



Gypsum Canyon Wilderness Overview
Orange County Parks Trails Subcommittee — April 11, 2024



Overview



Gypsum Canyon Wilderness

- Background
- Planning & Improvements
- Trail System
- Public Access
- Survey Feedback

Background — Location & Description

- Located in the foothills of the northwest extent of the Santa Ana Mountains, approximately where the 241 Toll Road meets the 91 Freeway
- Approximately 500 acres with six miles of new trails
- Features dramatic cobble and sandstone bluffs formed 16 to 20 million years ago
- Multiple special status wildlife and plant species
- Within Orange County Parks Foundation Easement
- Bordered by The Nature Conservancy Conservation Easement, Orange County Cemetery District, and California State Parks



Background – History

- **2014:** Donated to OC Parks by The Irvine Company
- **2015–2019:** Develop and complete Interim Recreation and Resource Management Plan (IRRMP)
- **2020:** Initial staging area improvements
- **2020–2021:** Baseline biological surveys to monitor the area’s flora and fauna
- **2021:** Container plants and native seed mix planted to enhance landscaping and improve habitat bordering the staging area
- **2021:** Large-scale improvements to the staging area, including concrete hardscaping
- **2021:** Preliminary trail routing
- **2022–2023:** Final trails and improvements formalized
- **2023:** Open for managed public access and start of visitor surveys



