SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
(Action Items Displayed in Italics)
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Alternate Chair Jones and Members Ball, Browning, Webber, Schoeck, and Stout were present. Chair Shawver 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 MINUTES FOR THE JULY 10, 2025 MEETING

Motion: Member Schoeck
2nd: Member Webber
Approved 5–0–1 (Member Ball abstained)

IV. DISCUSSION CALENDAR MATTERS (ITEMS A–C)

A. OVERVIEW OF OC PARKS MASTER PLANS

Staff will present an overview of park master plans, highlighting their development and role in park management.

Tuan Richardson, OC Parks Senior Landscape Architect, presented the item and answered the Members' questions.

Mike Wilson, OC Parks Deputy Director, answered the Members' questions.

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive and file.

Motion: Member Browning
2nd: Member Ball
Approved 6–0

B. OC PARKS TRAILS: BALANCING RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

Staff will present on the background of the OC Parks trail system and challenges with unauthorized trails.

Jim Foley, OCMB Facebook Group, expressed a preference that if OC Parks closes an unauthorized trail on Ladera Ridge in O'Neill Regional Park, they close the official alignment rather than the more curvilinear user-created alignment. He also expressed support for reopening the closed section of Dripping Cave Trail in Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park.

Antonio Valdes, OC Parks Trails and Mapping Administrator, presented the item and answered the Members' questions.

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

Mike Wilson, OC Parks Deputy Director, answered the Members' questions.

James Dinwiddie, OC Parks Deputy Director, answered the Members' questions.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Discuss and provide feedback to refine Draft Sections of OC Parks Unauthorized Trail Decommissioning Guidelines.

2. Recommend OC Parks staff move forward with developing Unauthorized Trail Decommissioning Guidelines, in consideration of Subcommittee feedback.

Motion: Member Ball
2nd: Member Stout
Approved 6–0

C. OC PARKS TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Subcommittee's 2026 Meeting Schedule will be provided for review and approval.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee's 2026 Meeting Schedule.

Motion: Member Browning
2nd: Member Webber

Approved 6–0

V. SUBCOMMITTEE EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Jeaniene Casiello, Executive Officer, provided updates.

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: *7:10 p.m.*

Unauthorized Trail Decommissioning Guidelines – Outline and Introductions

OC Parks Trails Subcommittee | January 8, 2026

Overview

California poppies in Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park

Guidelines Development

Purpose

Proposed Sections

Conclusion

Guidelines Development: Process and Next Steps

- Tonight we will walk through the proposed sections and gather Subcommittee input.
- At the April 9, 2026 Trail Subcommittee Meeting, we anticipate presenting and discussing the complete draft document.

Park Ranger patrolling Caspers Wilderness Park

Purpose of Guidelines

Site visit to an unauthorized bike jump in **Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park**. Borrow pit excavation and unauthorized approach trails are visible, with potential impacts to wildlife burrows, native vegetation, the seed bank, and archaeological or paleontological resources.

- Consistency and transparency
- Establishes best practices
- Clarifies expectations for staff, crews, and partners
- Establishes a clear workflow

Proposed Sections

1. Identification and Reporting
2. Baseline Data Collection
3. Prioritization and Approval
4. Evaluation of Resources
5. Trail Closure Planning
6. Compliance Coordination
7. Communication and Signage
8. Physical Decommissioning
9. Monitoring

Unauthorized bike jump in **O'Neill Regional Park**, widening the trail and impacting adjacent native habitat.

Section 1: Identification & Reporting

Parallel unauthorized trails descending a slope

- Introduction
- Definition and scope of unauthorized trails
- Impacts of unauthorized trails
- Identification methods (digital and field)
- Reporting protocol
- Data management and storage

Section 2: Baseline Data Collection

- Introduction
- Purpose and Role of Baseline Data Collection
- Triggers for Baseline Data Collection
- Field Assessment Procedures
- Drone Imagery Acquisition
- Standard Data Elements to be Collected
- Data Management and Integration into the Unauthorized Trail Database

Drones are used to capture aerial imagery of unauthorized trails

Section 3: Prioritization and Approval

Significant soil erosion on an unauthorized trail near **Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park**.

