



BLM
El Centro Field Office

Welcome

Welcome to the Imperial Sand Dunes (ISD) Recreation Area, the largest mass of sand dunes in California. Formed by windblown sands of ancient Lake Cahuilla, the dune system extends for more than 40 miles in a band averaging 5 miles wide. Dunes often reach heights of 300 feet above the desert floor, providing outstanding opportunities for recreation. A favorite destination among off-highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts, the dunes also offer fabulous scenery, opportunities for solitude, and a home to rare plants and animals.

With most of the off-road action taking place in the recreation area south of Highway 78, the open areas allow all types of vehicle recreation. The limited areas surrounding the dunes may have street legal requirements and require vehicles to travel only on designated routes. Closed areas prohibit motorized vehicle use entirely. Information and maps for all of these areas are available at the ranger stations.

The North Algodones Dunes Wilderness offers a tranquil alternative to the fast-paced action of the main dunes. Located north of Highway 78 and off limits to all vehicles and mechanized use, access by foot or horse affords excellent hiking, photography, and wildlife viewing.



Vehicle and Camping Closures

Vehicle and camping closures are in effect to conserve the habitat of several plant and animal species found within the dunes, one of which is the federally threatened Peirson's milk-vetch.

Closures are located in the Mammoth Wash area, the southwestern central portion, and near the Mexican border. Motorized travel is not permitted within the closure boundaries. These closures are marked with posts and "No Motorized Vehicles" signs.

A camping closure is located on the eastern edge of the dunes between Wash 33 and 70. While camping is not allowed within this closure, it is open to motorized travel. This closure is marked with posts and "No Camping" signs.

Desert Advisory Committee Subgroup

The ISD subgroup operates under the authority of the California Desert Advisory Committee and provides input to the BLM regarding issues pertinent to the ISD. Members represent OHV interests and the local communities. For more information, visit www.blm.gov/ca/isdra.

State of California Off-Highway Vehicle Laws

This section does not address all California OHV laws. Please remember, it is your responsibility to know the laws. Visit www.ohv.parks.ca.gov for more information. (Note: CVC denotes California Vehicle Code.)

Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (ROV) Laws.

- A person operating an ROV shall be at least 16 years of age or be directly supervised in the vehicle by a parent or guardian or by an adult authorized by a parent or guardian (CVC 38600).
- Safety helmets are required for operators and passengers of ROVs (CVC 38601).
- A seatbelt and shoulder belt or safety harness are required to be worn when an ROV is in motion (CVC 38602).
- Passengers must be seated in a location designed and provided by the manufacturer in an ROV with a model year of 2014 or later (CVC 38603(a)).
- Passengers in ROVs must be able to grasp the handhold while properly restrained with their back against the seatback (CVC 38604(a)).

Ability to Reach and Operate Controls. The operator of an off-highway motor vehicle shall be able to reach and operate all controls necessary to safely operate the vehicle (CVC 38304).

Ability to Reach and Operate Controls: Persons Under 14. A parent, guardian, or supervisor will not allow a child under 14 years of age to operate an OHV in a manner that violates CVC 38304 (CVC 38304.1(a)).

OHVs on Roadways. No person shall operate or drive an OHV on a roadway, except to cross at an angle of approximately 90 degrees and in a quick and safe manner (CVC 38025(a)).

Helmet Usage. All-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders must wear an approved safety helmet (CVC 38505).

Required Rider Safety Training. No person under 18 years of age shall operate an ATV unless he or she has received the safety course or is under the direct supervision of an adult who has the appropriate safety certification in his or her possession (CVC 38503). Contact the ATV Safety Institute at (800) 887-2887 or www.atvsafety.org.

Parental Supervision. No person under 14 years of age shall operate an ATV unless they meet conditions of CVC 38503 and are accompanied and

supervised by a parent or guardian or an adult authorized by a parent or guardian (CVC 38504). No parent or guardian or an adult authorized by a parent or guardian shall grant permission or knowingly allow that child to operate an ATV in violation of CVC 38504 (CVC 38504.1).

Noise Restrictions. OHV noise emissions shall be limited to not more than 96 dbA if manufactured on or after January 1, 1986, and not more than 101 dbA if manufactured prior to January 1, 1986 (CVC 38370(h)(1)). Visit www.ohv.parks.ca.gov for more information.

Carrying Passengers. ATV operators may not carry a passenger while operating on public lands, unless the ATV is designed for a passenger (CVC 38506).

Driving Under the Influence. It is unlawful for any person to drive a vehicle while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug, or both (applies anywhere) (CVC 23152(a)). Driving on or off road with a suspended or revoked driver's license status is against the law (CVC 14607).

- Speed Laws.**
1. Basic speed law: Don't operate an OHV faster than is safe for conditions (CVC 38305).
 2. Prima Facie Speed Limit: The speed limit is 15 mph within 50 feet of campgrounds, campsites, or concentrations of people or animals (CVC 38310).

