

La Jolla Valley Wildflowers (post-Springs Fire) Mugu Peak Trail
Point Mugu State Park February 28, 2015

Interactive – Interagency Trails

Trails.LACounty.gov

The Public Agency Perspective: Why Provide Correct Trail Information on the Internet?

Presented by

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- Provide an Overview of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.
- Describe Agency Challenges from Trail Info on the Internet.
- Review the National Park Service Website for SMMNRA.
- Discuss Agency Ways to Provide Correct Trail Info.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA)



- A unit of the National Park System; established in 1978.
- Covers 153,785 acres from Griffith Park to the Oxnard Plain.
- Land ownership mixture of 57% protected parkland and 43% private lands.
- State park land ownership is 35%; NPS ownership is 15% of the land base.
- Partnerships are key to management of SMMNRA.





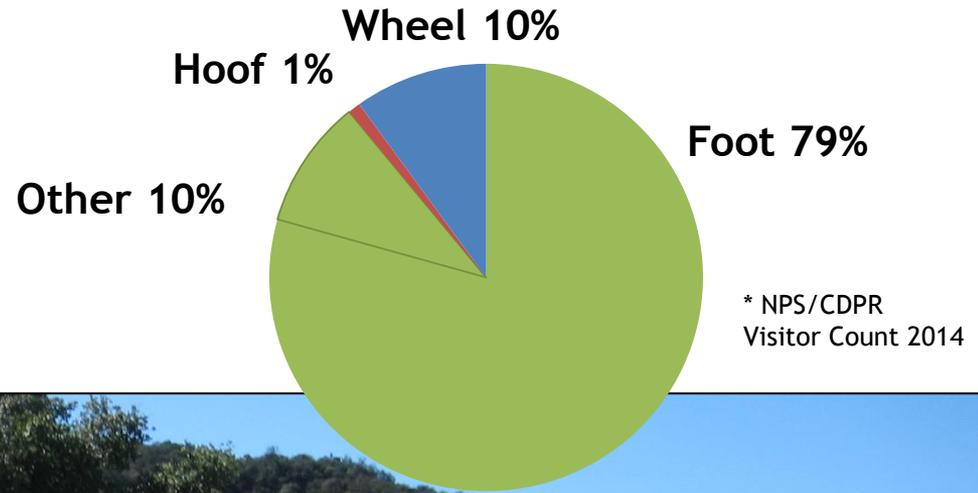
- Nearly 500 Miles of Public Trails

Trails 286 mi.

Roads (Unpaved/Paved) 198 mi.

