aspect of construction will be the concrete perimeter (curb) around the track.</p> <p>Public Comment:</p> <p>Kerry Langford – Questions regarding the proposed “Champions for Oceano” tiers for fundraising</p>

<b>6B (2A-B) Business Items</b>	<b>Discussion/Action:</b>
<p>Marketing:</p> <p>2) Grants</p> <p>    a) OPARC logo and logo items (EZ up, etc.)</p> <p>    b) District website page for OPARC and social media</p>	<p>Committee discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•LMUSD digital media arts students created logos for OPARC and the track fundraising for the OPARC committee to review. Member Varni asked the committee to choose their top 3 for compilation and review at the next OPARC meeting.</li> </ul> <p>•Mrs. Miller noted that the committee would need to secure a separate website for OPARC and fundraising (donate button).</p> <p>Public Comment: None</p>

<b>6B (3A) Business Items</b>	<b>Discussion/Action:</b>
<p>Event Updates:</p> <p>3) Events</p> <p>    a) Day of the Child event on June 23, 2024</p>	<p>Committee discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Member Varni noted that Chair Joyce-Suneson will have a table at the event.</li> <li>•Member W. Monson is coordinating event notification via Parent Square and the Oceano Elementary School website.</li> </ul> <p>Public Comment: None</p>

<b>6B (4) Business Items</b>	<b>Discussion/Action:</b>
<p>OPARC/OES Track &amp; Fundraiser discussion and update</p>	<p>Committee discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discussed in item 6A</li> </ul> <p>Public Comment: None</p>

7. **Items for Next Agenda:** Logo design selection; Outreach brochure

8. **Adjournment** at 2:19 PM.





# Oceano Community Services District

1655 Front Street, P.O. Box 599, Oceano, CA 93475

(805) 481-6730 FAX (805) 481-6836

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**Date:** August 6, 2024

**To:** Oceano Parks and Recreation Committee

**From:** Carey Casciola, Business & Accounting Manager  
Peter Brown, General Manager

**Subject:** **Agenda Item #6A(1):** Review the mid-year report for the Field Trips to State Parks Program under the Parks CA 2024 Route to Parks Grant Program.

## Recommendation

It is recommended that your committee review the mid-year report for the Field Trips to State Parks and Beaches Program through the Parks CA 2024 Route to Parks Grant Program.

## Discussion

The grant application for the Field Trips to State Parks and Beaches Program was approved at the September 6, 2023, Special Meeting of the Oceano Community Services Board of Directors. In December 2023, the district was awarded \$15,904 for the program. See the attached mid-year report, which is due August 9, 2024.

## Other Agency Involvement

The District partners with the Lucia Mar School District, the Oceano Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization, and the San Luis Obispo Beaver Brigade to provide transportation, curriculum, and fingerprinting for chaperones to local state parks and beaches.

## Financial Considerations

During the first half of 2024, the program spent \$8,792.84 on 14 trips for 548 participants. In the upcoming school year, the program anticipates 9 trips for 14 different classes at Oceano Elementary School.

## Results

Field trips to Oceano Elementary School offer an opportunity to connect students, teachers, staff, and chaperones and provide education about local state parks and beaches.

Attachments:

- 2024 Routes to Parks Grant Mid-Year Report

# Field Trips to State Parks and Beaches

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## *2024 Route to Parks Grant Program*

### ***Oceano Community Services District***

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Mr. Peter Brown  
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Oceano, CA 93445

peter@oceanocsd.org  
O: 805-481-6730

### ***charles varni***

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# FollowUp Form

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## *Program Activities*

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We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to support your efforts to increase access to California State Parks and the outdoors. Please complete this brief survey about progress you have made on your grant since it was awarded. To download a full list of survey questions, you may click the "Question List" button in the upper righthand corner of your screen.

**Instructions:**

You are able to save as you go, and revisit the report prior to submission, if needed. If you have any technical issues and/or need to get back into your survey, please do not hesitate to reach out.

**Project Name\***

Name of Project.