- Introduction
- Purpose of Prioritization
- Overview of Trail Attributes Used in Prioritization
- Using the Unauthorized Trail Prioritization Scoring Guide
- Trail Decommissioning Request Form
- Internal Review and Approval Process

Section 4: Evaluation of Resources

- Introduction
- Purpose of Evaluation of Resources
- Assessment of Financial Resources
- Assessment of Staff Capacity and Oversight Needs
- Crew or Contractor Selection Considerations
- Seasonal and Environmental Timing Constraints

Recently discovered unauthorized trail

Section 5: Trail Closure Planning

Dead vegetation placed on former trail tread to discourage use

- Introduction
- Understanding User Behavior and Use-Patterns
- Overview of Closure Methods and Obstacles
- Conducting the Secondary On-Site Assessment
- Accounting for Crew Skill and Project Requirements
- Trail Closure Case Study

Section 6: Compliance

- Introduction
- Determining Required Clearances
- Roles and Responsibilities in Compliance Review
- Translating Compliance Findings Into Project Constraints
- Documentation and Recordkeeping

Raptor nests are particularly sensitive to disturbance

Section 7: Communication and Signage

Rangers conducting a site visit on an unauthorized trail in **Laguna Coast Wilderness Park**

- Introduction
- Communication Goals and Principles
- Internal Coordination and Messaging Alignment
- External Communication Channels
  - OC Parks Website
  - Social Media
  - Public-facing signage at appropriate locations
  - Brochures and kiosk boards
  - Press releases and publications
- Managing Public Reactions and User Concerns
- Criteria for When Signage Is Appropriate
- Signage Design, Placement, and Messaging Standards
- Outreach to Partners and Volunteer Groups

Section 8: Physical Decommissioning

- Introduction
- Responsible Parties
- Pre-Project Crew Briefing and Coordination
- Site Visit Scheduling and Oversight Strategy
- Quality Assurance During Implementation
- Ensuring Compliance
- Adaptive Management and Problem Solving
- Final Inspection and Documentation

