

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** Monday, July 13, 2020

**To:** Katie Lozano, Senior Administrative Analyst/Open Space Manager

**From:** Senior Ranger Saldaña

**SUBJECT:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter City of Rancho Palos Verdes Ranger Enforcement Report

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### **PRESERVE VISITOR CONTACTS SUMMARY**

- April 01, 2020- June 30, 2020
- 4 Rangers\* patrolled the Preserve during this period

\*Approximately 130 hours per week.

This reporting period was an atypical quarter as operations were largely driven by public health mandates from the State and LA County regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic and also public safety needs related to public demonstrations near Preserve properties. Ranger and OSM Staff adjusted continuously to carry out and respond to operational needs during this time.

### **Operations Under Covid-19 LA County Health Department Regulations**

Due to the COVID-19 response measures mandated by the Governor of the State of California and the Los Angeles County Public Health Department, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes closed its parks, open space areas and beaches March 19, 2020. The Palos Verdes Nature Preserve opened in some capacity on May 13<sup>th</sup>, with phased openings to allow staff to conduct public safety inspections of the Preserve and trail maintenance prior to full trails reopening. During the closure period, many trails had substantial overgrowth and were unpassable. As of July 10<sup>th</sup>, all Preserve closures associated with the COVID-19 closures were lifted. For approximately half of this reporting period, the majority of Rangers and the City's Open Space Management (OSM) staff time was dedicated to keeping the Preserve closed to comply with state and county orders.

The City reopened the Preserve and beaches in some capacity on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Rangers and OSM staff, in coordination with PVPLC staff actively coordinated this reopening. Rangers and OSM staff spent the first two weeks post-reopening proactively educating visitors at trailheads on LA County Health mandates regarding trail use, including social distancing, use of face coverings, and group size. Rangers also responded to many calls for service and reports of patrons in non-compliance with these mandates. During patrols, Rangers observed approximately 60% compliance, which was consistent with trail manager observations across LA County. Reports for compliance from the public was significantly lower than those observed by Rangers.

Rangers and OSM staff sit on the Los Angeles County Task Force, which is lead by Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation in close coordination with the Los

Angeles County Health Department. Other task force members include the National and State Park Services, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and trail management agencies throughout Los Angeles County including Malibu, Los Angeles City and many more. The goals of this Task Force are to disseminate LA County Health Department orders to trail managers county-wide, trail manager coordination and cooperative efforts, and for trail managers to share what management practices and public education efforts are most successful, and what challenges experienced.

### **Demonstrations**

Rangers assisted LA County Sheriff's Department during public demonstrations staged near the Ocean Trails Reserve, Forrestal Reserve, and Alta Vicente Reserve on June 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **OVERALL VISITOR CONTACTS:**

#### **Total Contacts: 6151**

Hikers: 5,441

Dog Walkers: 520

Cyclists: 164

Equestrians: 26

#### **Preserve Information and Reporting Line Calls: 51**

COVID-19 Related (including masks, social distancing, one-way signage): 15

Use of Spur Trail: 11

Vandalism: 2

Paragliding: 2

Maintenance: 5

Parking Issues: 2

Trail Status and General Information: 9

Off-Leash Dog: 1

Fishing / Poaching: 4

### **ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY:**

#### **Notice of Parking Citations Issued: 448 Total**

##### By Violation:

Failure to Obey Signs – 160

Posted Temporary No Parking / Fire Lane - 11

Park by Permit – 245

Handicap Zone – 29

Other - 3

##### By Location:

Abalone Cove Reserve – 184

Alta Vicente Reserve - 1

Crenshaw Boulevard (Portuguese Bend / Filiorum adjacent) – 11  
Del Cerro – 224  
Seacove Neighborhood – 17  
Seaview Neighborhood – 4  
Ocean Trails Reserve – 4  
Palos Verdes Drive South – 2  
Vicente Bluffs Reserve – 1

### **Notice to Appear Citations Issued: 65 Total**

#### By Violation:

Closed Area – 61  
Protection of Flora / Fauna – 2  
Dogs off Leash – 2

#### By Location:

Abalone Cove Reserve – 22  
Agua Amarga Reserve – 1  
Filiorum Reserve – 2  
Forrestal Reserve – 6  
Ocean Trails Reserve – 8  
Portuguese Bend Reserve – 1  
San Ramon Reserve – 1  
Vicente Bluffs Reserve – 18  
Miscellaneous Parks - 6

### **ACTIVITY REPORT BY RESERVE**

The next section provides information by reserve including ranger public use observations and public observations reported to rangers. Public contacts are the collective sum of the interactions between rangers and Preserve users. Education includes information given which is usually directional or interpretive. Warnings are instances in which a ranger corrected Preserve misuse through voluntary compliance, and enforcement refers to infraction citations or parking citations issued. Numbers do not reflect actual number of individuals in the Reserve, rather public contacts made by rangers to patrons while on foot and/or vehicle patrols.

