

# SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

(Action Items Displayed in Italics)

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

## I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

*Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Bui.*

## II. ROLL CALL

*Chair Shawver, Vice Chair Warren, and Commissioners Bui, Diaz (arrived during Item III), Hanson, and Jones were present. Commissioner Gabbard was absent.*

## III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

*Chris Murphy commented on a request for Class I e-bikes being permitted on OC Parks' natural surface trails to allow more access into parks.*

*Layne Sutton commented on a request for the installation of a disc golf course in an OC Parks facility.*

## IV. CONSENT CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A)

The following item(s) on the consent calendar will be approved by one motion unless a Commissioner requests to pull a specific item.

### A. APPROVE COMMISSION MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 6, 2025 MEETING

*Motion: Commissioner Jones*

*2nd: Vice Chair Warren*

*Approved 5–0–1 (Commissioner Bui abstained)*

## V. DISCUSSION CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A–B)

### A. ARDEN: HELENA MODJESKA HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDENS STONE HOUSE RESTORATION PRESENTATION

Staff will present on the restoration of the Stone House at Arden: Helena Modjeska Historic House and Gardens and provide information on the site's history as well as its cultural and historical significance.

*Pam Passow, OC Parks Director, introduced staff presenting on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.*

*Dennis Shaffer, OC Parks Operations Manager, presented on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.*

## SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

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THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file.

*Motion: Vice Chair Warren*

*2nd: Commissioner Bui*

*Approved 6-0*

### B. OC PARKS TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER APPOINTMENT AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

A vacancy on the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee (Subcommittee) has recently occurred following the resignation of one member. Staff and the Subcommittee's Chair and Alternate Chair propose that Gibran Stout be appointed by the Commission to fill the current vacancy on the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has two members whose terms of membership have concluded and they desire to continue their service. Staff therefore propose to renew the membership of Member David Browning and Member Michael Schoeck for an additional two-year term.

*Pam Passow, OC Parks Director, introduced staff providing information on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.*

*Jeaniene Casiello, OC Parks Planning and Design Manager, provided information on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Appoint Gibran Stout as a member of the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee for a two-year term, expiring on March 6, 2027.
2. Renew the membership of OC Parks Trails Subcommittee Member David Browning for an additional two-year term, expiring on March 6, 2027.
3. Renew the membership of OC Parks Trails Subcommittee Member Michael Schoeck for an additional two-year term, expiring on March 6, 2027.

*Motion: Commissioner Diaz*

*2nd: Vice Chair Warren*

*Approved 6-0*

## VI. OC PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT (ITEM(S) A-B)

### A. DEPARTMENT UPDATES



## SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

(Action Items Displayed in Italics)

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

*Pam Passow, OC Parks Director, provided updates and answered the Commissioners' questions.*

### **B. UPCOMING OC PARKS EVENTS**

Explore! Fossils of the Ancient Sea Floor – Clark Regional Park – Saturday, March 12, 8 – 10 a.m.

- Join us for a guided tour of the Clark Regional Park hillside fossil bed, followed by a trip to the Interpretive Center. The tour will meet next to parking lot A for a brief introduction.

Wilderness Access Day: Red Rock Wilderness – Saturday, March 15, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

- Come explore OC Parks' newest trails at Red Rock Wilderness through this self-guided opportunity. Three miles of multi-use trails within Loma Ridge Nature Preserve, part of OC Parks' Irvine Ranch Open Space, will also be accessible for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Night Hike – Irvine Regional Park – Friday, March 28, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

- Join us at Irvine Regional Park as we search for nighttime critters that call the park home. This program will begin in front of the nature center near parking lot T. This hike is not recommended for very small children or strollers. Children must be accompanied by a guardian during the program.

*At the request of Chair Shawver, Commissioners and OC Parks staff present introduced themselves to Commissioner Bui.*

### **VII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND REPORT**

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

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT 6:55 p.m.**





**Natural Communities**  
**COALITION**

restoration | management | partnership

# **NCC Conservation Grazing Study**

## **Upper Weir Canyon**

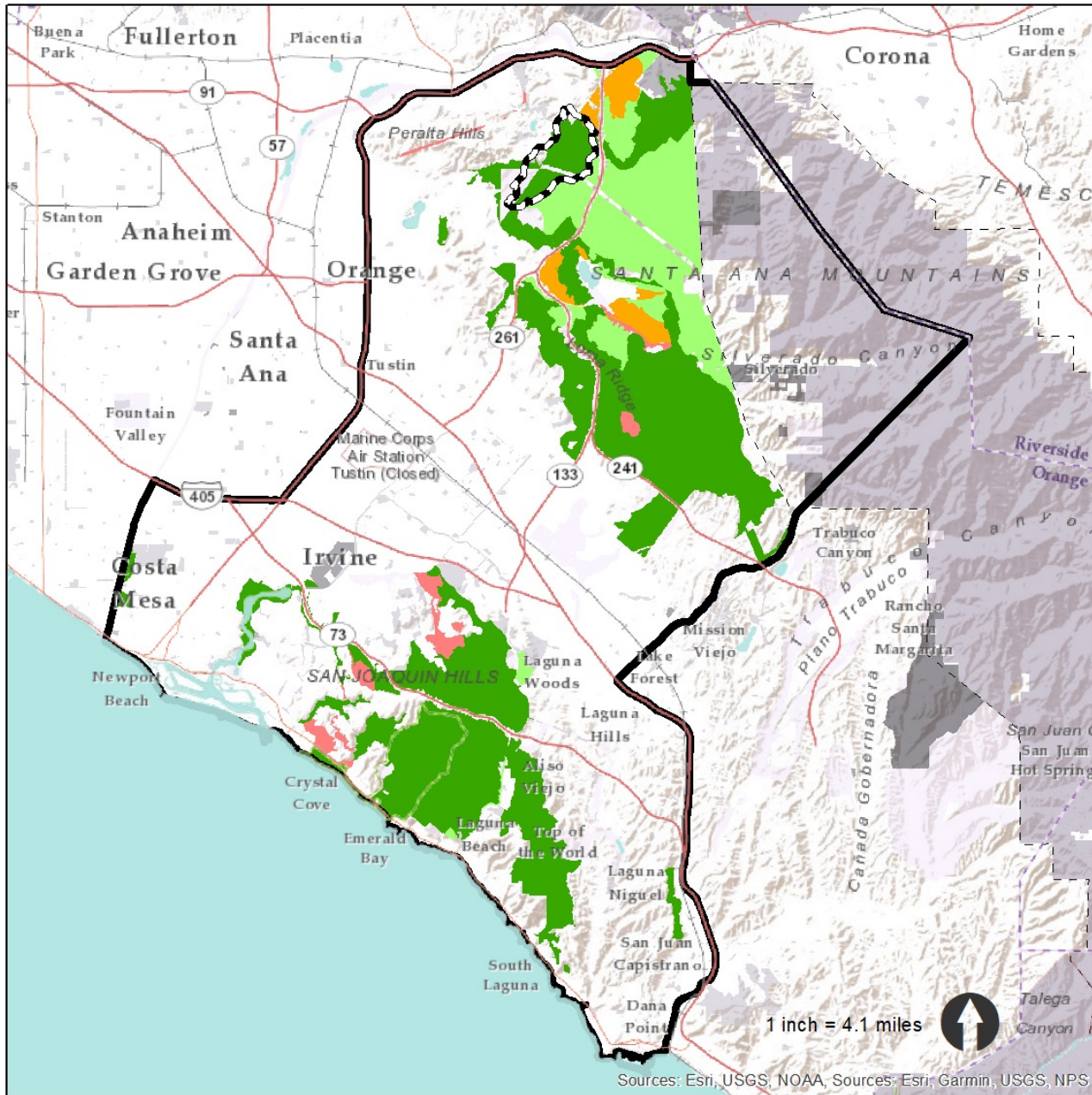


**LAND IQ**

May 1, 2025


Travis Brooks, Restoration Ecologist, Land IQ  
Josh Davy, CRM UC Cooperative Extension





# Natural Communities COALITION







restoration | management | partnership

 Weir Canyon Conservation Grazing  
Pilot Project Study Area

## Reserve System & Protected Lands (Owner)

-  Reserve (Multiple Landowners)
-  Special Linkage (Multiple Landowners)
-  Non-Reserve Conserved Land (OC Parks)
-  TNC Conservation Easement (OC Parks)
-  NCCP Planning Area
-  Cleveland National Forest