Volunteers decompacting the tread of an unauthorized shortcut

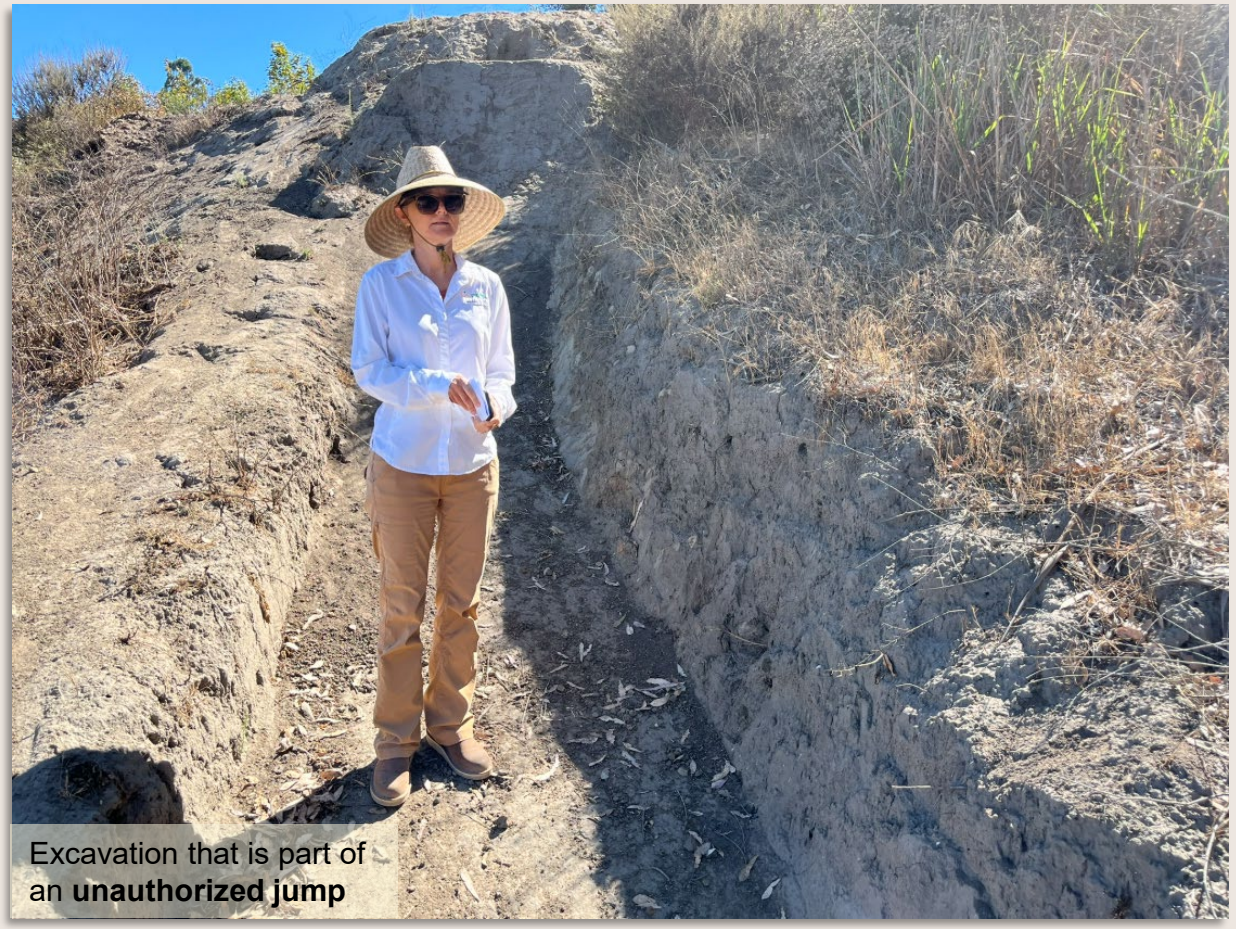
Section 9: Monitoring

OC Parks staff monitoring a recent closure

- Introduction
- Purpose and Role of Monitoring
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Monitoring Methods
  - On-the-Ground Trailhead Monitoring
  - Drone-Based Monitoring
- Monitoring Schedule and Duration
- Criteria for Determining Functional Closure
- Documentation Procedures
- Rapid Response Procedures
- Transition to Long-Term Stewardship

Next Steps

- Consider Subcommittee feedback in full draft
- Present draft at next Trails Subcommittee meeting and receive additional feedback
- Internal review and refinement
- Adaption and implementation



Excavation that is part of an **unauthorized jump**

Recommended Action

Recommended Action:

Provide feedback on the draft overview of Unauthorized Trail Decommissioning Guidelines for OC Parks' consideration

Unauthorized trail in **Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park**

Questions

2025 Trail Project Overview

OC Parks Trails Subcommittee | January 8, 2026

Presentation Overview

Outline of Highlighted Projects

Individual Project Updates

Conclusion

Equestrians in **Caspers Wilderness Park**

2025 Trail Projects

Regional Trails

- Aliso Creek Bikeway Slope Repairs
- Santa Ana River Trail Improvements
- Peters Canyon Regional Trail – Riding and Hiking Expansion Opening
- Bellview Trail Repairs

Park Trails

- Craig Regional Park – Bike Facility Updates
- Red Rock Wilderness – New Trail Names
- Peters Canyon Regional Park – Willow Trail Walkway
- Caspers Wilderness Park – Upper Juaneño Trail Reopening
- Laguna Coast Wilderness Park – Unauthorized Trail Decommissioning
- Laguna Coast Wilderness Park – Old Emerald Trail Rock Armoring

Hiker in **Irvine Ranch Open Space**

Regional Trails – Aliso Creek Bikeway Slope Repairs

Background

- Aliso Creek Bikeway (Laguna Hills)
- I-5 to Paseo de Valencia
- Severe erosion damage
- Culvert failure risk

Work to Date

- Replaced two failed culverts
- Stabilized creek banks
- Improved bikeway tread
- Installed erosion controls
- Improved drainage

Current Status

- Construction complete
- Completed December 2025

Next Steps

- 2026 habitat restoration
  - Seeding & planting
  - Invasive weed removal
  - Multi-year monitoring

Creek crossing

Resurfaced bikeway with repaired culverts

Locations of repairs

Regional Trails – Aliso Creek Bikeway Slope Repairs

Original deteriorating **culverts**

New replacement **culverts**

Stabilized slope and site of future restoration

Regional Trails – Santa Ana River Trail Improvements

Background

- Rest areas and amenities along trail requested by community
- Glassell to Tustin

Work to Date

- Five sites identified
- Bench seating
- Trash receptacles
- Lodgepole fencing
- Located near shade trees