Field Trips to State Parks and Beaches

**Organization\***

Oceano Community Services District

**Is your organization on track to meet the deliverables you identified in your grant agreement?\***

Yes

**Has your organization held any programming since the start of the grant period?\***

If yes is selected, you will be prompted to report on project outputs.

Yes

**Midterm Report: Program Summary\***

Please briefly summarize your Parks California-funded program, including what, where, when, and with whom the program took place.

(Please write up to 1,500 characters)

The Field Trips to State Parks and Beaches Program by Lucia Mar School District, Oceano Elementary School Parent Teach Organization, the Beaver Brigade of San Luis Obispo County and the Oceano Community Services District has provided 14 trips during the period of February to June 2024. So far, 470 students ranging from 1st to 6th grade, 42 chaperones, and 36 staff members have visited 7 different destinations. These destinations include the La Purisima Mission, the Morro Bay Natural History Museum, the Oceano Campground, the Oceano Nature Center, the Oso Flaco State Park, Hearst Castle and the Avila Aquarium.

## *Program Outputs*

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### **Midterm Report: Funds for transportation\***

Please tell us how you have used the funding for transportation.

Costs Break down as of May 29, 2024 (See attached PDF):

\$2,880.00 has been sent to Oceano Elementary School to cover the costs of chaperones fingerprinting.

\$2,288.00 has been sent to the San Luis Obispo Beaver Brigade for the development of curriculum, coordinating, permitting and scheduling for February- March.

\$3,088.84 has sent to Lucia Mar School District for the use of their school buses.

\$536.00 has been sent to CA Department of Parks and Recreation for the Hearst Castle entry fees.

\$8,792.84 has been spent and \$7,111.16 remains in the 2024 budget.

### **Midterm Report: Number of Participants\***

Please estimate the number of (unduplicated) individuals who, with support from Parks CA, participated in your program(s) over the last 6 months.

548

### **Midterm Report: Number of Trips\***

Please share the number of trips, with support from Parks CA, were conducted over the last 6 months.

14

### **Midterm Report: Types of Activities\***

Please share the types of activities, such as camping, hiking, kayaking, etc., that your organization has facilitated, with support from Parks CA, over the last 6 months.

The students participated in educational tours of La Purisima Mission, the Morro Bay Natural History Museum, the Oceano Campground, the Oceano Nature Center, the Oso Flaco State Park, Hearst Castle and the Avila Aquarium. They were provided with interactive learning lessons regarding wetlands and short hikes of the parks which included following a game trail. See the attached curriculum prepared by the San Luis Obispo Beaver Brigade.

## *Survey Tool*

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### **Survey Tool\***

We provided an optional survey tool for you to use to collect some simple outcomes on your participants. Have you used this tool? Please note, we will collect aggregate survey response data in the Final Report at the conclusion of your project.

Yes, we used the survey tool

## *Stories and Additional Data*

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### **Midterm Report: Relationship with State Parks\***

One of the goals of this grant is to strengthen relationships between California State Parks and local organizations. How, if at all, has your relationship with the California State Park System changed as a result of this grant?

This was many of the students first time to these locations and they were able to learn the names of sea creatures, words from the chumash language, and history and importance of each location to the local ecosystem. Some students had never been to the beach or lagoon before and pointed out the sea creatures they had learned about during the interactive tour.

### **Midterm Report: Resources to improve relationships with California State Parks\***

Are there any resources or services Parks California can provide to help improve relationships with the California State Park System?

In some of the surveys the teacher and chaperones mentioned how the most of student's favorite part of the tours were the sections that were hands-on.

### **Midterm Report: Stories\***

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this project has made a difference in the lives of the people your program serves.

At a visit to Osos Flaco Lake with the Beaver Brigade one student said, "This fieldtrip was a definite winner"

At a visit to the Oceano Dunes Center students said, "This was the best field trip ever"

"More language.... I want to know more Chumash Words"

"The best part were the games"

"I liked it and it was close to my house"

See the attached surveys prepared by the teachers and chaperones.

