

MEMORANDUM

Date: Wednesday, January 27th, 2021

To: Katie Lozano, Senior Administrative Analyst
Dan Trautner, Deputy Director of Recreation and Parks
Cory Linder, Director of Recreation and Parks

From: Norma Saldaña, Recreation Supervisor

Subject: Park Ranger Enforcement Report: 4th Quarter 2020

PRESERVE VISITOR CONTACTS SUMMARY

- October 1st 2020 – December 31st 2020
 - 4 Rangers* patrolled the Preserve during this period
- *Approximately 130 hours per week.

This reporting period continued to be atypical as operations continued to be strongly influenced by public health mandates from the State and L.A. County regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic and increased use of the Preserve, including more new visitors less familiar with outdoor and hiking safety and trail etiquette.

Welcome Park Ranger Acero!



In October 2020, The Recreation and Parks Department welcomed our 4th Park Ranger, Rosario Acero, to the Open Space Management (OSM) team. Ranger Acero has enforcement and public safety background from her employment with the Torrance Police Department and the City of Commerce lifeguard program. She also has a passion for public service and natural resource management, and we are excited about the talents she brings to the City's Open Space Management team!

Operations under COVID-19 LA County Health Department Regulations

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, group size in the Preserve was limited to no more than 10. Rangers educated patrons about social distancing, facial coverings, and other restrictions as mandated by the L.A. County Department of Public Health. During routine patrols, Rangers saw approximately 70% compliance with mask and social distancing mandates. Reports for compliance from the public were significantly lower than those observed by Rangers.

Trainings and Coordination:

The Open Space Management Division participates in the L.A. County-wide Trails Task Force, which is a group of open space managers throughout L.A. County that coordinate management best practices, including implementation and enforcement of Pandemic-related County Health Orders. Staff attended the October meeting at which the Task Force discussed topics including visitation levels, additional trail re-openings, and public communication and messaging enhancements.

The Open Space Management Division collaborates with the Los Angeles Marine Protected Areas Collaborative Team as well as the Department of Fish and Wildlife Game Wardens to educate visitors about Abalone Cove and Point Vicente State Marine Conservation Area. Staff collects data daily and submits this data on a weekly basis to our partners. Training has been postponed due to COVID-19.

Rattlesnake Safety Workshop: Staff received rattlesnake safety training from Dr. Emily Taylor of Central Coast Snake Services in October. Staff learned about snake identification, mating behaviors, and received hands-on training to be able to safely relocate rattlesnakes. The City will be offering additional information on rattlesnake safety for the public online and exploring options for community trainings in early 2021.

Water Rescue and Cave Training: On October 27th, Rancho Palos Verdes Park Rangers and L.A. County Fire Department firefighters and lifeguards met for training at Abalone Cove. The training included rock entries/exits, and personnel swam inside the sea caves simulating actual gorge rescues. Multi-agency efforts were made so that land-based resources and water-based resources can better coordinate their efforts while reducing risk for personnel.



In case of an emergency, the public should call 911 and know their specific location to share with dispatchers.

Project Coordination

OSM staff help coordinate multiple projects within the Preserve to ensure Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) compliance with PVPLC, to implement trail closures and public safety measures, and to provide public notification. Below are a list of projects OSM staff helped coordinate with PVPLC, the Public Works Department, and public utilities in the 4th quarter.

- Southern California Edison (SCE) infrastructure maintenance (9/25-10/6 at Portuguese Bend Reserve)
- Public Works Dept. Coastal Blufftop Fence Replacement Project (Aug. – Jan. at Vicente Bluffs Reserve)
- LARICS infrastructure installation (October -12/13 at Vista Del Norte)
- California Water Company Vanderlip Trail Repairs (11/3-1/7 at Portuguese Bend Reserve)
- Public Works Dept. Burma Gate Installation (11/9-11/16 at Portuguese Bend Reserve)
- SCE infrastructure maintenance (11/17-11/20 at Portuguese Bend Reserve)
- SCE infrastructure replacement (12/1-12/30 at Portuguese Bend Reserve)
- SCE infrastructure removal (12/1-ongoing at Portuguese Bend Reserve)
- SCE infrastructure maintenance (12/18-12/21 at Portuguese Bend Reserve)

OVERALL VISITOR CONTACTS:

Total Contacts: 6,480

Hikers: 5,582

Dog Walkers: 459

Cyclists: 422

Equestrians: 17

Warnings: 269

Calls for Assistance:

Heat exhaustion & heat stress: 12

Other (i.e. underlying condition, sprained ankle): 3

Preserve Information and Reporting Hotline Calls: 29 calls

COVID-19 related (including masks, social distancing, one-way signage): 2

Vandalism: 1

Paragliding: 3

Parking Issues: 1

Trail Status and General Information: 5

Removal of flora/fauna: 2

Littering: 1

Dog on the beach: 7

Fishing / Poaching: 2

Other Violations (not Preserve-related): 5

ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY:

