



PROPOSED PILOT PROJECT – TRAIL USE DESIGNATIONS

Trails Subcommittee Meeting – December 10, 2020



OC PARKS BACKGROUND

- Vision: We preserve and enhance OC Parks' natural and cultural resources for recreation, education and exploration.
- OC Parks is responsible for habitat and wildlife protection and providing public facilities that offer safe and enjoyable recreation experiences.
- 60,000 acres of land, including approximately 500 miles of trails:
 - 350 mi off-road, wilderness trails
 - 150 mi paved regional trails

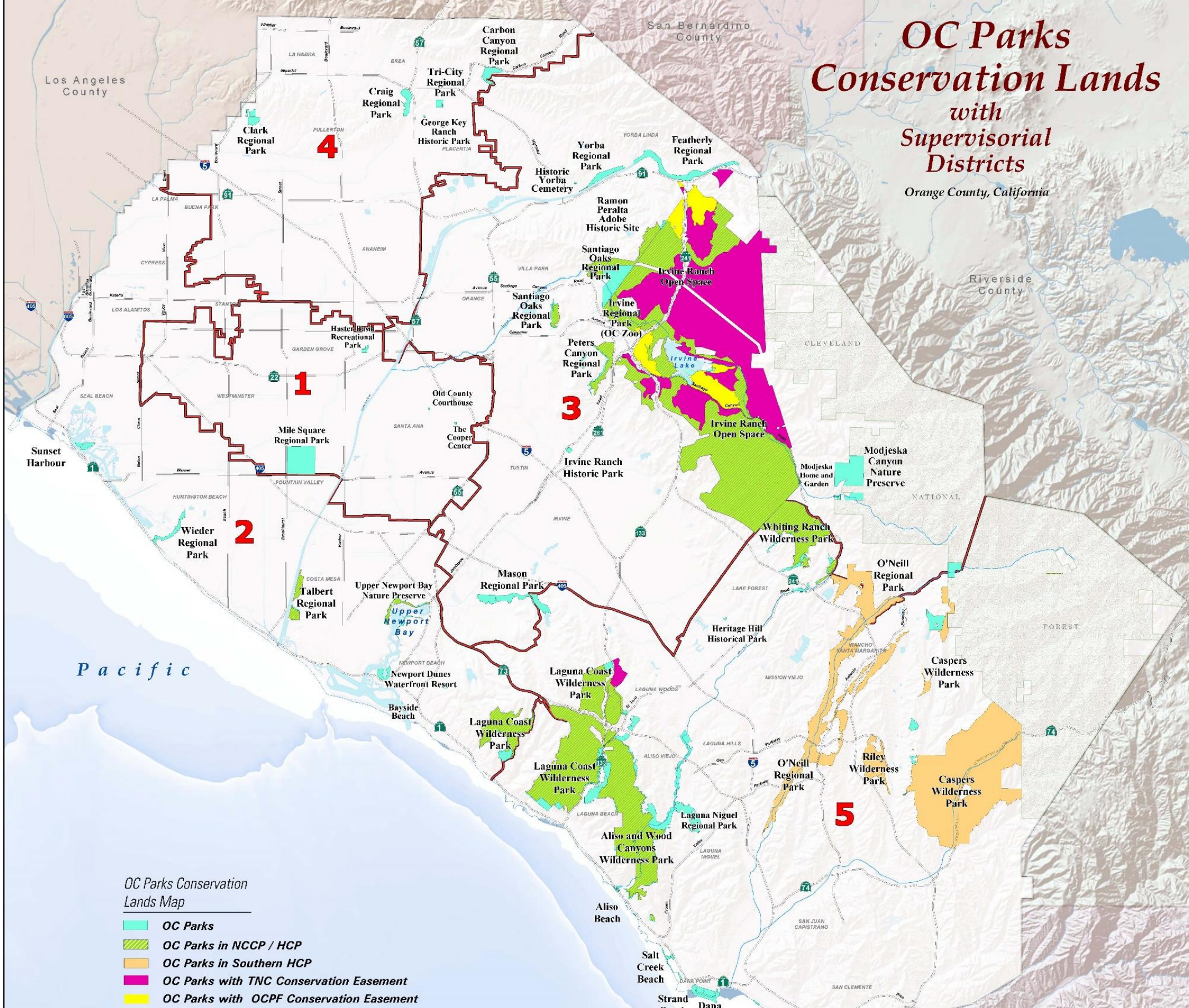
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OC Parks Conservation Lands with Supervisorial Districts

Orange County, California



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LAND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Wilderness areas managed by OC Parks are:
 - Visited by many types of users including hikers, bikers, equestrians, trail runners, birdwatchers, etc.
 - Accessed through a number of entrances/trails from surrounding communities, in addition to parking lot(s).
 - Home to protected and sensitive wildlife and plants
- Constraints in building new trails and authorization of unsanctioned trails due to land use restrictions.
- About 45 Park Rangers oversee and patrol 60,000 acres.
- Funding for trail system improvements must compete with other priorities, as established in, but not limited to:
 - 7-Year CIP program approved by Board
 - 10-Year Asset Management Program
 - Park Master Plans approved by Board

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TRAIL USE CONCERNS

- User Conflict (poor etiquette, aggression, near misses, speed, crowding)
- Safety (caused by environment: trail quality / conditions, wildlife)
- Trail overuse
- Habitat impacts (due to off-trail activity, use of closed trails, non-permitted uses)
- Insufficient enforcement

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TRAIL USE MODIFICATIONS

- Potential measures to alleviate certain trail use concerns might include:
 - Creating one-directional trails/loops
 - Designating/limiting trails for specific uses (e.g. pedestrian-only, biking-only, etc.)
- If implemented, proposed changes would be tested on a temporary basis. The pilot period would allow for:
 - Data gathering and monitoring
 - Assessment of results/success measures
 - Analysis of future operational impacts (e.g. staffing and financial resources)