Current Status

- Four areas completed as of December 2025

Next Steps

- One area remaining
- Anticipated completion early 2026

Bench within pocket rest area

New pocket rest area along trail

Regional Trails – Peters Canyon Regional Trail Riding and Hiking Expansion Opening

Background

- Peters Canyon Creek (west side levee)
- Natural-surface alternative to paved bikeway
- DG trail
- Built during channelization project
- Bridges & signage

Work to Date

- Multi-phase project
- Walnut–Warner built (2020)
- Railroad approval (2024)
- Graded rutting (2025)
- Gate delineators installed (2025)
- Phase 1 soft-opened

Current Status

- Walnut–Warner open

Next Steps

- Phase II: Warner–Barranca
- Pavement & bollards
- Final signage
- Anticipated completion Summer 2026

Recently installed **gate delineators**

Peters Canyon Regional Trail
west side near Moffett Dr. bridge

Regional Trails – Bellview Trail Repairs

Background

- Two degraded segments
- Severe rutting
- Steep grades
- Poor drainage
- Failed v-ditches

Work to Date

- Rolling grade dips installed
- Improved drainage
- Tread out-sloped
- Riprap wall added
- Trail recontoured
- V-ditches functional

Current Status

- Trail fully open
- User access restored
- Maintenance access restored

Next Steps

- Project complete

Before: rutting

After: rolling grade dip

Before: severe erosion

After: rip rap retaining wall

Craig Regional Park – Bike Facility Updates

Background

- USACE-owned land
- County recreational lease
- Long-term planning effort
- Extensive public input completed

Work to Date

- Public workshops held
- Environmental review completed (CEQA & NEPA)
- Preliminary grading & drainage plans prepared
- USACE submittals completed
- O&M plan drafted
- Preliminary design advancing

Current Status

- USACE review in progress
- Design refinement ongoing

Next Steps

- Complete federal review
- Advance design
- Select contractor
- Construction possible in 2026

Example of similar bike park

Example of similar bike park

Red Rock Wilderness – New Trail Names

Background

- Red Rock Wilderness
- Opened in 2024
- Five new trails (8 miles)
- Scenic overlook added
- Temporary names used

Work to Date

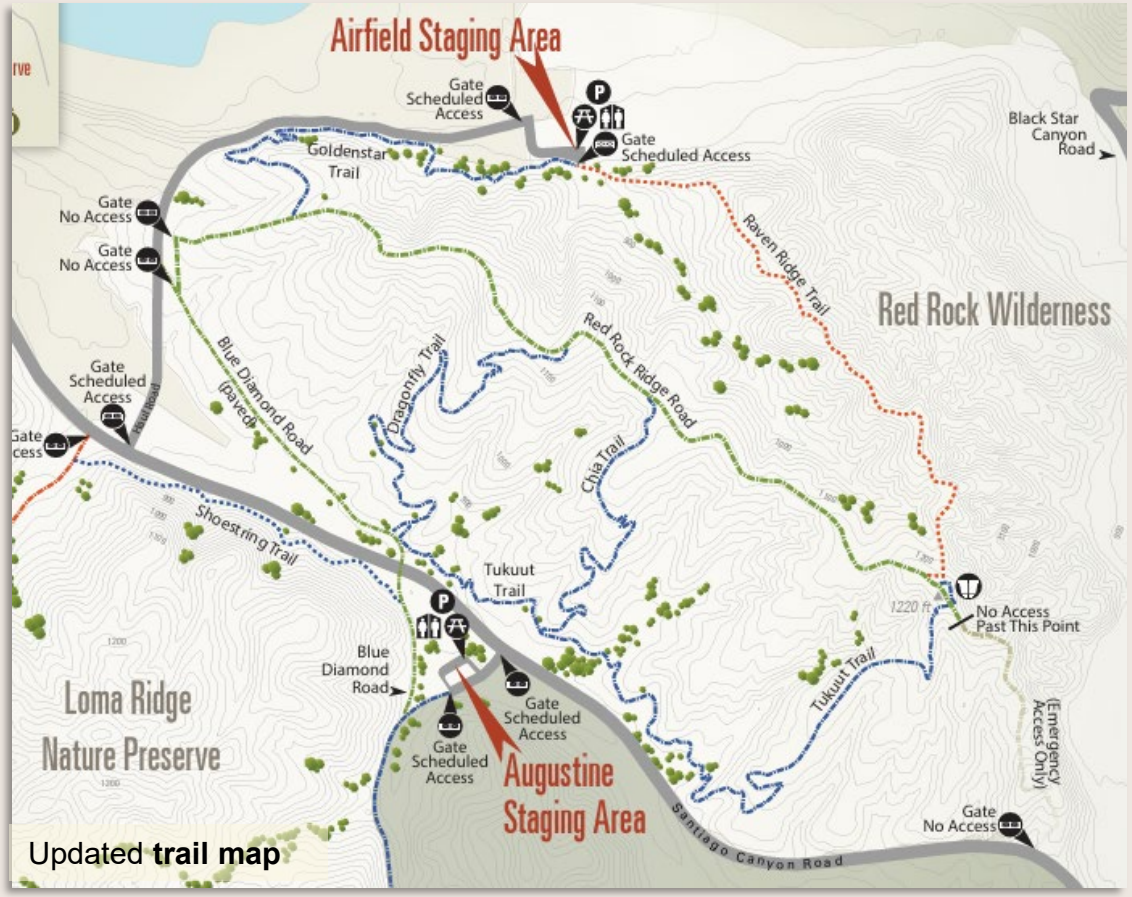
- Names selected by TSC
- Commission approval
- Names made official