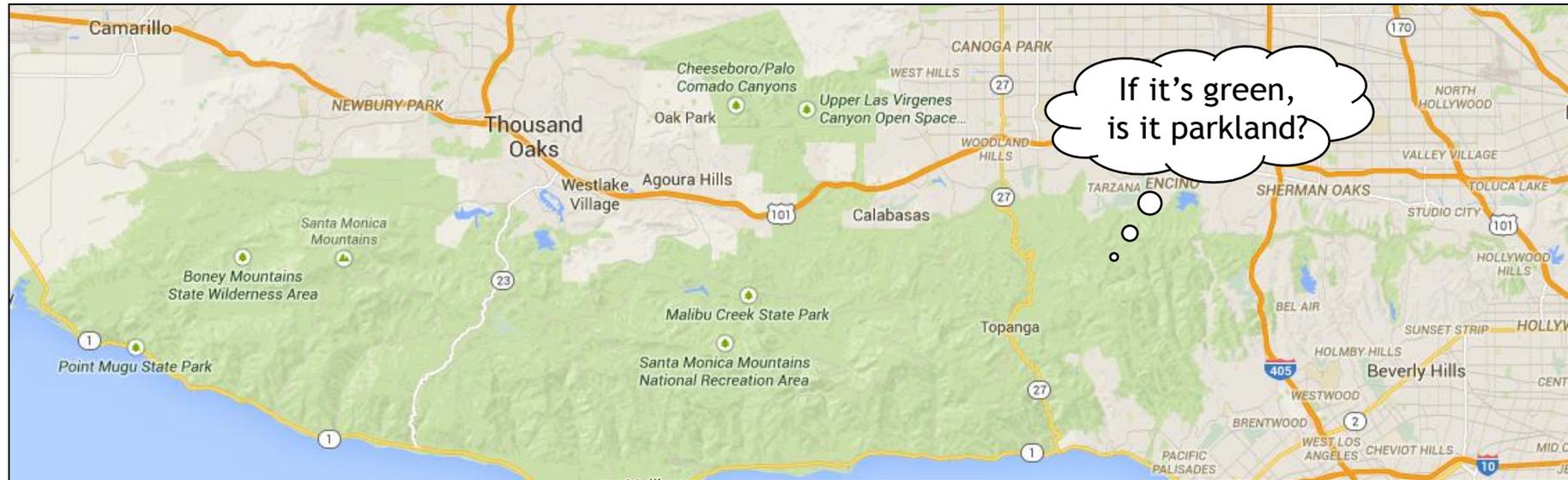
- Over 150 Trailheads

Visitors Propelled by*



Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park, February 2015

Google Maps: Park Land Illustration



"[Park rangers] met with a park neighbor in the Mar Vista area regarding