### **Additional Data and/or Information**

Please share with us any additional preliminary results of data you have collected on how your participants have changed as a result of your program **and/or** any additional information related to your project that you would like to share. You may share this data in the text field below, or as an uploaded attachment.

Survey - Wanda Monson.pdf

In the upcoming school year (FY 2024-25) 9 field trips are tentatively scheduled to 6 different destinations. The trips will take 14 different classes ranging from 1st to 6th at the Oceano Elementary School to the Avila Aquarium, the Butterly Grover, the La Purisima Conception Mission, the Morro Bay Natural History Museum, the Oceano Campground, Hearst Castel, and the Oceano Nature Center. See the attached photos, surveys, and letter of support from the Oceano Elementary School Principal, Johsua Herrera.

### **Additional Attachments**

If you have additional information you'd like to share about the project, you may submit then as an attachment.

Letter of Support Safe Routes to Parks Field Trips.pdf

When you click Submit, the report will be submitted, and you will be able to access a copy of your responses on your dashboard. Please download your response summary for your own records.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- Survey - Wanda Monson.pdf
- Letter of Support Safe Routes to Parks Field Trips.pdf

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Oceano Elementary

Name of Event: Avila Beach Aquarium Field Trip

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 24

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

10

Raise your hand if you have 19 (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

19

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 20

Total number of student participants: 24

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: OCSD Oceano Community Service District

Name of Event: Avila Aquarium and Park

Date: 2/29/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 50

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

Yes to the aquarium, I had been to the park.

Raise your hand if you have \_\_\_\_\_ (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

Yes, absolutely

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time

in nature. Yes, always

Total number of student participants: 41

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

Some students had never been to an aquarium before so this was very special to them. Their excitement naming the sea creatures and getting to touch them was amazing! As a teacher, I love how hands-on the field trip was.



### Participant Survey

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: OSO FIACO Beaver Brigudge

Date: 4/8/24

#### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 22

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

16

Raise your hand if you have \_\_\_\_\_ (activity) for the first time.

22

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

12

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 5

Total number of student participants: 22

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

Morro Bay

### Participant Survey

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: Morro Bay Natural History Museum

Date: 3/12/24

#### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 22

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

17

Raise your hand if you have 12 (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

9

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 6

Total number of student participants: 22

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: Avila Bay Aquarium

Date: 2/22/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 24 + 3 adults

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

~~0~~ 11

Raise your hand if you have 21 (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

22

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 20

Total number of student participants: 24

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: SLO Beaver Brigade / Oceano Lagoon  
Name of Event: Beaver Brigade (SLO) Visitor Center  
Date: Mon. 3/18/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 28

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

1

Raise your hand if you have Beaver Brigade (activity) for the first time. 19

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

11

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 15

Total number of student participants: 28

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: Avila Aquarium trip

Date: Feb 2024

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 16

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

6

Raise your hand if you have gone to aquarium (activity) for the first time. 10

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

16

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 10

Total number of student participants: 9

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Oceano Dunes Visitor Center

Name of Event: Northern Chumash Education

Date: April 23, 2024

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 26 kids 4 adults

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

YES!

Raise your hand if you have \_\_\_\_\_ (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

18 yes!

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. yes! 15

Total number of student participants: 25

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.



## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Oceano Elementary

Name of Event: ~~4/10/24~~ Oso Flaco Beaver Brigade

Date: 4/10/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 7 students 5 adults = 12

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

11

Raise your hand if you have \_\_\_\_\_ (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

12

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 12

Total number of student participants: 7

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Beaver Brigade

Name of Event: Oso Flaco Lake

Date: 5/7/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 21

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

20

Raise your hand if you have 20 (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

14

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 4

Total number of student participants: 21

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

One student said that this fieldtrip was a definite "W"!



## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Morro Bay Natural History Museum  
Name of Event: tour  
Date: March 12

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 22

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

21

Raise your hand if you have 21 (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

15

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 8

Total number of student participants: 22

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Oceano Elementary

Name of Event: Beaver Brigade

Date: Monday, 3/11/2024

**Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:**

How many total participants attended this outing? 25

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

17

Raise your hand if you have looked for signs of beaver life (activity) for the first time. 22

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

5

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 9

Total number of student participants: 23

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Oceano Dunes Center

Name of Event: Oceano Dunes Center

Date: 4/25/2024

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 22

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

17

Raise your hand if you have walked the lagoon/visited (activity) for the first time. 15

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

17

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 13

Total number of student participants: 22

Please share one or more stories or <sup>student</sup> quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

- "This was the best field trip ever!"
- "More language → I want to know more chumash words"  
videos to watch before
- The best part was the games
- I liked it  $\frac{1}{2}$  it was close to my house!"

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: Beaver Brigade

Name of Event: Oso Flaco Field Trip

Date: 4/23/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? ~~22~~ 24

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

3

Raise your hand if you have heard a beaver talk (20) (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

14

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 13

Total number of student participants: 22

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

This group does not get many opportunities for outdoor exploration with knowledgeable guides. They enjoyed walking searching for nature items, and playing at the beach.

## Participant Survey

Name of Organization: La Purisima Mission

Name of Event: Mission Field Trip

Date: 3/13/24

### Complete survey by recording participant's show of hands:

How many total participants attended this outing? 26

Raise your hand if this is the first time you have visited this park/outdoor space.

22

Raise your hand if you have MISSION VISIT (18) (activity) for the first time.

Raise your hand if you are interested in visiting this park/outdoor space again.

11

Raise your hand if, after visiting the state park, you are more interested in spending time in nature. 13

Total number of student participants: 24

Please share one or more stories or quotes that illustrates how this field trip experience has made a difference for your students.

Students had fun learning about history. Enjoyed the interactive parts.





## Oceano Elementary School

1551 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Oceano, CA 93445  
Phone: (805) 474-3800 Fax: (805) 473-5519

July 22, 2024

**RE: Letter of Support—Oceano Elementary Safe Routes to Parks**

Dear Oceano Community Services District and the State Route to Parks Grant Committee,

On behalf of Oceano Elementary School, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the Safe Routes to Parks grant opportunity to benefit the students of Oceano Elementary. Oceano Elementary is a Title I. school, where over 80% of the student population is considered socio-economically disadvantaged. This makes it very difficult for our students to have access to our local state parks.

Last year we received funding to begin the work of ensuring the students of Oceano Elementary have access to local parks, building their lifelong connection to the outdoors and the beautiful nature around the central coast. With last year's funding, over 470 students were able to attend amazing locations including La Purisima Concepcion Mission, Morro Bay Natural History Museum, Oceano Campground, Oceano Nature Center, Oso Flaco State Park and Hearst Castle. Students enjoyed the field trips tremendously and many of them stated that this was their first field trip and their first time being on a school bus.

This year, our school wide learning theme is, "Scholars on Safari," where the goal is to give students access to learn more about animals, habitats and ecosystems. With this lens, we would like our students to have another opportunity to visit our amazing state parks and learn more about the animals in nature.

The funding requested will continue to go to transportation, entry fees and ensuring parents have access to attend the field trips with students.

The Oceano Community Services District has been a tremendous supporter of our field trips to state parks, and we appreciate everything this organization has done for Oceano Elementary School.

We are greatly appreciative of your consideration of this grant and reiterate our strong support for its approval.

Sincerely,

Joshua Herrera, Principal  
Oceano Elementary School



Pictured: Oceano 6th  
Graders visiting Hearst  
Castle



**SAN LUIS OBISPO BEAVER BRIGADE**  
Watershed Stewards and Beaver Advocates  
[www.slobeaverbrigade.com](http://www.slobeaverbrigade.com)

March 20, 2024

To California State Parks,

The [SLO Beaver Brigade](#) has been educating our county on the benefits of beavers to our watersheds since 2020. We will be offering educational tours to Oceano Public Schools beginning in March 2024. We've attached a site map of our day at Osos Flaco State Park. We would like to meet up at the picnic tables in the parking area of Oso Flaco Lake.