## Other Protected Areas (Ownership Type)

-  City
-  County
-  Federal
-  Non Profit
-  Special District
-  State

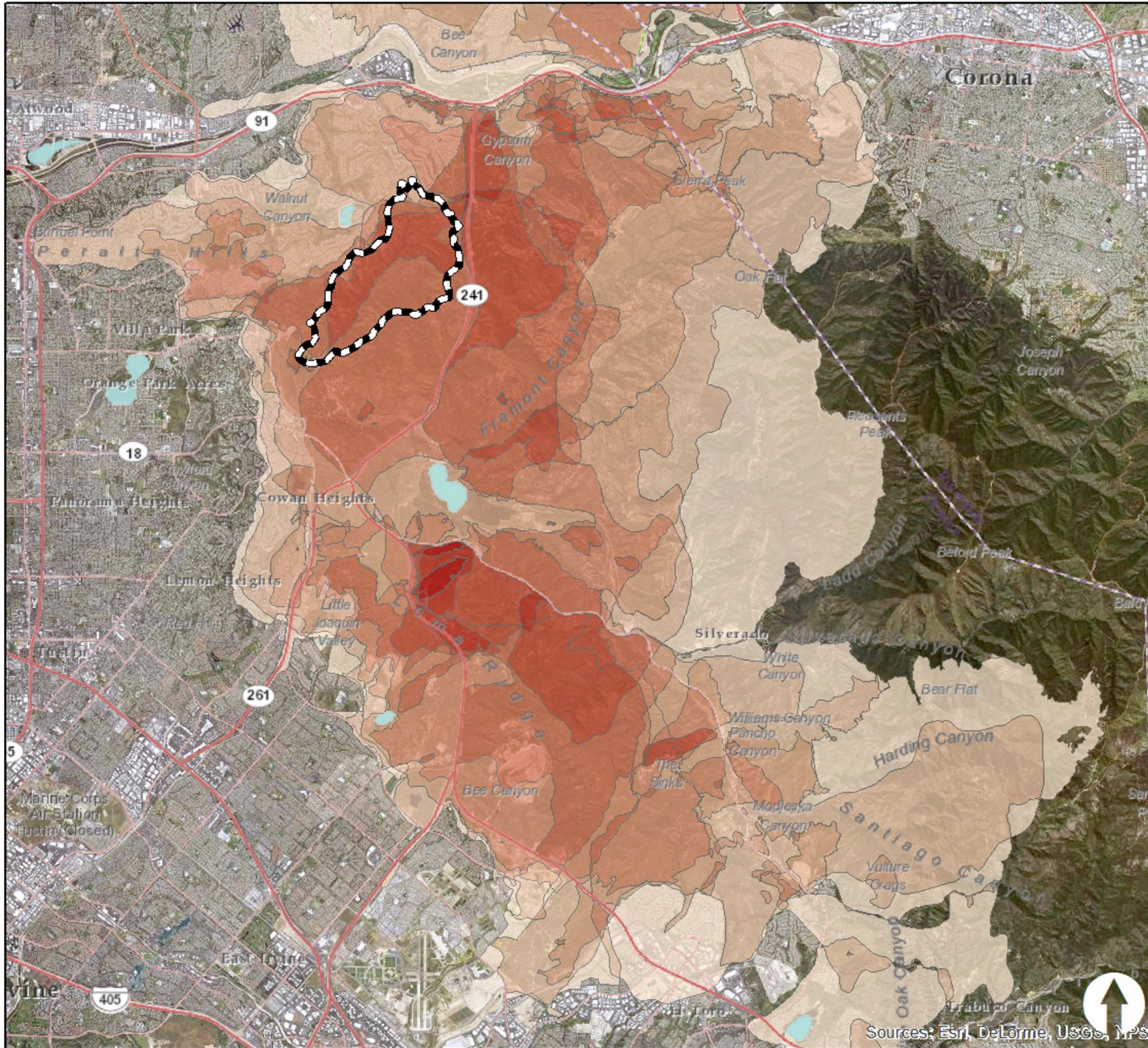
Source: GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas  
Database from OCFA Ownership DPA



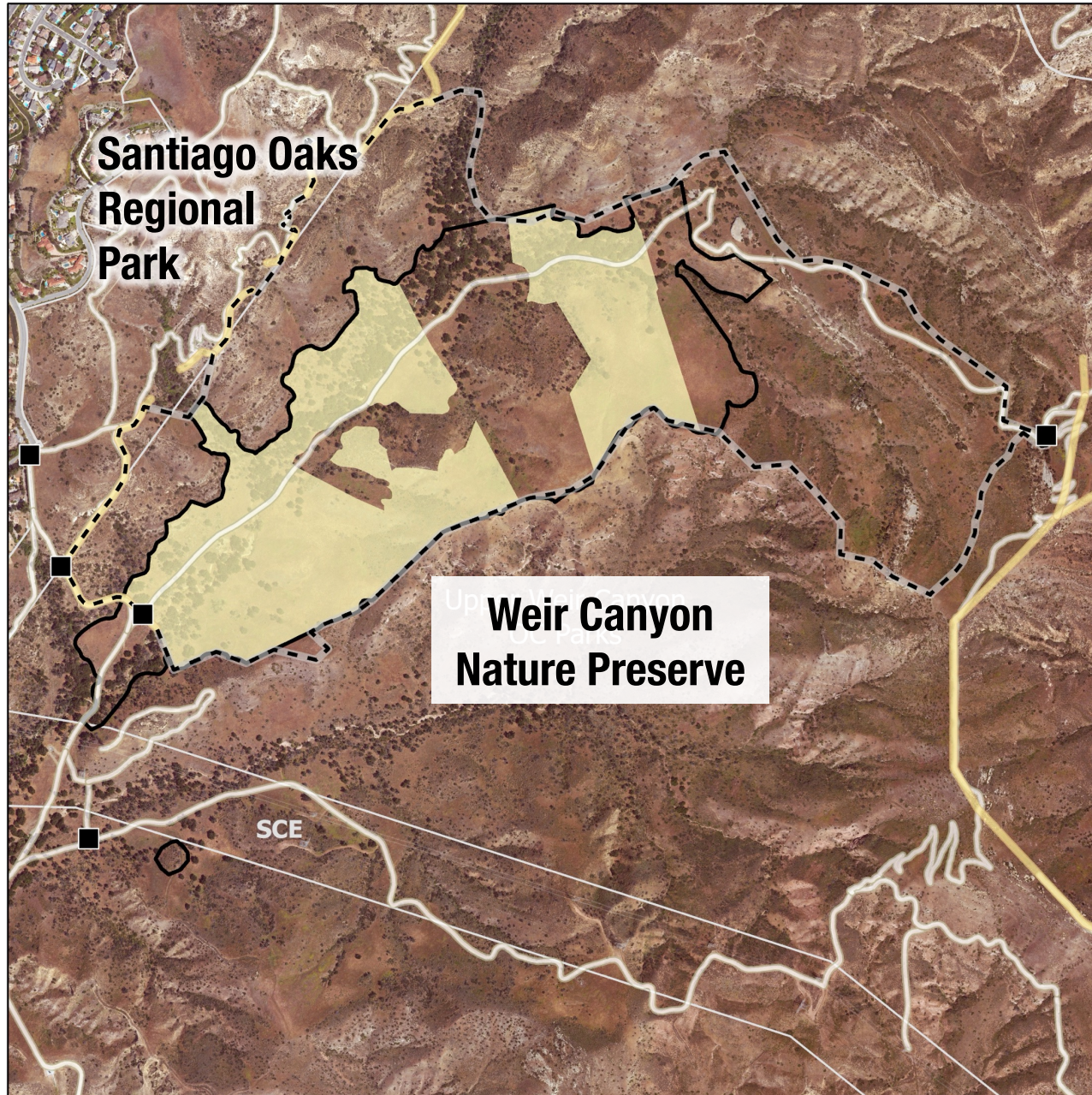
# Study Location

## Upper Weir Canyon

- High Fire Frequency
- Managed Public Access
- Opportunity for Habitat Enhancement and Restoration













# Study Location

## Upper Weir Canyon

-  Conservation Grazing Experiment Area (including non-grazed control areas)
-  Areas to be Grazed as Part of Experiment
-  Perimeter Fence Alignment
-  Gate
-  Access Roads and Trails
-  Existing Fence

# Project Purpose

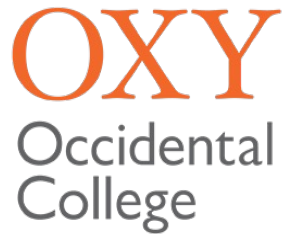
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Evaluate the potential of conservation grazing with cattle as a tool to enhance native biodiversity and reduce flammability in nonnative grasslands and mustard fields, while protecting wildlife.





# Partners & Stakeholders



# Management Hypotheses

## Testing 2 Grazing Strategies:

1. Precision Grazing
2. Low-Intensity Grazing









# Timeline





# Conclusion







## Summer Events Preview

OC Parks Commission  
May 1, 2025







# Rancho Days Fiesta

Heritage Hill Historic Park

Saturday, May 3

11 a.m. – 3 p.m.





# Spring Open House

Arden: Helena Modjeska  
Historic House and Gardens

Saturday, May 17  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.



OC parks

# Spring Into Summer

**FREE!**

*Saturday*  
**MAY 31**  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

*Fun for the Whole Family!*

**LIVE MUSIC • ART DEMOS**

*with*

**PERFORMANCES BY**

**THE COMO LA FLOR BAND:  
A TRIBUTE TO SELENA**

*and*

**YARI MORÉ LATIN BAND**

*Join us at the*

**OLD ORANGE  
COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

211 W. SANTA ANA BLVD., SANTA ANA



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OC  
parks



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## Spring into Summer

Old Orange County Courthouse


Saturday, May 31  
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.












# SUMMER CONCERT SERIES



<b>JUN 19</b> <b>OZOMATLI</b> <small>AND ADELAIDE PILAR</small> <b>MILE SQUARE REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>16801 EUCLID ST. FOUNTAIN VALLEY</small>	<b>JUN 26</b> <b>DOIN' TIME</b> <small>AND JUNO RADA</small> <b>MILE SQUARE REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>16801 EUCLID ST. FOUNTAIN VALLEY</small>	<b>JUL 10</b> <b>FLASHBACK HEART ATTACK</b> <small>AND ROCKIN DIVAS</small> <b>MASON REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>18712 UNIVERSITY DR. IRVINE</small>
<b>JUL 17</b> <b>MARIACHI DIVAS</b> <small>AND AMORY MAR</small> <b>CRAIG REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>3300 STATE COLLEGE BLVD. FULLERTON</small>	<b>JUL 24</b> <b>THE PISTOL BLONDE</b> <small>AND KATIE FERRARA</small> <b>CRAIG REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>3300 STATE COLLEGE BLVD. FULLERTON</small>	<b>JUL 31</b> <b>DREAM LIKE TAYLOR</b> <small>AND JESSICA VINES</small> <b>IRVINE REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>1 IRVINE PARK RD. ORANGE</small>
<b>AUG 07</b> <b>ELTON THE EARLY YEARS</b> <small>AND SHEA GIVEN</small> <b>IRVINE REGIONAL PARK</b> <small>1 IRVINE PARK RD. ORANGE</small>	<b>AUG 14</b> <b>NO DUH: THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO NO DOUBT</b> <small>AND SATIN DOLLZ</small> <b>SALT CREEK BEACH</b> <small>33333 S. PCH DANA POINT</small>	<b>AUG 21</b> <b>BOY BAND REVIEW</b> <small>AND RODERICK CHAMBERS</small> <b>SALT CREEK BEACH</b> <small>33333 S. PCH DANA POINT</small>

**THURSDAYS • OPEN AT 5 PM • CONCERT FROM 6-8 PM**

**ALL AGES • FREE ADMISSION & PARKING • [OCPARKS.COM](http://OCPARKS.COM)**



# SUNSET CINEMA

## SERIES



JUN  
13

JUN  
20

JUN  
27

JUL  
11

JUL  
18

JUL  
25

AUG  
01

AUG  
08

AUG  
15

AUG  
22

AUG  
29

**FRIDAYS • OPEN AT 6 PM • MOVIES AT SUNSET**  
**ALL AGES • FREE ADMISSION & PARKING • OCPARKS.COM**





# Summer Citrus Festival

George Key Ranch Historic House

Saturday, June 14  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.



oc  
parks



8





## Star Wars Day

OC Zoo

Saturday, June 28  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.