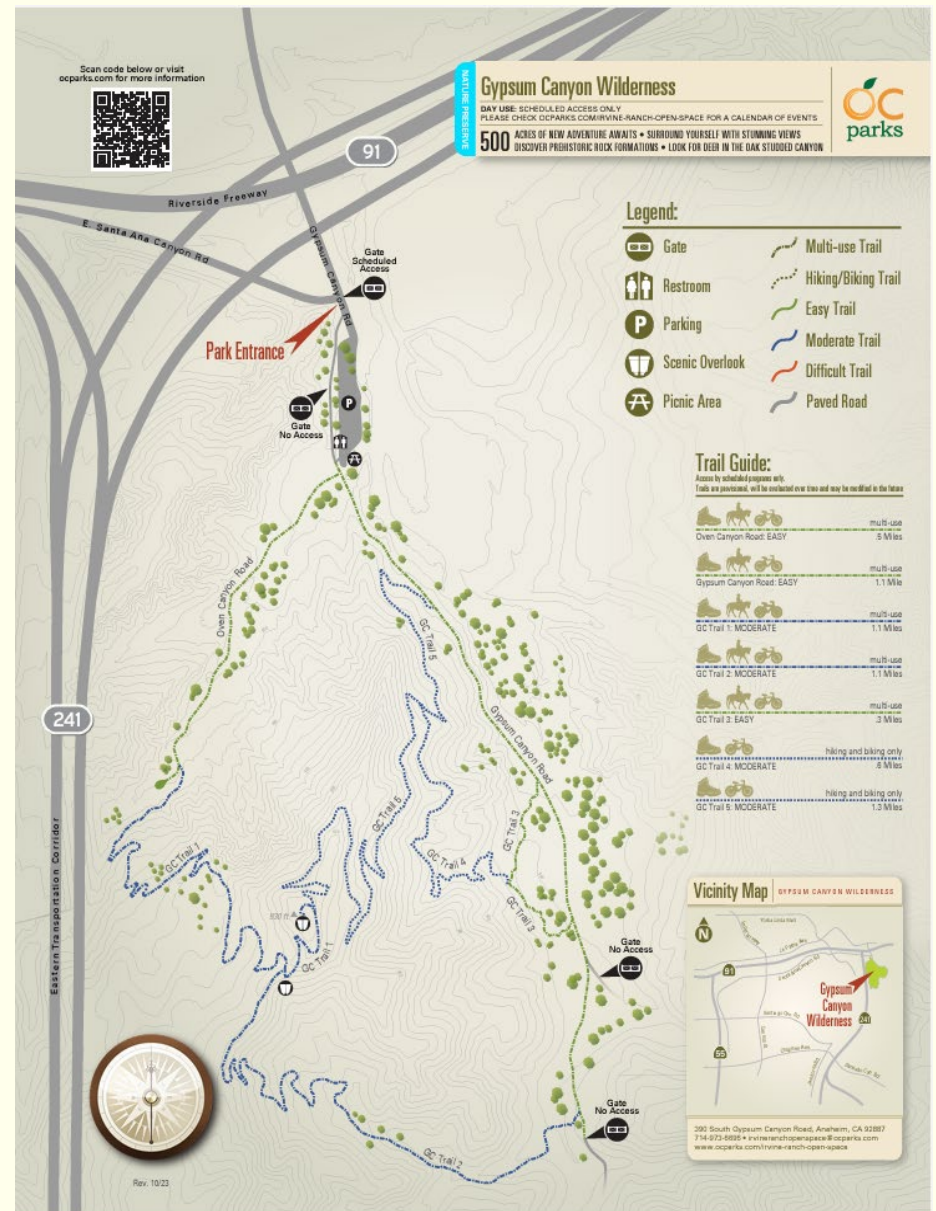
Spring Poppies in Gypsum Canyon

Trail Network

- Trail planning
 - Assessments from field staff as well as specialized OC Parks staff in Planning & Design, GIS, Natural Resources, and Archaeology & Paleontology



Trail Assessment by Park Ranger



Trail Network

- Trail installation
 - Combination of park staff and contracted work, including the Irvine Ranch Conservancy



Ascent on GC Trail 1



GC Trail 4

Planning & Improvements

- Staging area improvements
 - Grading, new gates, fencing, and landscaping
- Trail system and lookouts
 - Kiosks and wayfinding signage



Parking and Staging Area for Gypsum Canyon Wilderness in 2021



Kiosk Installation by OC Parks Maintenance Team



Parking and Staging Area installation of new concrete ADA parking pads

Planning & Improvements

- Staging area plant enhancement
- Habitat restoration projects



Staging Area Plant Enhancement led by Resource Specialist Gray Crouch



Oak Woodland Area Restoration led by Resource Specialist Gray Crouch



Cactus Planting Project with Resource Specialist and Volunteer Team

Public Access

- Opened November 14, 2023
- Scheduled guided and self-guided programs throughout Nov–Dec
- Guided mountain bike and hiking programs, along with interpretation by Resource Specialists
- Beginning in January, monthly managed access the second Saturday of each month



Ribbon-cutting Ceremony to welcome the public to the newest OC Parks facility

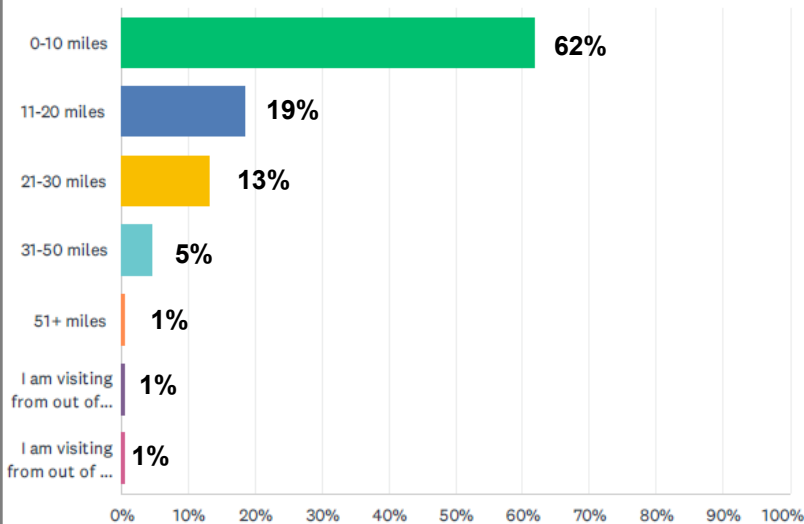


First Guided Mountain Bike Ride led by OC Parks Resource Specialist

Survey Feedback

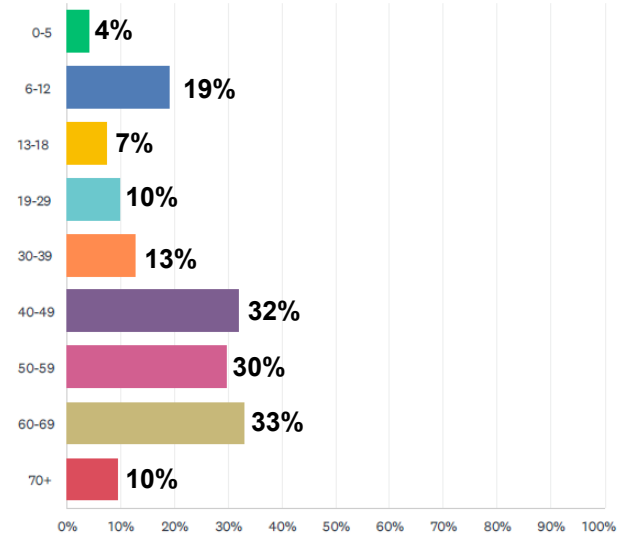
How far did you travel to visit Gypsum Canyon Wilderness?