Our curriculum Plan and schedule is:

**10:00am - 10:30am : Meet up at the picnic tables in parking area of Oso Flaco Park:**

1. Wetland Basics:
  - a. What is a wetland
  - b. Why are they important
  - c. How do beavers help wetlands
  - d. Wetland characteristics: full of life, predators and prey!

**10:30am - 11:00am Begin Walk along trail towards boardwalk.**

1. Game on trail: Mountain Lion - Deer. Instructor will go about 30 feet ahead of the class and pretend he is a deer. The class will pretend they are mountain lions. Whenever the deer looks up and behind him, the mountain lions need to be completely still, otherwise they are out because the deer will see them. The goal is for one of the students/mountain lions to reach the deer without the deer seeing any movement at all.

**11:00pm - 12pm Visual Scavenger Hunt along boardwalk**

1. Scavenger hunt on the walk. Students will be split up into groups of 5-6 students per group with 1 adult teacher/chaperone. Each will be given a list of wetland related items to spot on the trail as they walk. Once an item is spotted by a student, the teacher/chaperone will confirm and check off of the list.
2. Stop at 2, debrief scavenger hunt.

**12pm-12:30pm**

1. Eat lunch at picnic tables at area 3, near bathroom facilities.

SLO Beaver Brigade is educating and raising awareness around the existence and benefits of beavers in San Luis Obispo County. We advocate the health of watersheds through beaver habitat restoration and stewardship by supporting wetland and beaver research, installing beaver management tools, and organizing river cleanups.

CONTACT: Audrey Taub (805) 464-1255 [audrey@slobeaverbrigade.com](mailto:audrey@slobeaverbrigade.com)



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**12:30 pm-1:30 pm**

1. Walk back, sound activity? For the next 5 minutes of the walk, count how many different bird sounds you hear. Debrief.
2. Return to picnic tables in the parking area. Debrief the day: what was your highlight? What did you learn? What surprised you? What do you want

Please let us know if you need any further information from us.

Sincerely,

Audrey Taub

SLO Beaver Brigade

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# Would beavers make good firefighters?

**Authors:**  
Emily Fairfax and Andrew Whittle  
**Associate Editors:**  
Liesa Ziegler and Fiona Firth



## Abstract

We all know beavers as cute animals with flat tails. They gnaw down trees with their sharp teeth and build dams in rivers. But beavers are much more than lumberjacks. By building those dams, they reshape the whole environment around them and provide their surroundings with more water.

And this actually helps the plants around beaver dams to survive during wildfires! Therefore, we can think of beavers not only as great lumberjacks, but also as effective firefighters.

## Introduction

Beavers live all across North America and also in Europe and Asia. They are very well known for building dams out of wood. They usually also add stones and mud to build a stable dam. These dams make the rivers flow more slowly. They even keep back enough water that a new pond forms behind the dam.

But beavers do far more to reshape the environment around them. They also dig canals from their ponds out into the surrounding lands. These canals look like tiny rivers and are filled with water from the pond. As a result, even plants that grow a bit farther away from the pond get enough water from the canals (Fig. 1). This makes beavers very important for protecting the environment against **droughts**.

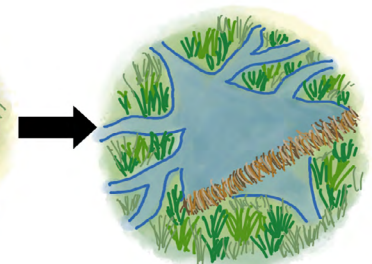
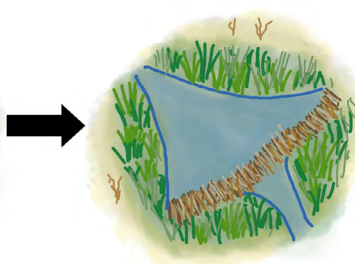
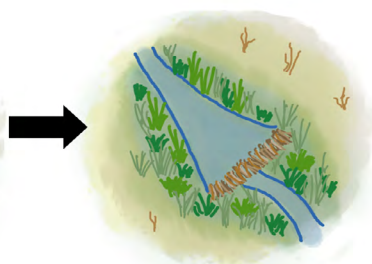
**Figure 1:**  
Beavers have **3** important functions for the environment:

A Simple Stream  
Without Beavers

**1.** Beavers Move In  
and Build a Dam

**2.** Beavers Make The Dam  
and Pond Bigger

**3.** Beavers Dig Canals  
From Their Pond



This slows the water down

This stores water

This spreads the water

This protects the plants around them from dying even if there is a **drought**, because there is far more water available.