illegal use of his property by the public, probably due to Google Maps labeling it as "Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area." (SMMNRA Weekly Staff Report 04/15/2015)

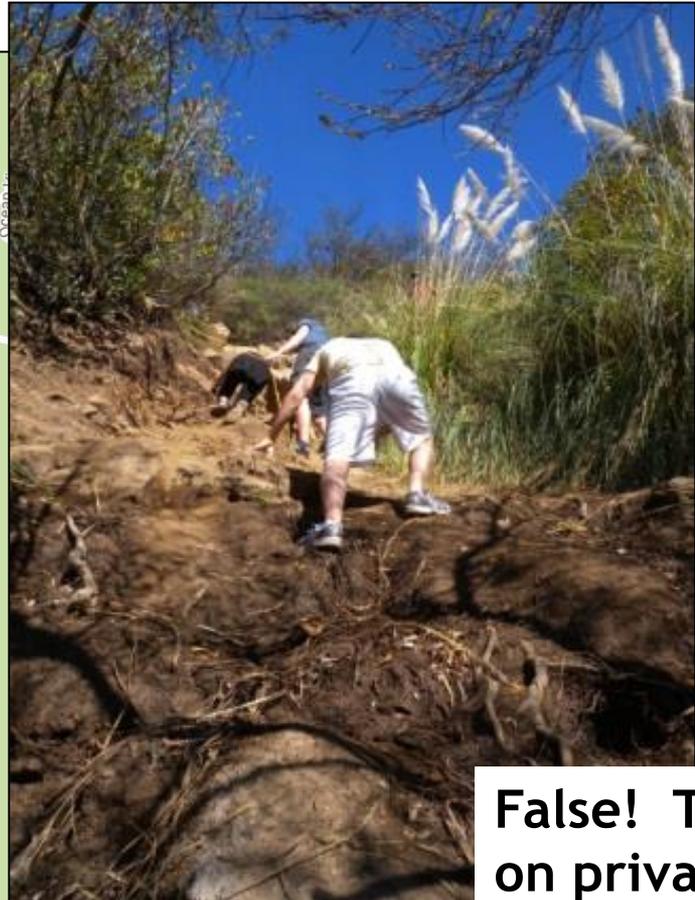
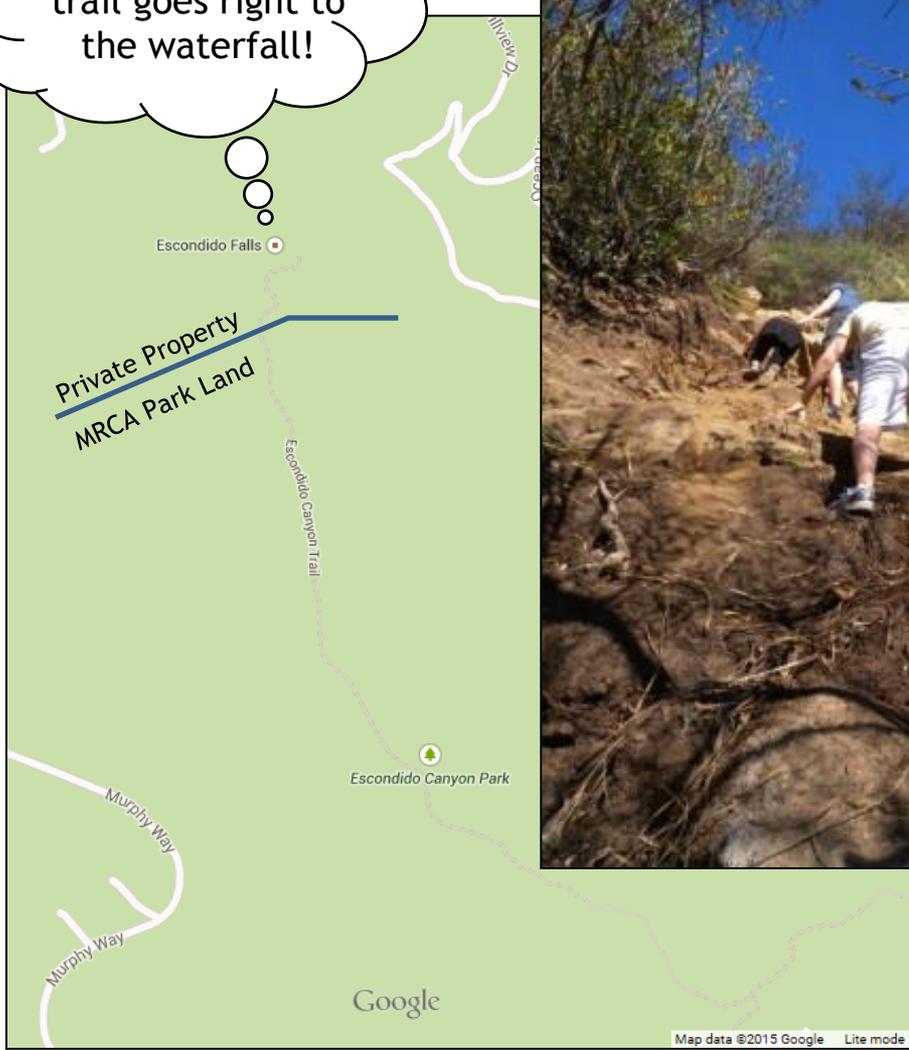


