

## **Clear Creek Management Area**



Providing OHV recreation opportunities for  
over 60 years

“...there is no health related basis for the CCMA closure.

I continue to see no reason whatsoever for the BLM to close the CCMA. The closure is not consistent with the science. There is no evidence of risk to those occupationally, para-occupationally, and/or environmentally/recreationally exposed to the asbestos found on the CCMA...”

“Uncertainty related to the toxicity parameters of the risk characterization includes the application of the IRIS and OEHHA asbestos toxicity values, which were developed from epidemiological studies of occupational exposures, to infrequent and episodic recreational exposures. This uncertainty could mean that the actual risks could be much lower than those estimated in the CCMA assessment”

Clear Creek Management Area Asbestos Exposure and Human Health Risk Assessment EPA Region IX  
May 2008

and possibly zero

Clear Creek Management Area Asbestos Exposure and Human Health Risk Assessment Draft  
EPA Region IX  
Date Unknown

As documented in an e-mail from Hollister Area Manager Rick Cooper to the EPA

# *Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club*

April 14, 2009

Dear Congressman Farr,

On May 1, 2008, while in the process of developing a new management plan for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) abruptly issued a temporary closure of the area to ALL users including hunters, gem collectors, and OHVs. This closure coincided with the release of a report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that claims that users of the CCMA face an excessive risk by recreating in the area.

The BLM cites the need “To protect public health and safety from exposure to asbestos” as the reason for the closure. Yet, with advance knowledge of the findings of the report available to them in early 2008, the BLM still allowed the area to remain open until the formal release of the report and also permitted three OHV events, two of which were family oriented and had many child participants.

While there is evidence that certain commercially manufactured/processed asbestos can cause illness and death, the naturally occurring chrysotile asbestos found in Clear Creek. is the least harmful and is considered by many scientists to be innocuous.

Here are some facts to consider:

**Fact** – No one associated with the Union Carbide or KCAC asbestos mining operations has ever been a victim of any asbestos related disease.

**Fact** – There have been no reports of anyone suffering an asbestos related illness from recreating in the CCMA.

**Fact** – The serpentine and asbestos ore body has been eroding for millions of years and the asbestos from Clear Creek has been widely distributed by wind and water around Central California. Asbestos from Clear Creek has been deposited along waterways draining into the Central Valley and into the Monterey Bay yet there are no toxic hot spots and in fact San Benito County ranks next to last among California counties in asbestos related deaths. (Source- [http://reports.ewg.org/reports/asbestos/tables/deathdetails\\_county.php?fips=06000](http://reports.ewg.org/reports/asbestos/tables/deathdetails_county.php?fips=06000))

**Fact** - The EPA conducted air sampling in a very small portion of the CCMA and in areas that have been historically impacted by the mining industry. Had the EPA sampled the entire management area in the same way that recreational users do, I believe that the results would have shown a much lower risk. An attached report details some of the historic uses of the area in which the EPA did their sampling and raises the issue as to whether the

**Fact** - The EPA does not have a risk analysis model based on New Idria chrysotile and uses risk measurements for forms of asbestos known to have much higher toxicity levels. The models also assume a thirty-year period of exposure and I do not believe that this is representative of a typical persons recreation experience or exposure.

**Fact** – The BLM closure order closes approximately 31,00 acres but because the network of roads and trails throughout this area are closed, the BLM has effectively closed over 75,000 acres to the majority of the public. Only one foot trail provides access at a limited portion of the management area.

**Fact** – The closure of Clear Creek eliminated over 50% of the OHV riding opportunity in Central California during the winter months.

The closure of the CCMA is a dramatic and unnecessary reaction to a single scientific report. In light of the long history of multiple use recreation, the absence of scientific data showing any incident of disease related to this use or to the mining activity that occurred for over 100 years, and previous studies that have concluded that there is a minimal risk from recreating in the area, we ask that you work with the recreation community to get this closure reversed.

Additionally, we ask that you work with the recreation community on a plan to develop a risk analysis model specific for chrysotile asbestos that may be used not only for the CCMA but also for many other recreation sites throughout the State of California.

The time has come for someone in the Government to use common sense and tell the Bureau of Land Management to come up with a plan that will allow the continued use of the Clear Creek Management Area by the recreating public and to lift the temporary closure while the planning process is being conducted. We hope you are that person.

