

HEARING
BEFORE THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ON THE APPLICATION OF THE GORDON (GUADALUPE) SAND COMPANY
FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT - TO MINE SAND IN THE DUNES
NEAR GUADALUPE, CALIFORNIA

Wednesday, November 1, 1967

STATEMENT

by

Mrs. Kathleen Jackson
Chairman, Nipomo Dunes Committee
2431 Paso Robles Street
Oceano, California 93445

My name is Mrs. Kathleen Jackson. I live at 2431 Paso Robles Street, in the town of Oceano, in San Luis Obispo County. This is a few miles north of Guadalupe, where you are today considering the application of the Gordon Sand Company (also known as the Guadalupe Sand Company) for a conditional use permit to mine sand.

ACTING COMMISSION CHAIRMAN, Mr. Richard Clare, honorable members of the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission, and representatives of various Santa Barbara County departments staffs:

I am speaking as a California citizen and as a conservationist, requesting a denial of this permit. I come before you representing the Nipomo Dunes Committee, of which I am chairman. This committee is almost five years old. It is composed of ~~20~~ active conservationists who live in various towns and cities all the way from San Francisco to Los Angeles. All the members of the Nipomo Dunes Committee know the central coast of California and are dedicated to its preservation as a natural and unique scenic and recreation resource. Our particular purpose is the preservation of its magnificent seashore and dunes, which extend for 17 miles from Point Sal in Santa Barbara County, to Pismo Beach in San Luis Obispo County. The area includes spectacular high white dunes, 11 freshwater lakes, 3 constant creeks and a river (the Santa Maria River). The region is variously known as the Nipomo Dunes, the Santa Maria Dunes, the Oceano Dunes and the Guadalupe Dunes....even as the Oso Flaco Dunes.

Our Nipomo Dunes Committee hopes to see this entire area, comprising from 15,000 to 25,000 acres, eventually acquired for public park and recreation purposes. Our committee assisted in the conservation effort to persuade the Pacific Gas and Electric Company to select a different site for their next atomic power plant - and not to locate in the Nipomo Dunes.

In January 1966 our committee brought a delegation of 50 persons to this room for a meeting of the California State Park Commission, requesting that they maintain active interest in acquisition of the central coast dunes for a state park and recreation area. The Commission affirmed the dunes to be a "live issue", of continuing concern to them and desirable for state acquisition.

Besides representing the Nipomo Dunes Committee today, I would like to offer you my further qualifications to speak here on this matter: I am a Santa Barbaran by background, and lived here on the Riviera until adulthood, and again in the 1940's and 50's, taking part in some civic affairs. I consider Santa Barbara my native land. I visit here often. I read the newspaper. I deeply and personally care about Santa Barbara County. Of this county I would say, as a writer once said devotedly to his friend:

"I have eaten your bread and salt.
I have drunk your water and wine.
The deaths you have died
I have watched beside.
And the lives you have lived are mine."

Although I am familiar with much of California -- I love and know these Santa Barbara hills and canyons and these mountaintops, which are your responsibility. And I know all the shoreline of Santa Barbara County, from Ventura to San Luis Obispo.

I wonder how many of you know personally these particular lands on which you must make this decision.

While I am speaking, may I pass among you some photographs that help to convey the mood and quality of this unique landscape -- mile after mile of splendour -- white sand piled in a myriad wind-sculptured formations, laced with green glades and small lakes - and bordered by blue ocean.

Today I shall bring to your Commission information and conclusions from various sources, about the subject of this hearing; and it is my earnest desire that my contribution may be useful to the Commission by indicating some of the reasons why any application for mining sand at the Guadalupe Dunes should be denied.

It is my hope, further, that the County Board of Supervisors will reconsider and will rescind the conditional use permit recently granted - with such seeming haste - to the California Sand Company to mine sand in the Guadalupe Dunes area.

As prelude to my statements about land use considerations of the Guadalupe Dunes area, I would like to offer a text which characterizes all that I have to say here today: I paraphrase from the writings of Sigurd F. Olson of the National Park Service: (QUOTE)

"The real significance of land value, of scenery and of recreation, is a cultural matter. It is far more than farming, hunting, fishing, hiking or beach sports: it has to do with the human spirit!