True or False: ALL of SMMNRA is park land.

False! 57% is protected, 43% is private. Google park land appears to be based on SMMNRA boundary.

Google Maps: Destinations on Private Property

It's green, and the trail goes right to the waterfall!



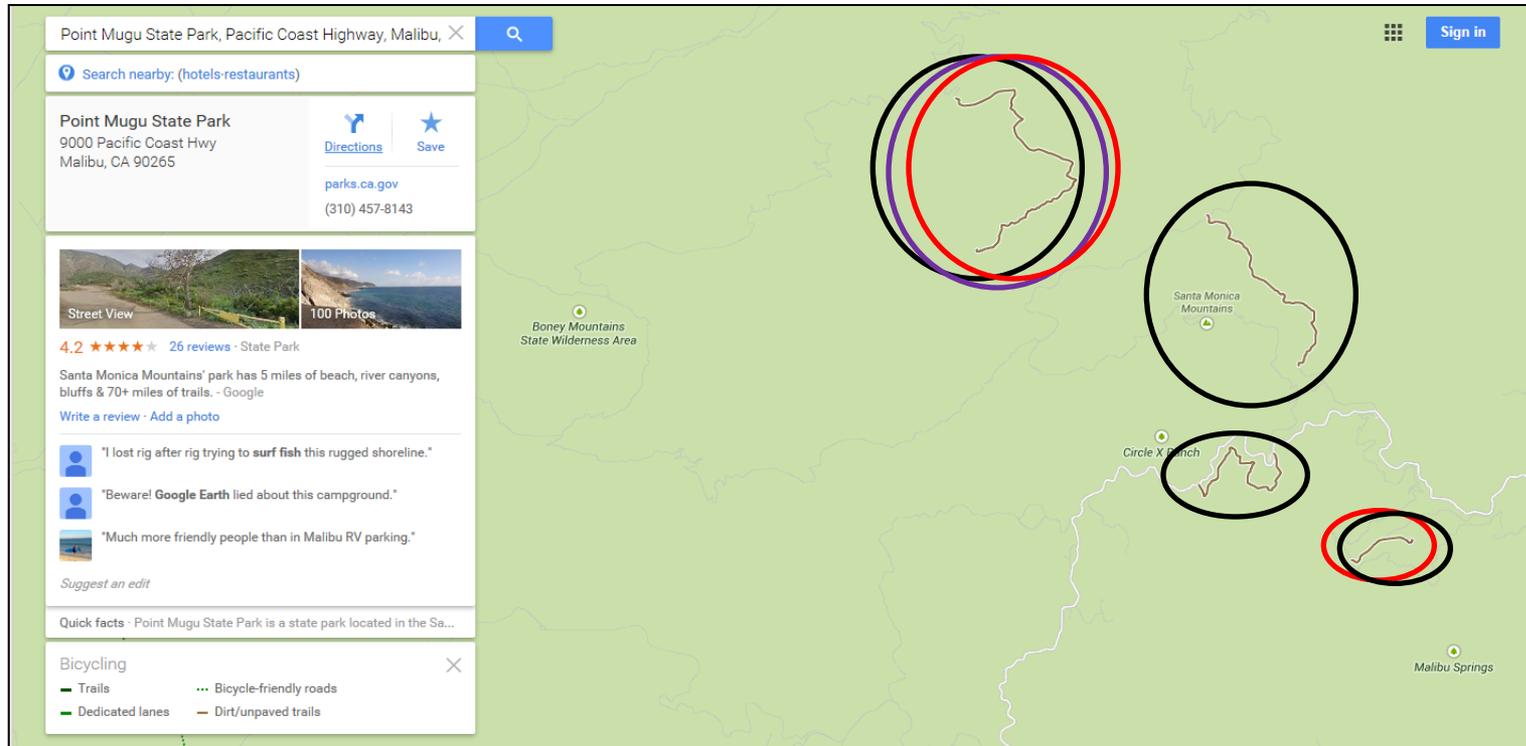
**True or False:
Escondido Falls are on
Public Land.**

HINT: “...After a while, we realized we had taken a wrong turn after passing some no-trespassing signs/fences and seeing the waterfall dozens of meters below us...”

Yelp.com review, 3/28/14

False! The “upper falls” are on private property. MRCA law enforcement rangers cannot patrol private property in this situation.