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PILOT PROJECT

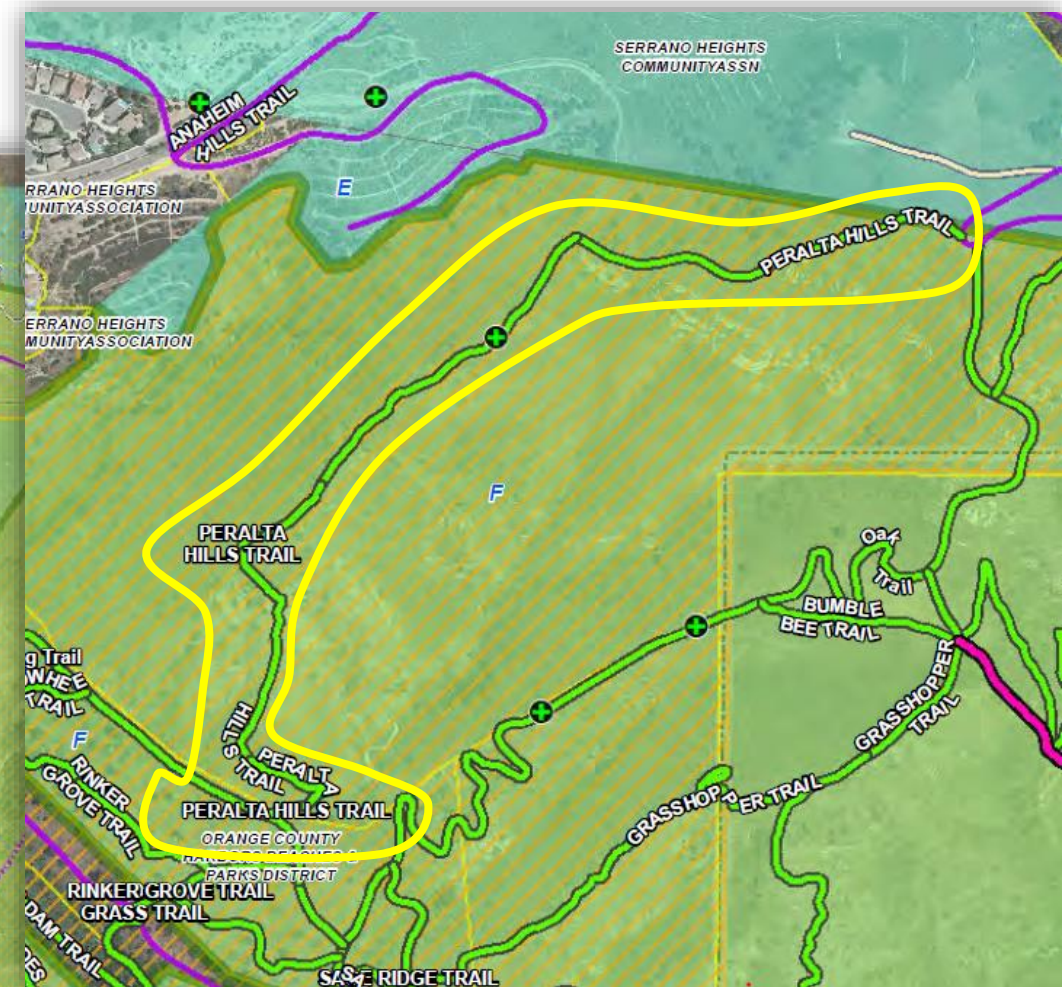
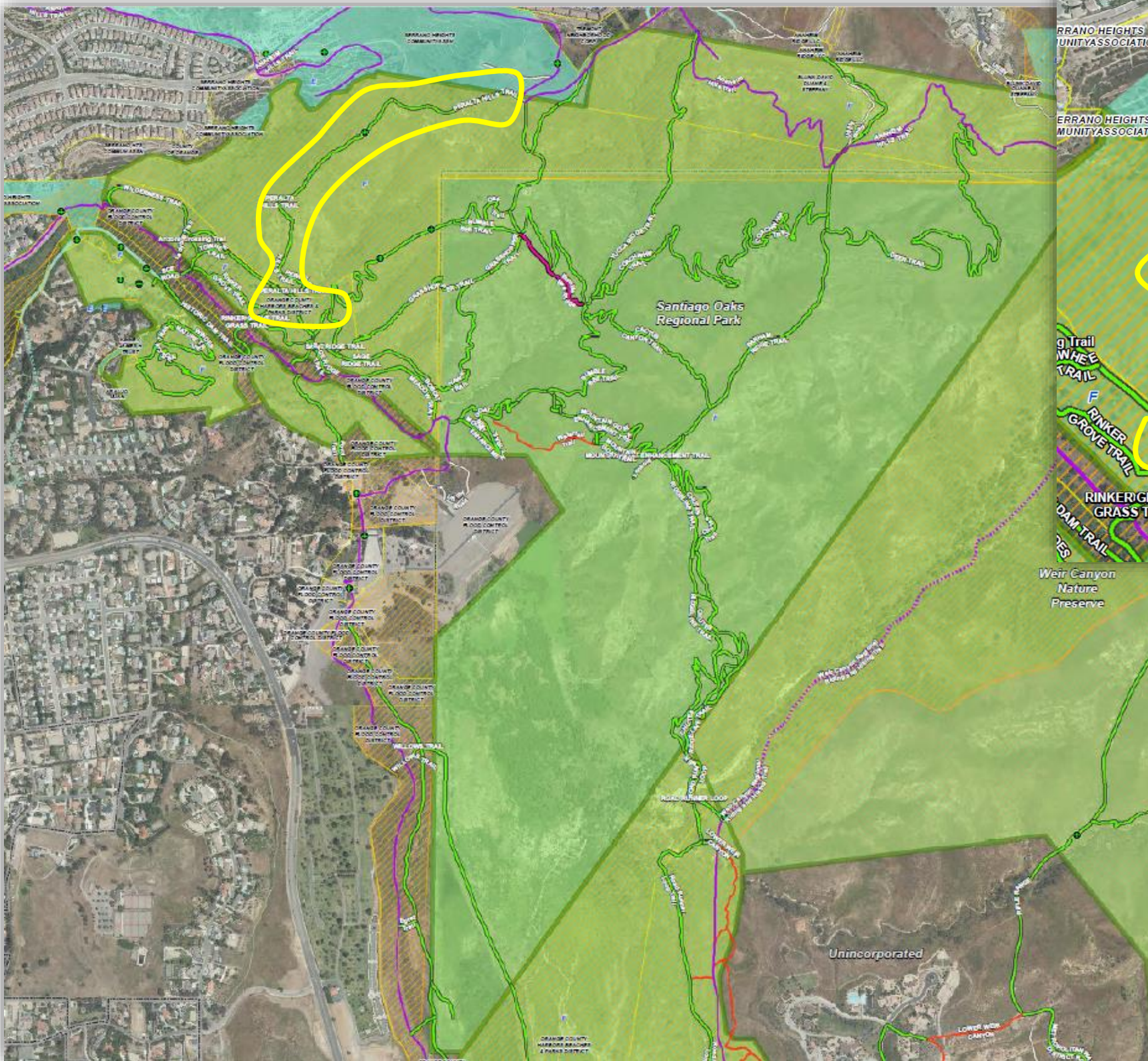
- Considerations applied in selecting trails that could potentially have use modifications:
 - Safety
 - Existing use
 - Feasibility
 - Connectivity for different users
- Implementation:
 - Identify multi-use trails that may be converted to limited or single-use
 - Identify trails which may be converted to one-directional or looping trails
 - Time needed to develop communications plan/public notification, signage, collection of baseline data, monitoring, etc.
 - Trail study and evaluation which includes patron surveys (before and after), monitoring, compliance metrics, and land surveyance.

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SANTIAGO OAKS MAP



Peralta Hills Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use: Hiking, biking, equestrian. Bidirectional.

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Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Peralta Hills Trail</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.	Hiking and equestrian use only; bidirectional.	Approx. ¾ mile; single-track.	Peralta Hills trail connects from the lower portion/main entrance of Santiago Oaks to Anaheim Hills Trail and runs parallel to Oak Trail. Bikes coming from the main park entrance travel uphill on Oak Trail to access the eastern and northeastern sections of the park towards Irvine Regional where much of the bike traffic is located. Peralta Hills is primarily used by hikers and some equestrians. Limiting Peralta Hills to hikers and equestrians only is anticipated reduce potential impacts/safety concerns and crowding by limiting trail use to those travelling at slower speeds.



Peralta – top, near Anaheim Hills Trail



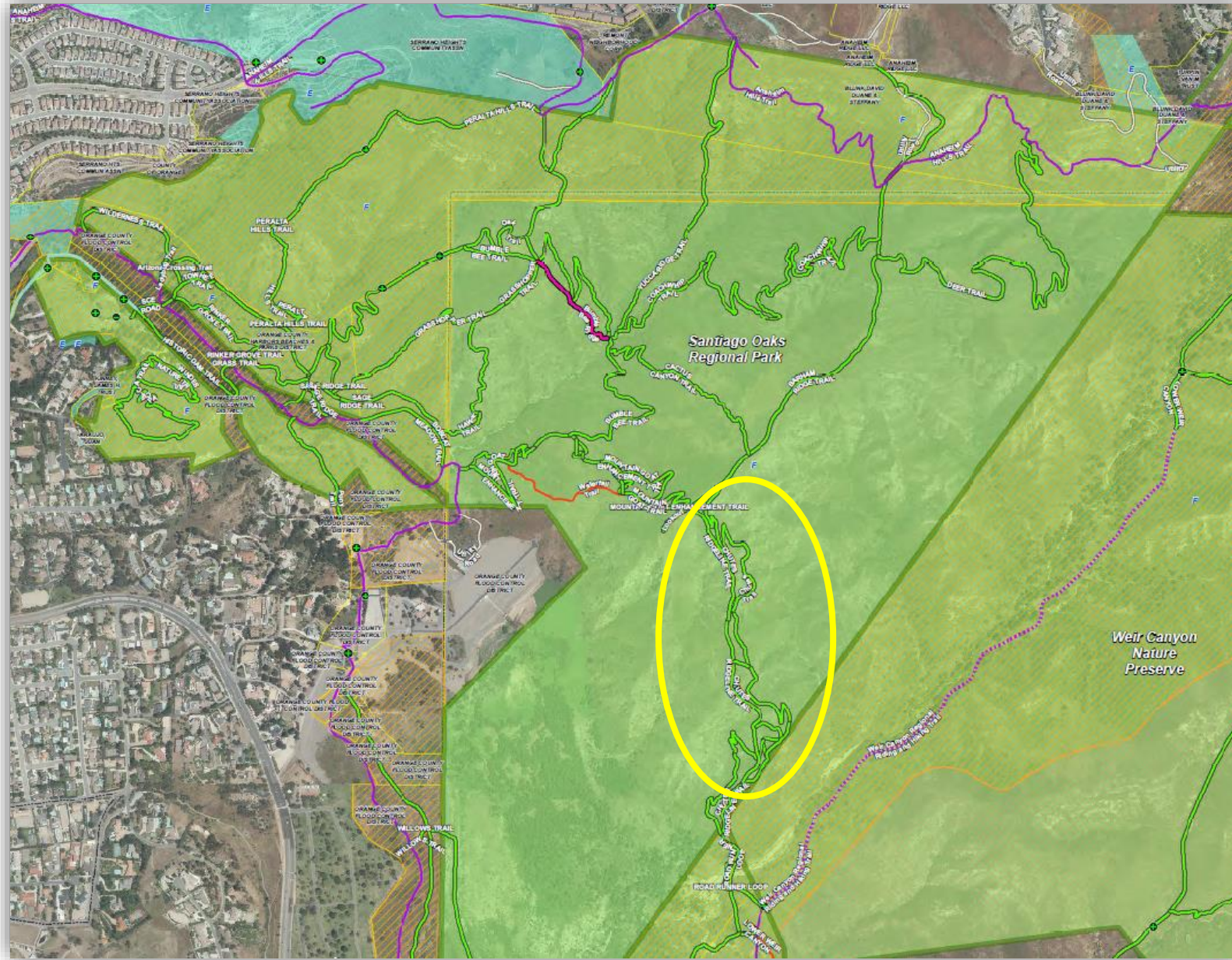
Peralta – bottom, near Wilderness Trail

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SANTIAGO OAKS



Chutes Ridgeline Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use: Hiking, biking, equestrian.
Bidirectional.