Registration.

1. Vehicles operated on federal and state highways; county roads; or the BLM's Gecko, Wash, Dune Buggy Flats, and Grays Well Roads must be licensed for highway use.
2. OHVs owned by California residents must be registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles and properly display a valid green sticker or red sticker vehicle identification tag (CVC 38020, 38010) on the vehicle (CVC 38170).
3. OHVs that do not have a valid registration or permit from the owner's home state (including Mexico and Canada) will be required to purchase a California nonresident permit (sticker) (CVC 38020). To purchase a permit, visit www.ohv.parks.ca.gov or call (916) 324-4442.

Required Equipment. Any OHV must be equipped with an approved muffler, brakes, and spark arrestor. A headlight and at least one red tail light are required for operation at night (CVC 38335, 38345).

Environmental Damage. No person shall operate an OHV in a manner likely to cause environmental damage (CVC 38319).

Use of Red and Blue Lights and Sirens. A person driving an OHV shall not use a siren or display a flashing or steady burning red or blue warning light (CVC 38346, 38375).

ISD Rules and Regulations

These rules apply to public lands within the ISD, but this brochure does not address all ISD laws. Please remember, it is your responsibility to know the law. If you have questions, please see a ranger or visit www.blm.gov/ca/isdra.

Recreation Permit. A permit is required for all primary street legal vehicles used for transportation to the recreation site. Upon arrival to the ISD, permits must be purchased and properly displayed in/on the windshield. Permits are nonrefundable.

Saving Spaces. Saving and/or reserving a camping space is prohibited.

Safety Flags. OHVs shall be equipped with a whip mast and a 6 x 12-inch red/orange flag. Masts must be mounted on the vehicle and extend 8 feet from the ground to the mast tip.

Fires. Burning potentially hazardous materials, including, but not limited to, gas, oil, plastic, and magnesium, is prohibited.

Wood Pallets. Firewood materials containing nails, screws, or other metal hardware are prohibited.

Glass Beverage Containers. Possession of glass beverage containers is prohibited.

Alcoholic Beverages. It is prohibited to drink or possess alcoholic beverages, including open containers, while operating a motor vehicle or OHV. No person under 21 years of age shall be in possession of alcoholic beverages.

Quiet Hours. No person shall operate or use any audio or motorized equipment (including generators) between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Organized Group Activities and Events. Visitors may not stage, carry out, participate in, or sponsor an organized event or activity without written authorization from the BLM.

Riding in Pickup Beds. No person shall ride in the bed of a pickup truck.

Aircraft. Aircraft, including ultralights, take offs and landings are prohibited within 1 mile of Gecko Road.

Camping Limit. A 14-day camping limit is in effect in the ISD.

Public Nudity. Public nudity is prohibited.

Firearms/Fireworks. On developed recreation sites and areas, it is unlawful to discharge or use firearms, fireworks, or other weapons (43 CFR 8365.2-5(a)).

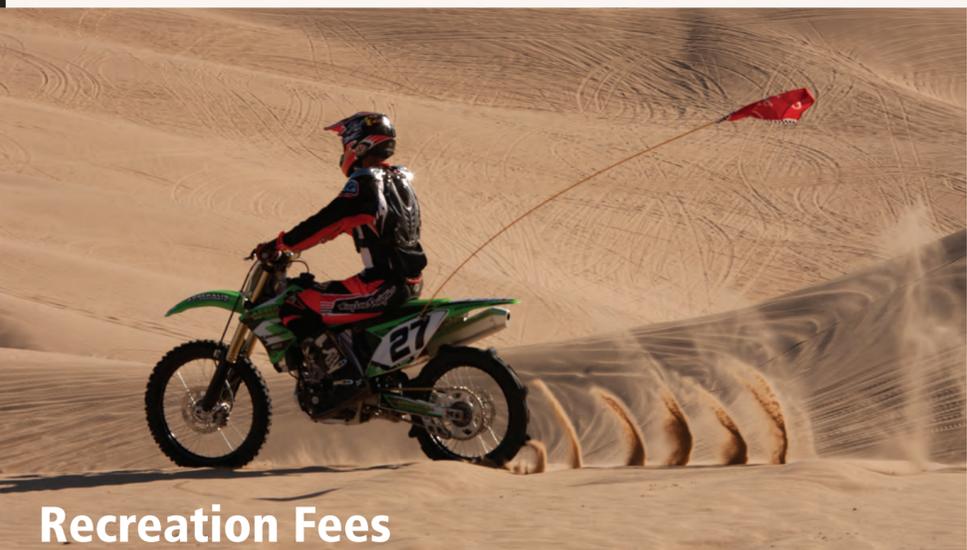
Parking. Parking or camping is not permitted within 10 feet of pavement on Gecko Road.