Current Status

- Maps updated
- Signage updated

Next Steps

- Project complete



Updated **trail map**


Dramatic vista in **Red Rock Wilderness**


Mountain lion on trail camera

Peters Canyon Regional Park – Willow Trail Walkway

Background

- Willow Trail
- Riparian corridor
- Chronic muddy crossing
- Resource impacts

Work to Date

- Walkway installed
- 48’ long
- 5’ wide

Current Status

- Opened March 2025

Next Steps

- Project complete

Willow **trailhead**


Newly-installed **walkway**

Caspers Wilderness Park – Upper Juaneño Trail Reopening

Background

- Juaneño Trail (upper)
- San Juan Creek floodplain
- 2024 high flows obscured trail
- Temporary closure

Work to Date

- Wayfinding installed
- Alignment reestablished

Current Status

- Navigation restored
- Trail reopened April 2025

Next Steps

- Project complete

Newly-installed **directional signage**


Directional signage at creek crossing

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park – Unauthorized Trail Decommissioning and Habitat Restoration

Background

- Unauthorized trail reopened
- Jumps & rock drops added
- Remote, undisturbed area
- Decommissioning required to restore area

Work to Date

- CCC-led field work
- Features removed
- Vegetation dispersed
- Straw wattles installed

Current Status

- Area under monitoring
- No trail re-establishment observed

Next Steps

- Continued monitoring
- Rapid response if needed

Former trail tread covered with dead vegetation to discourage use

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park – Old Emerald Trail Improvements

Background

- Heavy multi-use traffic
- Steep fall-line segments
- Chronic erosion issues
- Long-term repair needed

Work to Date

- Non-profit leading work
- Rock-armored drains installed
- Tread stabilized
- Trail narrowed

Current Status

- 3 of 10 drains complete
- Drainage performing well
- Rutting reduced
- User experience improved

Next Steps

- Continue work as funded
- Volunteer rockwork trainings
- January–February workshops

Planned **work sites**


Volunteer installing rock armoring

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park – Old Emerald Trail Improvements

Volunteers learning rock armoring techniques

Drainage **before** improvements

Drainage **after** improvements

Questions

1. Identification and Reporting

Introduction

Unauthorized trail identification and reporting is the first step in the multi-stage process of closing or "decommissioning" unauthorized trails. In this context, unauthorized trails refer to any man-made route, trail, or road, within parkland that is not recognized by a park's guiding documents or is identified through adaptive management as incompatible with park management goals. These routes are often user-created, though some may predate the establishment of the park. If left unaddressed, unauthorized trails can fragment habitat, contribute to runoff and erosion, promote the spread of invasive species, and damage sensitive cultural resources, among other impacts.

Once identified, the unauthorized trail is added to the OC Parks GIS database, initiating the pathway toward eventual decommissioning.