And what we are using and trying to conserve (in the subject of this hearing) -- is not land for sand mining or for a park, nor scenery, nor recreation, as much as we are trying to conserve the human spirit, itself." (UNQUOTE)

Speaking to you as a citizen and conservationist, land use concerns me anywhere, but more particularly in my native California, and especially in this lovely and still unspoiled central coast, which is my home. But land use is probably the most profound of all your responsibilities -- because land use determines the quality of our environment, the very quality of living. Of importance, of course, are your consideration of economic factors and public convenience and safety. But open space land, particularly scenic seacoast land, is a commodity now in very short supply. And open space is a necessary commodity to enhance the quality of living. Is the nicest, most responsible use of these Guadalupe Dunes as scenic area, space and for wholesome outdoor recreation -- or as an industrial site for mining sand?

There appeared some months ago in the San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune a dramatic and poignant photograph by staff photographer Jim Vestal -- showing the seated silhouette of a huddled man, at the edge of sand dunes, near the tideline fringe of a wide expanse of sea. His head was bent upon his arms, his knees were drawn up. The weariness and beauty of the end of a day were apparent in the last glimmer of daylight across the ocean breakers, and in the long shadow on the sand cast by the figure of the man. Underneath the photograph was the caption: (QUOTE) "A place where a man can be alone." (UNQUOTE) As a cry which has no answer for millions, who are caught in between cities, where land planning has left no space where a human being may find a little while, be alone. . . where the human spirit may recharge its self. What of the quality of living in such lives?

The Guadalupe Dunes are still open land. More remarkable, they are virgin land, untouched, unused. We still have a choice. This is a privilege not afforded most areas. Perhaps the responsibility of your Commission in this instance could be considered a solemn one...to be the first to make a first decision on primary land.

In reasoning for guidelines, the question can be asked, what lessons experts have commented on this Guadalupe dune-land? I know of three at once: on the national level, the National Park Service made a survey of the Pacific Coast in 1959 (the Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey) and about this section of the coast, reported: (QUOTE) "This sand dune area is unexcelled. Nowhere along the California coast do sand dunes of comparable scenic quality, extent and height, occur."(UNQUOTE)

Likewise, on the state level, the California Park System's Five Year Master Plan, 1956-61, lists and describes the beautiful sand dune and freshwater portion of this coast between Point Sal and Pismo Beach. Moreover, by order of the 1964 state legislature, under Senate Resolution #40 by Senator Weingand, the Point Sal extension to the Santa Maria River dune complex was thoroughly studied in 1965, and the study published in February 1966 under the title "South Central Coastal Study" by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation. This study recommended

acquisition of 5,095 acres between Point Sal and the Santa Maria River.

On the county level, it is gratifying to know that the area is recommended for recreation in the Santa Barbara County Master Plan - and there has been much publicity about a proposed county beach park on Parcel I of the Union Sugar Company sand land beside the mouth of the Santa Maria River.

When the State Park Bond Act of 1964 monies were being allocated, approximately 90 park and recreation projects put in bids for consideration. By formula these were ranged as to desirability; and the Point Sal to Pismo area, known as the Santa Maria Dunes, was as high as seventh on the list. It was not funded, however, due to the high price tag for the whole area, amounting to something around seven million dollars.

Nevertheless, it is the philosophy of the Nipomo Dunes Committee and of many conservationists who are concerned to preserve our remarkable central coast, that continuing efforts should be made to resist the encroachment of incompatible uses, such as industry, and to protect the area through the years until such time as land gifts or purchase, result in state acquisition.

The entire area is a related unit. The state presently owns approximately 1,000 acres in Pismo State Beach at one end, and 49 acres in Point Sal State Beach at the other end. It is probably only a matter of time until the total expanse between Pismo State Beach and Point Sal is acquired. It might be 15 years. It might be 50 years. But these are not significant intervals in the life of a park. Consider the Santa Cruz Big Trees or Sequoia, the great city park at San Diego, or even Alameda Parks here in Santa Barbara. They are whole. They were planned whole. They do not have to accommodate themselves to piecemeal planning. A piece cannot be cut out of a park or a potential park without a damaging and disintegrating effect.