Google Maps: Trail Existence and Use Designation by...Anyone



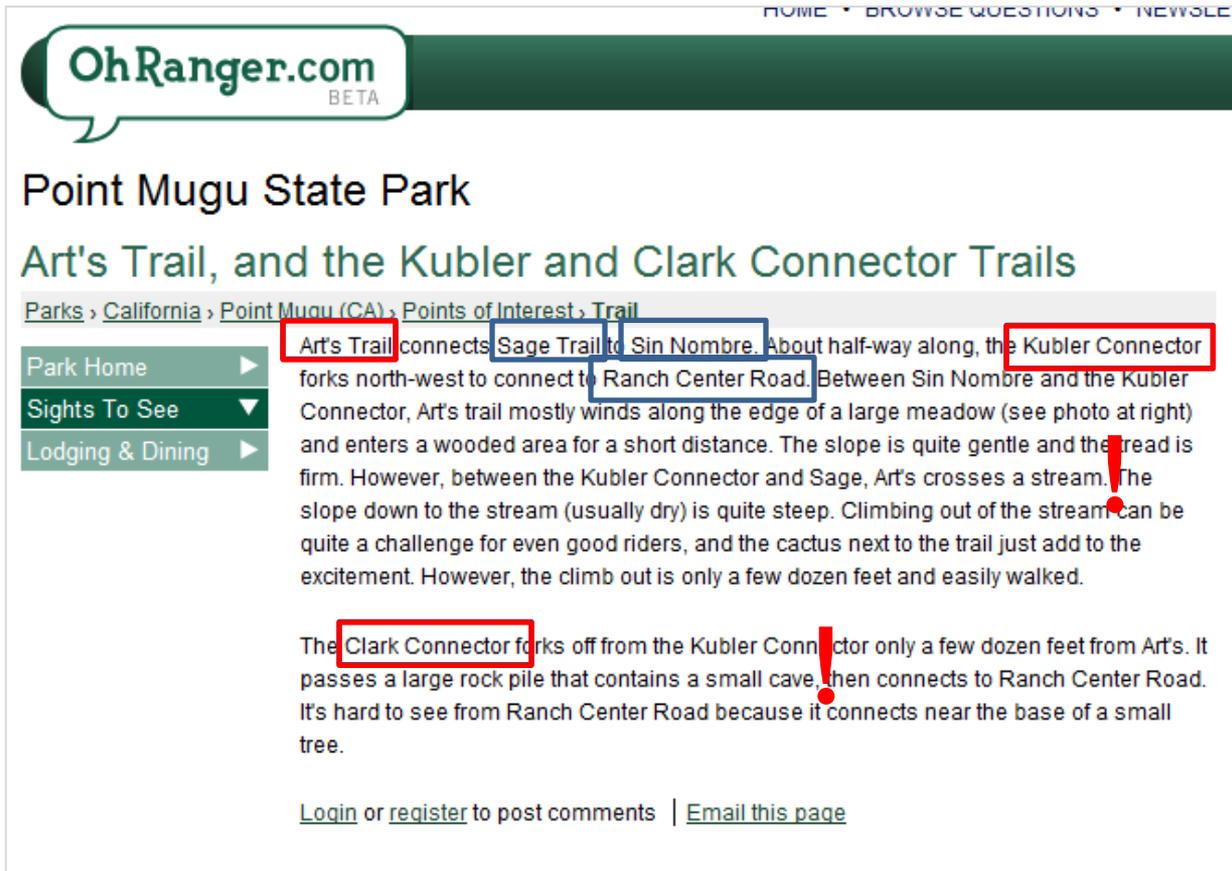
How Many Errors Are on this Map?

- a. none
- b. 1
- c. 4
- d. 7

Answer: d. 7

- **Illegal Trail (2)**
- **Road Attribution (1)**
- **Bikes Allowed (4)**

Trail Websites: Trail Existence and Use Designation by...Anyone



OhRanger.com BETA

Point Mugu State Park

Art's Trail, and the Kubler and Clark Connector Trails

Parks > California > Point Mugu (CA) > Points of Interest > Trail

Park Home ▶
Sights To See ▼
Lodging & Dining ▶

Art's Trail connects Sage Trail to Sin Nombre. About half-way along, the Kubler Connector forks north-west to connect to Ranch Center Road. Between Sin Nombre and the Kubler Connector, Art's trail mostly winds along the edge of a large meadow (see photo at right) and enters a wooded area for a short distance. The slope is quite gentle and the tread is firm. However, between the Kubler Connector and Sage, Art's crosses a stream. The slope down to the stream (usually dry) is quite steep. Climbing out of the stream can be quite a challenge for even good riders, and the cactus next to the trail just add to the excitement. However, the climb out is only a few dozen feet and easily walked.

The Clark Connector forks off from the Kubler Connector only a few dozen feet from Art's. It passes a large rock pile that contains a small cave, then connects to Ranch Center Road. It's hard to see from Ranch Center Road because it connects near the base of a small tree.

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How Many Trails Are Mentioned?