# EVENTS

Location

- Any -

Apply

< >

today

April 2025

month week day list

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	
7a Sunday Fitness Hike ...	7a Distance Hike into R...	7:30a Tuesday Morning...	10a Tot Trails	7:30a Thursday Mornin...	7a Early Morning Hike: ...	7a Fremont Distance H
7a Early Morning Hike: ...	9a Baker Canyon Eques...	8a Enjoy Nature's Story...	10:15a Spring Fling Pre...	8a Demonstration Gar...	8a Seasons Series: Hell...	8a Wilderness Access ..
9a Jr. Ranger Adventur...		6a Limestone and Red ...	3p Scientific Testing!	8:30a Fitness Hike - Wi...	9a Baker Canyon Eques...	8a Wilderness Access ..
		ng Hike on Hic...	4p Crazy 8 Hike in Red ...	5p Moving with Nature ...	10a Wild Tales	8a Trail Stewardship - I
			+1 more			+7 more
		8	9	10	11	1
		uesday Morning...	7a Early Morning Frem...	8:30a Fitness Hike - W...	9a Baker Canyon Eques...	7a Mountain Bike Ride
		Nature's Story...	8a Open Space Invader...	9a Butterfly Series: Lim...	9a Canyon Eggs-plorati...	7:30a Restoration Day
		discovery Hike - ...	5:30p After Work Card...	9:30a Little Explorers: ...	10a Wild Tales	8a Wilderness Access ..
		uring Oaks in ...	6p After Work Fitness ...	10a Equestrian Trail Ri...	10:15a Spring Fling Pre...	8a Explore Limestone C
		+2 more		+2 more	+2 more	+12 more

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[ocparks.com/events](https://ocparks.com/events)



THANK YOU



## ORANGE COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

### STAFF REPORT

**FROM:** Pam Passow, Executive Officer, OC Parks

**DATE:** May 1, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Support of Exploring Possible Allowance of Class I Electric Bicycle (E-Bike) Use on Unpaved, Natural-Surface Trails in OC Parks Facilities

#### **Background**

At the October 10, 2024, OC Parks Trails Subcommittee (Subcommittee) meeting, OC Parks staff presented an overview of electric bicycles (e-bikes) and their interface with OC Parks.

Currently, Class I and II e-bikes are permitted on more than 75 miles of regional paved, off-road bikeways managed by OC Parks, pursuant to Orange County Codified Ordinance (OCCO) section 2-5-29(n), as well as on paved roads that allow general vehicle access in parks. Consistent with this ordinance, the OC Parks system operates a significant amount of unpaved, natural surface trails, including wilderness trails, in which the use of e-bikes is prohibited. Additionally, most wilderness trails in the OC Parks system are located on lands enrolled in the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan or the Southern Habitat Conservation Plan or subject to conservation easements held by The Nature Conservancy or Orange County Parks Foundation. Information on these conservation easements were presented to the Orange County Parks Commission (Commission) during its May 4, 2023 meeting and a map depicting the overlay of these conservation easements on OC Parks facilities will be part of the item's presentation. These conservation plans and easements were developed in partnership with Federal and State Fish and Wildlife agencies with the primary goals of restoring, protecting, and sustaining habitat and wildlife. As such, OC Parks seeks to balance these primary goals with public recreation interests.

State law allows land managers to determine the suitability of e-bikes on trails. Thus, any change in the current regulations regarding e-bike use within OC Parks facilities would require action on both the OCCO and the conservation plans and easements. Such action would be achieved through County of Orange Board of Supervisors' approval via a change in the OCCO as well as amending the current conservation plans and easements with various regulatory agencies, including the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other conservation entities.

Historically, both the Subcommittee and Commission have received public comments regarding e-bikes within OC Parks. During the April 10, 2025 Subcommittee Meeting, an item was brought before the Subcommittee to determine if it was supportive of exploring the possibility of allowing Class I e-bikes on unpaved, natural surface trails in OC Parks facilities and, in turn, further engage with regulatory agencies regarding allowing Class I e-bikes on unpaved, natural surfaces trails in OC Parks facilities. In advance of this meeting, many individuals submitted public comments via email. Of these emails, approximately four were in support of e-bike use on unpaved, natural surface trails and nine were in opposition. During the meeting, 24 individuals spoke during public comment

regarding the item concerning e-bikes. Approximately 15 people expressed comments in opposition to and nine individuals expressed comments in support of allowing Class I e-bikes on unpaved, natural surface trails. After receiving the public testimony and Subcommittee member discussion, the Subcommittee voted 3–2 to forward to the Commission the gathered information, documentation, correspondence, and public testimony relative to Class I e-bikes on unpaved, natural surfaces and trails in Orange County for the Commission’s review and to study with all stakeholders and local agencies.

### **Electric Bicycle Use in Parks of Other Jurisdictions**

Within California, allowance or prohibition of e-bikes within park facilities varies by jurisdiction, even among neighboring jurisdictions. Crystal Cove State Park currently prohibits all classes of e-bikes in all inland trails but does allow Class I e-bikes on trails west of Highway 1. Both Chino Hills and San Onofre state parks allow Class I e-bikes on trails that are open to standard bicycle use. Both San Diego County Parks and Recreation and Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District allow Class I and II e-bikes on trails where standard bicycles are allowed, except where explicitly restricted for reasons including impacts to terrain or areas of heightened user conflicts. In United States National Forests, including Cleveland and Angeles national forests, e-bikes are only allowed on roads and trails designated for motorized use as e-bikes are classified as motorized vehicles by this agency. City of Irvine Open Space explicitly prohibits e-bikes from all its open space areas, including equestrian, hiking, or recreational trails. City of Newport Beach also prohibits e-bikes from its trails.


### **RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

OC Parks Commission to select and recommend one of the following actions:

- A. The OC Parks Commission recommends OC Parks staff explore the feasibility of allowing Class I electric bicycles on unpaved, natural surface trails in OC Parks facilities.

or

- B. The OC Parks Commission does not recommend OC Parks staff explore the feasibility of allowing Class I electric bicycles on unpaved, natural surface trails in OC Parks facilities.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pam Passow

Attachment A – Correspondence Submitted to OC Parks Trails Subcommittee





**ORANGE COUNTY PARKS**

**TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025, 6:00 p.m.**

**IRVINE RANCH HISTORIC PARK**

**13042 Old Myford Road**

**Irvine, CA 92602**



# **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Valdes, Antonio**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 4:07 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee; Randee Tolentino; [REDACTED] Shawver, David  
**Subject:** Request to post attached document on TSC website prior to the April 10, 2025 meeting  
**Attachments:** Sustainable Access for C1 MTN Bicycles in OC Parks(April 7, 2025)FINAL.pdf

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Hello OC Parks Trails Sub-Committee Chair Shawver and Staff,

Thank you for Agendizing the Class 1 mountain bike topic for discussion at the upcoming meeting of the OC Parks Trails Sub-Committee (TSC).

We will be speaking on the Agenda Item and respectfully request that the attached document be posted on the website **in advance** of the meeting so that the TSC members and the public can review the document before the meeting. This request is being made within the requirements of the 72-hour pre-meeting information availability notice period of the California Brown Act.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to seeing you at the TSC meeting on Thursday evening.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

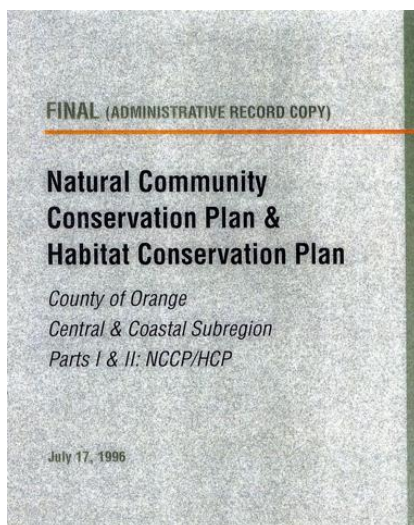
Respectfully Submitted,  
Chris Murphy, Randee Tolentino, and Jim Foley

## **Proposal for Sustainable Access for Class 1 Mountain Bicycles on Natural Trails in OC Parks**

This proposal outlines a potential pathway for the sustainable integration of Class 1 mountain bicycles into OC Parks.

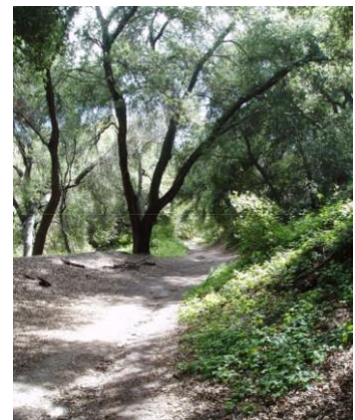
### **Addressing Concerns and Future Steps**

This proposal acknowledges the need for proactive engagement with all interested stakeholders to ensure a successful and sustainable integration of Class 1 mountain bicycles into OC Parks. These stakeholders include the Board of Supervisors, OC Parks Commissioners, Park Staff, the Trails Sub-Committee (TSC) members, landowners, conservation groups, and trail users.



Extensive outreach has been undertaken to understand and address potential concerns. Notably, proponents have engaged with the Natural Communities Coalition (NCC), U.S. Wildlife Service, and California Fish and Games representatives to discuss the proposal, understand any concerns, and propose common-sense solutions, including for Reserve areas protected by the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP).<sup>1</sup> These discussions have been constructive, raising issues and concerns that have been taken into account in the proposed implementation plan described below. Based on these discussions, the goal of this proposal is to find a way forward that embraces the evolving mountain bike community while ensuring the continued preservation and enjoyment of OC Parks for all residents and users.

The proposal notes that the current regulatory framework in OC Parks inappropriately groups Class 1 mountain bicycles with other classes of electric bicycles, for example Class 2 and 3, as well as electric motorcycles and off-road recreational vehicles, which is a key concern for proponents. The proposal recommends that the OC Parks bicycle classification regime be aligned with the California three-class classification system for electric bicycles, as defined by California Vehicle Code (§312.5) as well as the practical traditions and evolution of mountain biking in OC Parks. This modification would also mirror action recently taken by the Board of Supervisors for OC roads and bikeways.