To cut out one section of the Guadalupe Dunes, such as the Union Sugar Company parcels near the Santa Maria River, would break up the grand concept of eventually creating the greatest seashore and dunes park and recreation area in the entire West, offering potential of more different kinds of recreation than any existing park or recreation area in California.

And to permit the Gordon Sand Company even conditional use for sand mining, would be a knife-thrust severing Point Sal and picturesque Mussel Rock from the complete concept.

If I may ask you to glance at the maps I have given each of you, you will see that this parcel of land which the Gordon Sand Company is purchasing outright from the Union Sugar Company, is just 300 feet wide (north and south) and 4,600 feet long (from the ocean to the inland) -- constituting a stab of industry into what is potentially a great state park. Doubtless, this would deter the state from future interest in acquiring this dramatic piece of Santa Barbara county seacoast for park and recreation purposes. For they would be able to buy only up to the Gordon Sand Company from the south -- and down to the Gordon Sand Company ownership from the north.

Therefore, one suggestion I would urge for your consideration is that in case you do grant this company a conditional use permit, you stipulate that no mining shall be done on the beach to a distance of ~~several hundred feet~~ ^{1000 ft. or more} above mean high tide line. This will at least protect and preserve the beachfront.

While you are looking at the maps, may I ask you to note that the California Sand Company proposes to locate on a site proposed for Park Headquarters and that the Gordon Sand Company would occupy a Park Day Use picnic ground. In any event, my recommendation would be that these sand mining facilities should locate east of the boundary of the proposed park.

Another consideration is the plight of sand. It is more scarce now than even as recently as 25 years ago. Your Commission and other Santa Barbara County Planning Commissions before you have wrestled with vanishing beach problems right here in our county. You are familiar with the reasons: impoundments upstream have cut off the natural sources of sand. Tampering with the natural processes of nature has led to beach sand shortages up and down California's coast. Legislator Zeeberg has been working with a committee concerned with coast sand shortages and beach erosion.

An official of the Gordon Sand Company has expressed the belief that due to the silt drift from the Santa Maria River, the sand supply at this location is inexhaustible. But how long would this last, were that proposed dam to be built up on the Sisquoc? And with the Gordon property ownership running right to the mean high tide line, what is to prevent the company from tampering with the natural flow of sand by attempting to suck or slurry sand from under the beach? This technique might be successful!

Therefore, my second suggestion is that in case a conditional use permit is granted, it should prohibit any removal of sand below mean high tide line or under the tidelands.

It is well known that the taking of sand does deplete a dune area. Signal example is the case of the Uel Monte Sand Company, located at the northern end of the famous 17-mile drive near Monterey, who have actually taken away altogether the very high dunes formerly there. The only dunes left in that area are a group of smaller dunes, now preserved in the Asilomar State Beach Park.

You have in the packet I gave to each of you a copy of a newspaper column by Tom Kleveland, in which it was proposed to rob the central California coast between Point Sal and Pismo of its sand to replenish the vanishing beaches of Los Angeles County. This presumptuous predation should shock us all. Should our rare sand dunes be taken to repair the mistakes of Los Angeles County?

I suggest

Thus, my third suggestion would be that in case this permit is granted to the Gordon Sand Company, a stipulation in the permit should require frequent review, a review each year, of all the factors involved - by a team of qualified experts.

I would like now to turn to some economic facts.

Perhaps one of the major economic resources of the future is clean air. People seek it now when they go vacationing. And it can be found a number of places in Santa Barbara County, including the Guadalupe Dunes area. A fact of orderly development of the county is protection of our clean air areas from industry. There are alternatives for industry - which I will refer to in a moment.

