

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

(Action Items Displayed in Italics)

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Pam Passow.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Jesse Brossa commented on trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail and asked that more trails be opened.

John Sindelar commented on trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail and asked that more trails be opened.

Katie Brossa commented on trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail.

Dave Stefanides commented on trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail.

Marta Hatter commented on the impacts of trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail.

Eric Pond commented on the impacts of trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail and the benefits of having those trails open.

Katia Linstrom commented on the positive benefits of hiking and the impacts of trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail.

Grace Brossa commented on the impacts of trail closures near Bell View Regional Trail.

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 MAY 1, 2025 MEETING

Motion: Commissioner Jones

2nd: Commissioner Diaz

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THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

Approved 5–0–1 (Commissioner Gabbard abstained)

V. DISCUSSION CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A–B)

A. RANGER ACADEMY 10 TRAINING PRESENTATION

Staff will provide a presentation that details the recruitment and training process for Park Rangers.

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

Eric Rubery, OC Parks Operations Support Manager, presented on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file.

Motion: Commissioner Gabbard

2nd: Commissioner Bui

Approved 6–0

B. OC PARKS FISCAL YEAR 2025–2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Staff will provide a presentation on the budget for the upcoming 2025–2026 fiscal year.

Mylinh Tu, OC Parks Budget Analyst, presented on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.

Pam Passow, OC Parks Director, presented on the item and answered the Commissioners' questions.

Michael Wilson, OC Parks Deputy Director, answered the Commissioners' questions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file.

Motion: Commissioner Diaz

2nd: Commissioner Gabbard

Approved 6–0

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

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

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THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.

A. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

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

B. UPCOMING OC PARKS EVENTS

OC Parks Sunset Cinema Series – Carbon Canyon and Craig Regional Parks – June 6, 13, 20, and 27, 6 – 10 p.m.

- Friday, June 6 features *Despicable Me 4* (PG, 2024) at Carbon Canyon Regional Park.
- Friday, June 13 features *Charlie's Angels* (PG-13, 2000) at Carbon Canyon Regional Park.
- Friday, June 20 features *Inside Out 2* (PG, 2024) at Craig Regional Park.
- Friday, June 27 features *Hercules* (G, 1997) at Craig Regional Park.

Summer Citrus Festival at Key Ranch – George Key Ranch Historic Park – June 14, 10 – 2 p.m.

- Join OC Parks and OC Historical Commission for Summer Citrus Festival at George Key Ranch Historic Park! Activities and performances include hands-on craft activities for kids, local educational partners and exhibitors, live music performances by The Orange Town Revival, demonstrations by the Master Food Preservers of OC, and docent led tours of the Key Ranch home.

OC Parks Summer Concert Series – Mile Square Regional Park – June 19, 26, 5 – 8 p.m.

- Thursday, June 19 features Ozomotli with an opening performance by Adelaide Pilar.
- Thursday, June 26 features Doin' Time with an opening performance by Juno Rada.

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 7:10 p.m.

ORANGE COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

FROM: Pam Passow, Executive Officer, OC Parks

DATE: August 7, 2025

SUBJECT: OC Parks Trails: Balancing Recreation and Conservation

At the June 5, 2025 OC Parks Commission (Commission) meeting, members of the public commented during the Public Participation portion of the agenda regarding recent closures of unauthorized trails in the area of Caspers Wilderness Park adjacent to the Robinson Ranch community. In response to the public comments, the Commission requested that OC Parks staff report back to the Commission to provide context for the trail closures.

Staff have prepared a presentation outlining the history and development of the OC Parks trail system, challenges posed by unauthorized trails, and information regarding the recent response to unauthorized trails in Caspers Wilderness Park.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Refer trail decommissioning guidelines to the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee for review and feedback.



