

ORIG

Progress Report for

**Guadalupe Dunes (Santa Barbara County)
Fence Installation**

Fish and Game Contract #9508

08 July 1991

Contract Manager:

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Introduction

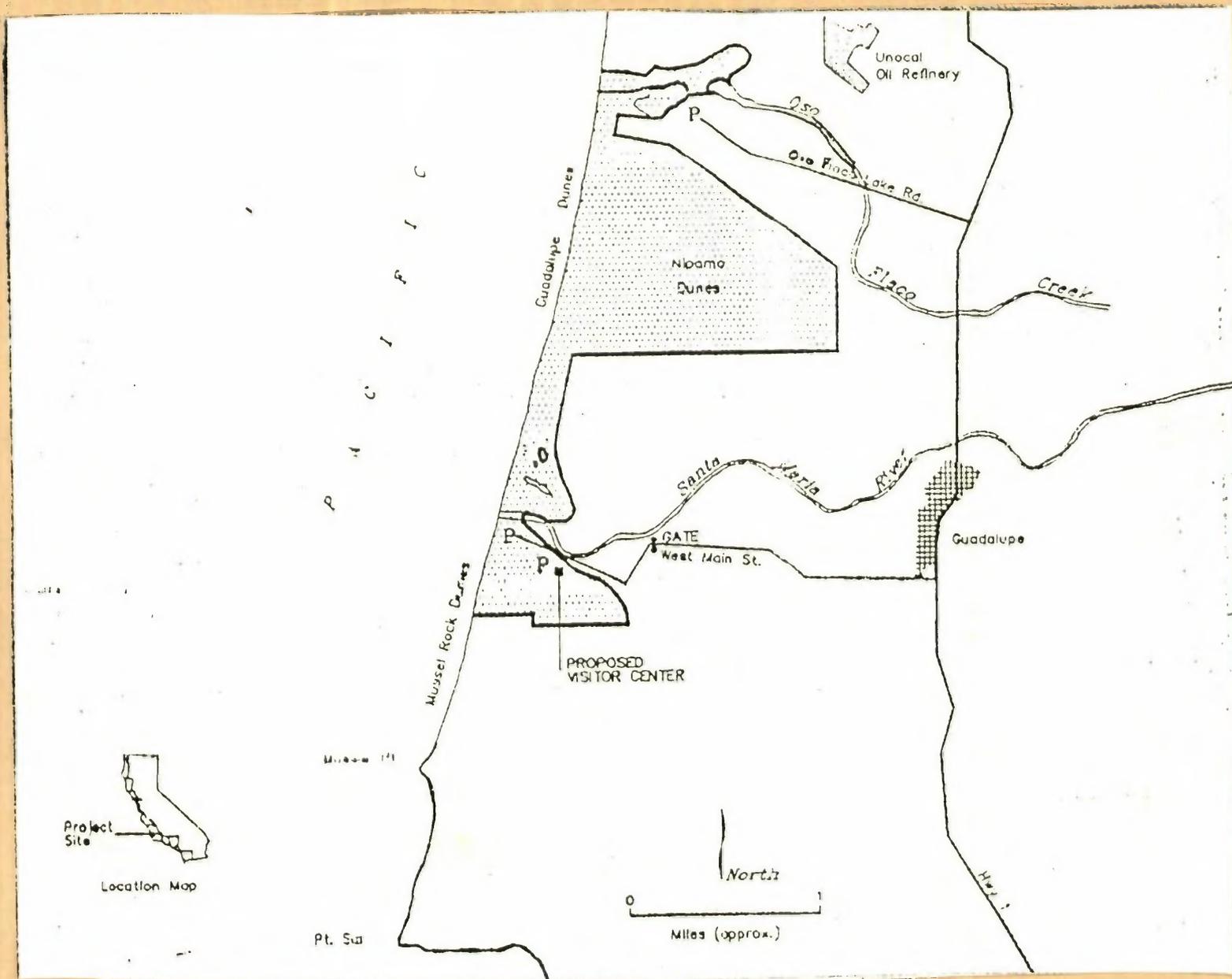
The Nipomo Dunes encompass 18 miles of coast line along the Central Coast of California. These dunes are the home for many endemic and rare species, as well as plants and animals at the north and south edge of their respective ranges. Rare animals that live within the dunes include the federally endangered California least tern, and the category 2 snowy plover. Rare plants include the state listed beach spectacle pod (*Dithyrea maritima*), La Graciosa thistle (*Cirsium loncholepis*), surf thistle (*Cirsium rhotophilum*), and plants of local concern such as the crisp dune mint (*Monardella crispera*).