But here are some pertinent economic statistics:

1. The population of California increases by 1,600 people each day.
2. Open land in California decreases by 375 acres each day.
3. With a decreased work week and an increased population in less space, there is a greater demand for outdoor recreation.
4. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC), states that less than 2% of the total shoreline in the United States is in public ownership for recreation.
5. The ORRRC Report points out: (QUOTE) "State and Federal Agencies should act promptly to preserve for public use the remaining magnificent stretches of unspoiled coastline." (UNQUOTE)

Further economic guidelines on consideration of industrial use versus park-recreation use of the Guadalupe dunes might be taken from the remarkable California Public Outdoor Recreation Plan of 1960. (For the sake of brevity I will hereafter call it the COR Plan.) As you probably know, this plan analyzed qualifications for locating public park and recreation areas. I will take up only four of the points, most pertinent to our subject:

FIRST - the matter of STRATEGIC LOCATION. The dunes area of northern Santa Barbara County is located almost more strategically than any other area in California, for recreation -- superceded only by San Luis Obispo County, which falls within the exact middle of overlapping zones (for overnight and vacation use) from California's four major population centers: San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento.

SECOND: SCARCITY CHARACTERISTICS. The COR Plan points out that the most urgent need is for setting aside and preserving areas which are unusual, rare, unique, historic, scientific, educational. Thus, the question needs to be asked: Does the Guadalupe dune area have these scarcity characteristics? And the answer is, yes, it has all of these characteristics. Qualified experts can attest to this.

THIRD: WATER-ORIENTED RECREATION USE is rated by the COR Plan as the first choice of 80% of all recreation demand. Although the tumultuous surf at the Guadalupe dunes is unsafe for fishing, bathing or recreation use, it has dramatic scenic value. The lagoon and mouth of the Santa Maria River, however, could be developed to a high degree for water recreation.

FOURTH: ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY. A study of the area and of the South Central Coastal Study indicates that development for recreation would not be exhorbitant here and would be well justified by local and tourist use.

For instance, Pismo State Beach records a million and a quarter visitors this past fiscal year -- and also reports 15,000 people turned away.

At present where can these disappointed vacationists go to find another park area? 25 miles north to Montana de Oro State Park, or 35 miles north to Morro Bay State Park. Or they can drive 60 miles south to Gaviota - unless they have just come from there and it is full! If there were a park and recreation area at the Guadalupe dunes, the overflow families from Pismo State Beach would undoubtedly drive the 13 miles to use it. And the overflow from Gaviota would gratefully have to drive only 47 miles north to Guadalupe.

Further with regard to economics, I understand that approximately \$100,000 represents the investment of the Gordon Sand Company. Questions to be raised are:

1. What is the life of this investment?
2. What amount is added to Santa Barbara County's tax base from this \$100,000? - *or \$500,000 - or even an eventual million dollars?*
3. At the end of 25 or 50 years will the condition of the land show improvement or defacement?
4. And also, after a lapse of these years, will the quality of living in the Guadalupe area show enhancement or deterioration as a result of the sand mining operations?

Next, let similar questions be asked in case this Guadalupe Dunes land should be developed as a scenic and recreation park:

1. What would be the length of life of investment as a park?
The answer is that a park outlives any industry. Parks last as long as vegetation grows and as long as tides thunder in and winds come and go. Parks are said to be "forever".
2. What amount would be added to Santa Barbara County's tax base from park and recreation development?
Answer: state and national surveys show that recreationists and visitors spend from \$4-\$12 a day per person for gas and oil, groceries or restaurants and for camps or motels. Think what this could mean to the local economy of Guadalupe and nearby Santa Maria, as well as the increment to the total county economy.
You may ask: would users come? The answer is found in the statistics just quoted above from Pismo State Beach, showing the need for developing more accommodations for visitors.
3. The final question asked is whether, after 25 - 50 - 100 years had elapsed, would the quality of living in the general area of Guadalupe - close to a major state park - show deterioration or enhancement?
The answer is an economic one: it is presently known that land values always increase on land adjoining or near a park. Land buyers can rest assured of a permanent high quality land use.

ALTERNATIVES: As for alternatives for the mining of sand, I am not an engineer and what I know about industrial sand is only information I have researched and picked up in the past month and a half from an extensive

adventure in asking questions.

But I have found out enough to realize that qualified experts in industrial sand should be assisting you here today to make your decision.

For instance, I have learned that all sand is not suitable for all industrial uses. Not just any old sand will do the job. Some industrial techniques require extremely specialized sand. A sand that is high in silicate content; a sand that offers a natural wide variety of sizes of grain. Or uniformity of grain size. These are factors in the problem. I have learned that highly specialized natural sand is found only in limited locations throughout the United States, and that there are only four or five such locations in California, three of them in State Parks!

