



## **The Oceano and Nipomo Dunes Constitute California’s Ocean-side Sahara Desert, Where History and Beauty Collide**

*Discover Hollywood History at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center, Go Back in Time at the Oceano Train Depot and The Rancho Nipomo Dana Adobe, Drive Your Car on Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area, Witness Thousands of Monarch Butterflies as they Migrate, and Enjoy Miles of Unspoiled Beaches*

**April 1, 2018- San Luis Obispo County, CA** – Oceano and Nipomo are authentic California beach towns, off the beaten track, offering miles of pristine sand dunes reminiscent of the Sahara Desert alongside a historic Mexican Village where visitors can go back in time. Located along the [California Highway 1 Discovery Route](#) smack dab between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and making up the largest sand dunes complex in the state, these beautiful destinations are far from ordinary and offer a plethora of unique activities for everyone to enjoy.

### **Nipomo**

Situated as the first town in San Luis Obispo County when traveling north on Highway 101, locals proudly proclaim “The Central Coast Starts Here!” Nipomo offers a charming old-fashioned downtown featuring the deliciously world-famous Jocko’s Steak House, and is home to three world-class golf courses, orchards laden with citrus and avocados, and fields of strawberries and flowers. Here are some noteworthy things to do while visiting Nipomo:

- **[Rancho Nipomo Dana Adobe](#)**  
Standing in a grove of stately Eucalyptus trees on the Nipomo Mesa is a 13-room adobe residence built by Captain William Goodwin Dana in 1840. Restoration efforts have restored this historic home to much of its original splendor. Burros and other farm animals from the great Rancho era are still found here, along with costumed docents, antique farm implements, and historians who will gladly guide you through its fascinating history.
- **[Monarch Butterfly Grove](#)**  
From late October to February, thousands of black and gold Monarch butterflies cluster in the limbs of a Eucalyptus grove at the Monarch Dunes in Nipomo, providing a spectacular glimpse of nature in all her vibrant glory. Many of these fragile butterflies fly more than 1,000 miles, braving harsh weather conditions before coming to roost in the protected grove for the winter. The grove and Butterfly Habitat is open year-round with an interpretive trail, and is free to all.
- **[The Luffa Farm](#)**  
The Luffa Farm is a family run operation, one of the only growers of luffa sponges in the USA, and, is open to the public. Nestled on the hidden mesa in Nipomo, The Luffa Farm grows and sells natural luffa sponges and specializes in handmade natural bath bombs, bath salts, and bath teas, along with handmade natural glycerin soaps and lotions. They offer fun and free educational tours that showcase how the sponges are grown using the farm’s special heirloom luffa seeds, which make the luffa sponges uniquely soft, luxurious, and inviting.

- [Guadalupe – Nipomo Dunes Center](#)

The Dunes Center is a natural history museum located in the heart of historic Guadalupe, CA that works to conserve the unique ecosystem of the local dunes through education, research, and cooperative stewardship. Well known for its display of artifacts from Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 *The Ten Commandments*, the Dunes Center also offers a variety of guided community hikes, classroom education programs, and nature field trips that focus on the history of the area, as well as local flora and fauna.

- [Oso Flaco Natural Area](#)

Let your senses come alive at one of the most scenic areas along California's coast, Oso Flaco Lake, located at the southernmost part of the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area, just southwest of Nipomo. Join a docent led hike or explore on your own. This surprising wooded area ends at an incredible boardwalk bridge that takes visitors out over the lake and out to the dunes. At the end of the boardwalk you will find a viewing platform with vistas of the entire San Luis Bay from Point San Luis in the north to Mussel Rock in the south.

- [Stewardship Travel](#)

This award-winning Stewardship Travel Program provides a unique menu of over 50 activities where visitors can play, care, and connect deeper with local residents, scientists, naturalists, wildlife, and heritage sites located along the CA Highway 1 Discovery Route. Visitors can enjoy Stewardship Travel learning experiences in Nipomo including docent led hikes and/or donation opportunities to help maintain the restoration programs throughout The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex. The Dunes Center has a thriving education program, reaching over 4,000 students annually.

## [Oceano](#)

Oceano is a little California beach town at the edge of the largest dunes complex in the state. The Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area is the only place in California where visitors can drive on the beach and enjoy fun recreation opportunities from ATV cruising and horseback riding, to surfing and kayak fishing. The historic Oceano Train Depot served as a classic turn-of-the-century Type 22 train depot until 1973 and is now a history museum filled with a plethora of railroad artifacts.

- [Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area](#)

Don't settle for just sunbathing, drive your car onto the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and experience the beach in an all new way. Formerly Pismo Dunes SVRA, this sand dune complex is geologically unique and provides an impressive playground for off-road enthusiasts offering ATV rentals and safety gear. Oceano Dunes offers visitors other recreational activities such as swimming, surfing, fishing, camping, kayak fishing, kite boarding, personal watercraft and hiking.

- [The Great American Melodrama & Vaudeville](#)

The Great American Melodrama & Vaudeville is a professional theatre company located in Oceano that has been operating year-round since 1976. Each night, a two-act play is performed – typically comedies, musicals, and spoofs – followed by an original vaudeville revue filled with song, dance, and comedy. As the theatre's name suggests, many shows are performed in a classic melodramatic style, with patrons encouraged to cheer the hero and boo the villain. An evening at the Melodrama promises affordable fun and laughs for all ages.

- [Oceano Train Depot and Museum](#)

The Oceano Train Depot is a turn-of-the-century train depot that remains virtually untouched, and is open to the public for tours. It was once the most important building in South San Luis Obispo County as all passengers, freight, telegraph, and mail service passed in and around the Depot. Housed inside the walls are not only artifacts from the railroad, but historical photos and artifacts from the community itself dating back to the early 1900's. Railroad buffs and old timers tell their stories of working on the railroad and give the history on the equipment and railroad artifacts on display. Kids love the old post office boxes, coffee grinder, jukebox, and things of yesteryear.

- **[Stewardship Travel](#)**

Stewardship Travel makes it easy for individuals and families to jump in alongside locals for educational and conservation activities that are designed to be "bite size" to pair well with wine tasting and beach fun. Examples in Oceano include Oceano Dunes or Pismo State Beach Cleanup days, themed hikes at Oso Flaco and visiting the Oceano Historic

Plan for a memorable rural road trip or vacation in Oceano and Nipomo and [download the Oceano and Nipomo Road Trip Map](#) to check out these must-see spots. For more information as well as lodging and dining options, please visit [www.highway1discoveryroute.com](http://www.highway1discoveryroute.com).

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