Unauthorized trails are typically identified in two primary ways: digital observations and field observations. Digital observations involve reviewing drone imagery, satellite imagery, or exercise-tracking heatmaps to detect new or previously unreported routes. These discoveries are often incidental; staff frequently use these platforms for other work functions and may notice indicators of new or unreported routes in the process.

Field observations come from park staff and volunteers, as well as partner agencies and non-profit organizations, who encounter these routes while working or recreating within OC Parks' backcountry.

Once identified, the information is reported to the Trails and Mapping Administrator, the Supervising Park Ranger, the Operations Manager, and the Parks Division Manager via email. After this notification, the Trails and Mapping Administrator begins the next phase: Baseline Data Collection.

Regardless of the source, standardized identification and reporting procedures ensure consistent data storage and guarantee that all relevant staff are promptly informed of new unauthorized impacts.

Sections:

- *Definition and Scope of Unauthorized Trails*
- *Impacts of Unauthorized Trails*
- *Identification Methods*
    - *Digital Observations*
    - *Field Observations*

- *Reporting Protocol*
- *Data Management and Storage*

2. Baseline Data Collection

Introduction

Baseline Data Collection is the process of documenting unauthorized trail attributes before closures. This information expands the OC Parks unauthorized trail database, supports comparison across unauthorized trails, and helps determine which closures should occur first (addressed in the next section). It also provides the baseline against which closure effectiveness will later be evaluated.

Once an unauthorized trail is reported, baseline data is gathered through on-the-ground assessments and drone imagery. The Trails and Mapping Administrator receives the report and initiates baseline data collection, which includes at least one site visit combining an in-person assessment with a drone flight. These methods capture key information such as trail length, impacts to sensitive habitat, tread condition, potential hazards, and approximate trail age. Standardized survey procedures help ensure that collected data remains consistent and comparable across parks and over time. The resulting information then informs the next phase: decommissioning prioritization and approval.

This step is essential because each unauthorized trail has distinct impacts influenced by factors such as ecosystem type, grade, use intensity, and hydrologic setting. Baseline data provides a clear understanding of the unauthorized trail inventory and helps identify which routes require attention first.

Sections:

- *Purpose and Role of Baseline Data Collection*
- *Triggers for Baseline Data Collection*
- *Field Assessment Procedures*
- *Drone Imagery Acquisition and Standards*
- *Standard Data Elements to be Collected*
- *Data Management and Integration into the Unauthorized Trail Database*

3. Prioritization and Approval

Introduction

Because staff time and funding are finite, it is necessary to prioritize which unauthorized trails are decommissioned first. Prioritization is possible because each route has unique

characteristics that influence its impact on park resources. OC Parks captures these attributes during the on-the-ground and remote assessments conducted in the previous section. Once collected, these data are transferred to the Unauthorized Trail Prioritization Scoring Guide. This fillable spreadsheet assigns numerical values to each trail's traits and generates a final score that places the trail into a low-, medium-, or high-priority category.

High-priority trails represent significant resources or safety risks and are considered feasible to close using available resources. For these trails, a brief report, the Trail Decommissioning Request, is drafted and submitted for internal review. This review process verifies that the Scoring Guide's evaluation aligns with management goals and confirms that sufficient resources are available to perform the decommissioning. After internal approval, the project site is evaluated to ensure the work can be conducted in compliance with all applicable restrictions and regulations.

Sections:

- *Purpose of Prioritization*
- *Overview of Trail Attributes Used in Prioritization*
- *Using the Unauthorized Trail Prioritization Scoring Guide*
- *Trail Decommissioning Request Form*
- *Internal Review and Approval Process*

4. Evaluation of Resources

Introduction

The Evaluation of Resources step determines whether a proposed closure can realistically be executed with the resources available. Because approaches to unauthorized trail decommissioning can vary widely due to length, terrain, ecological or cultural resource sensitivity, and patterns of use, this phase begins with confirming the anticipated scope of work for the specific closure. A clear scope allows staff to understand the level and type of resources required.

This evaluation should occur before, or in close coordination with, Trail Closure Planning to ensure the resulting strategy reflects the funds, staff capacity, and contract support currently available to OC Parks. At minimum, this includes reviewing contract balances, identifying available budget allocations, and estimating the level of staff oversight the project will require.