Thank you for your review of this information and for setting up a meeting for the recreation community with the BLM and EPA..

Sincerely,

Ed Tobin  
Member

## OHV Recreation in the CCMA 1946 - 2008

Motorcycling was wildly popular in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both as a sport and as a practical form of transportation. Mass produced automobiles and the Great Depression caused all but a handful of motorcycle manufacturers to go out of business during the 1930's. After World War Two there was a resurgence in motorcycle usage in the United States. This was brought on by the new prosperity following years of war and economic strife and because large numbers of surplus motorcycles were available following the war. Much of this new usage was recreational in nature.

According to Frank Rodgers of Salinas, his grandfather and other motorcyclist started to frequent the New Idria area starting around 1946. Their activities were mostly relegated to the road system in the CCMA because of the types of bike available at the time – larger, twin cylinder, Harley Davidson and Indian road models.



It wasn't until the mid-1950s when lighter weight, single cylinder British motorcycles were imported in quantity did the use expand beyond the road system.

Bob Day, 76 of Salinas, recalls that he laid out poker runs from Larry Ketzels Salinas motorcycle shop starting in 1958 and the runs would go through Clear Creek and New Idria before

returning to Salinas. These runs introduced many riders to the CCMA and more and more riders started to frequent the area, exploring the hundreds of miles of roads left behind by the mining industry.

OHV use in the CCMA grew tremendously in the late 1960's and early 1970's when modern off-road motorcycles arrived in the United States from Japan and Europe.

Brands such as Suzuki, Yamaha, Honda, CZ, Maico and Husqvarna produced "enduro" style bikes that allowed riders to better climb the barren hills and explore the CCMA.



The first organized event held in Clear Creek was the 1973 Quicksilver Enduro. This event was promoted by the Salinas Dirt Riders from 1973 to 1976. The Salinas Dirt Riders merged with the Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club in 1976 and the Ramblers continued to host the annual enduro event until 2008.

Numerous other American Motorcyclist Association competitive events have been promoted over the years by various clubs including the Merced Dirt Riders and the Timekeepers Motorcycle Club. Many clubs also put on club rides including the Santa Cruz Ridgerunners, Mountaineers MC and Racers Under the Sun MC.

## Family OHV Recreation in the CCMA

Because of the CCMA's location, two to four hours drive time from home for many Central Californians, overnight camping on weekends was very popular. Also very popular was the family recreation aspect of off-roading. Generations of families have enjoyed the pleasure of recreating in Clear Creek with family members.



Pictured here are three generations of Salinas Ramblers. Frank Rodgers, a founding member of the Club on the left on a CZ, his son Richard (Dick) on a Suzuki and to the right Dick's sons.

Frank Sr. passed away a few years ago at age 89. Dick Rodgers is a life member of the Salinas Ramblers and his son Frank is an active member.

This photo was taken at the Indian Hill Staging area in 1973.

Raising a family is a difficult task, probably more so now than I was 30-40 years ago. OHV recreation is one of the few sports that allows all members of a family to participate together. Many people have told me that it is/was OHV recreation that helped the families bond and grow together.

Salinas Ramblers Club Run - 2007



RUTS Event 2008



## Recreational Activities

The CCMA is a favorite destination for a wide variety of recreational activities that include rock hounding and gem collection, deer and wild boar hunting, target shooting, hang gliding, high pointing (San Benito Mountain is the tallest spot in San Benito County), scenic touring and native American ceremonies. It is a great place to get away from the grind of everyday life to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

**Organized Events:** Motorized recreationists is by far the predominate recreation activity that takes place in the CCMA.



Over the years the area has hosted a great number of organized recreational activities. Off-road motorcyclist have participated in enduros and hare scrambles events promoted by the Salinas Ramblers, Santa Cruz Ridgerunners, Timekeepers MC and Merced Dirt Riders.

Jeepers/4WD drivers recreate throughout the year. Many use their jeeps and side by sides to access hunting areas on the edges of the Hazardous Asbestos Area. Many also participated in the annual Molina Ghost Run.

Numerous clubs and organizations from the Central Coast use the CCMA for events such as picnic/BBQs and poker runs.