Notice of Parking Citations Issued: 595 Total

By Violation:

Posted Temporary No Parking / Fire Lane – 36
Passenger Loading Zone - 255
Park by Permit – 198
Handicap Zone – 11
Parking Lot / Preserve / Park Hours: 95

By Location:

Abalone Cove Reserve – 63
Alta Vicente Reserve - 2
Crenshaw Boulevard (Portuguese Bend / Filiorum adjacent) – 301
Del Cerro Park – 183
Forrestal Reserve - 5
Ocean Trails Reserve – 1
San Ramon Reserve - 1
Vicente Bluffs Reserve – 19
City of RPV Parks – 20

Notice to Appear Citations Issued: 32 Total

Number of violations is greater than the number of citations issued

By Violation:

Closed Area – 23
Dogs off Leash – 4
Animals on the Beach – 2
Paragliding (Misdemeanor) – 2
Park Hours - 2

By Location:

Abalone Cove Reserve – 12
Forrestal Reserve – 1
Ocean Trails Reserve – 7
Portuguese Bend Reserve – 4
Vicente Bluffs Reserve – 7

City of RPV Parks - 1

ACTIVITY REPORT BY RESERVE:

The next section provides further information on projects, reports, and observations received by Rangers from the public, organized per Reserve. Numbers do not reflect actual number of individuals in the Reserve, rather those spoken to while on foot and/or vehicle patrols.

Abalone Cove Reserve:

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	803	184	116	74
Dog walkers	35	24	23	1
Cyclists	14	2	2	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

On Sunday, November 15, a patron reported finding human remains on Abalone Cove Beach. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies were called and after close examination, confirmed they were not human, but were marine mammal.

A patron called the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department regarding a possible suicidal person on Portuguese Point Loop Trail. Deputies responded and escorted the individual out.

On weekends, holidays, and during low-tide events, staff continued to observe high traffic in the City's two State Marine Conservation Areas, primarily, at Abalone Cove SMCA. Staff continued to educate patrons about Marine Protected Areas (MPA), and shared proper tide pool etiquette for safely viewing but not disturbing marine organisms. During this reporting period, a total of 62 violations were observed, and 111 individuals were contacted and educated by staff, resulting in the return of 92 marine organisms, and an additional 21 violations prevented by providing information and alternative locations where individuals can legally take outside of the MPA zone with a fishing license.

Collection of animals in containers (as seen on the right) even with the intent to return is not allowed in the MPA zones. Containers, including buckets, tubs, and plastic bottles of water are frequently used to collect water and wildlife to observe closely. They are confiscated by staff, and all animals are returned safely to their respective habitats.



Additionally, staff continues to collaborate, and communicate with local agencies, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Los Angeles Waterkeeper, and Los Angeles Marine Protected Areas Collaborative Team.

Aqua Amarga Reserve

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	41	4	3	0
Dog walkers	2	0	0	0
Cyclists	6	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers received multiple past reports of an aggressive dog on the trails. One reporting party indicated their dog was bit and wounded. The party was advised to notify Animal Control and consult with their local veterinarian to report and assess the dogs' injuries. Rangers continue to monitor the area and have been unable to locate the dog or owner.

Alta Vicente Reserve

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	30	6	3	2
Dog walkers	12	2	2	0
Cyclists	1	1	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers received several reports of a potential homeless man in the area verbally threatening hikers in the Alta Vicente Reserve trails. Rangers were unable to locate the man, or any evidence of an illegal encampment. Rangers continue to monitor the area.

Staff has also observed increased use at Alta Vicente Reserve and Upper Point Vicente Park/Civic Center. Violations of dogs off-leash and off-trail use are being observed and addressed. Rangers have additionally received reports of increased dog waste on trails.

Filiorum Reserve

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	123	31	9	0
Dog walkers	10	1	2	0
Cyclists	6	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

On October 3rd, staff observed a paraglider fly and land in the Reserve at approximately 3 pm. It is unclear where the paraglider took off from.

Evidence of illegal harvesting of prickly pear cactus was found in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, adjacent to the Filiorum Reserve.

Forrestal Reserve

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	176	13	11	6
Dog walkers	48	4	5	0
Cyclists	26	0	2	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers received reports of individuals with their dogs off leash. No additional activity reported / observed during this period.

Ocean Trails Reserve

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	388	20	3	4
Dog walkers	61	16	18	3
Cyclists	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers have received calls of increased dog use at Rancho Palos Verdes Beach. Animals are not allowed on any beach in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. Animal fecal matter and urine can cause health risks for humans and affect water quality. Dogs are allowed on the trails, as long as they are on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length. The City is working with Trump National Staff to ensure adequate signage is in place to educate and enforce the City's Municipal Code.



