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PRESS RELEASE

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SANTA YNEZ RIVER ESTUARY REMAINS CLOSED TO PUBLIC ACCESS
Public Access Closed Past 40 Years to Protect Endangered Species and Habitat

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) -- The Santa Barbara County Community Services Department, Parks Division, reminds the public that contrary to what has been posted on social media, there is currently no public access to the Santa Ynez River Estuary at County Ocean Beach Park, located 13 miles west of Lompoc. The estuary has been closed to public access for 40 years to protect endangered species and habitat, and remains closed to boating, fishing and swimming.

The County continues to discuss the possibility of limited public access at the estuary with Vandenberg Airforce Base and other government agencies that have regulatory authority over the waters of the Santa Ynez River. However, significant concerns remain for wildlife and habitat in the estuary, as well as security around the Air Force base that prevents opening the estuary.

Recent social media posts implied that the Santa Barbara County Parks Commission may have taken an action or decided to open the estuary to non-motorized boating. The Parks Commission received a briefing on County Park staff's ongoing efforts to work with partner agencies to consider opening the estuary for public access, however the Commission did not have an item regarding the estuary nor take any action related to the Santa Ynez River estuary and public access. At this time, the estuary remains closed to public access.

County Ocean Beach Park remains open for day use and visitors are asked to respect the restricted areas so that the County, Vandenberg Air Force Base, U.S. Fish & Wildlife and other regulatory agencies may continue discussion about options to open the estuary in the future.

For information about County Ocean Beach Park, go to countyofsb.org/parks/day-use/ocean-beach.sbc.