To move forward, it is requested that this proposal and implementation plan, or modifications as a result of stakeholder engagement, be continued on the agenda for future OC Parks Commission and/or TSC meetings. This will facilitate further discussion and the development of a recommendation for the Board of Supervisors to change the existing ordinance or adopt a new one

<sup>1</sup> See *Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) & Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Overview*, OC Parks Trails Subcommittee (May 11, 2023), <https://www.ocparks.com/sites/ocparks/files/2023-05/TSC%202023.05.11%20Presentation.pdf>.

to formally permit Class 1 mountain bicycle access to OC Parks, where legacy mountain bicycles are already permitted. The proponents appreciate the Supervisors, Commissioners, TSC members, trails users, and other stakeholders' openness to these proposed changes and will continue to work in collaboration with others to find a common-sense way forward.

## Current Situation and Proposal



Currently, OC Parks' regulations group all electric bicycles, including Class 1 mountain bicycles, with Class 2 and 3 bicycles, as well as electric motorcycles and off-road vehicles. Class 2 and 3 bicycles and electric motorcycles are clearly inappropriate for park trails. Below is the current version of the ordinance adopted in 2018, which already recognizes Class 1 and 2 bicycles and already contemplates a path for acceptance:

### OC Municipal Ordinance (Vehicle Regulation Sec. 2-5-29 (n)), Title 2: Public Facilities, Division 5: Parks, Beaches and Recreational Areas

*Motorized Wheeled Conveyance Prohibited.* No person shall operate or drive any electric or combustible motorized skateboard, scooter, dirt bike, mini bike, mini motor bike, mini motorcycle, go-kart, go-ped, mo-ped, all-terrain-vehicle, quad runner, dune buggy or any similar electric or combustible motorized wheeled conveyance in any park, beach or recreational area, with the exception of Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles, as defined by the California Vehicle Code, on those regional paved, off-road bikeways designated for such use by the Director of OC Parks, with the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

Today's framework, however, fails to recognize the distinct characteristics of Class 1 mountain bicycles eight years on. The proposal below seeks to address the evolution of Class 1 mountain bicycles by formally recognizing and incorporating the California three-class electric bicycle classification system, as defined by the California Vehicle Code (§312.5), within OC Parks trails policy. Specifically, it proposes amending the existing OC ordinance 2-5-29(n), which already recognizes Class 1 bicycles, or adopting a new ordinance to permit the use of Class 1 mountain bicycles, on unpaved roads and natural trails where legacy mountain bicycles are already allowed. This aligns with the classification of Class 1 mountain bicycles as bicycles under California law, the permitted use of legacy mountain bikes in OC Parks, and recent actions by the Board of Supervisors for OC roads and bikeways.

### Proposed Natural Trail Access in OC Parks for Class1 Bicycles

<p><b>Mountain Bike</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p> 	<p>In 3 years, over 50% of OC Parks MTB riders switched to Class 1</p>
<p><b>Class 1 Mountain Bike</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p>  <p>No Throttle Pedal Assist &lt;750w &lt;20 mph UL Approved</p>	<p><b>More than 20% of some OC Park visitations are now Class1 MTB*</b></p>
<p>Adapting Class1 as a bicycle, aligns with CA law and reduces burden of enforcement</p>	

<p><b>NO</b></p> <p><b>Class 2-3 e-Bike</b></p> <p>Throttle/No 20-28 mph</p>  <p>Super73</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p> <p><b>Illegal off-road vehicle</b></p> <p>Throttle 2,000w</p>  <p>Sur-ron</p>
<p>Not recommended for use on natural trails</p>	

\*NCCP visitations estimate, 2025, OC Parks Trail Use Designation Project 2021

## Factors in Favor of Permitting Class 1 Mountain Bicycles on OC Park Trails

- **Alignment with Conservation Goals:** Importantly, studies have demonstrated that Class 1 mountain bicycles have the same impact on trails and parks as legacy mountain bicycles. Importantly, when Class 1 mountain bicycles have been introduced in natural trail areas in California and other jurisdictions, they have been found to be positive for recreation and used primarily for climbing and extending rides.<sup>2</sup> The Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) permits mountain biking on designated trails and prohibits "motorized recreation vehicles." As Class 1 mountain bicycles are classified as bicycles in California, it is possible to interpret their use as being consistent with existing permitted uses within the NCCP/HCP, as long as it is consistent with legacy mountain biking.
- **Supports the Traditions of the Sport:** Class 1 mountain bicycles are pedal-only bicycles that assist to help pedaling, ceasing at 20 mph, clearly distinguishing them from throttle-based, self-propelled e-bikes and electric motorcycles. Anecdotal evidence suggests they constitute over 50% of bicycles in OC Parks today without any known adverse impacts beyond those of legacy mountain bikes.
- **Increased Accessibility and Inclusion:** Class 1 mountain bicycles make mountain biking accessible to a wider range of individuals, including older riders, people with disabilities, and families, allowing more people to enjoy OC open spaces.
- **Minimal Impact on Trails and Other Users:** Research indicates that Class 1 mountain bicycles have similar impacts on trail tread, soil movement, erosion, and speed differentials compared to legacy mountain bikes. User behavior and compliance with laws are also reported to be nearly identical. Studies have even shown that there are no material safety distinctions between Class 1 and legacy bicycle use.
- **Alignment with Other Jurisdictions:** Many jurisdictions in California, such as the East Bay Regional Park District, San Diego County (see, Figure 1, October 2024, *Policy C-50*), and Sonoma County, already permit Class 1 mountain bicycles on trails where traditional bikes are allowed.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY & PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM	POLICY NUMBER C-50 Page 1 of 2
TITLE: E-Bike Use in Parks, Preserves, Trails and Pathways	
Date issued/revised: October 2024 Authorized by: Jason Hémmens, Interim Director Signature: <i>Jason Hémmens</i>	
IT IS THE POLICY of the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) that all people should have the opportunity to enjoy and have equal access to County operated parks and recreation facilities. County operated trails and pathways shall be used only for non-motorized transportation and multi-use recreation for pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists.	
The exceptions created by the State of California are as follows:	
<b>BACKGROUND</b> CA State Assembly Bill 1909 specifically gives the ability to prohibit the operation of an electric bicycle (E-Bike), or similar electric powered mobility device, on any path or trail within DPR's jurisdiction. In addition, San Diego County Ordinance Section 612.206 (b), Use of Trails, authorizes the County Official (Director of Parks and Recreation) to restrict the types of recreation and transportation uses that would be otherwise allowed on a trail or pathway if the County Official determines that to maintain the public safety and welfare or to prevent damage to a trail or pathway or the area along a trail or pathway, certain recreation and/or transportation uses would not be allowed on a trail or pathway or a segment thereof. All other E-Bikes that do not meet the definitions of an E-Bike are considered a motor vehicle by the California Department of Transportation and are required to stay on paved surfaces designed for motor vehicle use by the State of California and in DPR parks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State of California passed AB 1906 in October 2015 which states Class 1 &amp; 2 E-Bikes that are less than 750 watts/28 mph use limit are non-motorized bicycles that may go wherever a bicycle can go, such as Class 1 &amp; 2 E-Bikes in AB 1906, unless there is a specific ordinance or prohibition by the Department of Parks and Recreation to prohibit the operation of an electric bicycle on any path or trail within the department's jurisdiction.</li> <li>• The State of California passed AB 1909 in September 2022 which states Class 3 E-Bikes that are less than 750 watts/28 mph use limit are non-motorized bicycles that may go wherever a bicycle can go, such as Class 1 &amp; 2 E-Bikes in AB 1906, unless there is a specific ordinance or prohibition by the Department of Parks and Recreation to prohibit the operation of an electric bicycle on any path or trail within the department's jurisdiction.</li> </ul>	
<b>PROCEDURE:</b> Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes are permitted on all County trails and paved paths/roadways where bicycles are permitted unless specifically restricted by the DPR Director for environmental, maintenance, or safety concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class 1 &amp; 2 E-Bikes must have a classification number label that is permanently affixed, in a prominent location, on each bike, as required by the State of California.</li> <li>• A list of DPR facilities, County trails, and paved pathways where Class 1 &amp; 2 E-Bikes are specifically restricted will be available on the DPR website <a href="http://www.sdparks.org">www.sdparks.org</a></li> <li>• Class 3 E-Bikes are prohibited on DPR trails or paved paths and must follow motor vehicle laws on paved roadways in DPR parks.</li> <li>• Personal electric vehicles that are not Class 1 or 2 E-Bikes, such as electric motorized skateboards and scooters, or similar devices (such as one-wheel devices) are prohibited on DPR trails and paved paths/roadways.</li> </ul>	

Figure 1. County of San Diego Policy C-50

<sup>2</sup> See OC Parks Trails Subcommittee, Public Comments: *Allowing Class 1 Pedal Assist Bikes on Designated Mountain Bike Trails* (October 10, 2024), slides 8, 11-12, <https://ocparks.com/sites/ocparks/files/2024-11/Public%20Comment%20TSC%202024-10-10.pdf>; see also OC Parks Trails Subcommittee, Public Comments: *OC Cycling Business Coalition & PeopleForBikes EMTB Resources* (January 9, 2025), pages 1-7, <https://ocparks.com/sites/ocparks/files/2025-01/Q1%20TSC%20PUBLIC%20COMMENT%20-%202025.01.09.pdf>.



- **Distinction from Motorized Recreational/Off-Road Vehicles and Electric Motorcycles:** It is crucial to differentiate Class 1 mountain bicycles from motorized recreational off-highway vehicles and electric motorcycles, like Sur-Rons, that can exceed the 750-watt motor limit and are designed for off-highway use only, requiring OHV registration. These motorized recreational and off-road vehicles are not classified as electric bicycles.<sup>3</sup>
- **Economic Benefits:** Access to open spaces, enhanced by Class 1 mountain bicycles, contributes to increased property values, attracts businesses and tourism, and supports the local economy. Open spaces are also an investment that can enhance the tax base.