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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (SANTIAGO OAKS)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Chutes Ridgeline</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.	Bikes only; downhill only.	Approx. ¾ mile; single-track.	Chutes Ridgeline connects Santiago Oaks to Irvine Regional and is primarily used by bikes going downhill to Irvine Regional. Limiting Chutes Ridgeline to bikes downhill only is anticipated to reduce potential impacts/safety concerns and crowding while maintaining the user experience enjoyed by many bikers on this trail. There will be no change to the 10mph park speed limit. The parallel, lower trail (Chutes) connecting Santiago Oaks to Irvine Regional will still be available for multiuse, bidirectional travel.



Chutes Ridgeline – top, at Santiago Oaks trailhead



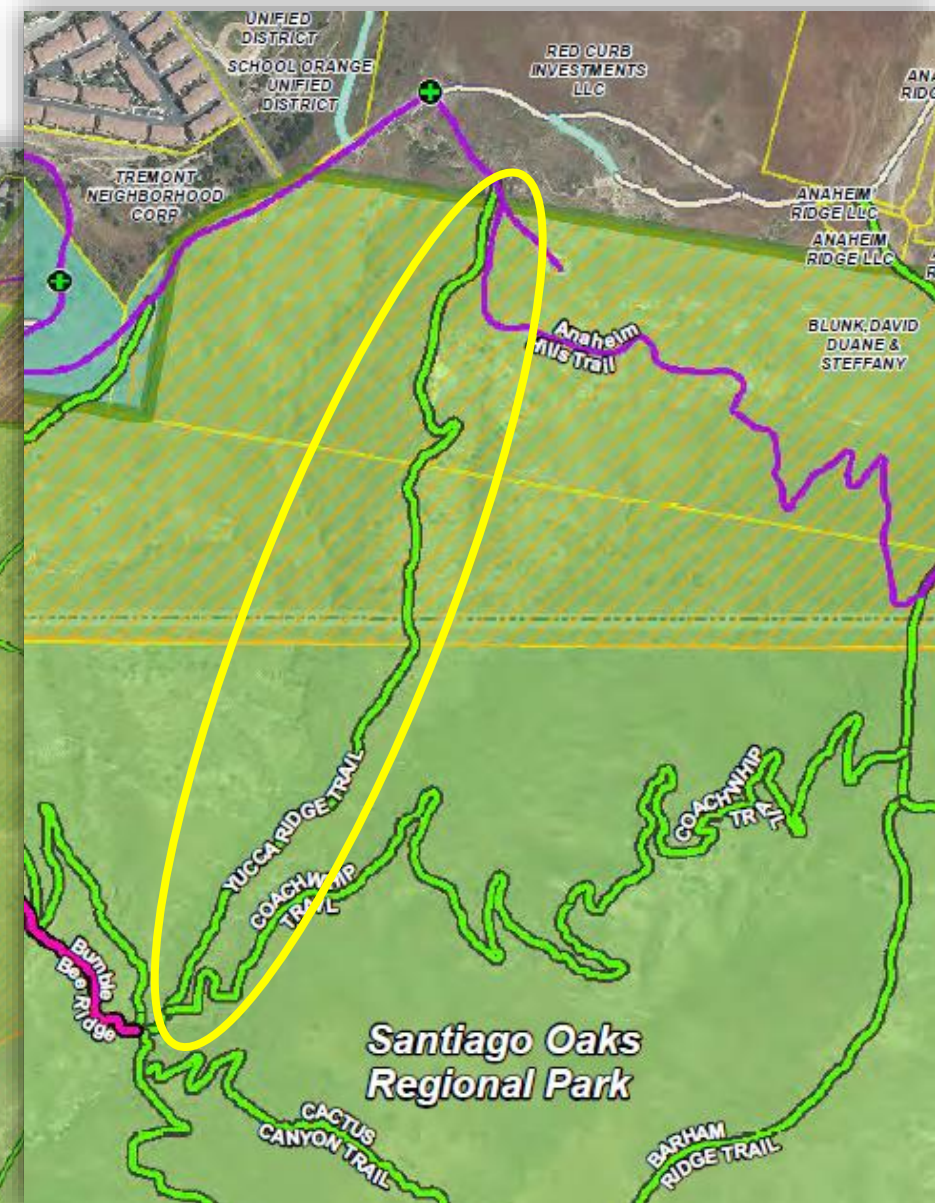
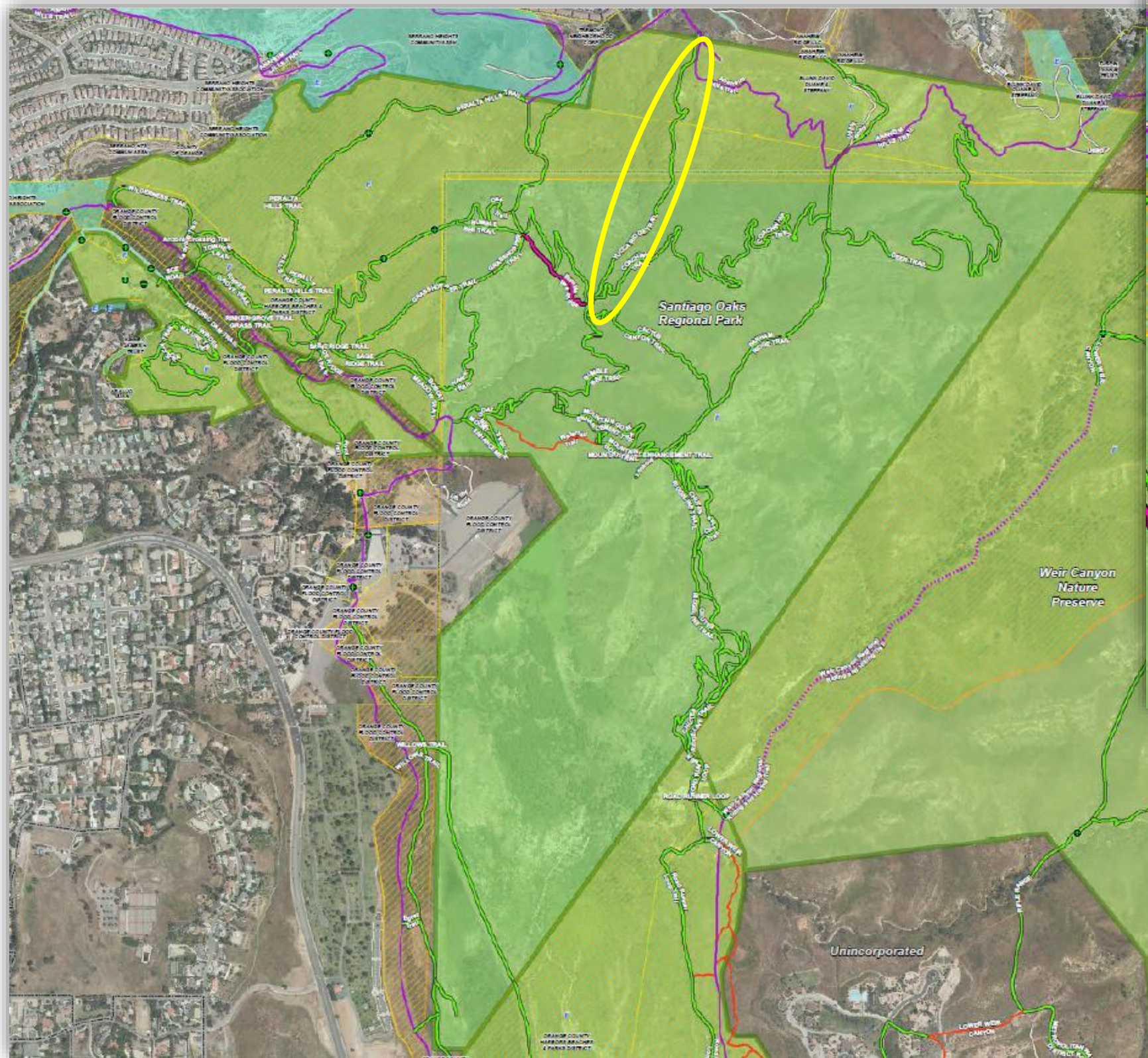
Chutes Ridgeline – bottom, near Irvine Regional

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SANTIAGO OAKS MAP



Yucca Ridge Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use: Hiking, biking, equestrian. Bidirectional.

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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (SANTIAGO OAKS)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Yucca Ridge Trail</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.	Hiking, biking, equestrian; downhill only.	Approx. ½ mile; single-track.	Yucca Ridge Trail connects Anaheim Hills to the trails in the inner canyon of the park. This trail is heavily used by all user groups. Access being limited to downhill only is anticipated to ease congestion and reduce the amount of users on the trail. There will be no change to the 10mph park speed limit. Hikers, equestrians, and bikers can use the adjacent Coachwhip Trail to travel uphill.