Pam Passow

Attachment A – Presentation

OC Parks Trails: Balancing Recreation and Conservation

OC Parks Commission | August 7, 2025

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW



Trail sign in Caspers Wilderness Park

1. OC PARKS TRAIL SYSTEM HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT
2. UNAUTHORIZED TRAILS
3. RECENT UNAUTHORIZED TRAIL RESPONSE

OC Parks Trail System History and Development



Overview of OC Parks Trail System



Trail runners at Peters Canyon Regional Park

- OC Parks currently manages approximately:
 - 200 miles of Regional Trails
 - 300 miles of natural surface trails
- Parks with significant trail networks include:
 - Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park
 - Laguna Coast Wilderness Park
 - O'Neill Regional Park
 - Peters Canyon Regional Park
 - Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park
 - Santiago Oaks Regional Park
 - Thomas F. Riley Wilderness Park
 - Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park
 - Irvine Ranch Open Space

Trail System Establishment



Mountain bikers in Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park in the 1990s

Photo credit: Randy Vogel and Larry Kuechlin, Mountain Biking Orange County, California (1996)

- Most parks with extensive trail networks were deeded to OC Parks between the 1960s and the 1990s
- Network consists of ranch roads and preexisting mountain bike routes
- Many of these routes were adopted into official trail system
- Some trails were constructed after acquisition

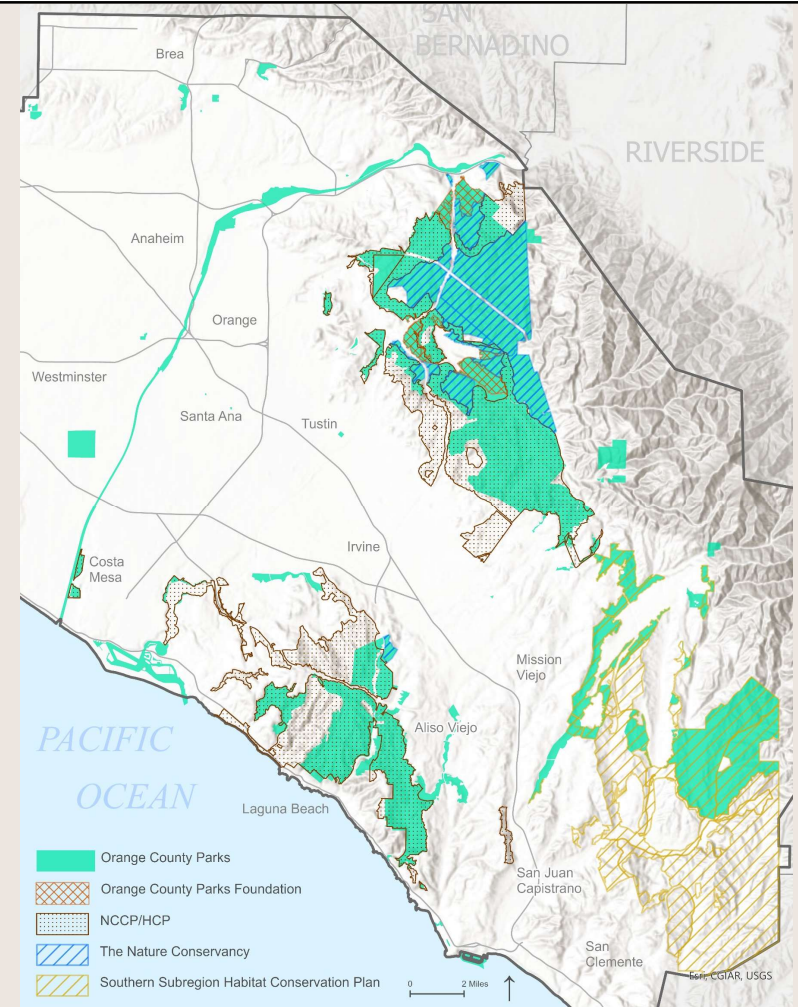
Master Plans

- Many parks are guided by Master Plans, often called GDPs & RMPs ; serve to define uses & infrastructure
- Trail systems are outlined in the plans
- Developed with public input, stakeholder feedback, and regulatory review
- Approved by Board of Supervisors



Plans and Easements

- Most OC Parks facilities are required to follow conditions established by conservation plans or easements including:
 - Orange County Parks Foundation Easements (OCPF)
 - The Nature Conservancy Easements (TNC)
 - Central and Coastal Orange County Natural Community Conservation Plan/ Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP)
 - Southern Subregion Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP)
- Each plan or easement allows either only a limited amount of habitat impact, beyond which no further disturbance is permitted or no impact entirely



Recent Trail Development

- A new Master Plan for Peters Canyon Regional Park with public input.
 - Two major reroutes
 - A new connector trail
- Recent additions of open space wilderness areas have led to new trail systems:
 - Saddleback Wilderness (2023)
 - Gypsum Canyon Wilderness (2023)
 - Red Rock Wilderness (2024)
- Together these additions contribute to 17 miles of new trails