Crew or contractor selection also depends on the nature of the closure, as each team brings different strengths, technical skillsets, and levels of required supervision. Aligning

the project with the appropriate crew or contractor is essential for a successful outcome. Timing is another key factor: some routes require urgent attention due to safety concerns or high resource impacts, while others are best scheduled during periods that enhance efficiency, such as the rainy season, when pliable soils facilitate tread modification.

By outlining these considerations, this step clarifies whether the closure can proceed immediately, how the plan should be shaped by available resources, or whether the work should be deferred until conditions are more favorable.

Sections:

- *Purpose of the Evaluation of Resources*
- *Assessment of Financial Resources*
- *Assessment of Staff Capacity and Oversight Needs*
- *Crew or Contractor Selection Considerations*
- *Seasonal and Environmental Timing Constraints*

5. Trail Closure Planning

Introduction

Trail Closure Planning is the stage in which staff determine the specific combination of methods and obstacles needed to implement an effective closure. Because no single technique works in all situations, this phase draws from a range of approaches, such as targeting choke points, closing entire routes, reshaping tread, deconstructing built features, brushing-in, and installing difficult-to-remove obstacles such as embedded rocks, logs, wattles, ditches, and strategic plantings.

Before selecting among these options, staff should consider both the trail's physical site conditions and the user behavior driving the route's creation or continued use. Different environments support different tactics, and understanding whether users are motivated by destination, experience, or access helps determine how much deterrence is required and where it should be applied.

Although some strategies can be selected by reviewing baseline assessment data, many closures benefit from a secondary on-site assessment focused specifically on decommissioning tactics. This visit helps staff identify where specific obstacles should be placed, where multiple approaches should overlap, and how closures can be tied into surrounding features to prevent unauthorized rerouting.

The level of detail needed in the final plan depends on the team conducting the closure. Youth corps or entry-level crews typically require thorough, step-by-step guidance, while

experienced contractors familiar with best practices may help refine the approach during implementation. Regardless of who performs the work, Trail Closure Planning ensures that physical conditions, user behavior, available methods, and logistical needs are fully considered before crews enter the field.

Sections:

- *Understanding User Behavior and Use Patterns*
- *Overview of Closure Methods and Obstacles*
- *Conducting the Secondary On-Site Assessment*
- *Accounting for Crew Skill and Project Requirements*
- *Trail Closure Case Study*

6. Compliance Coordination

Introduction

Compliance Coordination ensures that trail decommissioning activities comply with environmental regulations and resource-protection requirements. Although trail decommissioning generally has limited impacts, some disturbance may occur, making it essential that all regulations are followed. The time of year, location, and local site conditions will determine which clearances are necessary.

Not all closures will require every clearance type, but common needs include:

- Sensitive species presence/absence surveys
- Nesting bird surveys (February 15 – September 15)
- Archaeological and paleontological assessments
- Streambed compliance

The associated assessments are conducted by either OC Parks resource staff or qualified contract biologists and specialists. All required checks must be completed prior to project implementation. While the constraints rarely prevent a closure from moving forward, they may establish some restrictions around specific actions, such as no-dig zones in areas of archaeological significance or timing restrictions for biological protection.

Sections:

- Determining Required Clearances
- Sensitive Species Surveys
- Nesting Bird Surveys
- Archaeological and Paleontological Surveys

- Streambed and Riparian Compliance
- Roles and Responsibilities in Compliance Review
- Translating Compliance Findings Into Project Constraints
- Documentation and Recordkeeping

7. Communication and Signage

Introduction

Communication and Signage guide how OC Parks informs the public, partners, and staff about unauthorized trail closures to support clarity, transparency, and compliance. The purpose of messaging is not solely to share information; it is also intended to help shape user behavior and thereby protect the cultural and natural resources of park wildlands. Communicating clearly, accurately, and consistently across parks, programs, and external partners is essential. This does not require a single tone or script, but messaging that is coherent and aligned even when addressing different audiences or facets of the issue.

Unauthorized trail closures can generate strong reactions. Clear, timely messaging can help reduce frustration and demonstrate that closures are part of a broader, long-term effort to conserve fragile resources. It should also be noted that not all closures warrant on-the-ground signage, and the need for signage should be determined on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, signage may draw additional attention to unauthorized routes and inadvertently increase use. For this reason, broad communication, such as social media, the OC Parks website, or signage at established, high-traffic locations, can often be more appropriate.