Yucca – top, near Anaheim Hills Trail



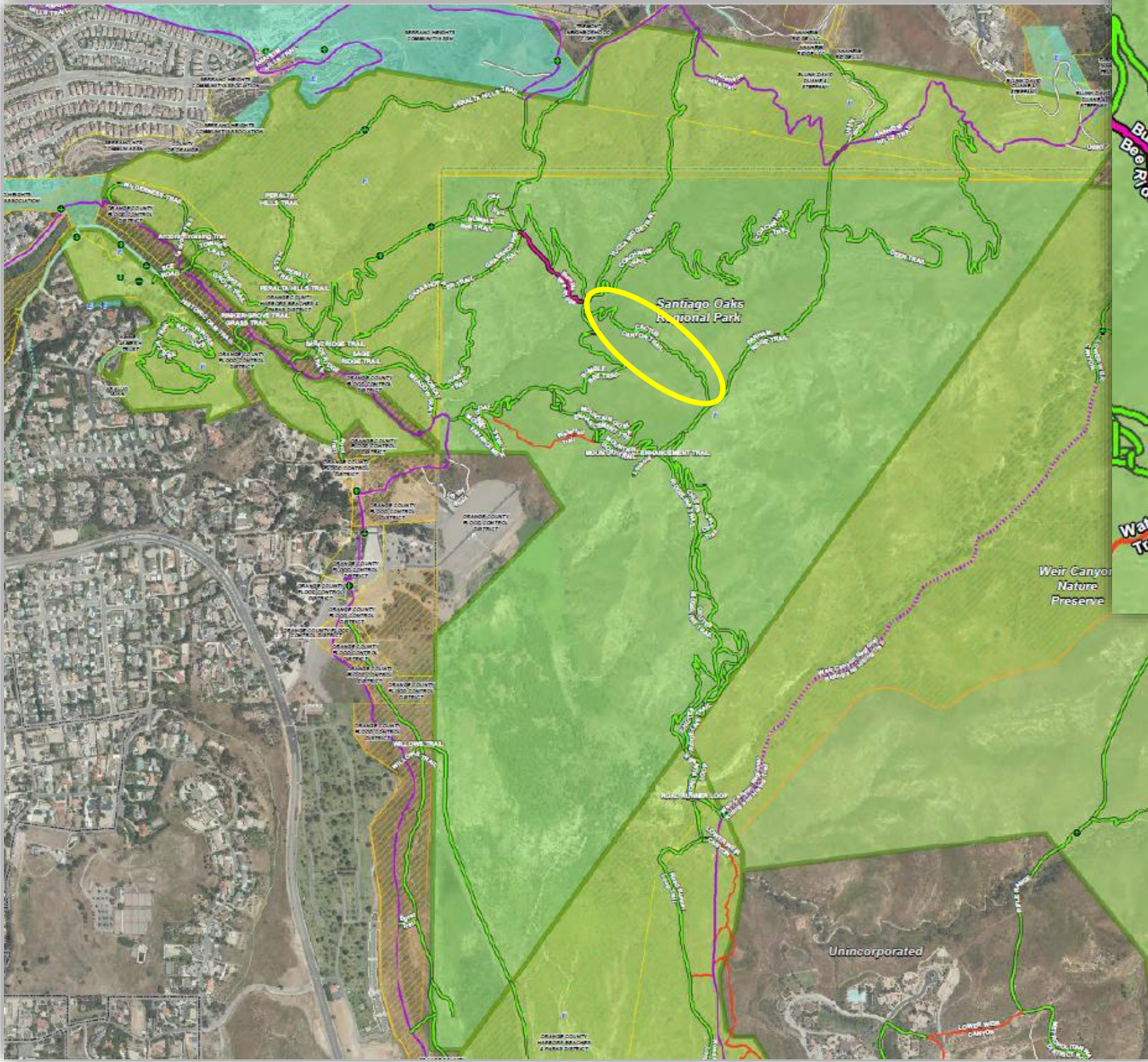
Yucca – bottom, near Cactus/Bumblebee

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SANTIAGO OAKS MAP



Cactus Canyon Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use:
Hiking, biking,
equestrian.
Bidirectional.

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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (SANTIAGO OAKS)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Cactus Canyon</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional	Hiking, biking, equestrian; downhill only.	Approx. ½ mile; single-track	Cactus Canyon Trail connects Barham Ridge to the trails in the inner canyon of the park. This trail is heavily used by bikes traveling downhill on berm turns. Access being limited to downhill only will ease congestion and reduce the amount of users on the trail. There will be no change to the 10mph park speed limit. Hikers, equestrians, and bikers can use the adjacent Coachwhip Trail and Bumble Bee/Mountain Goat Trails to travel uphill.



Cactus Canyon – view of whole trail from Bumblebee



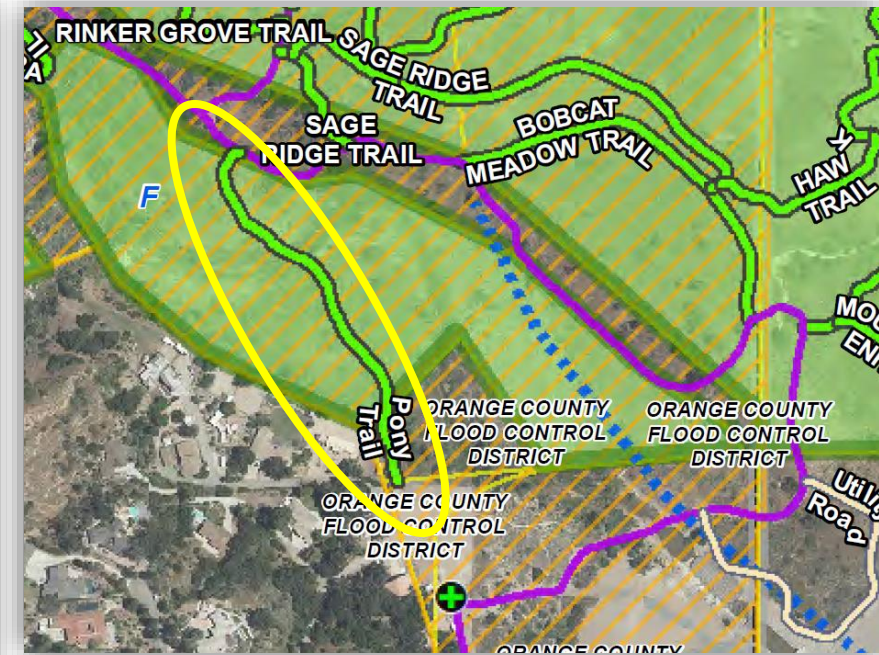
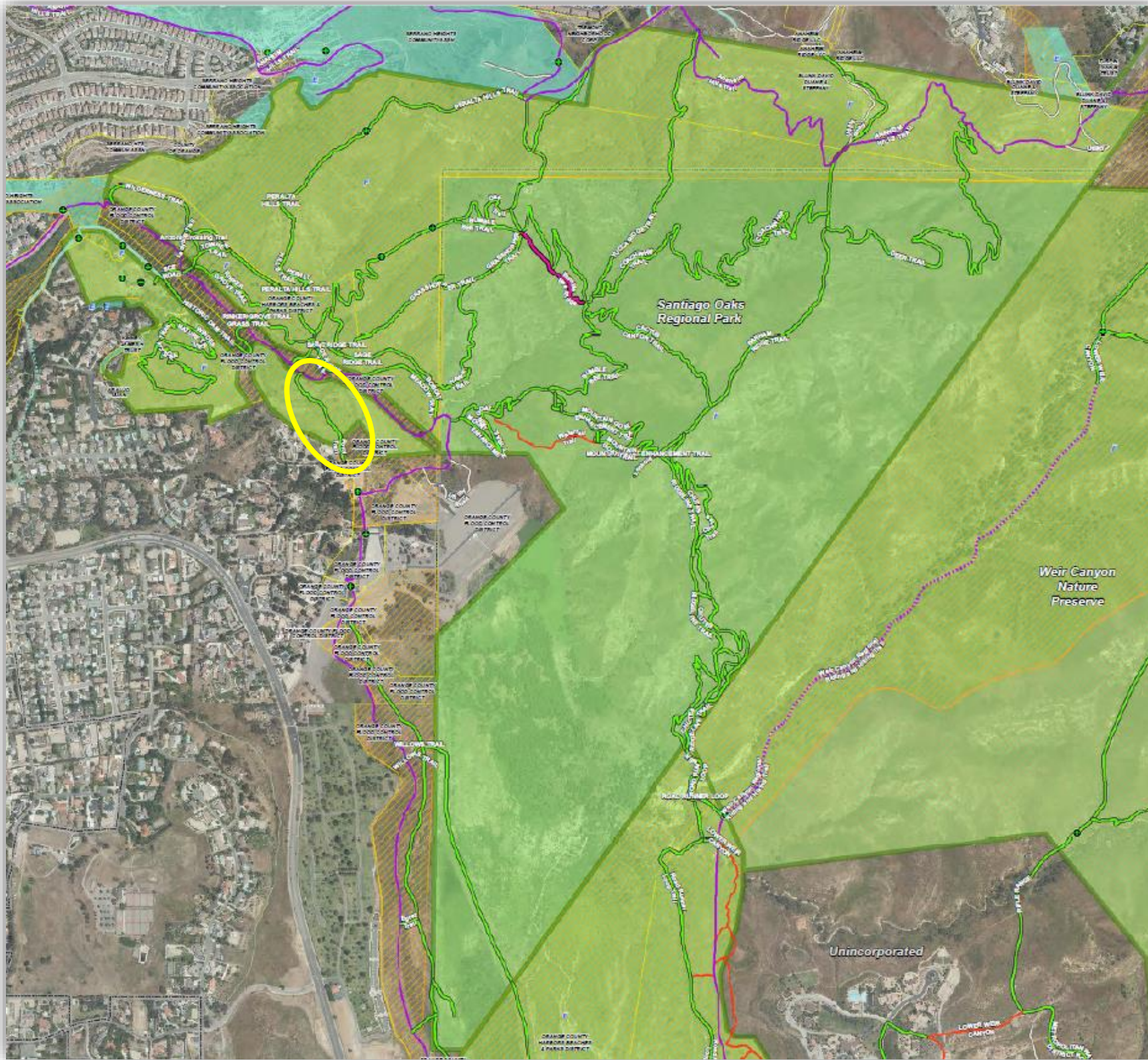
Cactus Canyon – top, near Barham Ridge