Answered: 189 Skipped: 0



Please provide the ages of all participants in your group (check all that apply).

Answered: 188 Skipped: 1

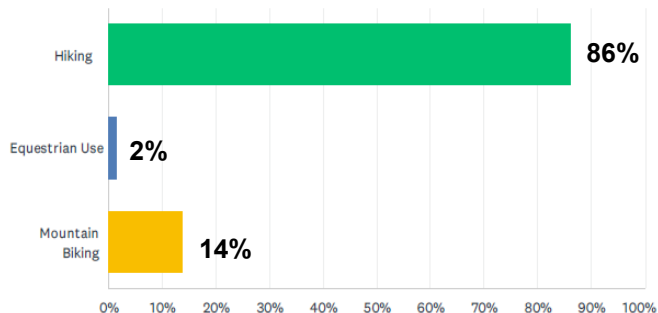


* Note: All percentages are rounded, therefore responses may not equal 100%

Survey Feedback

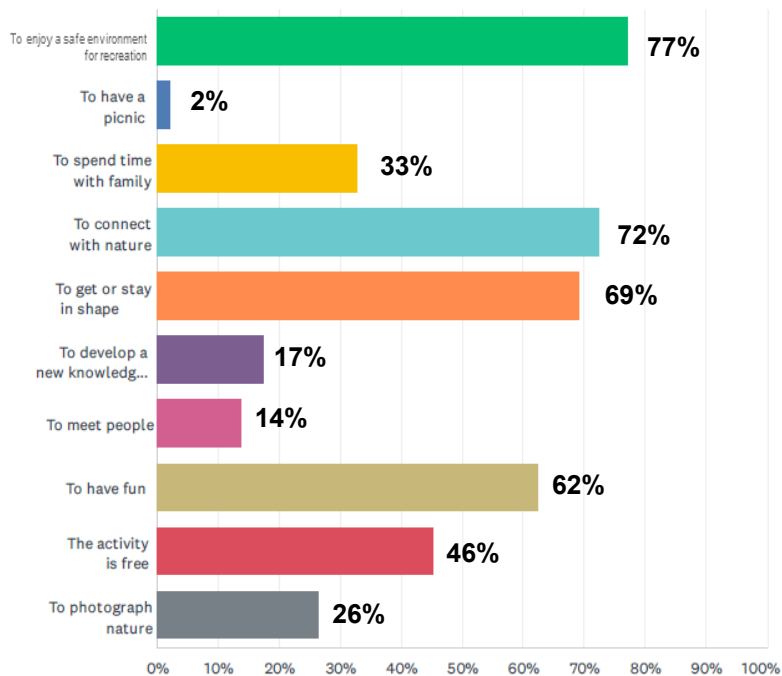
Please tell us the type of activity in which you engaged on the trail.

Answered: 188 Skipped: 1



Please share with us your general motivation(s) for visiting Gypsum Canyon Wilderness (check all that apply):