Guided hike in Red Rock Wilderness

Unauthorized Trails



Unauthorized Trails

- Unauthorized trails exist within OC Parks facilities
- Inclusion of any new trails requires OC Parks to consider a variety of factors



Unauthorized trails often incorporate **unnatural materials**; in this case, over 350 synthetic sandbags



At a glance, some **unauthorized trails** resemble **official trails**

Trail Design and Maintenance

- Unauthorized trails often lack sustainable design, causing erosion and channelization ultimately leading to a loss of vegetation
- Erosion-prone trails contribute sediment to runoff, impacting aquatic habitats downstream
- Many existing trails already require heavy maintenance; poorly built unauthorized trails add to the burden



Poorly designed trails concentrate runoff, resulting in **channelization** and **widening**

Environmental Considerations

Trail creation:

- Removes native plants
- Creates a vector for invasive plants
- Fragments habitat
- Risks disturbing protected species
- Unauthorized trail maintenance rarely follows best practice



Intact **coastal sage scrub** habitat



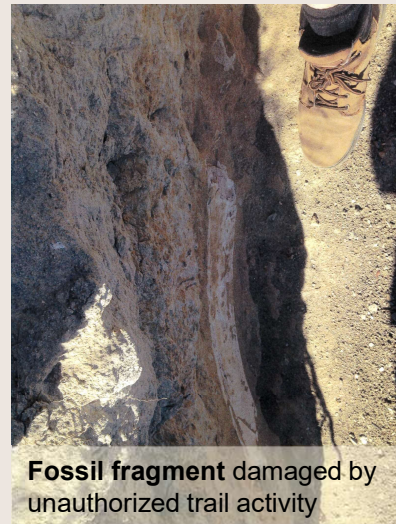
The **coast horned lizard** is listed by California as a Species of Special Concern

Cultural and Paleontological

- Impacts to archaeological and cultural heritage sites
- Disturbance of paleontological resources



Fossil impression of a bivalve



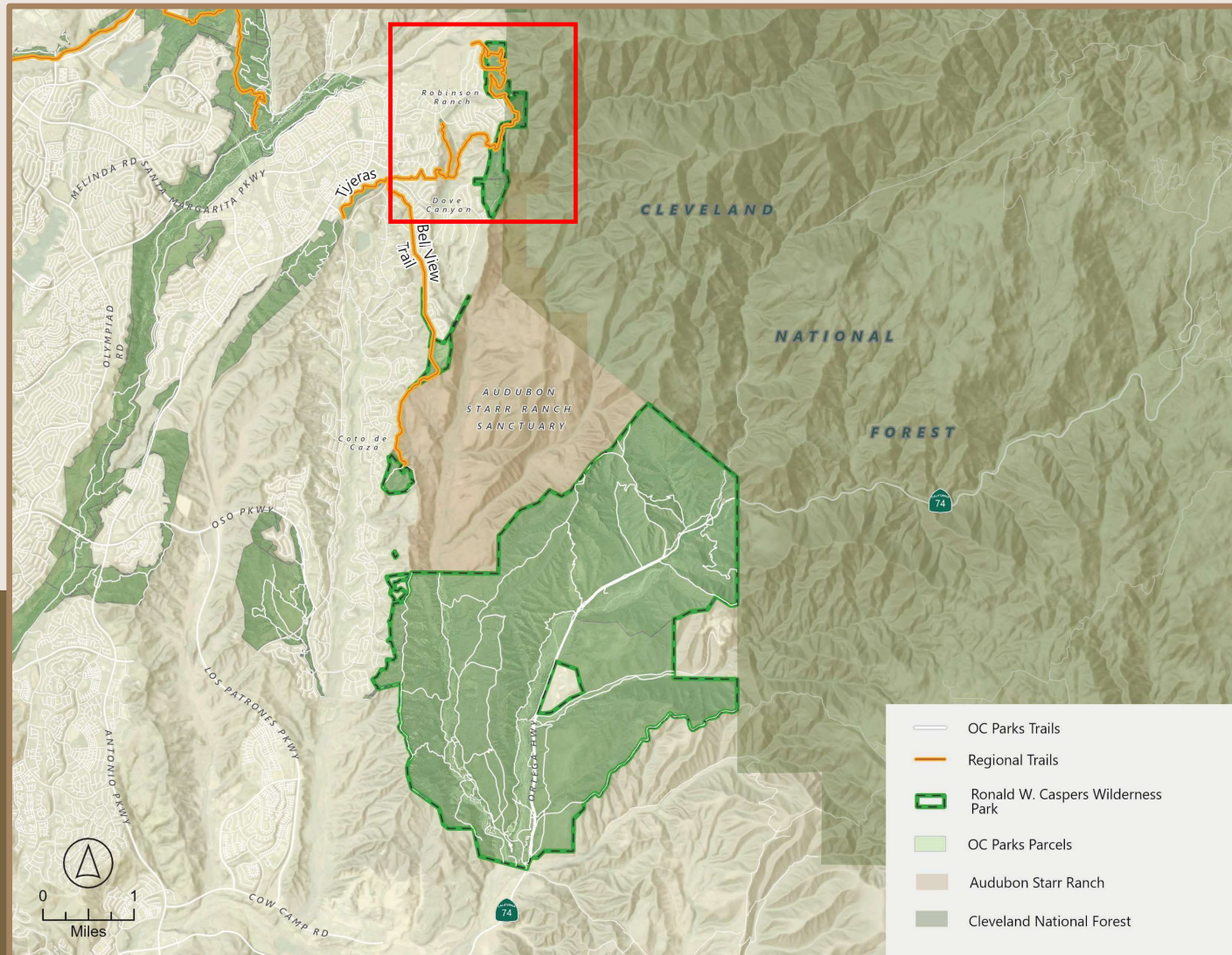
Fossil fragment damaged by unauthorized trail activity

