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Comments at the California Coastal Commission Meeting
April 22, 2022

Thank you, Commissioners.

I'm Megan Isadore, Executive Director of River Otter Ecology Project, an environmental research and conservation organization.

We've worked in the Seashore since 2012 at eleven widely-dispersed sites, for 6 to 12 months during the year, once to twice a week.

During these years, I've watched waterways including lagoons and marshes, suffer from depredation by cattle, which routinely escape the pastoral areas. I've submitted photos and video of cattle roaming throughout all parts of Abbott's Lagoon. It can take many weeks for the cattle to be returned to pastoral lands.

We have submitted photographs of dead cattle in various stages of decomposition in Drake's Estero, as well as fences in disrepair that allow the cattle to venture into the marsh, get stuck in the mud, and die slowly. This has not been remediated.

We are unaware of any consequence to any of the ranchers for their continuing lack of response to cattle destroying natural resources within the parks and polluting the waters.

I hold a permit from the NPS which allows us to conduct research in the Park. We are not funded or subsidized in any way by the Federal Government.

It is an honor and a privilege to work in our National Parks. We are careful, and we train and supervise our volunteers. If we were to continuously breach our permit requirements, we would expect consequences. We expect no less for the ranchers who are privileged to share our National Parkland, and make a living from their leases.

We ask, as a start, that you add conditions prior to the issuance of any new leases: that the resource protection areas identified in the GNPA be fenced off, repair or replace all existing broken fencing in other areas adjacent to Drakes Estero and Abbott's Lagoon, and provide a publicly available report for review and approval by the Executive Director, of all actions taken to meet these requirements.