Answered: 189 Skipped: 0

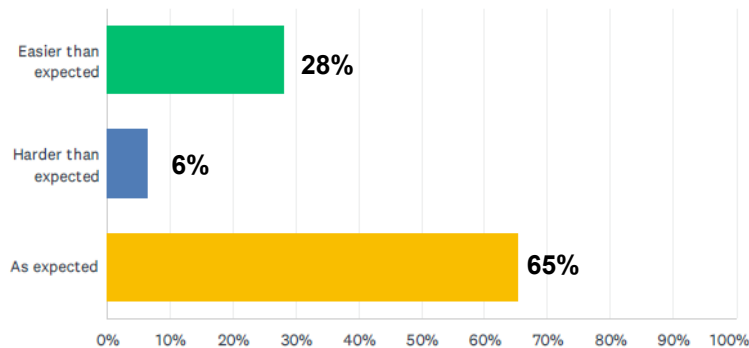


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Survey Feedback

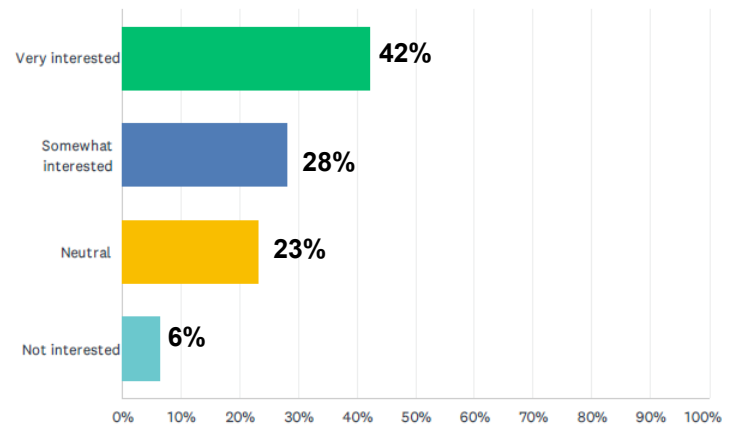
Did you find the trail categories (easy, medium) to be accurate?

Answered: 185 Skipped: 4



Please rate your level of interest in having user-group specific (example: mountain biking only, hiking only) self-guided access opportunities offered:

Answered: 185 Skipped: 4

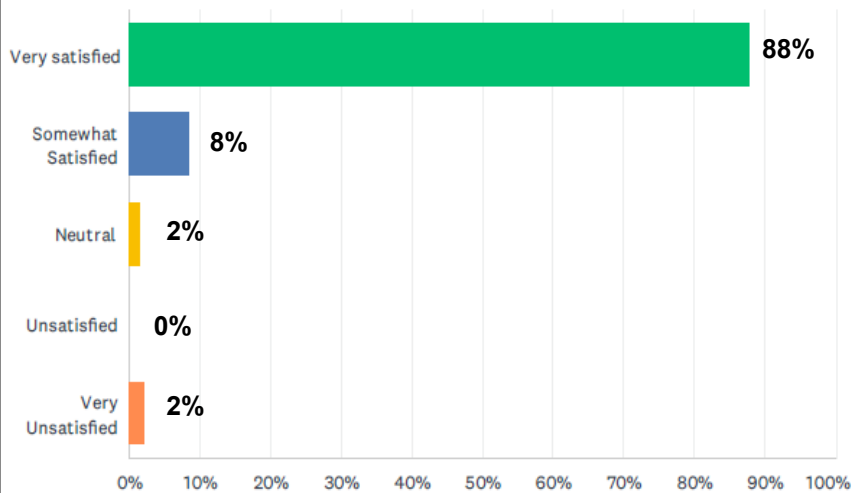


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Survey Feedback

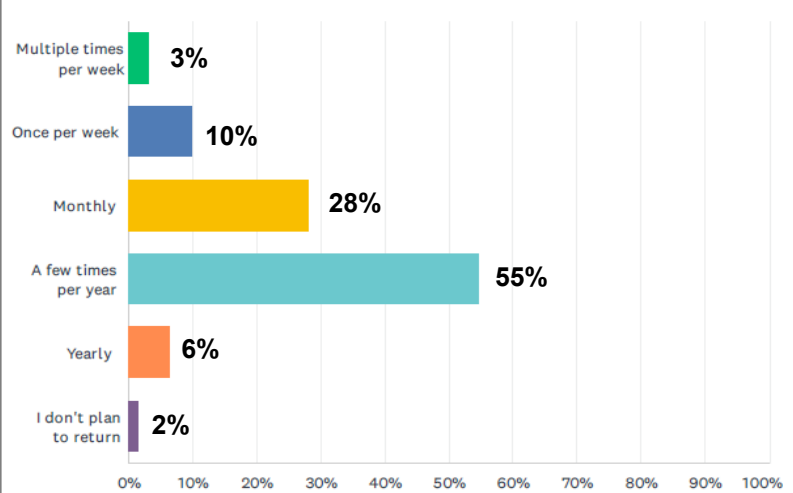
Please rate your experience:

Answered: 189 Skipped: 0



After this visit, how often do you plan to visit Gypsum Canyon Wilderness in the future?

Answered: 188 Skipped: 1



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Looking Ahead

- Trail naming
- Continued improvements
 - Interpretive panels
 - Bench at overlook
 - Habitat restoration



Questions?