The Nipomo Dunes are also the center of many human activities from off-road vehicle use, beach orientated recreation, and oil and sand extraction. The Nature Conservancy manages a 3,500 acre preserve within the Nipomo Dunes with the major objective of protecting rare species while allowing human activities that do not impact the protection goal.

One of the major entrances for the Nipomo Dunes Preserve is West Main Street, as shown in Figure 1. This road allows access directly to the beach by motorists. However, the road has no barriers to off-road vehicle use. In March of 1983, the West Main Street entrance to the Mussel Rock Dunes was closed to off-road vehicles; prior to that date, off-road vehicles had had unlimited access to the Dunes. The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors passed two ordinances that regulated off-road vehicle use at West Main Street. The ordinances stated that no off-road vehicles or similar vehicles would be allowed on the coastal dunes in the Mussel Rock Dunes portion of Santa Barbara County. The second ordinance stated that the West

Figure 1.

West Main Street Entrance to the Nipomo Dunes Preserve



Main Street entrance would be closed at specific times, and that access would be controlled by a staffed entrance station and gate when the entrance was open.

Plans for Entrance Station

Currently, the existing staffed entrance station provides continuous monitoring of all vehicles entering the southern section of the Nipomo Dunes, allowing control of access by off-road vehicles. A private security firm staffs the entrance station with administration by the Public Works Department of the County of Santa Barbara. The funding for the security firm comes from mitigation fees from Shell Oil, which has had several exploratory oil wells within the Mussel Rock Dunes.

Shell Oil is in the process of abandoning their oil operations in the Mussel Rock Dunes. After Shell has completely withdrawn, the staffing of the entrance station will be assumed by The Nature Conservancy, as mandated by the County of Santa Barbara.

The Nature Conservancy feels that a visitor entering at West Main Street should immediately be aware of a sense of pride and commitment to the Dunes. Therefore, the current "guard shack" will be replaced with a new, attractive "entrance station kiosk," constructed with cedar shingles that will weather attractively and blend in with the site. The overhead power and phone lines to the kiosk will be moved underground, the accessory power poles removed from the site, and the chemical toilet used by entrance station attendants screened by an attractive wood wall. The large metal gate will be repaired and repainted with a weather-resistant paint; the gateway will also be cleared of weeds, trash, and dead vegetation, and replanted with native vegetation.

The numerous signs scattered around the entrance will be taken down and consolidated into one attractive large wood sign that will welcome visitors, as well as inform them of guidelines to make their visit to the Preserve more enjoyable. The overall effect will be to clean up the aging, cluttered appearance of the present entrance and give Preserve visitors a sense that they are entering an area that is treasured and unique. Figure 2 displays the planned improvements for the West Main Street entrance.

Current Tasks Funded by Fish and Game

Parts of the West Main Street entrance improvement have been funded by Fish and Game contract 9508 as part of the California Endangered Species Tax Check-off Fund. The overall objective was to:

Provide overnight security and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trespass protection for rare dune habitat that supports *Dithyrea maritima* (T), *Cirsium loncholepis*(T), and *Monardella crispera*.

Three subtasks were included under this major objective.

Subtask 1: Design and install strong and attractive gate and fencing near site of manned guard station.