A good example of this type activity was the annual Racers Under the Sun (RUTS) ride that brought families together for prayer and recreation

# OHV Registration Data & Recreation Opportunities

Within the Central California area surrounding the CCMA there are a large number of citizen with registered OHV who are looking for places to ride. Here is a list of registered off-road motorcycles and 3 and 4 wheeled bikes from a DMV report dated 31 Jan. 2009:

County	Active			Inactive		
	MC	3/4Whl	Total	MC	3/4Whl	Total
Monterey	3,369	3,640	7,009	2,291	1,688	3,979
Santa Cruz	4,390	1,966	6,356	2,161	577	2,738
San Benito	1,606	1,234	2,840	934	441	1,375
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>16,205</b>			<b>8,092</b>
Alameda	8,499	4,064	12,563	4,062	1,463	5,525
Fresno	4,979	12,249	17,228	2,740	4,660	7,400
Kern	9,403	14,397	23,800	6,106	4,868	10,974
Kings	935	3,198	4,133	600	1,153	1,753
Madera	1,496	3,552	5,048	848	1,283	2,131
Merced	1,868	4,574	6,442	1,223	1,543	2,766
San Luis Obispo	4,651	3,871	8,522	2,905	1,593	4,498
San Mateo	4,811	1,771	6,582	2,064	679	2,743
Santa Clara	12,017	5,440	17,457	5,692	2,004	7,696
Stanislaus	5,760	8,517	14,277	3,151	2,734	5,885
Tulare	4,117	9,803	13,920	2,270	3,100	5,370
<b>Total</b>			<b>146,177</b>			<b>64,833</b>

At the same time, there are few legal places to ride.



Fact – There are no legal public riding areas in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties.

Fact – There are only three California State OHV parks, one state park, two small county parks and one Forest Service area in all of these Central California counties.

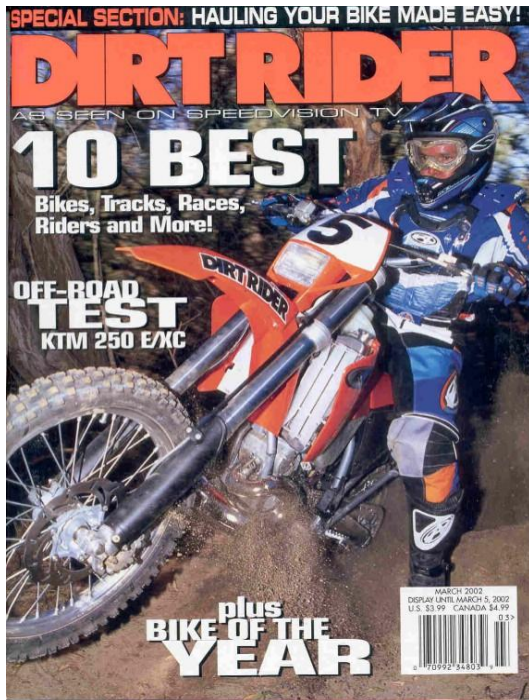
Fact – Hollister Hills turns away riders on

many weekends during Fall, Winter and Spring months and Carnegie SVRA just turned away riders for the first time in late February 2009.

Here is a list of the limited OHV recreation opportunities available to Central California OHV enthusiasts:

Location	County	Acreage	Miles of trails
Hollister Hills SVRA	San Benito	2,400	64/tracks
Carnegie SVRA	Alameda	1,500	40/tracks
Oceano Dunes SVRA	San Luis Obispo		Sand Dunes
Metcalf Regional Park	Santa Clara	459	20/tracks
Frank Raines Park	Stanislaus	860	Appx. 20
San Luis Reservoir SRA	Merced	47	Tracks only
Pozo La Panza, USFS	San Luis Obispo	18,167	45

By comparison, the CCMA has 75,000 acres, 232 miles of roads and trails and 400+ acres of open barrens. With the BLM's closure of the CCMA, the central coast OHV community lost a riding opportunity greater than all the other recreation areas combined.



In addition to the acreage and miles of trails lost by the closure of the CCMA, OHVs also lost one of the best places to ride in the entire United States according to Dirt Rider magazine. In the March, 2000 edition, Dirt Rider staff ranked Clear Creek as the number 6 best place in the country to ride.