While communication alone may not convert every user away from unauthorized trail creation or use, effective messaging strengthens public trust and helps ensure that OC Parks' mission is more widely understood.

Sections:

- *Communication Goals and Principles*
- *Internal Coordination and Messaging Alignment*
- *External Communication Channels*
    - *OC Parks Website*
    - *Social Media*
    - *Public-facing signage at appropriate locations*
    - *Brochures and kiosk boards*
    - *Press releases and publications*
- *Managing Public Reactions and User Concerns*

- *Criteria for When Signage Is Appropriate*
- *Signage Design, Placement, and Messaging Standards*
- *Outreach to Partners and Volunteer Groups*

8. Physical Decommissioning

Introduction

The Physical Decommissioning phase represents the point at which planning transitions into on-the-ground implementation. This phase relies on the groundwork established in earlier steps, including prioritization, resource evaluation, compliance coordination, and trail closure planning.

The Trail and Mapping Administrator or a designated Supervising Park Ranger is responsible for communicating the approved closure plan to the selected crew and ensuring expectations are clear before work begins. Roles, responsibilities, and lines of communication should be established with the crew supervisor at the outset.

Site visits are essential to ensure the work is being carried out effectively. The frequency and intensity of oversight should be scaled to the complexity of the closure and skill level of the crew. During site visits, staff verify that closure methods are being implemented as planned and that work adheres to best practices, including any environmental or cultural protection requirements identified during compliance review.

On-the-ground conditions often differ from what was anticipated during conceptual planning, and some level of adaptive problem-solving is often necessary. When adjustments are required, staff should work with the crew supervisor to determine the best course of action in a manner that remains consistent with closure objectives and compliance constraints.

Once physical work is complete, the Trail and Mapping Administrator or designee inspects trailheads and closure points to confirm that access has been effectively blocked, camouflage is adequate, and, if appropriate, approved signage has been installed correctly. A closure is considered successful when continued use is no longer apparent and the route is positioned for recovery, allowing it to blend back into the surrounding landscape over time.

Sections:

- *Responsible Parties and Roles*
- *Pre-Project Crew Briefing and Coordination*
- *Site Visit Scheduling and Oversight Strategy*

- *Quality Assurance During Implementation*
- *Ensuring Compliance*
- *Adaptive Management and Problem Solving*
- *Final Inspection and Documentation*

9. Monitoring

Introduction

Monitoring evaluates the effectiveness of unauthorized trail closures and supports long-term stewardship by ensuring closures remain intact and ecological recovery occurs. Monitoring also provides the mechanism for identifying and responding to closure breaches before unauthorized use becomes reestablished.

Monitoring may be conducted by a variety of parties depending on the project and available resources. In some cases, a contractor may be retained to perform monitoring for a defined period; in others, monitoring may be carried out by park staff or the Trails and Mapping Administrator. Clear assignment of monitoring responsibility is essential to ensure consistency and follow-through.

On-the-ground monitoring focuses on unauthorized trailheads and closure points, where staff or contractors assess evidence of renewed use, vegetation recovery, and the condition of physical barriers or signage. Interior foot-based monitoring of closed routes is generally avoided to prevent creating new disturbance or inadvertently reopening the path. Instead, drone-based monitoring is used to document corridor conditions and recovery over time without additional impact.

Site visits are conducted at regular intervals, typically every six months during the first two years following closure, with frequency decreasing to once annually thereafter. Findings from each visit are documented on a mobile fillable survey that records the condition of the closure and the location of any breaches. After five consecutive years with no documented breaches, the trail may be considered functionally closed, and routine monitoring may be discontinued.

If a breach is detected, prompt corrective action should be taken to reclose the route and prevent reestablishment. In some cases, the contractor may be responsible for rapid response; if not, it is OC Parks' responsibility to respond quickly by engaging an available crew or completing the work in-house. By keeping a close watch on completed work and responding quickly when reopenings occur, this final phase marks the transition from active closure to long-term stewardship.

Sections:

- *Purpose and Role of Monitoring*
- *Roles and Responsibilites*
- *Monitoring Methods*
    - *On-the-Ground Trailhead Monitoring*
    - *Drone-Based Monitoring*
- *Monitoring Schedule and Duration*
- *Criteria for Determining Functional Closure*
- *Documentation Procedures*
- *Rapid Response to Breaches*
- *Transition to Long-Term Stewardship*