

Live Oak Trails Pilot Program

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to Jon

Thank you for your comments regarding the multi-use trail pilot program for the trails at Live Oak. County Parks has received a few messages from concerned members of the equestrian community and would like to share some background on the pilot program for expanded access to the trails at Live Oak.

Over the next year and a half, Santa Barbara County Parks is planning to introduce hiking, then explore biking on the Live Oak trails as part of an effort to expand recreational opportunities countywide. Expanding uses will be incremental to ensure all concerns are heard and there is time to address interactions of users. This pilot program meets the intent of the Cachuma Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. This is the basis for the County's management of Cachuma Recreation Area, including Live Oak, on behalf of the US Bureau of Reclamation. The plan specifically identifies permitting 'hiking and biking' on the Live Oak trails in its preferred alternative. This is also the standard for trails throughout Santa Barbara County.

Throughout this pilot programs effort, Parks staff intends to evaluate the needs of the various trail groups, make improvements to the Live Oak trail system for all users, establish clear rules for trail use, and to identify opportunities for unique trail experiences. This may include trail segments for specific user groups and looking for locations suitable for future trail network expansion. The purpose of approaching this effort as a pilot program is to allow for public feedback and to allow Parks the opportunity to the make adjustments.

Parks staff is aware of the concern about conflicts between different trail user groups. The terrain around the Live Oak area is generally open with few steep areas and long established routes along existing ranch roads where these types of conflicts can be minimized or eliminated with good trail management and user compliance.

For this effort to be successful your input will be invaluable. We encourage you to continue to share your experiences at the Live Oak trails with our staff through this dedicated email address. Trails@sbparks.org.

I will be out of the office from 12/24 through 1/5 and checking my email periodically.