Dogs off-leash and on the beach, as well as individuals off-trail or in closed areas continue to be common violations observed by Rangers and reported by the public in several Reserves. While not as common, Rangers also receive reports of smoking or BBQs/bonfires in unauthorized areas. Rangers continuously watch for and correct these violations.

### **Abalone Cove Reserve:**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	1,605	138	222	206
Dogs	106	48	1	0
Biker	10	2	2	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers educated and informed patrons of Reserve rules for various violations observed, including dogs off leash, dogs on the beach, entering closed area, and drones prohibited.

A large number of warnings issued were in regards to patrons observed at or near Gorge 1, and Gorge 2. To deter patrons from accessing these areas, that are closed due to falling rock potential, Rangers worked with the Public Works Department to install a 4 ft. by 3 ft. "area closed" sign. Rangers continued to educate and enforce, as necessary, patrons that proceeded into the closed area. See pictures below.



Rangers also responded to three separate reports of homeless individuals and/or homeless encampments in Abalone Cove.

Additionally, upon reopening of Abalone Cove Reserve, Park, and Beach, under the direction of County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, the parking lot remained at capacity, and closed due to full capacity an average of 10 times per weekend day. OSM staff, with Ranger and LA County Deputy assistance, spent significant resources on traffic control and parking lot management for traffic safety. Staff educated patrons on alternative beach access points, and deterred vehicles from parking illegally on Palos Verdes Drive South adjacent to Annie's Stand, and from dangerously blocking traffic on Palos Verdes Drive South while waiting for the parking lot to reopen after its numerous closures. To help resolve traffic issues, the Public Works Department painted the curb red in front of the parking lot turn-lane, where "no stopping" signage already exists, and OSM staff placed stanchions to block the turn-

lane during closure. Ranger Fox can be seen in the images below educating patrons about alternative parking locations to access beaches within the City.



Rangers responded to a report of a motorcyclist on Sacred Cove Beach. A violation of City Municipal Code 12.16.020 “No Motor Vehicles.” Rangers attempted to make contact with the individual, when he proceeded to thwart Rangers and drove up Sacred Cove View Trail, as other patrons were on the narrow trail. This made for dangerous and unsafe conditions for all. Rangers alerted the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department for assistance, but we were unable to locate the individual.

Rangers have observed, and had several reports from the public of poaching from the tidepools within the Marine Protected Area at Abalone Cove. This is a significant increase in poaching. Rangers and OSM staff are working closely with the Department of Fish and Wildlife Wardens and the Los Angeles Marine Protected Areas Collaborative Team (LAMPACT) to correct violations and to educate visitors about Abalone Cove’s no-take zone. Tools being engaged to correct this behavior are additional enforcement presence from Fish and Wildlife Wardens and the LAMPACT. Rangers are also working with these organizations on additional and more language inclusive signage with less text and clear images in the area.



Rangers have additionally received reports of individuals off trail, and continue to monitor for this unauthorized activity.

#### **Aqua Amarga Reserve**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	17	3	5	1
Dog	2	0	0	0
Biker	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

During this quarter, few patrons were observed during patrols at Agua Amarga Reserve. Most contacts were in regards to trail maintenance and fuel modification site visits. The goats were used in May and June for fuel modification. Residents had reported night use of Reserve at the beginning of the quarter, but no significant issues have arisen since the Reserve remained closed.

#### **Alta Vicente Reserve**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	35	2	5	1
Dog	5	0	0	0
Biker	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers educated drone operators at the helipad about Reserve closure related to COVID-19. No significant issues were observed or reported.

Rangers received reports and warned a patron who claimed she was a volunteer authorized to remove non-native vegetation along the southern section of the Reserve adjacent to Palos Verdes Drive South.

### **Filiorum Reserve**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	18	1	3	2
Dog	5	1	0	0
Biker	2	2	0	0
Equestrian	6	4	2	0

Rangers witnessed and warned a patron who released 6 mice near Filiorum Reserve. Mice had been captured from the patrons' home, and were being released onto adjacent open space. No other activity to report.