## Proposed Implementation Strategies

To integrate Class 1 mountain bicycles responsibly, the following strategies are proposed, and there may be other options:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Study current OC Parks trails use, including by Class 1 mountain bicycles, convene a process for stakeholder engagement, including Park staff, landowners, managers, trail users and any other interested parties.
- **Update the Existing Ordinance or Adopt a New Ordinance:** Based on study and stakeholder engagement, develop a recommendation for the Board of Supervisors to modify parks trail use policies accordingly. This proposal recommends modification to OC ordinance Vehicle Regulation Sec. 2-5-29(n) or creation of a new ordinance to specifically authorize Class 1 mountain bicycles on authorized trails, as follows:

*Motorized Wheeled Conveyance Prohibited.* No person shall operate or drive any electric or combustible motorized skateboard, scooter, dirt bike, mini bike, mini motor bike, mini motorcycle, go-kart, go-ped, mo-ped, all-terrain-vehicle, quad runner, dune buggy or any similar electric or combustible motorized wheeled conveyance in any park, beach or recreational area, with the exception of Class 1 ~~and Class 2~~ electric bicycles, as defined by the California Vehicle Code, on those regional paved, off-road bikeways and unpaved and natural trails, unless otherwise designated for such use by the Director of OC Parks, with the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

- Alternatively, mirror the OC Public Works new ordinance adopted by the Supervisors in June 2024,<sup>4</sup> as follows:

### New OC Public Works: Code Sec. 6-4-102: Definitions

(c) *Bicycle:* As defined by Vehicle Code 231, as may be amended or superseded, a bicycle is a device upon which a person may ride, propelled by human power through a belt, chain, or gears, and having one or more wheels; for the purposes of this ordinance, an electric bicycle, or e-bike, shall be considered a bicycle.

<sup>3</sup> See OC Parks Trails Subcommittee, Public Comments: *California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Information Bulletin (For California Law Enforcement)* (April 22, 2024), pages 12-15, <https://ocparks.com/sites/ocparks/files/2025-01/Q1%20TSC%20PUBLIC%20COMMENT%20-%202025.01.09.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> See Minutes of Board of Supervisors, June 25, 2024, Agenda Item #48, [https://ocgov.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=ocgov\\_c8ab017fb943f04bdf1032af223d4654.pdf&view=1](https://ocgov.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=ocgov_c8ab017fb943f04bdf1032af223d4654.pdf&view=1); Staff Report and other attachments [http://cams.ocgov.com/Web\\_Publisher\\_sam/mainlist.asp?docid=00000051&docname=Agenda06\\_25\\_2024.htm&meetdate=06\\_25\\_2024&pagendatypeid=1&pisagenda=0](http://cams.ocgov.com/Web_Publisher_sam/mainlist.asp?docid=00000051&docname=Agenda06_25_2024.htm&meetdate=06_25_2024&pagendatypeid=1&pisagenda=0).

...

(k) *Electric Bicycle*: An electric bicycle (also known as e-bike) is a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts. Electric bicycle does not include motorized bicycles or mopeds as defined in California Vehicle Code 406(a).

- i. A “class 1 electric bicycle,” or “low speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle,” is a bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

In addition, a provision with the effect that: “A Class 1 electric bicycle may be ridden in places where bicycles are allowed, including but not limited to, streets, highways, roads, bicycle lanes, and bicycle or unpaved natural trails” should be included.

Either of these proposals would align OC Parks policy with state law and recent actions on paved roads. There may be other options as well.

- **Community Stewardship Program:** Implement a volunteer program to educate Class 1 mountain bicycle riders on responsible use, trail etiquette, and environmental awareness through peer engagement and reporting trail conditions.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Develop voluntary point-of-sale materials for bicycle shops and online resources, along with clear signage at trailheads, to inform riders about guidelines, safety, and etiquette.

## Conclusion

Permitting Class 1 mountain bicycles in OC Parks on designated trails offers an urgently needed, common-sense approach that recognizes the functional similarity of these bicycles to traditional mountain bikes, enhances accessibility, has minimal environmental impact, and is distinct from other motorized recreational and off-road vehicles.

It is also important to emphasize that permitting Class 1 mountain bicycles in OC Parks does not open the flood gates for other electric motorize vehicles, especially those that are self-propelled, off-road motorized recreation vehicles, and electric motorcycles, due to their different design and usage characteristics, including the presence of throttles and higher speed capabilities. These self-propelled characteristics are inconsistent with the desired OC Parks and NCCP/HCP trail experience and pose significant, undesirable Reserve and trail use safety issues that are not present today.

The proposed implementation strategies prioritize habitat conservation, education, community stewardship, and clear regulations. By aligning with state law and the practices of other jurisdictions, Orange County can modernize its Class 1 mountain bicycle regulations and provide sustainable access to its natural resources for residents seeking to responsibly use the parks in a manner compatible with existing requirements. Support for this pragmatic approach will balance recreation with conservation and community interests, ensuring the continued enjoyment of OC Parks for future generations. We look forward to working constructively with all interested parties.

Contacts: Chris Murphy ([REDACTED])  
Randee Tolentino ([REDACTED])  
Jim Foley ([REDACTED])

## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Josh Bowen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 8, 2025 12:02 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee; Shawver, David  
**Cc:** Chris Murphy; Jeff Curie [REDACTED] Mitch Baxter  
**Subject:** Class 1 Pedal Assist E-Bikes on OC Parks Trails...

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Greeting OC Parks staff and Chairman Strawver,

My name is Joshua Bowen and I am a Lake Forest resident. I recently moved to Orange County in July and shortly after met Mitch Baxter, Jeff Curie, and Chris Murphy. They made me aware of the need to formally recognize Class 1 Pedal Assist bikes for use in OC Parks and encouraged me to reach out to you. I apologize that I am unable to attend the April 10 trails subcommittee meeting due to family obligations. If you will allow me, I would like to give you a brief overview of who I am and my perspective as a lifelong bike rider.

I am a Mechanical Engineer by trade with a Master's Degree with nearly 20 years of work experience. I grew up riding BMX bikes and Mountain bikes in Northern California and have always loved riding, so much so that I was a mountain bike instructor for a summer camp. I am also married with children and hope to pass on my love of riding to my children.

During the pandemic like many people I began riding my mountain bike again after a bit of hiatus when I primarily rode motorcycles. During that time a friend bought a Class 1 Pedal Assist Mountain bike and let me borrow it. The following points are what I found to be true and the reason I purchased a similar bicycle for myself.

1. I could go for a 14 mile ride and return with enough energy to wrestle with my children.
2. The bikes allowed me to enjoy a ride more without aggravating old injuries.
3. These bikes reopened a deep enjoyment of being outside on the trails and getting to experience the beauty we enjoy in Southern California.
4. The assistance of the bike allows the bike to adjust to my fitness level and me to remain outdoors longer.

I would also like to echo what Mitch stated in his testimony and email

1. Class 1 bikes perform similarly to traditional bikes on flat or downhill terrain. I regularly ride with a coworker who rides a standard mountain bike. We ride side by side and only on climbs do I slow down to match his pace.
2. Many riders of Class 1 bikes, myself included, go out of our way to be courteous to hikers, equestrians, and fellow trail users.
3. Both the State of California and local jurisdictions like San Diego and Lake Forest recognize Class 1 Pedal Assist bikes as bicycles, not motorized vehicles.

I respectfully urge the Trails Subcommittee to begin the process of updating the regulations to allow Class 1 Pedal Assist bikes on OC Parks trails, in coordination with relevant regulatory agencies.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our county. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance in any way.



Respectfully,  
Joshua Bowen



## Valdes, Antonio

---

**From:** karol benner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 7:58 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** E-bikes on our wilderness trails

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

### Trails Subcommittee (OC Parks)

[Here's why] I oppose the legalization of e-bikes on our wilderness trails and/or I think that a study of the impact of Class 1 e-bikes on our trails would be a waste of time and money.

**1. Legal Ramifications:** Our wilderness parks were created from lands set aside to preserve natural wildland habitat in the face of the increasing urbanization of Orange County. Human enjoyment of said parks, while part of the deal, was a fringe benefit. These lands came with legal strings attached in the form of conservation easements [NCCP, HCP\*, Nature Conservancy and OC Parks Foundation Easements]. One of their stipulations is that no motorized vehicles may be used for recreation on park trails, "motorized" being understood to mean having a motor of any kind. It would be a difficult and complicated process to change these legal restrictions, as it would, in effect, challenge the very conditions under which these lands were set aside in the first place. Be careful what you wish for, lest we end up with no parks left for us to enjoy or all humans prohibited from entering them.

\*Natural Community Conservation Plan, Habitat Conservation Plan

For this and #2, see [Overview of e-bikes in OC Parks](#), especially slides 5-6 and 11. Scroll down past Minutes to get to it.

**2. Slippery Slope:** Although the proposed study applies to Class 1 e-bikes only, it is very difficult to tell them apart from Class 2 or 3 e-bikes on sight. This makes enforcement tricky. In addition, some of the more powerful electric motorbikes look somewhat similar. And who can say that in due course a demand will not be made to legalize all e-bikes—and then where does it end? With full-on motorcycles? This almost guarantees that the wilderness parks will either be destroyed as wilderness or all human recreational use will have to be prohibited to save them.

**3. Weight Issues:** E-bikes are heavier than mountain bikes. The Addendum to a study done by Utah State for our parks a few years ago established that, while horse traffic is the most damaging to trails, there aren't that many horses in our parks, and equestrian use is limited to a few areas. Although the study claimed that hiking and biking lead to similar trail erosion, it made an important exception: "in situations where cycling leads to skids and trail-widening behaviors." To this, it added that "the increased mechanical forces of spinning tires can also dislodge soil leading to increased soil transport, erosion and vegetation damage, as well as a higher potential for wider and more deeply incised trail conditions." Most of the trail damage we observe, primarily on single tracks with heavy downhill traffic, has been caused by bikes. Heavier e-bikes will likely increase the amount of damage, at a faster rate. Expect higher maintenance costs for trails and adjacent habitat.

See p. 2, Addendum to Pilot Project Report.

**4. Liability Issues:** Related to the matter of weight is potential liability. Collisions between hikers and mountain bikes seem to be rare, but they have occurred, and people have been injured. If an e-bike runs into someone, there would perhaps be a higher likelihood of severe injury or even death. What might the Parks' liability be, particularly if they had chosen to legalize e-bikes, whose presence had previously been illegal? Yes, we all know that there are e-bikes in the parks right now because it's hard to enforce the rules, but there may be a different perception of whom to blame when something is where it does not belong, and when it is there with permission. Lawsuits are costly; you prepared?

