

de la Guerra, Sheila General Public Comment

From: Kathleen Rosenthal <ksrvaquera@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 5:00 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Live Oak Trail Comment Letter



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Dear Honorable Supervisors,

My name is Kathy Rosenthal and I am an equestrian who enjoys riding the Live Oak Trail at Cachuma Recreation Area. The trail was opened to hikers on April 15, 2021 under an 18 month "Pilot Project" (Project) and there remain unresolved issues with the way the Project is being implemented. It has been mis-represented to the public and the landowner, the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR).

The Project was presented and approved by the USBR to collect data on the number of trail users, assess if there is adequate demand for the trail by equestrians and hikers and then assess the findings after 18-months. Equestrians were assured by 3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartman that allowing mountain bikes are "off the table" at Live Oak Trail for 18-months.

We are now several weeks into the Project and wish to note the following issues:

- There currently is no way to accurately count trail users. Because of the delay in having a proper method to count trail users in place as the project was implemented, the Project's 18-month study period must be re-started at the time a trail counter or other accurate method of counting trail users is installed.
- The data collected must be collected concurrently for all users (equestrians and hikers) to account for heat, trail closures, fire emergencies and other extraneous factors that may affect trail use during the 18-month study period.
- Equestrians must be part of discussions regarding trail policies and projects. Mountain bike and County representatives have been meeting to discuss trail issues; equestrians were not part of those discussions.
- Equestrian's history and role in establishing the Live Oak Trail must be acknowledged. Over the past few months presentations to the Parks Commission and CRAHTAC have omitted the equestrian history at Live Oak Trail. The equestrian and hiking public must be included in Live Oak Trail planning, proposals and discussions for any new users allowed on the trail .

The trails at the Main Cachuma Recreation Area are specifically for mountain bikes, (equestrians are prohibited from riding the trails in the developed Recreation Area on the Lake's south shore, although these trails were "equestrian trails" for many years). The Los Padres National Forest and most City and County Parks are open to mountain bikes. Is there an **actual or perceived need** to open Live Oak Trail to mountain bikes? The overwhelming evidence indicates that they are already getting the lion's share of trail access.

Live Oak Trail is a unique resource for equestrians and hikers and birds and wildlife as well. It provides a **truly safe**, natural environment with excellent habitat values that eliminates conflict with aggressive users and allows us to enjoy the trail and the wildlife to thrive. There are enough trails to accommodate all, but in the age of limited safe riding/hiking trails, aggressive mountain bikers, with no County oversight or regulation/rule enforcement, then separate trails are a must. I want to enjoy my sport without fear.

It does not matter how much maintenance is provided by mountain bike groups. The fact is, that if mountain bikes are not allowed on trails at all, there is not a need for the level of maintenance required for this "sport". Mountain bike activities are the classic "make work" scenario and cost more resources in the long run in terms of erosion, environmental degradation and habitat disturbance. Therefore, I do not want to see bikes in any form allowed on the Live Oak Trail.

Sincerely,
Kathy Rosenthal