I have learned that highly specialized sand for industry was not a problem in California before World War II, because at that time a new surge of industry located in Los Angeles County with new types of machinery, requiring rare and special sand. Similar industries in other parts of the United States are located near sources of the sand they need. And the cost of importing special sand to California from out of state is prohibitive.

Artificial sizing of sand grains is a technical alternative sometimes used.

~~XX~~ I have learned that new techniques are presently in the experimental stage, to devise abrasive synthetics, to substitute for sand in manufacturing processes.

THEREFORE, FINALLY and FOURTHLY, I suggest postponement of consideration of this conditional use permit, and a rescinding of the first permit, until a thorough study can be made. I urge that qualified experts be consulted and requested to study the proposal to mine sand at the Guadalupe Dunes, including such as the following:

1. An expert on sand uses in industry:
 - familiar with synthetic abrasives.
 - familiar with possible recovery of sand techniques.
 - familiar with artificial sizing.
2. A beach erosion specialist from the Army Corps of Engineers.
3. A tidelands engineer from the State Lands Department.
4. The director of the study which was made by the State of the proposed Point Sal Extension State Park. He knows this area, understands it and can tell of its park and recreation potential, and can indicate how development could be feasibly accomplished.
5. A team of ecologists:
 - a biologist
 - a botanist
 - a marine biologist
6. A qualified archaeologist who can inform you of past Indian cultures whose records may lie in the area. The curator of an Indian collection in California remarked to me that: (QUOTE) "We know there were civilizations in the dunes ten thousand years before the Chumash, but we have never had the budget to make the study." (UNQUOTE) Our own human cultural heritage is thus involved here.

7. A qualified geologist, or geo-morphologist, whose specialty is sand dunes.

I understand that these sand dunes are most interesting from the standpoint of historical geology. Truly unique. Related as part of an ancient dune formation stretching from the Callender area on the Nipomo Mesa near Black Lake, all the way to the town of Orcutt. A valuable study area for geology students.

As a matter of fact, this area is included in a research work soon to be published, by one of the foremost dune scholars in the United States, Dr. William S. Cooper of Boulder, Colorado. A letter from this distinguished scientist states: (QUOTE)

"The dunes in the vicinity of the mouth of the Santa Maria River are without question the finest on the coast of California. Scenically and in scientific interest they are supreme. In my work, shortly to be published, they will receive more extensive treatment than any other dune area. The work that I have done is a mere beginning. This area holds possibilities for much more research. I know of one project in progress in this area that will lead to valuable knowledge applicable in fields other than that in which the work is being done." (UNQUOTE)

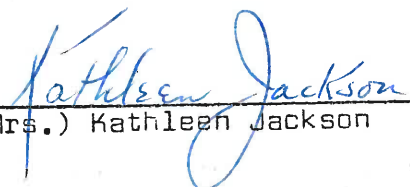
FIFTH, I suggest that representatives from this group above participate in the yearly review of the mining operation if a conditional use permit should be granted.

IN CONCLUSION, I ask that you go out to see these dunes -- in a beach buggy, or an open jeep. Get your driver to take you high -- up on the sand banks of the cliffs, 400 feet above the water which lies below you; spread out incredibly blue and vast. Observe the caves of Mussel Rock. Drink at the freshwater spring bubbling out of a cliff. Then spin along the flat beachfront with the fresh sea wind in your face. Listen to the great white combers come pounding in. Dip in and out of the white wind-sculptured dune formations. Get the feel of the area. It is different from the desert dunes because here you have the thunder and roar of a wild surf, the expanse of the sea, glittering...and a quiet river mouth.

And I ask you to remember what Sigurd Olson said: that the real significance of land value is a cultural matter...that it is far more than farming, hunting, fishing, hiking or beach sports...that it has to do with the human spirit. And that what we are using and trying to conserve here is not land for sand mining or for a park...as much as we are trying to conserve the human spirit, itself.

After you do this - then I would ask that you study the findings of your qualified advisors - and finally make your decision on the best and highest use for this land.

THANK YOU.


(Mrs.) Kathleen Jackson