**5. Age and Ethics:** The argument many e-bikers make in favor of e-bike legalization is that they have enjoyed mountain biking, but that they are now getting older, and it is becoming harder to pedal up hills. What they need is a pedal-assist. Although we can empathize with them, the argument is specious. We are all getting older, things hurt, and it is getting harder for all of us to do some of the things that we used to do with ease. Older hikers also find it harder to get up those hills! We hikers, in fact, outnumber all other trail users in our parks. But do we plead that you go out there and widen and reroute all our favorite single tracks to ascend smoothly, at a much more gradual rate, so we can still climb them with reasonable ease? No, of course not! We all recognize this proposal as outrageous because it threatens the premise of our wilderness parks. So I ask, why is it that a particular group of trail users think they are entitled to special consideration, which also challenges the premise of wilderness, when others are not?

6. **Fire Danger:** Fires caused by lithium-ion batteries are rare but fierce and rapidly spreading. The main risks for e-bike battery packs would involve overuse and overheating or impact damage due to a crash. Do we wish to encourage this risk, though small, in wilderness areas?

See [National Fire Protection Agency](#), [US Fire Administration](#).

7. **Final Questions:** We already have a significant number of e-bikes illegally on our trails and inadequate enforcement of existing regulations because OC Parks lacks the staffing to cover the territory involved. Would a formal study yield enough additional information to justify its cost? Would legalizing and thereby encouraging a greater number of e-bikes to use our parks—even if it theoretically applies only to Class 1 e-bikes (see #2 above)—improve the existing situation? Do we wish to reward current park users for breaking the law? Should we dispense with all park regulations entirely? Do we wish to maintain—and retain—our parks as wilderness?

Thank you,  
Karol Benner  
avid hiker  
& donor to OC Parks

Sent from my iPhone

**Valdes, Antonio**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025 9:51 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** E-Bikes on unpaved, natural trails in OC Parks - OPPOSE

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

April 10, 2025 meeting. I **oppose E-bikes** in OC Parks unpaved trails. 1) Danger to hikers, due to speed, which could seriously injure or kill adults and children. If hiking alone, injured people might not be able to get help. A speeding biker cannot always see around a curve, see around high vegetation, and who is walking down a steep incline. 2) Bike classes cannot be distinguished easily, therefore all classes of bikes will be used. 3) No enforcement of speed is possible. 4) fire danger. 5) Bikers could be groups of younger people who are not cautious and probably cannot be held responsible for their actions. 6) Single adults also pose a collision risk, but groups of any size would be even more dangerous and cannot be restricted. 7) The outdoor experience will be stressful, not peaceful, for hikers and wildlife. Always looking over your shoulder and listening for bikes just doesn't fit with the purpose of the park. 8) bikers already have streets, bike parks, and numerous other paved trails to use and trails designated for motorized use (and that is growing). 9) existing trails could experience much more degradation. Sincerely, a concerned OC Parks user.

## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Michael Schwager [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 7:59 AM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** Please, No E-bikes on Unpaved Trails

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

I ask you to avoid even considering to allow e-bikes on Orange County Park unpaved trails.

This is in response to the agenda item for your April 10th meeting, where you will consider a proposed study of the potential impact of Class 1 e-bikes on the parks, with a view to legalizing their use.

It seems obvious to me that e-bikes would be a danger to their riders, to other users of the trails, to the trails themselves, and to the plants, animals, and general environment near the trails.

E-bikes are wonderful devices, good for the environment, good for their riders, good for the rest of us.

But, they have no place on unpaved trails.

Thanks, Michael

Michael Schwager  
[REDACTED]



**Valdes, Antonio**

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**From:** Patrick Montoya [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025 7:47 AM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** E-Bikes on OC Trails

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Good morning, Trails Subcommittee.

I am messaging today to lodge my concerns about allowing E Bikes on the trails for fire, environmental, and safety reasons for those who use it and live around park areas.

In an era of growing use lithium batteries, they are dangerous. They can cause fires that spread quickly, like the Eaton Fire. They are never to be stored on a plane in the luggage area because they can be damaged from the handling. There would be no difference if an e biker crashes and impacts the battery or if it overheats while on the trail system.

Please do not allow the E- Bikes on our trails. In addition to the stated concerns, ultimately if E bikes were allowed, then gas powered units will be clamoring to gain access as well. Exploring our trails should be human powered as designed.

Thank you,

Pat Montoya  
[REDACTED]

**Valdes, Antonio**

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**From:** Sue Mundi [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 4, 2025 4:21 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** NO E-Bikes Please

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Trails Sub Committee,

It has come to my attention that you will be vote next week regarding public use of E-BIKES on our OC trails. In my opinion, this would be a mess. E-Bikes have been proven to be so dangerous (see quote below from Scripps Health). Please do not vote in favor of allowing them on our hiking paths.

Thank you.

Sue Mundi  
[REDACTED]

Safety experts caution that without proper education and training, e-bike users face a greater risk of injury or death in accidents. E-bikes are heavier and faster than regular bikes and can go faster due to their battery power. This makes them more dangerous than regular bicycles.

Feb 29, 2024



Scripps Health

<https://www.scripps.org> › News Items

**Are Electric Bikes Safe? What Are the Risks? - Scripps Health**



## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Mitch Baxter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 8, 2025 10:27 AM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee; Shawver, David  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Chris Murphy; Jeff Curie [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Class 1 Pedal Assist E-Bikes on OC Parks Trails...

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Hello OC Parks staff and Chairman Strawver,

We have met before – I'd sorry I can't be there for the Apr 10 trails subcommittee meeting. In my absence, I would love for you to consider a few points from my perspective, as a nature lover/appreciator, and an avid mountain biker:

- They bikes (I'll call them e-mountain bikes, or eMTB) are virtually the same speed to ride downhill. The motors don't really help or constrain riders, so there's no appreciable increase in trail risk to runners and hikers. Even uphill, it's a little faster, but the terrain almost always constrains speed for eMTBs and regular MTBs alike.
- There are approximately 50% eMTBs on the trails today. Have the rangers or other staff seen increases in accidents or damage to non-trail areas? I would be surprised if the answer is yes...
- These bikes allow older riders, and riders with orthopedic issues to stay on the trails. This describes me perfectly: a 62 year old rider with many orthopedic surgeries and sporting a fair amount internal titanium.
- The state of CA and other regions (like San Diego County) treat Class 1 Pedal Assist bikes as bikes, not motorized cycles.
- We have some of the most amazing trails in the country (with not a lot of exaggeration). These bikes help all people explore these amazing trails, and do it in a safe and healthy way!

I encourage the trails subcommittee to begin the process of changing the rules to allow class one bikes on OC Park trails, coordinating with the regulatory bodies as needed.

Thanks for your attention and for your great service to our beautiful county.

Mitch

Mitch Baxter  
[REDACTED]

## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Orange County Chapter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025 8:41 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** Letter in opposition to changes to OCParks Trails Policy re: e-bikes  
**Attachments:** OCParks ebikes Policy 2025\_et.pdf

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Dear OCParks:

On behalf of the Orange County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (OCCNPS), we are submitting a letter in opposition to changes to the OCParks Trails Policy of restricting e-bike use in its Regional and Wilderness Parks.

Please see the attached letter.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Wallace  
President  
Orange County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society



April 9, 2025

Trails Subcommittee  
OCParks  
13042 Old Myford Road  
Irvine, CA 92602

Sent VIA EMAIL: [Admin.TrailsSubcommittee@OCParks.com](mailto:Admin.TrailsSubcommittee@OCParks.com)

The Orange County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (OCCNPS) has long had an interest in the study and conservation of the region's wildland plants, as well the access to our wildlands and native plant flora for all to enjoy.

OCCNPS is opposed to changes to OCParks trails policy of restricting e-bike use in its Regional and Wilderness Parks. We urge OCParks to continue to prohibit all e-bike classes on all OC Parks regional and wilderness unpaved surfaces. OCCNPS has provided similar comments to the Trails Subcommittee and OCParks in the past, opposing e-bike access, when this topic was previously debated. This is a contentious issue and we can appreciate all perspectives. Many of our members are trail riders themselves.

While we strongly support public access to our county's wildland spaces, we also must balance this access with the natural resources that make these spaces so desirable to the public and biologically important for our native plants and animals.

OCCNPS' specific concerns and justifications for continued prohibition of e-bikes on non-paved OCParks surfaces are:

- **USFS Wilderness areas do not permit bicycle use of any type.** Other USFS lands (Cleveland National Forest, Trabuco District) only permit e-bike use on forest roads and trails permitted for motorized vehicles. CA State Parks, for the most part, do not permit e-bikes on non paved surfaces (although individual parks may provide occasional local exceptions). OC Parks should consider the policies of these other local public lands and consider the importance of consistency across various lands, many of which abut one another.
- **A significant lack of enforcement of current bicycle use on OC Parks trails.** In 2021, information was requested through the Public Information Act of all trail use infractions at OC Parks over the prior five year period. The results were discouraging. Considering the tens of thousands of users annually, enforcement actions were almost imperceptible, totaling less than twenty, and those being mostly dogs off-leash. As

frequent trail users, our members can attest that there is essentially no trail enforcement currently. Given this extreme lack of trail use enforcement, e-bike use would permit added trail use with an even greater need for enforcement, which is inconsistent with current OCParks practices of capacity.

- **Bicycle, hiker, and equestrian conflicts and accidents on trails are a growing concern.** Increased frequency and the addition of e-bikes would exacerbate this issue.
- **Off-trail travel and the creation of unpermitted "use-trails" is a growing issue in all wildland areas.** This presents a strain on management resources. Additional bicycle volume will exacerbate this concern.
- **Off-trail travel from cyclists impacts native plant populations** through trampling, illegal brush cutting, additional erosion, compaction of native vegetation's roots, and other impacts.
- **Entry and/or parking fees are required at most OCParks regional and wilderness parks,** either on a day-use manner or via an annual pass. Hikers are usually more-or-less obligated to pay these fees, while bicycle users often park off-site and cycle in, not paying use fees to the parks and thereby adding additional strain to already limited OCParks resources and rules enforcement. Without enforcement, as mentioned above, this presents a perhaps unintended preference to bicycle users over hikers.
- **Soil erosion from bicycle travel is documented as a higher impact than foot traffic.** Soil erosion negatively affects habitat for many native plant species. High bicycle use widens trails and compacts existing vegetative root systems.
- **Invasive plants are one of the most significant threats to local biodiversity and environmental health.** Invasive plants are expensive to manage and a burden that the County must bear. Invasive plants usually initially establish in wildland areas along disturbed trailsides and staging areas. In addition, seed propagules of invasive plant species are commonly dispersed to new areas through bicycle tires and equipment.