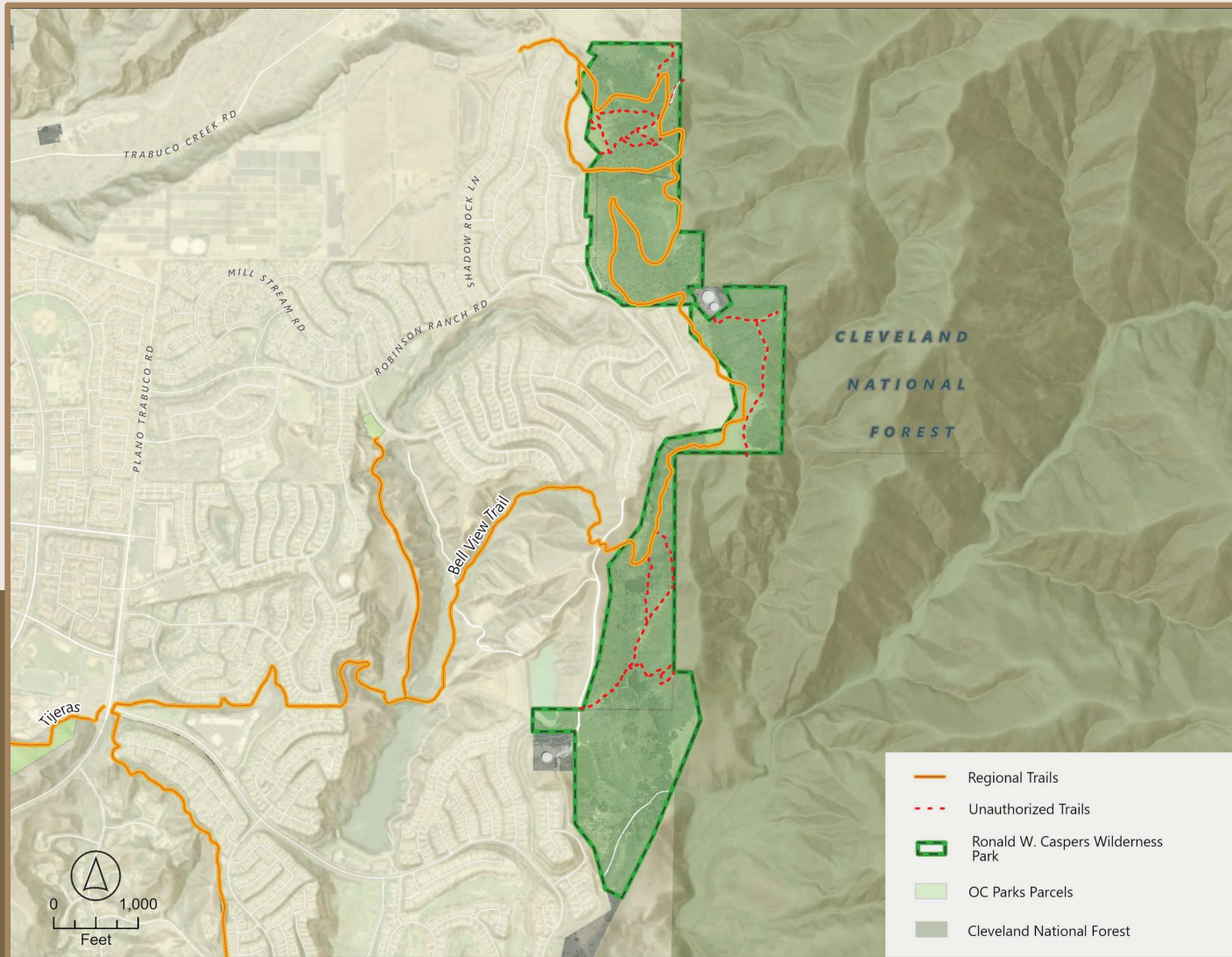


Park staff confiscating tools used to excavate an unauthorized trail

Recent Unauthorized Trail Response

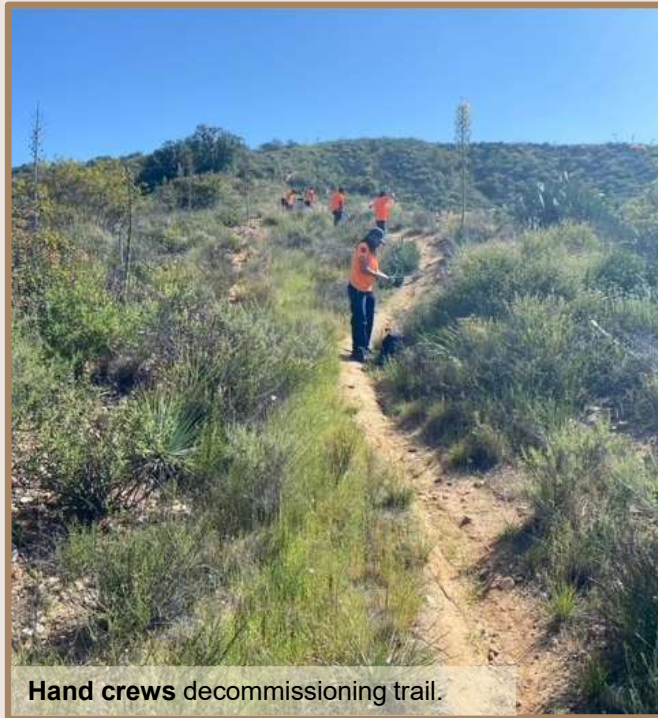








**A deteriorating oil drum
repurposed as a jump**



Hand crews decommissioning trail.



Informational signage posted.

A person wearing a red shirt and dark shorts is riding a bicycle on a dirt trail. The trail is surrounded by large trees with thick canopies, creating a shaded environment. The ground is covered with dry leaves and dirt.

Recommended Action:

Refer trail decommissioning guidelines to the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee for review and feedback.



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OC Parks Tree Management

OC Parks Commission | August 7, 2025

Who is OC Parks' Arborist?

➤ Kyle Sato

- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Board Certified Master Arborist
- ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
- B.S. in Forestry & Natural Resources
Minor in Geographic Information Systems (GIS)



