

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

(Action Items Displayed in Italics)
WEDNESDAY, August 9, 2023 — 6:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chairperson Shawver (arrived at 6:42 p.m.), Alternate Chairperson Jones, and Members Webber, Ball, Martin, and Browning were present. Member Schoeck was absent.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At this time, members of the public may address the Subcommittee on items of public interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee and are not contained in tonight's agenda.

No comments were received from the public.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR (ITEM A)

The following item will be approved by one motion unless a Subcommittee Member requests to pull a specific item.

A. APPROVE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 11, 2023 MEETING

Motion: Member Webber

2nd: Member Martin

Approved 5–0

IV. DISCUSSION CALENDAR MATTERS (ITEMS A–B)

A. SUBCOMMITTEE WILDERNESS PRESENTATION

Staff will present an overview of Saddleback Wilderness, an OC Parks facility that recently opened to managed public access, including feedback from the public and details on the facility's trail system.

Brian Kurnow, Interim Executive Officer, introduced the item.

Jennifer Naegele, OC Parks Natural Resources and Trails Manager, presented on the item and answered the Subcommittee Members' questions.

Darin Loughrey, Orange County Parks Foundation Executive Director, answered a Subcommittee Member's question.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive and file.

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

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Item was received and filed.

B. NAMING OF SADDLEBACK WILDERNESS TRAILS

The Subcommittee will review proposed trail names for the three trails located at Saddleback Wilderness and vote on final trail names, based on responses gathered from public surveys and staff recommendations.

Brian Kurnow, Interim Executive Officer, presented on the item and answered the Subcommittee Members' questions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Select names for three Saddleback Wilderness trails for recommendation to the Orange County Parks Commission for approval.

Subcommittee Members unanimously recommended Holeshoot Trail, Whiptail Trail, and Mirador Trail as names for the three Saddleback Wilderness trails for approval by the Orange County Parks Commission.

Motion: Chairperson Shawver

2nd: Member Martin

Approved 6–0

V. SUBCOMMITTEE EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Brian Kurnow, Interim Executive Officer, provided updates and answered the Subcommittee Members' questions.

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORT

At this time, Subcommittee Members may comment on agenda or non-agenda matters, provided that no action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law.

VII. ADJOURNMENT 7:06 p.m.

OC PARKS TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

FROM: Brian Kurnow, Interim Executive Officer

DATE: November 9, 2023

SUBJECT: Trail Use Designation Pilot Project Report Addendum

Background

In 2021, OC Parks, Utah State University (USU) researchers, and the Natural Communities Coalition (NCC) engaged in a Trail Use Designation Pilot Project (TUDPP) with the overarching goal of evaluating whether changes to existing trail use and direction designations would improve user experience and alleviate trail user conflict. The Project was implemented on nine select trails in Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park (two trails), Laguna Coast Wilderness Park (two trails), and Santiago Oaks Regional Park (five trails). Researchers from USU conducted park visitor surveys and collected trail data before and during the designation changes. Additionally, park visitors using a TUDPP trail were invited to provide feedback through the project webpage and the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee (Subcommittee) email address. As of December 1, 2021, trails studied during the TUDPP returned to their previous designations.

In 2022, the USU researchers compiled analyzed data into the “Orange County Parks Trail Use Designation Pilot Project Technical Report” (Technical Report) for evaluation by the Subcommittee, OC Parks, and the public. The Technical Report provided an analysis and summary of the TUDPP findings and indicated that park visitors generally supported the trail direction and use designation changes that were implemented during the study period. Moreover, user survey responses indicated that trail designations resulted in a decreased perception of user conflicts and an enhanced sense of safety.

Following the release of the Technical Report, researchers from USU finalized an addendum titled "Assessment of the Trail Use Designation Pilot Project (TUDPP) on Ecological Resource Conditions in Orange County Parks" (Addendum). The Addendum evaluates the effects of the TUDPP on specific trail resource conditions, such as trail width and incision depth. It compares the monitored trails that underwent designation changes with those control trails that stayed unchanged during the same period. A brief summary of the Addendum’s analysis, findings, and discussion follows.

Analysis and Results

Two primary analysis techniques were used to assess trail resource conditions. The first technique evaluated if there were statistically significant changes in TUDPP trail width and depth between 2021 and 2022. The second technique compared changes in width and incision between the TUDPP and control trails to determine if there were any statistically significant differences.

Results indicate that changing trail use designations can contribute to increases in trail width and depth. However, the magnitude, or effect size, of the differences in trail width and incision were small and can be interpreted as subtle but measurable differences.

Discussion

The statistical significance of trail width and depth change identified in the Addendum does not necessarily indicate managerial action since the research shows the actual influence of trail use designations on trail conditions is relatively minor compared to other factors such as soil type, trail-slope alignment, and design. The findings acknowledge limitations such as the short length of study, varying results on different segments of the same trails (e.g., some trails widened in particular sections and narrowed in others), and other potential influences such as larger trail network complexities.

Taken together, the findings of the Technical Report and Addendum suggest that trail designation strategies can effectively address conflict and concerns about visitor safety, while emphasizing the need to evaluate ecological conditions when making changes to trail use. The Addendum specifically recommends assessing trail conditions when employing management strategies such as changes to trail use and direction designations to determine if trends in resource conditions are acceptable and meeting management objectives. Moreover, the existing trail assessment literature suggests that use-related factors generally play less of a role than trail design factors and therefore, some of the observed changes can likely be mitigated through trail maintenance actions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Provide comments on the Addendum to OC Parks staff.
2. Receive and file.

 for Brian Kurnow

Brian Kurnow

ATTACHMENT:

Addendum to Trail Use Designation Pilot Project Report: Assessment of the Trail Use Designation Pilot Project (TUDPP) on Ecological Resource Conditions in Orange County Parks

OC PARKS TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

FROM: Brian Kurnow, Interim Executive Officer

DATE: November 9, 2023

SUBJECT: OC Parks Trails Subcommittee Proposed 2024 Meeting Schedule

A proposed schedule of 2024 meeting dates is provided below for the Subcommittee's review and approval.

First Quarter

Wednesday, January 24 Regular Meeting

Second Quarter

Wednesday, April 24 Regular Meeting

Third Quarter

Wednesday, July 24 Regular Meeting

Fourth Quarter

Wednesday, October 16 Regular Meeting

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee's 2024 meeting schedule.

 for Brian Kurnow
Brian Kurnow