Staff continued to receive reports of individuals in closed areas. Some of these individuals are hiking off trail, and some are individuals illegally paragliding, including launching from and land on City property. When possible, staff educated and informed individuals of habitat loss, compaction, and damage to sensitive species, including the island green dudleya that are found in the area. The City reinforced signage, barricades, and increased patrols to inform, and deter off-trail use.



Portuguese Bend Reserve

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	3,498	175	29	3
Dog walkers	253	10	15	1
Cyclists	315	10	2	0
Equestrian	17	2	0	0

Staff approached a patron with an off-leash cat in the Reserve. The man was hiking with his cat and indicated that the cat was startled due to high traffic on Burma Road trail, causing the cat to hide behind nearby brush.

On Thursday, October 8th, Cal Water alerted residents in the Portuguese Bend Community about a main break. Vanderlip trail remained closed throughout the weekend. Rangers closed off Vanderlip, Kubota, and a section of Gary's Gulch Trail while crews worked to bring in dirt, and repair damages. Rangers received several reports of patrons accessing these trails during the closure increasing safety concerns for the public.



On Monday, November 9th, construction began for the installation of the new entry gate at the Burma Rd. trailhead. The trails remained open, however, OSM staff were present to provide information to the public and recommend alternatives to access the Portuguese Bend Reserve during construction. The gate is programmed to lock at sunset, and unlock at 7:00 a.m. every day. When trail closures are in effect, the gate will remain locked. Rangers have increased patrols during the night to ensure the gate is in working condition and patrons are informed of the Preserve hours.

Old Burma Gate



New Burma Gate (Installed November 2020)



“Residential Quiet Zone” signs located at the top of Burma Road trail were vandalized and spray painted with gray colored paint, bent, or removed from their post on several occasions. OSM repaired and replaced signs on a weekly basis, with over 8 counts of vandalism on each sign (24 total). No information is known about the individual(s).

San Ramon Reserve

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	9	2	3	1
Dog walkers	0	0	0	0
Cyclists	48	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Staff has reported at least 2 counts of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes locks cut on both the bottom and top of Wanderer Trail. Rangers continue to monitor activity in the Reserve, including unauthorized vehicle access, and replace locks as needed.

On November 25, Rangers made contact with a male who was harvesting cacti fruit from the native Prickly Pear cacti growing along Palos Verdes Drive East within Reserve boundaries. The individuals returned the fruit to Rangers.

The illegal structure reported to Rangers during in September was dismantled. The structure included several repurposed logs, pipes, and plywood held together by nails, and rope. With the support of OSM, staff was able to haul out all material from the area.

Before



After

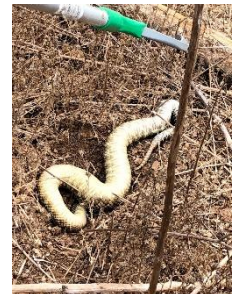


Three Sisters Reserve

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	50	0	0	0
Dog walkers	3	1	1	0
Cyclists	3	1	1	0
Equestrian		0	0	0

Residents reported hearing and seeing increased coyote activity at dusk along the lower trails. One such incident included a sighting of a coyote pack within 20 feet of a hiker. Coyotes do reside in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. Any coyote sightings should be reported to the City's Code Enforcement Division online from your mobile device or desktop.

Additionally, Rangers received a report of a deceased snake adjacent to Three Sisters Trail. It was unclear how the snake had died, but the reporting party indicated it may have died from blunt force trauma inflicted by a group of hikers that they had encountered on the trail. The rattlesnake was found with its head buried 4 inches into the ground and had no other injuries.



Vicente Bluffs Reserve

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	464	48	17	26
Dog walkers	35	6	2	0
Cyclists	3	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

The Bluff Top Fence Replacement Project began in August 2020, and continued through the fourth quarter. The project included temporary closure of trails, and one-way

trails when paths were not wide enough to allow for two-way traffic. As a result of this project, temporary chain link fence was placed, and several concrete shortages stalled the work of the project. Staff saw a decreased in the amount of unauthorized trail use. Upon completion of the fence, staff installed “Do Not Climb Over the Fence” signs to educate and remind visitors of safety hazards/environmental sensitivity on the cliff edge. Staff also stenciled numbers to mark the locations of posts along the Seascapes and Golden Cove trail. These numbers can be used to report maintenance issues and or emergencies with greater precision for location.



On November 7, 2020, staff reported damage to the City’s monument sign located at Terrace Trailhead. It is unknown when or what caused the damage.

Vista del Norte Reserve

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	0	0	0	0
Dog walkers	0	0	0	0
Cyclists	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

The Reserve monument sign located on the upper section of Vista del Norte Trail was damaged in August 2020. Rangers are working with the responsible party for signage replacement.

City Parks:

Rangers educated patrons in City Parks regarding the City’s Municipal Code, including use of drones, dogs off-leash, and park hours.