### **Forrestal Reserve**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	128	5	24	6
Dog	10	1	1	0
Biker	14	2	0	0
Equestrian	4	4	0	0

Forrestal Reserve reopened in May with one-way directional trails on Pirate, Flying Mane, and Quarry Trails. These one-way directional trails were later removed, as more trails within Forrestal and lower Portuguese Bend reopened, providing opportunity for greater dispersal/social distancing. Rangers advised one patron of drone use at the cul-de-sac of Forrestal Drive, and one patron for dog off-leash. All other verbal warnings were related to visitors in areas closed due to state and county orders.

### **Ocean Trails Reserve**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	199	16	15	11
Dog	11	1	1	1
Biker	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Multiple calls were received regarding dogs off leash and dogs in the beach at Ocean Trails Reserve and Beach. Regular patrols were increased to address these calls. On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Rangers and OSM staff worked with Trump National Golf Course staff, and the Los Angeles County Fire Department to locate an injured hiker on Dudleya Trail. LA County Fire was unable to extract the injured hiker, and resorted to airlifting her for medical attention.

Rangers received numerous reports of illegal paragliding activity in Ocean Trails Reserve. Rangers patrolled area and OSM staff installed new area closure signage to deter habitat trampling and unauthorized access. Appropriate signage referencing the Municipal Code strengthens the the likelihood an infraction will be upheld in court.



### **Portuguese Bend Reserve**

	Public Contact	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	2,528	220	13	246
Dog	331	129	12	1
Biker	132	8	1	0
Equestrian	16	2	2	0

Rangers enforced closures and assisted with phased re-openings of trails within the Portuguese Bend Reserve, with an emphasis on educating trail users on new trail guidelines during COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike some Reserves which opened all trails simultaneously, Portuguese Bend Reserve was opened in several stages to allow necessary safety inspections and trail maintenance to take place.

Rangers responded to multiple reports of fireworks in the Reserve near the scenic overlook on Burma Road Trail on June 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. Rangers were unable to locate individuals, but did locate a "Billy Club" firework used and discarded on the high brush of mustard.

Rangers spoke to a family seen walking out of Burma Road Trail onto Crenshaw Blvd., with a pile of cacti pads. Rangers educated patrons about Preserve rules, including removal of flora per the City's Municipal Code. They complied when asked for retrieval, and Rangers were able to return pads to an existing cacti grove.



Rangers also received reports from the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy's Volunteer Trail watch (VTW) of unsafe mountain biking activity near Burma intersections with Ishibashi and Barn Owl Trails as well as and E-bike use in Lower Portuguese Bend Reserve. Rangers continuously monitor for this activity.

### **San Ramon Reserve**

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	56	17	38	1
Dog	0	0	0	0
Biker	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers received reports from the VTW of individuals smoking in the area, and focused patrols watching for this activity, with no violations observed. Education contacts were related to trail closure status, and goats and fuel modification activity. Verbal warnings issued related to closure of trails, and vehicles parked in closed turnouts during the mandated closure.

### **Three Sisters Reserve**

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	2	0	1	0
Dog	0	0	0	0
Biker	0	0	0	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

No significant issues to report.

### **Vicente Bluffs Reserve**

	Public Contacts	Education	Warning	Enforcement
Hikers	853	63	117	19
Dog	50	0	1	0
Biker	6	0	2	0
Equestrian	0	0	0	0

Rangers responded to multiple reports of people climbing over the fence near the scenic lookout adjacent to the Calle Entradero parking lot. OSM staff assisted Rangers in educating many individuals on public safety concerns regarding steep and unstable cliffs and unauthorized spur trails.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Rangers responded to a report of a large family gathering at the beach below Vicente Bluffs. The family consisted of 17 individuals and 1 dog that had set up a canopy and barbecue grill. Rangers were able to make contact with the family and informed them, per County Health Department orders only passive use of beaches was permitted at the time. Additionally, Rangers confirmed the family had used an illegal spur trail to access the beach. A verbal warning was issued, as the family was compliant and proceeded to pack up and hauled out all of their trash.

Rangers also contacted Palos Verdes Estates City staff to confirm that there is an authorized access to the beach below Vicente Bluffs from Christmas Tree Cove and Honeymoon Cove. Rangers hiked and verified this authorized alternative to access this beach.



Rangers also received reports of drones at Vicente Bluffs and continue to monitor for this activity.

### **City Parks**

In addition to the 1,400 acres of open space in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, and City beaches, Rangers also assisted Recreation and Parks Staff in responding to calls for service and assistance in matters related to enforcement. These calls were related to drone use and policy, paragliders, dogs off-leash, patrons in closed areas (during COVID-19 mandated closure of parks and open spaces), alcoholic beverages, and special event permits / organized events without city's approval.