OCCNPS urges the Trails Subcommittee and OCParks to continue its current trail use policies and prohibit all e-bike classes on all OC Parks regional and wilderness unpaved surfaces.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wallace  
President  
OCCNPS



Elizabeth Taylor  
Conservation Chair  
OCCNPS



## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** FHBP - Green Vision [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025 6:06 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Cc:** Michael Wellborn  
**Subject:** Comment on ebikes for 4-10-25 subcommittee meeting  
**Attachments:** FHBP comment letter OC Parks E Bikes 4-9-25.pdf

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Hello-

Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks is providing comment on ebikes in wilderness areas. Please see attached.

Sincerely,  
Annette

--

**Annette Poliwka**

**PROGRAM CONSULTANT**

**Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks**

[REDACTED]  
Follow FHBP: [on the web](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Subscribe](#)





April 9, 2025

David Shawver, Chair  
Orange County Parks Trail Subcommittee  
Irvine Ranch Historic Park  
13042 Old Myford Road Irvine, CA 92602  
Admin.TrailsSubcommittee@ocparks.com

Subject: Letter of Opposition to the Proposed Study and Legalization of E-Bikes on Our Wilderness Trails.

Dear David Shawver,

On behalf of Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP), we write to express deep concern regarding the proposed study and potential policy shifts that could legalize Class 1 electric bikes (e-bikes) in Orange County's wilderness parks. These lands were preserved to protect fragile ecosystems—not to serve expanding recreational trends. The implications of legalizing e-bike use, even conditionally, are serious and far-reaching.

FHBP is an Orange County nonprofit organization working to protect natural lands, waterways, and beaches. We formed in 1997, bringing together a unified voice for conservation and community groups working on local environmental and park issues. In addition to our Green Vision Coalition of some 80 conservation and community groups, FHBP has more than 5,000 individual members who support our regional work.

## **1. Legal Ramifications**

Our wilderness parks are protected under conservation easements (NCCP, HCP, Nature Conservancy, OC Parks Foundation) that prohibit motorized recreation—including Class 1 e-bikes. Altering these terms could jeopardize the legal foundation of the parks and threaten their continued existence or public access.

## **2. Slippery Slope**

Distinguishing Class 1 e-bikes from Class 2 or 3 is nearly impossible, complicating enforcement. Once Class 1 bikes are allowed, pressure to permit all e-bikes—or even motorbikes—will grow, risking degradation or closure of trails.



### **3. Trail Damage**

E-bikes are heavier and more powerful than traditional bikes, leading to increased erosion, soil displacement, and trail widening. According to prior park studies, most trail damage comes from bikes—heavier e-bikes will only accelerate this trend and raise maintenance costs.

### **4. Liability Risks**

Collisions involving e-bikes carry higher risk of serious injury. Legalizing e-bikes could expose OC Parks to increased liability, especially if an accident occurs on a trail where motorized use was previously prohibited.

### **5. Age and Access**

While we empathize with aging riders, the argument for pedal-assist access is not unique. Hikers face similar physical limitations yet do not request trails be redesigned. E-bike users should not receive special exemptions that undermine wilderness values.

### **6. Fire Danger**

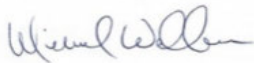
Lithium battery fires, though rare, are fast-spreading and dangerous—especially in wildfire-prone areas. Wilderness parks are not the place to introduce even low-probability ignition sources.

### **7. Final Considerations**

With limited enforcement capacity, a formal study is unlikely to resolve current issues—and may unintentionally reward illegal use. The question remains: do we want to preserve our parks as true wilderness, or slowly convert them into multi-use recreation zones?

In closing, we urge OC Parks to honor the original intent, legal framework, and ecological mission of our wilderness parks. E-bikes have many appropriate places to be enjoyed—but wilderness parks are not among them. Let us uphold the principles of preservation that led to these lands being saved in the first place.

Sincerely,



Michael Wellborn  
President  
Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks

## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Jeff Curie [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 8, 2025 2:32 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee; Shawver, David  
**Subject:** Statement to April 10 Meeting of the Trails Subcommittee

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Dear Trails Subcommittee Members and Chair Shawver,

I'm glad the OC Parks are openly discussing how to adapt our park operation to support the evolution of our trails use. In particular, treating Class 1 mountain bikes the same as mountain bikes.

With estimated over half the riders in our parks now riding Class 1 bikes, it's important we stop treating this growing population as "illegals". These citizens are advocates for our parks and trails, and we should treat them as part of the solution and not the problem. It's abundantly clear to anyone who rides regular and class 1 bikes that they are the same when it comes to impact on our natural trails. No more and no less impact than approved bikes. Studies have been done and years of use on our own trails demonstrate first hand that it is no problem.

As an avid hiker and mountain biker, I've enjoyed our trail extensively for over 30 years. I ride both kinds of bikes for different reasons. I routinely use a bell and am thanked for being courteous to hikers.

While I ride my class 1 bike, I am frequently dismayed to see people riding Super73s and similar e-motorcycles on our trails - yet I can say nothing, in the parks eyes I am just as illegal as they are. Clearly this is wrong and not what the Subcommittee wishes to happen.

We all see with our own eyes that Class1 bikes are a good thing and do no harm, dont abuse our trails, don't burst into flames, and don't cause mass increases in park use.

A proper set of rules returns the mountain biking community to the role of advocates of our trails rather than law breakers. Proper rules will set a standard for the city parks to follow clarifying rules across the county. The state and many communities have already adopted proper rules to treat Class 1 bikes as simply bikes. OC Parks should too.

Remember, including Class 1 bikes means enforcement is not necessary for the majority but only necessary for the true issues with electric motorcycles and other misuses of our parks.

I'm happy to volunteer my time to help any way I can and thank the committee members for considering adapting rules for natural trail use to the changes happening in the sport of cycling.

Thank you,

Jeff Curie  
[REDACTED]



## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Youndy HUNG [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 10, 2025 12:32 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** Ebikes

**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Hello OC Parks:

I understand there are discussions of possibly legalizing access for ebikes on off road trails in the OC Parks system. As a local hiker and mountain biker who rides a non motorized bike, this news is very concerning.

Allowing ebikes on single track trails would be bad for both people and flora/fauna. The fact is, the difficulty of some of these trails naturally limits the amount of bike traffic if you have to pedal them under your own power. With the advent of ebikes, I see drastically more people using the trails. If you legalize them, even more will come than already are (and breaking the rules). More bikes will undoubtedly impact animals and vegetation because ebikes are heavier and riders typically cover much more ground than regular bikes or hikers. I have personally witnessed ebikers going off official trails and creating their own illegal trails with jumps and other features which impacts the environment further. And on top of that, the county will likely increase their exposure to litigation when collisions and injuries inevitably occur between ebikers and hikers. My experience is that many ebikers don't have the skills and etiquette to ride these trails because it's so easy to jump on a ebike and have it carry you up these technical trails, like Lizard, Laguna Ridge, Rock-It or Rattlesnake.

Please, please keep the existing rules for our off road trails and increase your budgets for enforcement. Every dollar spent will reap multiple times of benefits in citation revenue.

**Youndy Hung**  
[REDACTED]

## Valdes, Antonio

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**From:** Len Gardner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 10, 2025 1:07 PM  
**To:** Admin, Trails Subcommittee  
**Subject:** E-bikes on trails in county wilderness parks

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Dear Trails Subcommittee Members,

I strenuously oppose allowing e-bikes on our county wilderness trails. I write to you as someone with considerable experience on these trails.

For ten years I was a volunteer backcountry docent in Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park. In addition, I was a backcountry docent for ten years with Crystal Cove State Park and the Irvine Ranch Conservancy.

I know from that extensive experience that e-bikes on wilderness trails are highly problematic. For example: damage to trails far in excess of wear and tear from hiking, conflicts with non-motorized trail users and conflicts with wildlife. There is also the legal question of whether these motorized bikes are compliant with codes, covenants and conservation easements in county wilderness parks.

I might add that I am also a homeowner in Orange County, paying over \$10,000 a year in property taxes. I am happy to see a portion of that money go to support our exemplary county parks as long as these parks do not allow incompatible uses, such as e-bikes on wilderness trails.

Thank you for your consideration,

Len Gardner  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]





# Overview of Electric Bicycles

OC Parks Commission  
May 1, 2025





# Overview

BACKGROUND  
REGULATIONS  
ENFORCEMENT  
OTHER JURISDICTIONS  
RECOMMENDED ACTION





# BACKGROUND: What is an Electric Bicycle (e-bike)?

*An electric bicycle is a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts.*