TRAQ CERTIFIED

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

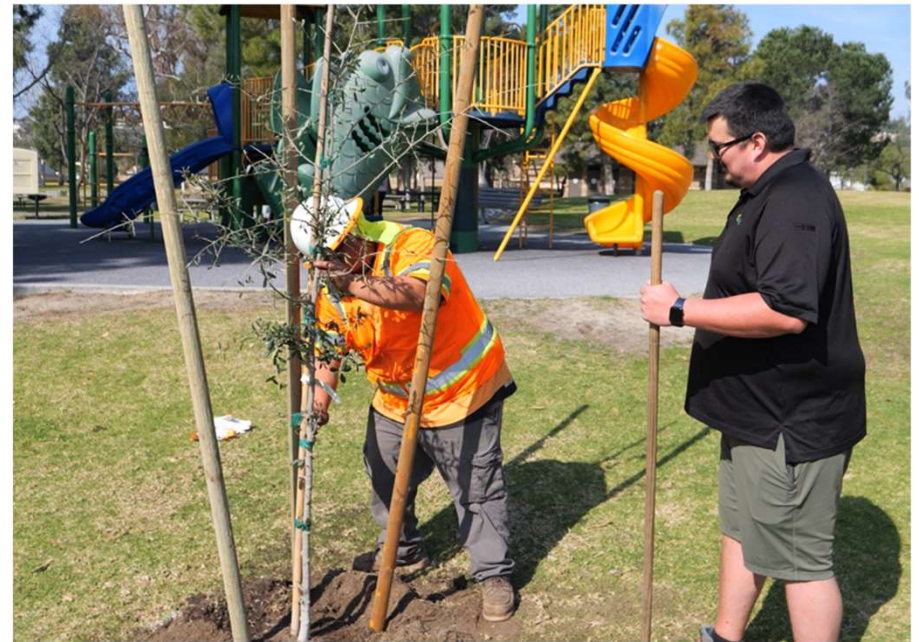
OC Parks Tree Management

OC Parks Commission
August 7, 2025



Role Overview

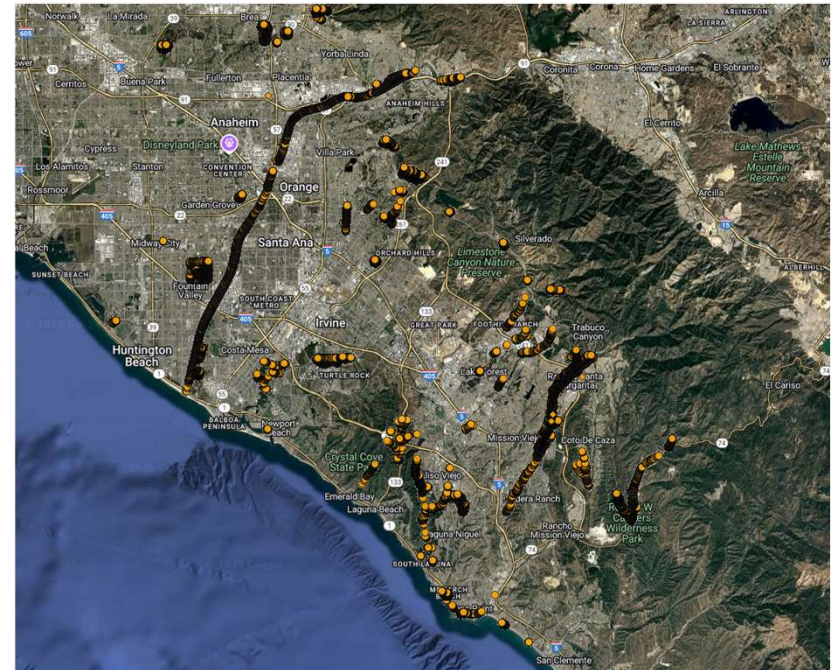
- Oversees trees within OC Parks
- Provides expert consultation for projects
- Manages the Tree Maintenance Contract
- PLANTS TREES!



Trees in OC Parks – At a Glance

- 47,973 trees inventoried

| Species | Common Name | Count | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------|------------|
| <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> | COAST LIVE OAK | 15,606 | 33% |
| <i>Platanus racemosa</i> | CALIFORNIA SYCAMORE | 7,377 | 15% |
| <i>Pinus halepensis</i> | ALEPPO PINE | 2,018 | 4% |
| <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> | RED GUM | 1,506 | 3% |
| <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> | ARROYO WILLOW | 1,436 | 3% |
| <i>Schinus molle</i> | CALIFORNIA PEPPER | 1,093 | 2% |
| <i>Pinus canariensis</i> | CANARY ISLAND PINE | 1,073 | 2% |
| <i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i> | SUGAR GUM | 1,027 | 2% |
| <i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i> | RED IRONBARK | 977 | 2% |
| <i>Populus fremontii</i> | FREMONT COTTONWOOD | 911 | 2% |
| | OTHER | 14,949 | 31% |



Tree Planting Highlights

- Over 1,000 trees planted in the past four years across OC Parks
- Focus on increasing species diversity in regional parks



Tree Pruning Practices

- Trees are pruned in accordance with ISA Best Management Practices
- Most regional park trees follow a 3-year trimming cycle
- Trees in wilderness parks are not routinely pruned to maintain natural growth and habitat value



Tree Pest Challenges & Partnerships

- Invasive Shothole Borer
 - Gold Spotted Oak Borer
 - Asian Citrus Psyllid
 - Ghost Canker
- We partner with University of California Cooperative Extension to develop and implement best management strategies to monitor, manage, and mitigate these invasive pests



THANK YOU!