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SANTIAGO OAKS MAP



Pony Trail

- Fire Road
- Current Use:
Hiking, biking,
equestrian.
Bidirectional.

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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (SANTIAGO OAKS)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Pony Trail</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.	Hiking and equestrian use only; bidirectional.	Approx. ¼ mile; fire road.	Pony Trail is one of two entrances from the South end of the park. This trail is currently highly used by equestrian riders. Limiting Pony Trail to hikers and equestrians only is anticipated reduce potential impacts/safety concerns and crowding by limiting trail use to those travelling at slower speeds. Bikes are able to enter and exit the area via Santiago Creek Trail rather than using Pony Trail.



Pony – crossing Santiago Creek



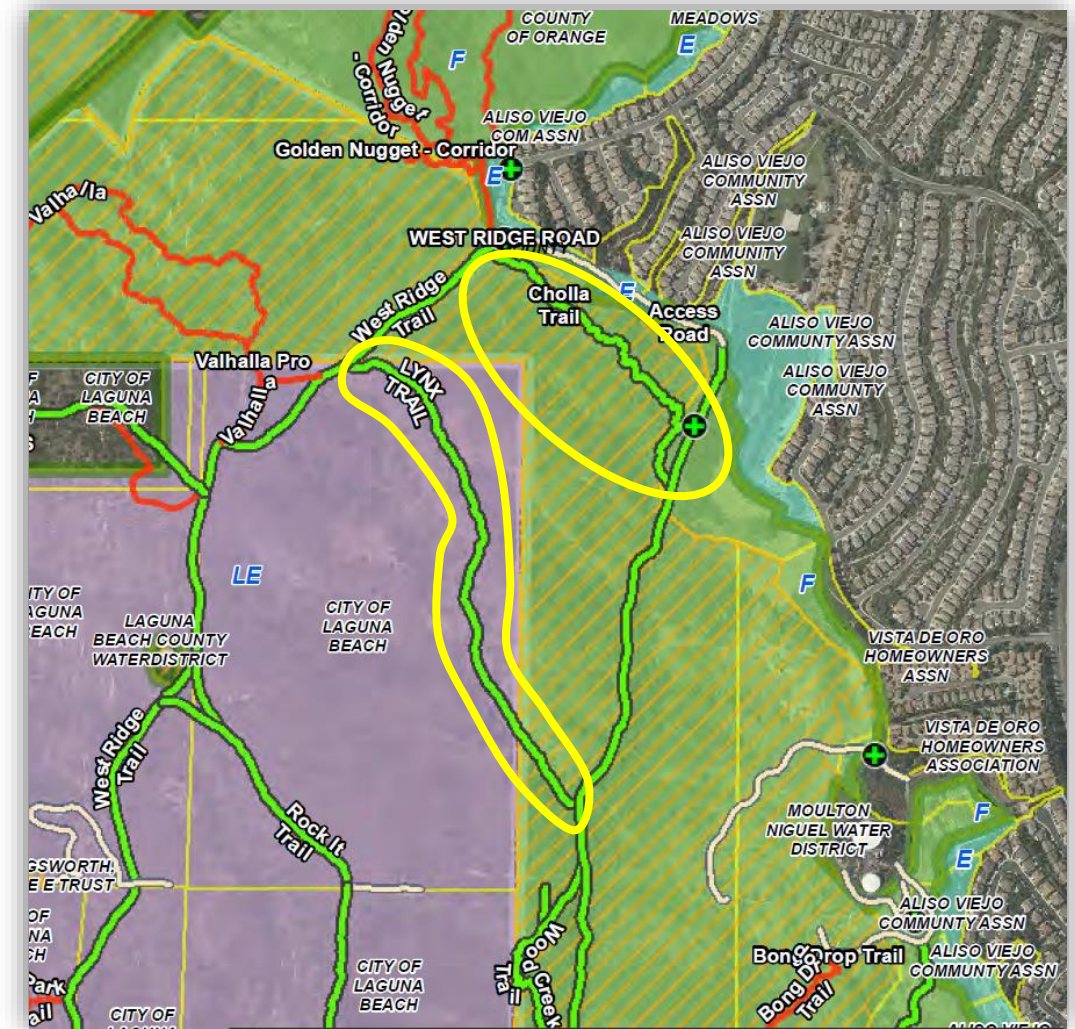
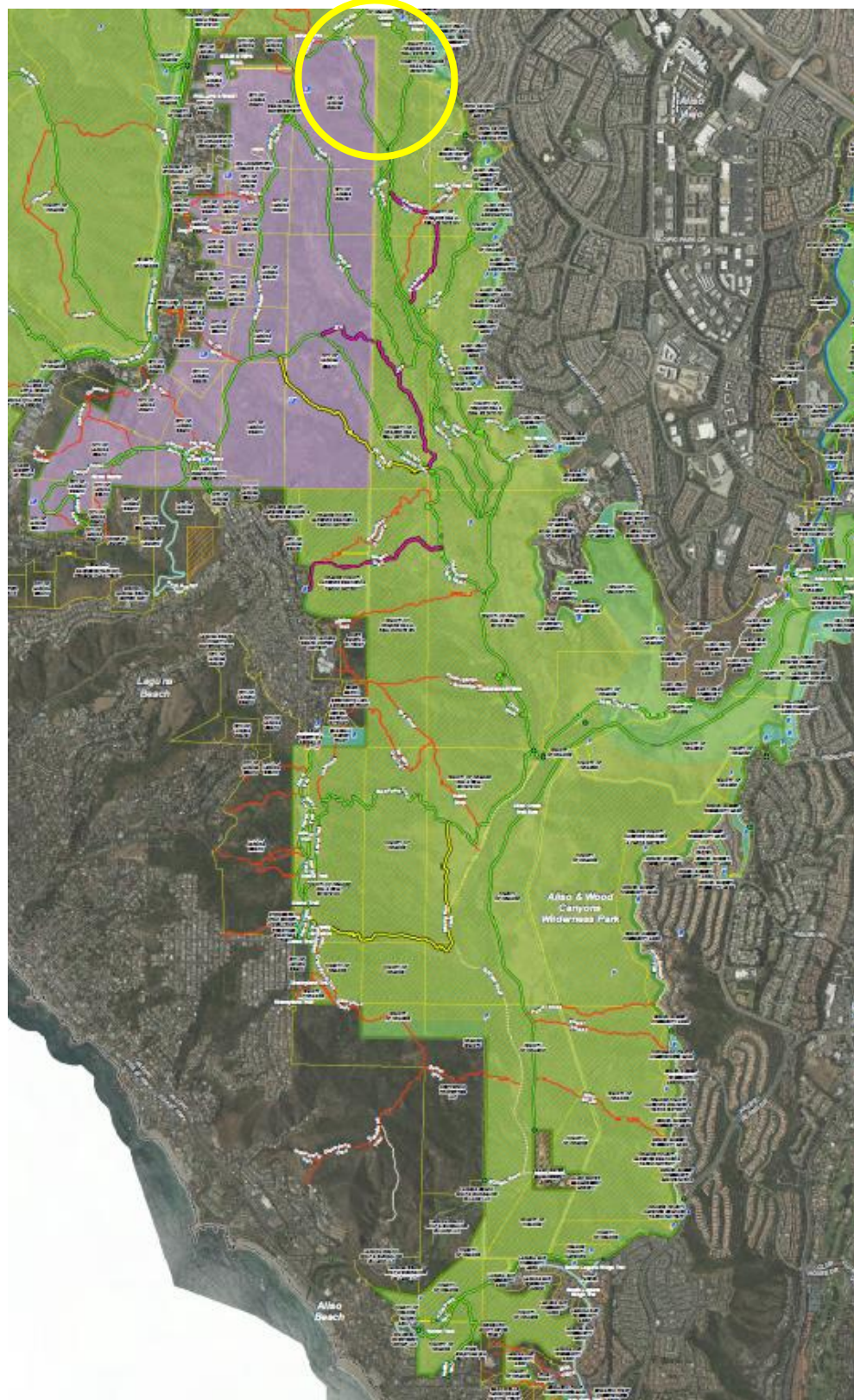
Pony – at OC Flood trailhead

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ALISO AND WOOD CANYONS MAP



Lynx Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use: Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.