Pets. On developed recreation sites and areas, animals must be kept on a leash not longer than 6 feet and secured to a fixed object or under the control of a person, or otherwise physically restricted at all times (43 CFR 8365.2-1(c)).

Sewage. Dumping sewage is prohibited (43 CFR 8365.1-1(b)(3)).

On public lands under Section 303(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1733(a); 43 CFR 8360.0-7; 43 CFR 2932.57(b)), any person who violates any of these supplementary rules may be tried before a United States magistrate and fined no more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for no more than 12 months, or both.

Such violations may also be subject to the enhanced fines provided for by 18 U.S.C. 3571. Those who violate these rules may also be subject to civil action for unauthorized use of public lands; violations of special recreation permit terms, conditions, or stipulations; or for uses beyond those allowed by the permit under 43 CFR 2932.57(b)(2).



Recreation Fees

Permits are required from October 1 through April 15 each year. If purchased before arriving at the ISD, permits cost \$35 per week. Permits purchased at the dunes (onsite) cost \$50 per week. The season permit costs \$150 and is valid October 1 through April 15 each year.

Information on how to purchase your permit online or before your arrival is available at www.blm.gov/ca/isdra. For each permit purchased online (weekly or season), a second weekly permit may be purchased for \$25 (a \$10 discount) and used for any weekly timeframe.

Border Safety

The southernmost boundary of the sand dunes in the Buttercup area shares an international border with Mexico. The construction of the "border fence" by the U.S. Border Patrol makes this boundary quite apparent. Please remain at least 100 feet away from the fence, as this will make patrol easier for border agents and help ensure your safety.

Despite the fence, illegal activity may still occur along the border, and your safety may be at

risk. Always be aware of your surroundings when you are recreating in this area. Report any suspicious or illegal activity to the BLM dispatch center at (909) 383-5651. Direct reports of illegal aliens to the U.S. Border Patrol at (800) 901-2003.

Desert Tortoise

The desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is a seldom-seen inhabitant of the desert. The tortoise's potential habitat range extends east from the microphyll woodland, which borders the east side of the dunes. If you find a tortoise in the desert, respect its privacy and space. You may take pictures and observe it, but do not touch or harass the animal. If you find a dead or live tortoise, don't collect it. Call the wildlife biologist at BLM's El Centro Field Office at (760) 337-4400 with the general location, GPS coordinates (if available), your contact information, and whether the tortoise was alive or dead. Report any vandalism, harassment, or collecting to the El Centro Field Office or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's "CalTIP" number: (888) 334-2258. For more information, visit www.blm.gov/9xld.



Information Listings

Police, Fire, Ambulance—911

Emergency Medical Services
Pioneers Memorial Hospital (760) 351-3333
El Centro Regional Medical Center (760) 339-7100
Yuma Regional Medical Center (928) 344-2000
Desert Regional Medical Center (760) 323-6511

Bureau of Land Management
Cahuilla Ranger Station (760) 344-3919
Buttercup Ranger Station (760) 572-2220
El Centro Field Office (760) 337-4400

Imperial County
Sheriff's Office (760) 339-6311
Jail, Prisoner Information (760) 339-6367
ICSO OHV Enforcement Team (760) 351-3043

California Highway Patrol
El Centro Dispatch Center (760) 482-2505
Local Road Conditions (760) 482-2555

Border Patrol (800) 901-2003

Bureau of Land Management
El Centro Field Office
1661 S. 4th St.
El Centro, CA 92243
www.blm.gov/ca/isdra
www.facebook.com/BLMImperialSandDunes



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In An Emergency Call 911

Injured Person
It is usually best not to transport an injured person from an accident scene before medical personnel arrive. Moving a victim improperly can make an injury worse. **Call 911.** If possible, tell the dispatcher your Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, as they are extremely useful in locating the victim quickly.

BLM Ranger Stations
Cahuilla Ranger Station is located near Highway 78 on Gecko Road. Buttercup Ranger Station is located on Grays Well Road off Interstate 8. Both stations are open from October through late spring, depending on staffing and weather conditions, with varying hours. Maps, brochures, and first aid assistance are available here.



Small fuzzy leaves and big seeds characterize Peirson's milk-vetch, a silvery perennial at the root of the dunes' critical habitat closures. Found only here and on some dunes in Mexico's Gran Desierto de Altar, its sturdy taproot keeps it anchored in the sand. Germinating when rains are plentiful, pretty purple flowers in March or April attract a digger bee, the plant's only known pollinator. And those big seeds aren't just for show; extra nutrients within help the seedling emerge from damp sand—a unique desert adaptation for survival in a shifting landscape. Because it is a federally threatened species, critical habitat for Peirson's milk-vetch is closed to OHV use.