You can probably imagine that it is harder to burn plants that are healthy and green from drinking enough water. Dry, brown plants burn more easily. So we asked ourselves:

if plants around beaver dams are better **hydrated**, would this be enough to protect them from wildfires?

## Methods

To test our theory, we chose five different locations across North America. Wildfires have affected all five places in recent years. All five spots had some parts with beaver territories in them and some parts without beavers.

We looked at satellite images from all five spots. The pictures allowed us to identify the areas where beavers lived, because you can see the beaver dams and their ponds

on the satellite images. So, we had pictures of areas **with** beavers and of areas **without** beavers from five different wildfires.

We then looked at the images from one year before the wildfire started and also at images taken during the wildfire. We compared how green the areas around the beaver dams were to the areas without beaver dams.

## Results

According to our theory, areas with beavers should stay greener during wildfires. And we were right! The wildfires burned in both the areas with the beavers and the areas without beavers, but the beaver territories stayed much greener during wildfires (Fig. 2).

We are pretty sure this is because of the beaver dams and canals. The plants there have more water available and therefore don't burn as easily as plants that are less hydrated.

How do we know that beaver dams protect the surrounding area from wildfires?



With Beavers



Without Beavers



**Figure 2:**

Even during a wildfire, more plants survive near beaver dams than in those areas without dams!

Photos: [Joseph Wheaton](#) (Utah State University) / [CC BY 4.0](#)

## Discussion

Although it might seem obvious that plants with more water are less likely to burn, our findings are of great importance! We proved that beaver activity can sustain enough water in the environment so that areas are less affected by wildfires. Not only does this mean that more plants survive, but it also creates a **refuge** for animals during wildfires. Not all animals can fly away, swim away, or run fast enough to escape the spreading fires. They can find shelter in the areas around

beaver dams, where the fire cannot reach them.

**So beaver activity reshapes the environment and protects plant and animal life from wildfires.** This is something people living in areas that are **prone** to wildfires should keep in mind. Maybe it would be a good idea to introduce beavers into these areas. That way, the beavers would help create fire-resistant spots in the landscapes just by living there!

## Conclusion

**If you live in an area that is prone to wildfires – or if you know people living in such areas – you could make other people aware of the advantages of beavers.** You could talk to your friends, teachers, wildlife organizations, politicians,

or even the public in your town. Tell them that beavers could help them in their wildfire management. This could not only save the lives of plants and animals but also get you a cool firefighting beaver in the neighborhood!

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Drought** – an extended period of dryness, especially when it causes damage to plants.

**Hydrated** – hydration is the level of water in people, animals, or plants. If you drink enough water every day, you are hydrated.

**Prone** – being likely, having a tendency.

**Refuge** – a place where you are safe from whatever danger you are facing. A refuge might be your home if you feel overwhelmed by school or it might even be a whole country that takes you in if you need to flee from your own country.

## REFERENCES

Emily Fairfax and Andrew Whittle (2020) *Smokey the Beaver: beaver-dammed riparian corridors stay green during wildfire throughout the western United States*. Ecological Applications.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.2225>

Science Kids: Fun Beaver Facts for Kids

<https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/beaver.html>

Kiddle Encyclopedia: Beaver Facts for Kids

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Beaver>

## Check your understanding

1 How would you describe a beaver? What do beavers do?

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2 Why do plants around the beaver dams have access to more water?

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3 How do beavers also protect animals from wildfires?

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4 Use books and the Internet to do some more research about beavers. Write at least four facts to share with your classmates.

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**Acknowledgement:** This article's adaptation was supported by the GM Foundation.