– California Department of Motor Vehicles

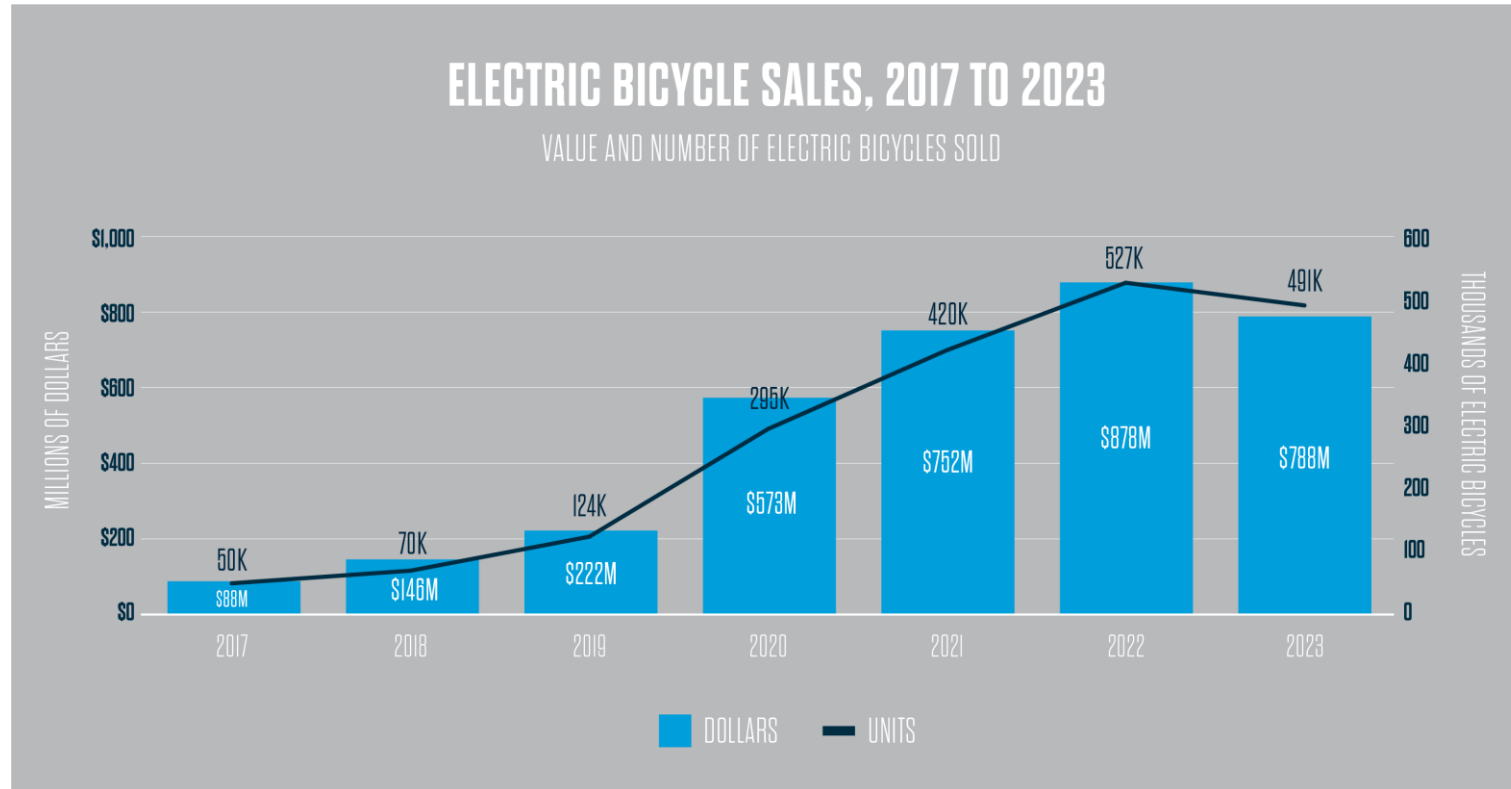
E-bikes contain a motor

Motor ≠ combustion engine



# BACKGROUND: Trend in E-bike Use

E-bike popularity has surged in recent years



Source:  
People for Bikes



# BACKGROUND: E-bike Class Distinctions

## CLASSIFIED E-BIKES

Pedal-assisted 20 mph max speed	Pedal or Throttle-assisted 20 mph max speed	Pedal-assisted 28 mph max speed
CLASS I	CLASS II	CLASS III
		

# BACKGROUND: E-bike Class Distinctions

## SIMILAR ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Greater wattage and speed than Classified e-bikes  
Not considered e-bikes according to California state law

### UNCLASSIFIED



Powerful motors and throttle only  
Not considered e-bikes according to California state law

### ELECTRIC MOTORCYCLES





# Current E-bike Regulations Related to OC Parks



# REGULATIONS: State

In 2022, SB 814 amended the California Vehicle Code § 231 to define Classified e-bikes as bicycles, thus allowing them on California public roadways, with stipulations.

California Vehicle Code § 21207.5 allows land managers to determine the suitability of e-bikes on trails.



# REGULATIONS: Local Ordinances – Public Works

- On June 25, 2024, Orange County Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the County's traffic ordinances.
- Changes include:
  - The definition of a bicycle to include classified e-bikes
  - The definition of e-bike classes
  - Minimum age for Class III e-bike ridership (16 years)
  - The maximum speed of e-bike travel (28 mph)
- These changes apply to unincorporated portions of the County.

# REGULATIONS: Local Ordinances – Public Facilities

Orange County Codified Ordinance (OCCO) 2-5-29(n) prohibits electric and combustible motorized wheel conveyance in Orange County parks, beaches and recreation areas.

Exception: The Board of Supervisors amended this ordinance in 2018 to allow Class I and II e-bikes “on those regional paved, off-road bikeways designated for such use...”



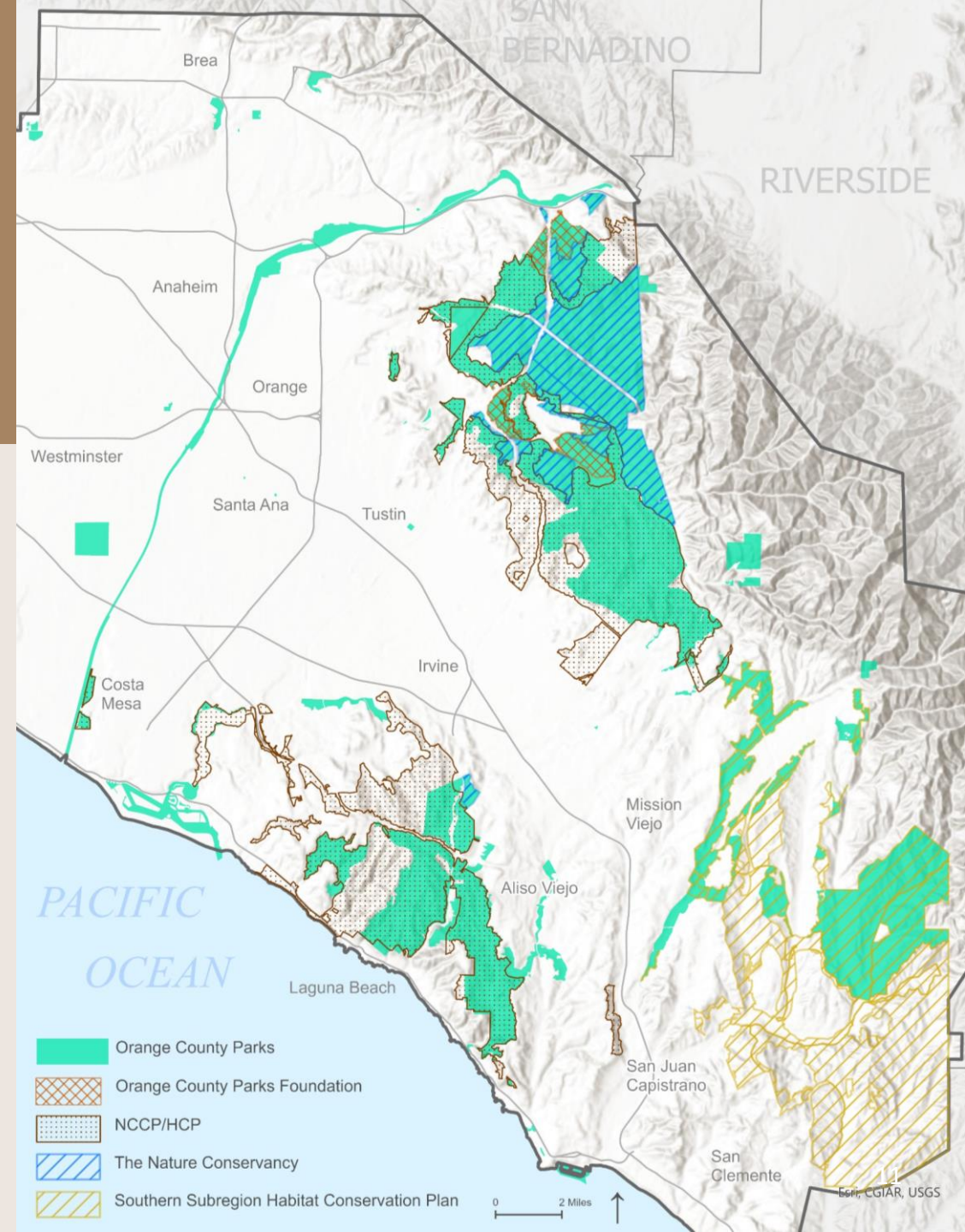
# REGULATIONS: Local Conservation Plans & Easements

Most OC Parks facilities are protected by conservation plans and easements.

Motorized vehicle recreation is prohibited by:

- Natural Community Conservation Plan/ Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP)
- The Nature Conservancy Easements
- Orange County Parks Foundation Easements

The definition of "motorized" in the plans and easements is literal, and thus includes e-bikes and all other vehicles that contain motors.



# REGULATIONS: Where are E-bikes Allowed in OC Parks?

Class I and II e-bikes are permitted on 75 miles of regional paved, off-road bikeways.

E-bikes are allowed on paved roads that allow general vehicle access in parks.

Regional trail and park regulations apply, including 10 mph speed limits.







# Enforcement



# ENFORCEMENT: Challenges

Difficult to distinguish between e-bikes and standard bikes

Difficult to monitor larger parks and multiple entry points

ULTRALIGHT E-BIKE	STANDARD BICYCLE
	



# ENFORCEMENT: Penalties

Park Rangers employ progressive enforcement, seeking to gain compliance through education.

Those riding e-bikes on natural surface trails are subject to advisement and citation.

Those riding off-trail and repeat violators are subject to more severe penalties.

# OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Within California, allowance or prohibition of e-bikes within park facilities varies by jurisdiction, even among neighboring jurisdictions.\*

## Allowed

- Angeles and Cleveland National Forests (*only in areas designated for motorized vehicles*)
- Crystal Cove State Park (*only Class I on trails west of Highway 1*)
- Chino Hills and San Onofre State Parks (*only Class I where standard bicycles are allowed*)
- San Diego County Parks and Recreation (*only Class I and II where standard bicycles are allowed and where not explicitly restricted*)
- Riverside County Regional Parks and Open Space District (*only Class I and II where standard bicycles are allowed and where not explicitly restricted*)

## Not Allowed

- Crystal Cove State Park (*inland trails*)
- City of Irvine Open Space
- City of Newport Beach (*trails*)

\*Information gathered from agencies April 2025



# RECOMMENDED ACTION:

OC Parks Commission to select and recommend one of the following actions:

A. The OC Parks Commission recommends OC Parks staff explore the feasibility of allowing Class I electric bicycles on unpaved, natural surface trails in OC Park Facilities.

or

B. The OC Parks Commission does not recommend OC Parks staff explore the feasibility of allowing Class I electric bicycles on unpaved, natural surface trails in OC Parks Facilities.