Cholla Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use: Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.

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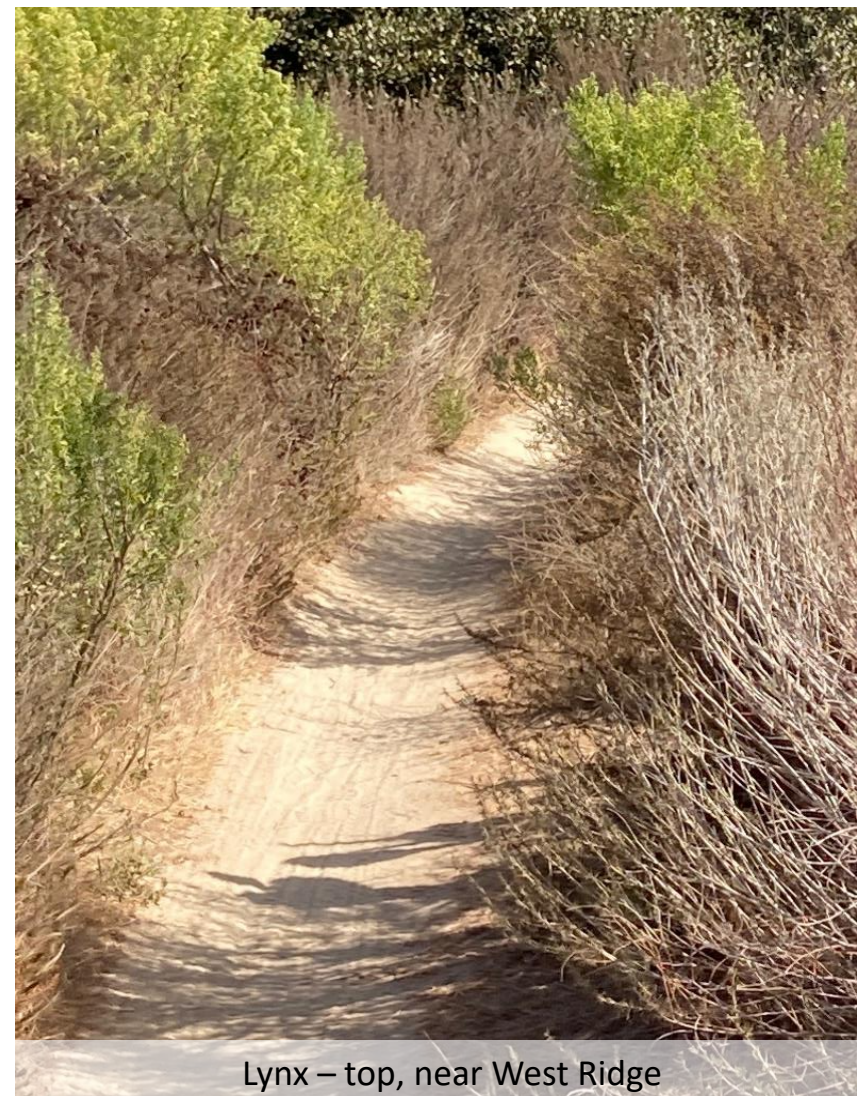


PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (ALISO AND WOOD)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Lynx Trail</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.	Bikes only, downhill only.	Approx. ½ mile; single-track.	Cholla and Lynx are parallel trails that connect Wood Canyon and West Ridge. Cholla is heavily used by both hikers and bikers while Lynx is more heavily used by bikes, with the preferred route of travel for bikes going downhill. Limiting Lynx to downhill bikes only is anticipated to reduce potential impacts/safety concerns and crowding while maintaining the user experience enjoyed by many bikers on this trail. There will be no change to the 10mph park speed limit. As an alternate to Lynx, hikers will still be able to travel down Cholla or Rock-It trail further south.



Lynx – bottom, near Wood Canyon



Lynx – top, near West Ridge

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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (ALISO AND WOOD)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Cholla Trail</u>	Hiking, biking, equestrian; Bidirectional.	Bikes: uphill only. Other users remain bidirectional.	Approx. ½ mile; single-track.	Cholla and Lynx are parallel trails that connect Wood Canyon and West Ridge. Cholla is heavily used by both hikers and bikers while Lynx is more heavily used by bikes. Limiting Cholla bike travel to uphill only is anticipated to reduce crowding concerns and also maintain, along with the Lynx/Wood Canyon/West Ridge trails, a looped route for bikes in this area of the park.

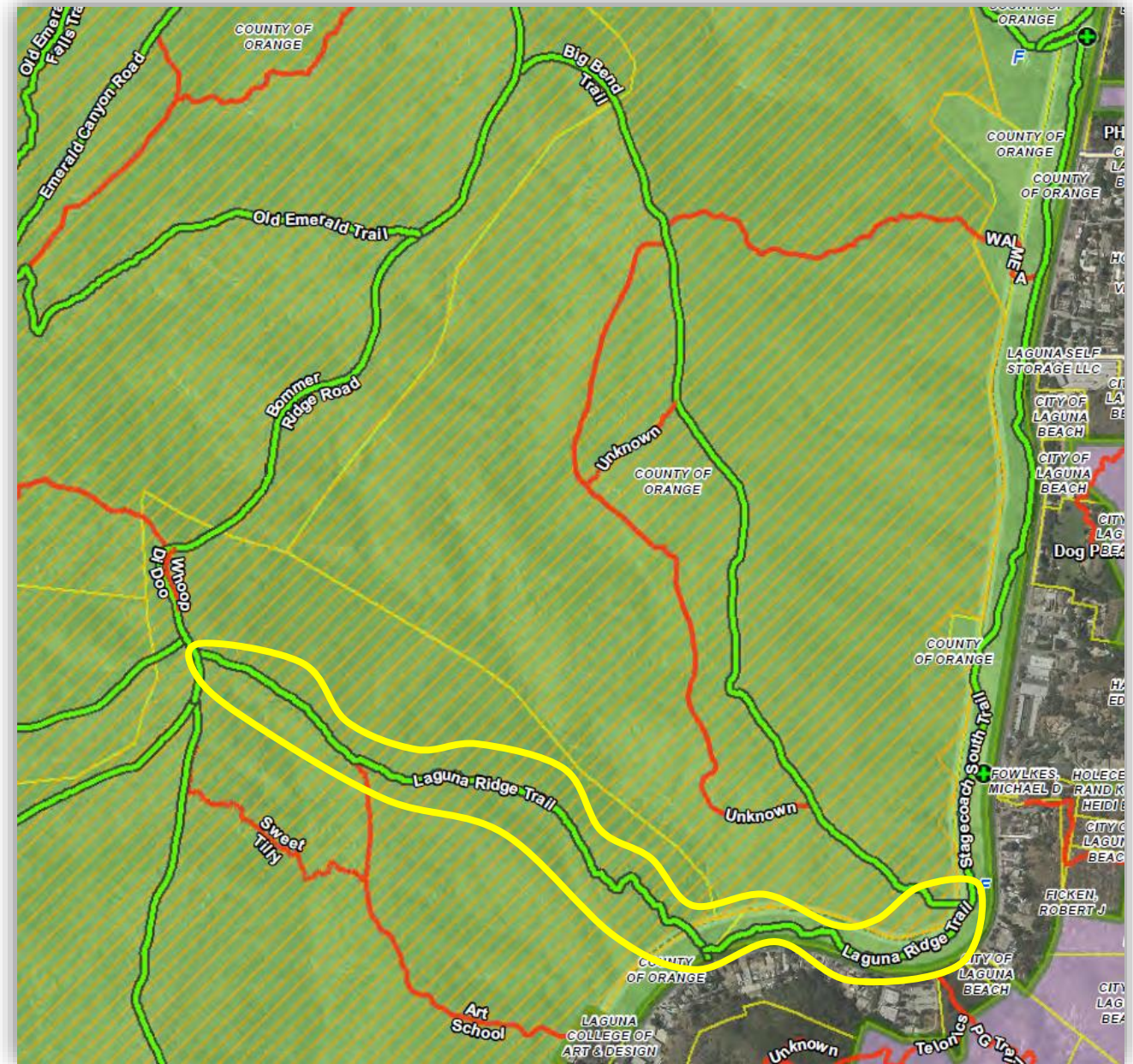
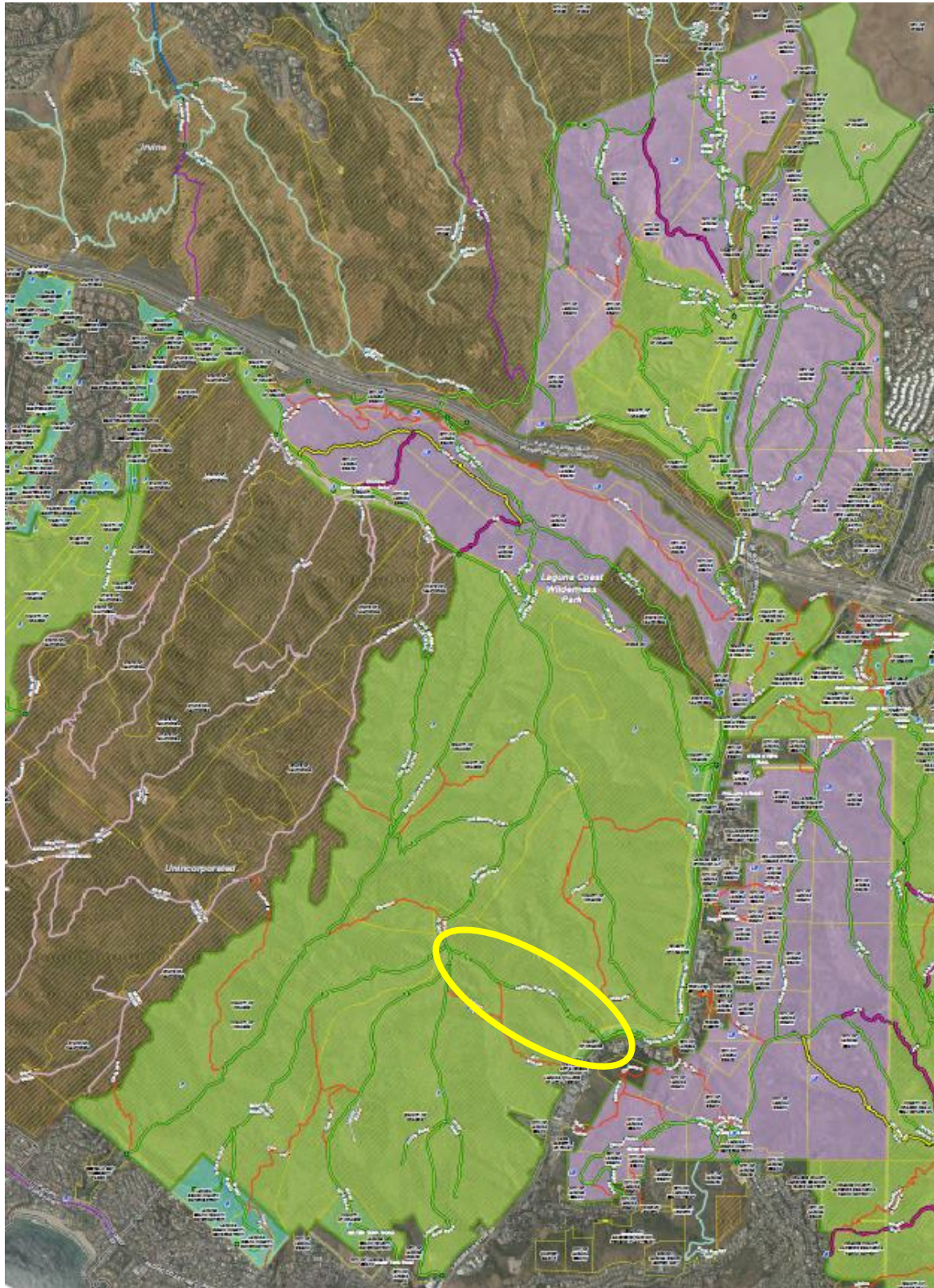