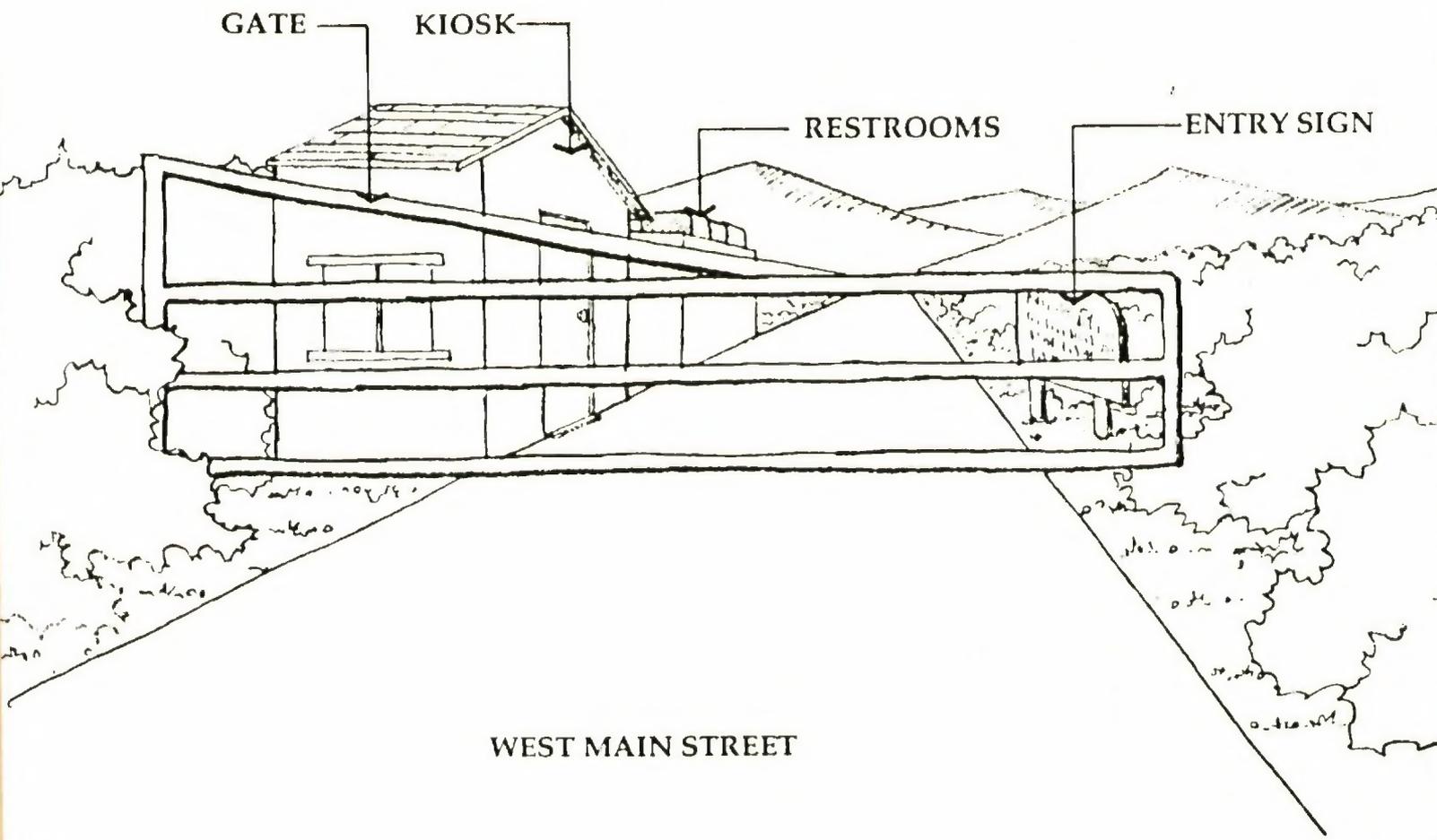
Subtask 2: Design and install wooden signs at entrance gate explaining open hours, OHV restrictions.

Subtask 3: Install approximately three hundred yards of four-strand barbed wire fencing along Santa Maria riverbed to control two trespass cattle access points.

This rest of this report will discuss progress made on Subtask 1 and 2, Subtask 3 will be discussed under a report to be sent in October 1991.

Figure 2.

Planned Improvements for the West Main Street Entrance



Progress on Subtask 1

An old gate was in place at the entrance to the Preserve. However, this gate was in disrepair and badly needed repair and repainting. Instead of designing and installing a new gate and fence, Nature Conservancy staff decided to repair the old gate and fence.

During the spring of 1991, the following duties were performed to repair the gate:

- The entire gate and fence was scraped to remove rust and old paint.
- All vegetation growing on fence and gate was trimmed and removed.
- All trash and litter including glass, abandoned car parts, and other junk was picked up and removed.
- The gate and fence was painted with two coats of a special metal paint for use in harsh climates.
- All weeds were removed and the area was planted with native seeds.

Labor for these projects was provided by Nipomo Dunes Preserve staff and volunteers from a local highschool environmental club. Upkeep of the gate and fence will area will continue with paint touch-ups and weed removed performed as needed.

Photo Documentation

The following photos document what the gate and fence looked like before and after repair and replanting.

Figure 3.

Before and After Photos of Entrance Gate

Before



Figure 3. Continued



Figure 3. Continued



Figure 3. Continued

After



Figure 3. Continued



Figure 3. Continued



Progress on Subtask 2

The second subtask was to design and install the entrance signs at the West Main Street entrance. The signs have been designed and constructed and are now being stored until all permits have been obtained in order to install them. Installation is foreseen for October 1991. The California Conservation Corps will install the signs with telephone pole supports. The photos below show the signs at the storage facility.

Figure 4.

Entrance Signs



Figure 4. Continued

**Welcome to the Guadalupe Entrance
of the
Nipomo Dunes Preserve**



**A Cooperative Preservation Project Managed by
The Nature Conservancy**



**For the Enhancement and Protection
of its Significant Natural Values**



**Support from California
Endangered Species
Tax Check-off Fund**