

California Department of Fish and Game
Office of Spill Prevention and Response



U.S. Department of
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**United States
Coast Guard**



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Contact: Melissa Boggs, OSPR
805-772-1756

Press Release

Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve oil sump clean-up

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Media Contact: Melissa Boggs, OSPR Environmental Scientist: 805-772-1756

North Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve closed during clean-up operations

Thriftway Company is working with the U.S. Coast Guard and California Department of Fish and Game Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) to implement plans to remove oil-contaminated sump material (oily sand) and pipelines, at the north end of the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve in northern Santa Barbara County.

Because of the excavation and clean-up work to be done, the north end of the beach will be closed for public safety until further notice.

The beach is on the south side of the Santa Maria River. At one time, four oil wells existed on the site. When installing the wells, oil-soaked sand was generated as waste. Prior to effective environmental regulation, drillers would dispose of this oily material by digging a pit nearby and burying it. High tides and heavy surf have eroded the beach enough to expose the oily sump material, and some is likely to have been released into the ocean.

To ensure protection of both public and ecosystem health, the Coast Guard and OSPR will oversee the clean-up operations in a standard "Unified Command," working cooperatively with Thriftway Company, which last operated the abandoned wells. To date, no oiled wildlife has been observed.

The Coast Guard and OSPR are working with other local, state and federal agencies and with the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM). The beach is owned by Santa Barbara County and managed by the nonprofit CNLM. Until the Unified Command announces the north portion of the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve has been re-opened, the public is asked to stay away from the work area at the north end of the beach. During clean-up, some traffic delays may occur while entering and exiting the park.

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