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LAGUNA COAST MAP



Laguna Ridge Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use:
Hiking and biking, Bidirectional.

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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (LAGUNA COAST)

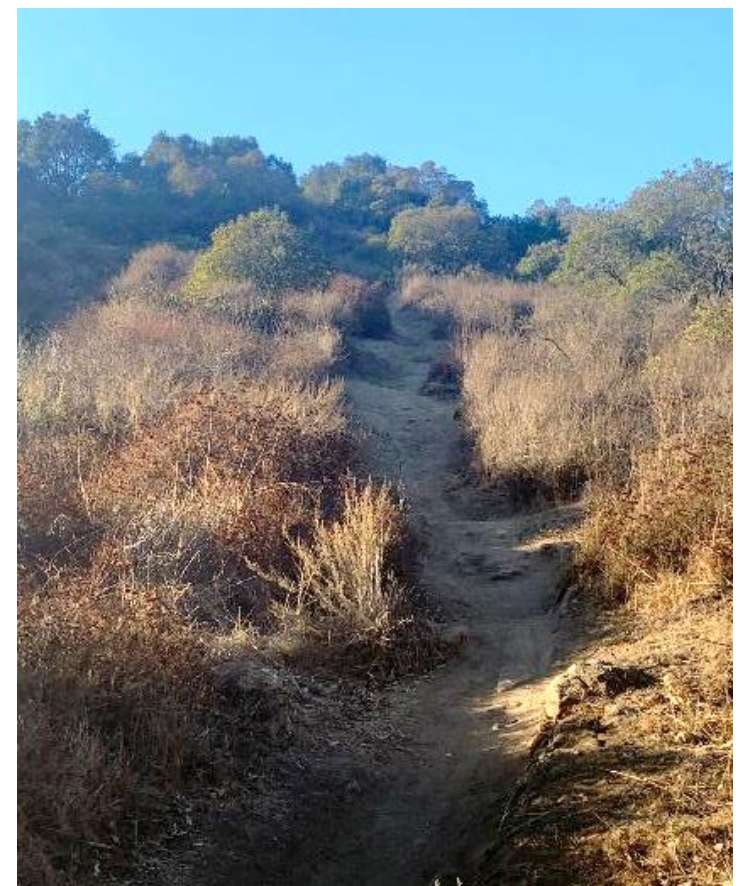
Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Laguna Ridge Trail</u>	Hiking and biking; Bidirectional.	Bikes only, downhill only.	Approx. 1 ¼ miles; single-track.	Laguna Ridge Trail provides access from Laguna Canyon Road to the interior of the park, connecting to Bommer Ridge. The portion of the trail nearing the Road is extremely steep. This trail is currently heavily used by bikes going downhill, and limiting it to downhill bikes only is anticipated to reduce potential impacts/safety concerns and crowding while maintaining the user experience enjoyed by many bikers on this trail. There will be no change to the 10mph park speed limit. A nearby trail, Big Bend Trail, runs parallel to Laguna Ridge and can be used by hikers to access the interior of the park north of Laguna Ridge Trail.



Laguna Ridge – top, near Bommer Ridge



Laguna Ridge – near middle



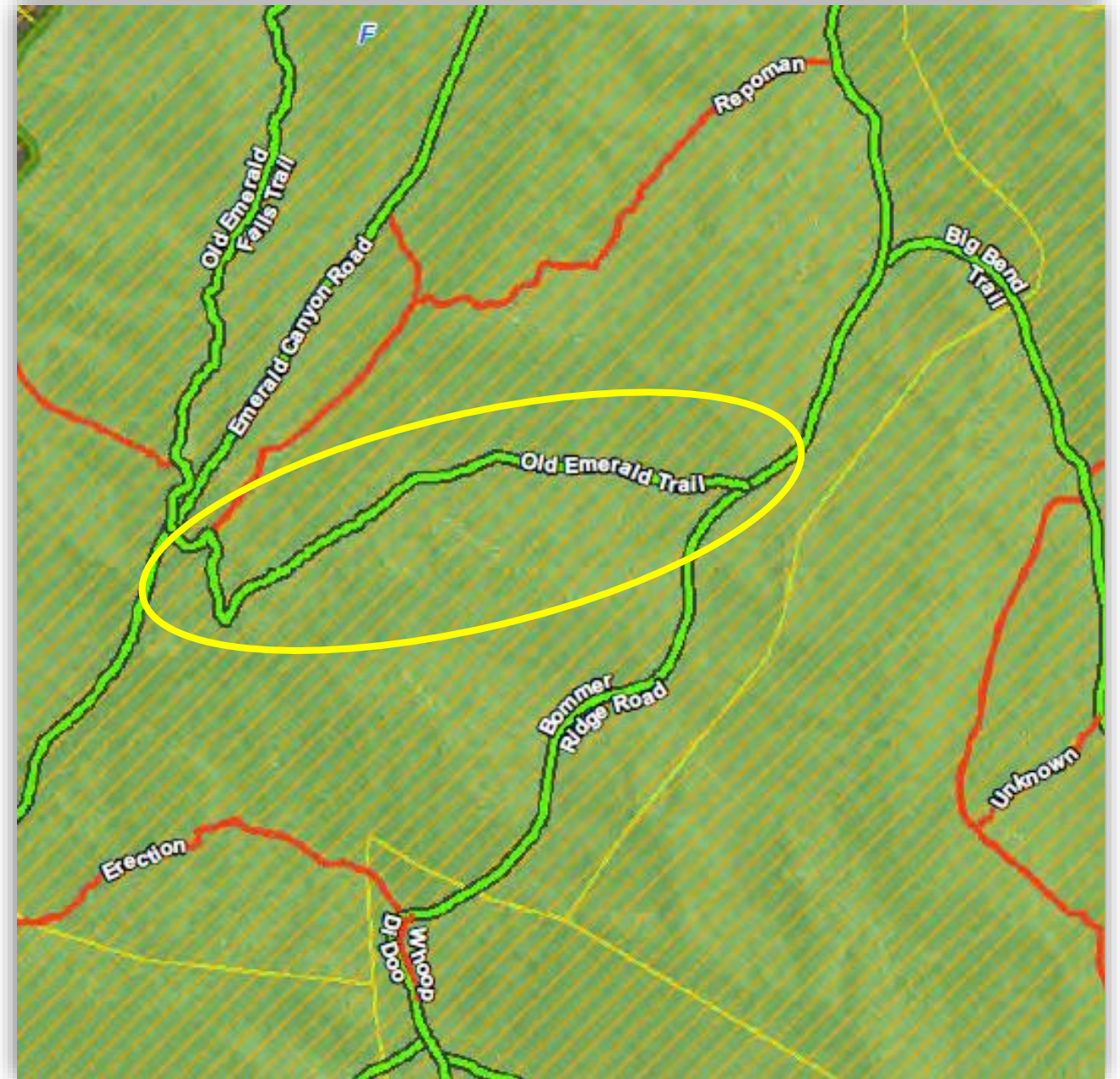
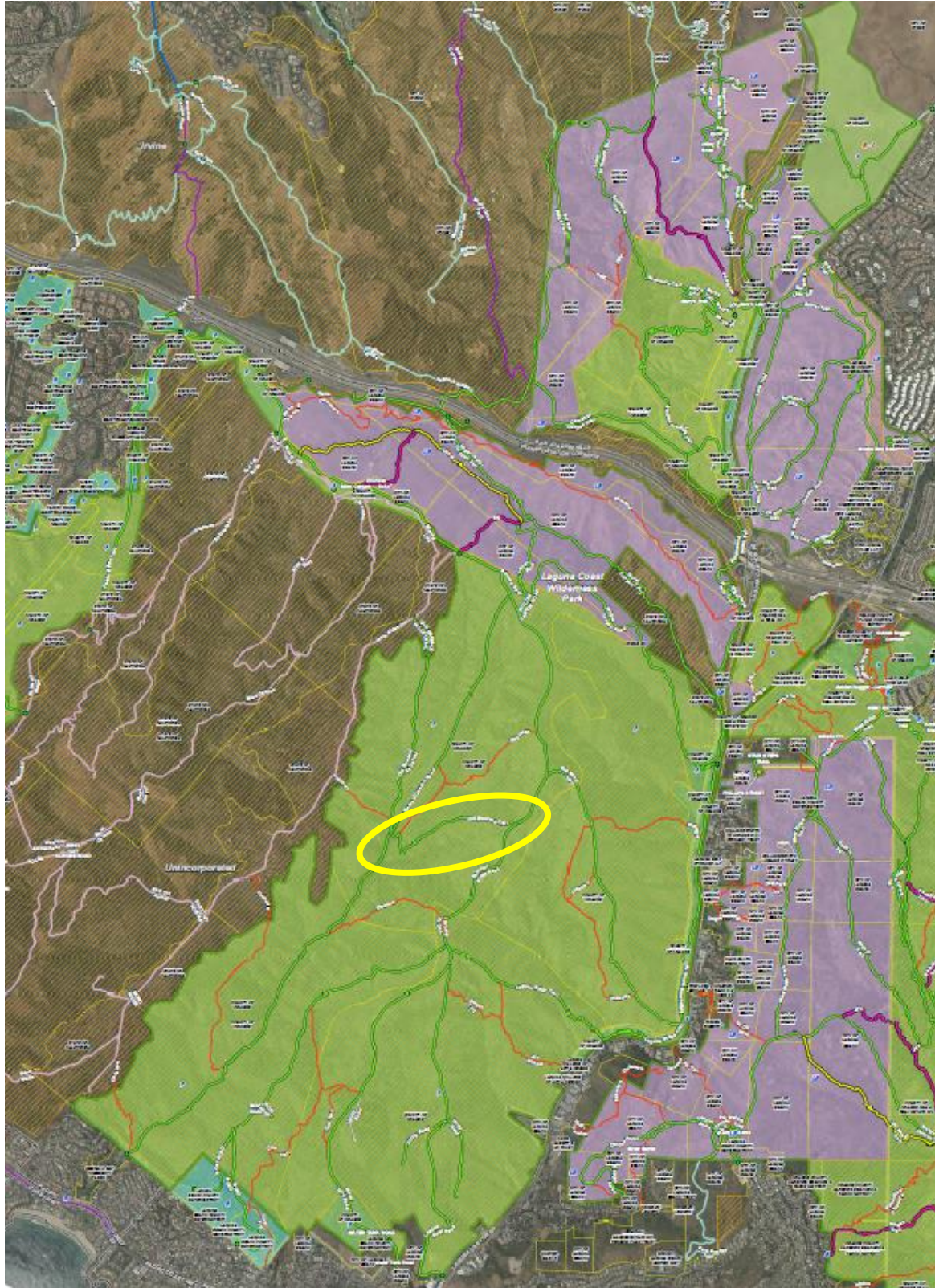
Laguna Ridge – bottom, near Stagecoach

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LAGUNA COAST MAP



Old Emerald Trail

- Single Track
- Current Use:
Hiking and biking, Bidirectional.

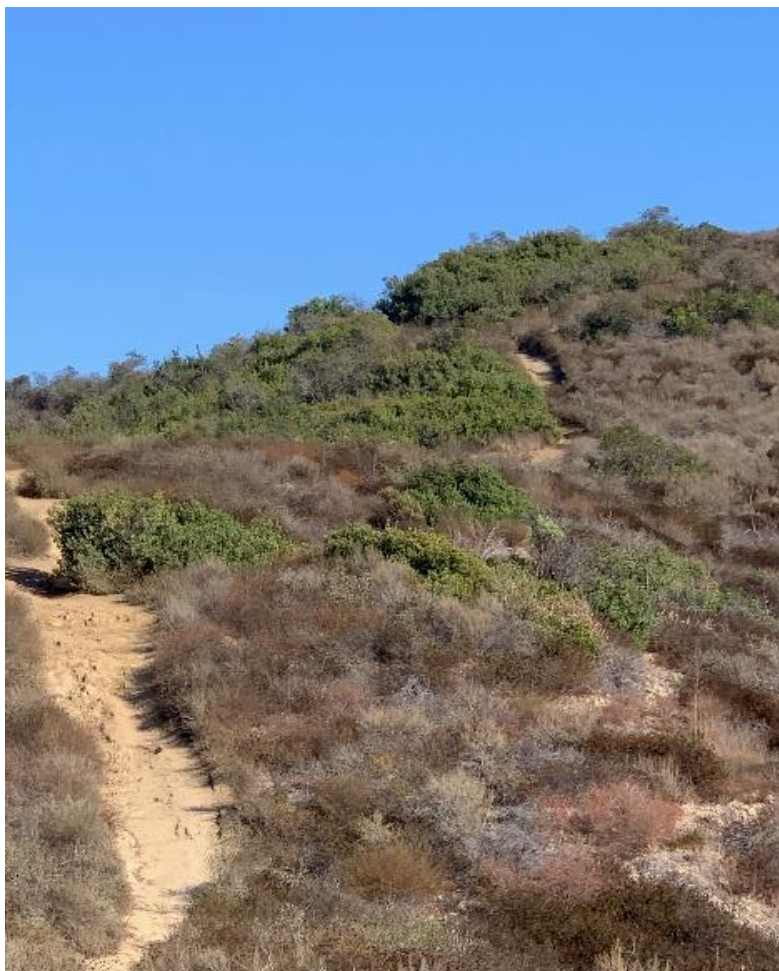
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PROPOSED TRAIL USE CHANGES (LAGUNA COAST)

Trail Name	Current Use	Proposed Change	Trail Description (length, width)	Justification
<u>Old Emerald Trail</u>	Hiking and biking; Bidirectional.	Bikes: downhill only. Hikers remain bidirectional.	Approx. ¾ mile; single-track.	Old Emerald Trail connects Bommer Ridge Trail to Emerald Canyon Trail. It is currently heavily used by both hikers and bikers, with bikers primarily travelling downhill. As there is no comparable alternate route for hikers, multiple use is recommended for this trail. Limiting bike travel to downhill only is anticipated to reduce crowding concerns while maintaining the user experience enjoyed by many bikers on this trail. There will be no change to the 10mph park speed limit.



Old Emerald – top, near Bommer Ridge



Old Emerald – near middle



Old Emerald – bottom, near Emerald Canyon

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RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Make recommendation to Parks Commission to support pilot project.

Thank you.



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