- a. 1
- b. 3
- c. 6

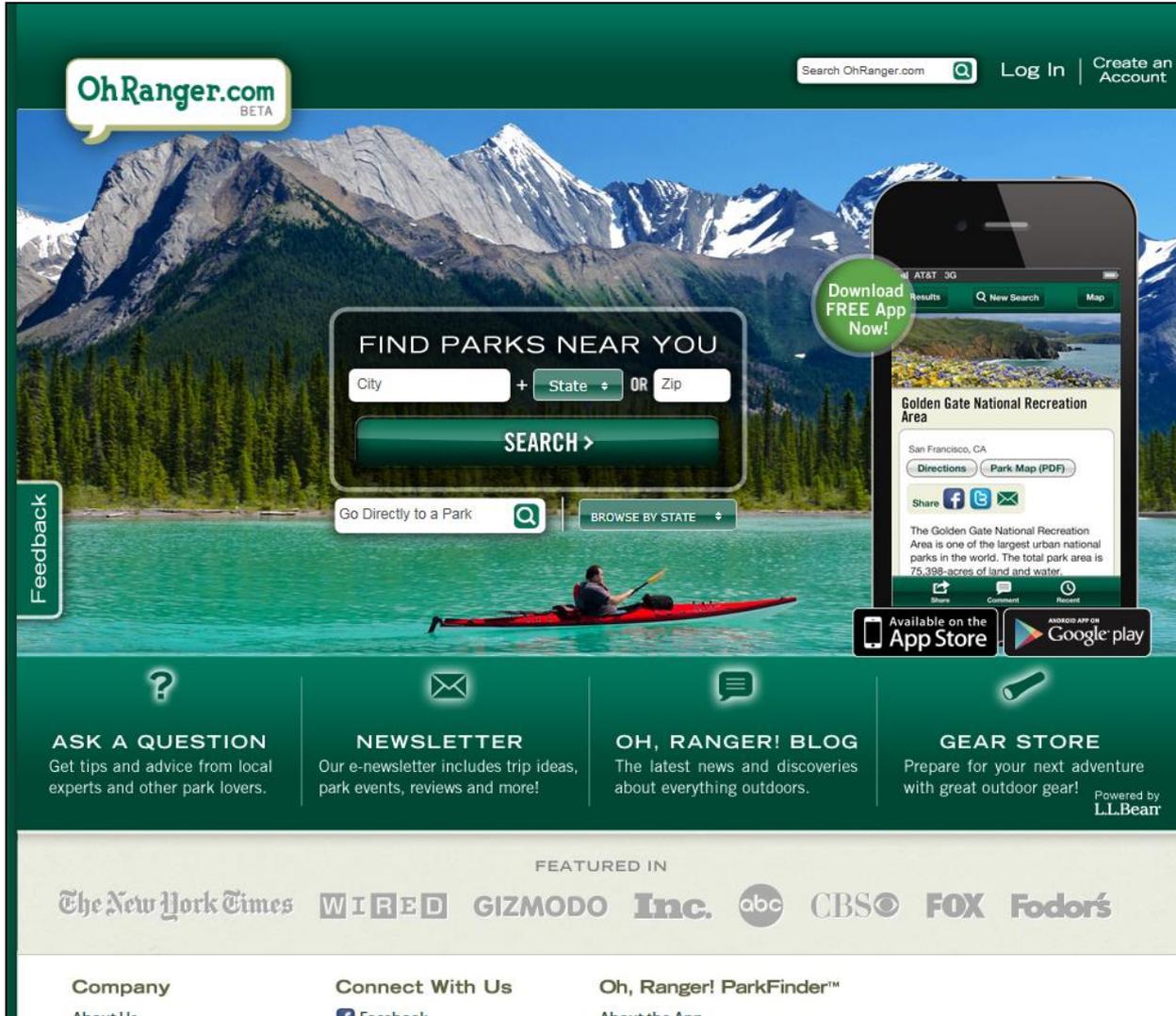
How many illegally constructed trails are mentioned?

- a. none
- b. 3
- c. 6

Answers:

- c. 6 trails mentioned
- b. 3 illegal trails

Trail Websites: Official Appearance



The screenshot shows the OhRanger.com website with a search bar for finding parks near you. The search bar includes fields for City, State, and Zip, and a green 'SEARCH >' button. Below the search bar are links for 'Go Directly to a Park' and 'BROWSE BY STATE'. A mobile app preview is shown on the right, displaying search results for Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The app interface includes a search bar, a map, and a list of results. The website footer contains navigation options: 'ASK A QUESTION', 'NEWSLETTER', 'OH, RANGER! BLOG', and 'GEAR STORE'. The footer also features logos for 'The New York Times', 'WIRED', 'GIZMODO', 'Inc.', 'abc', 'CBS', 'FOX', and 'Fodor's'. The website is powered by L.L.Bear.

Does this website look official?

Would you use this website to plan your trail outing?

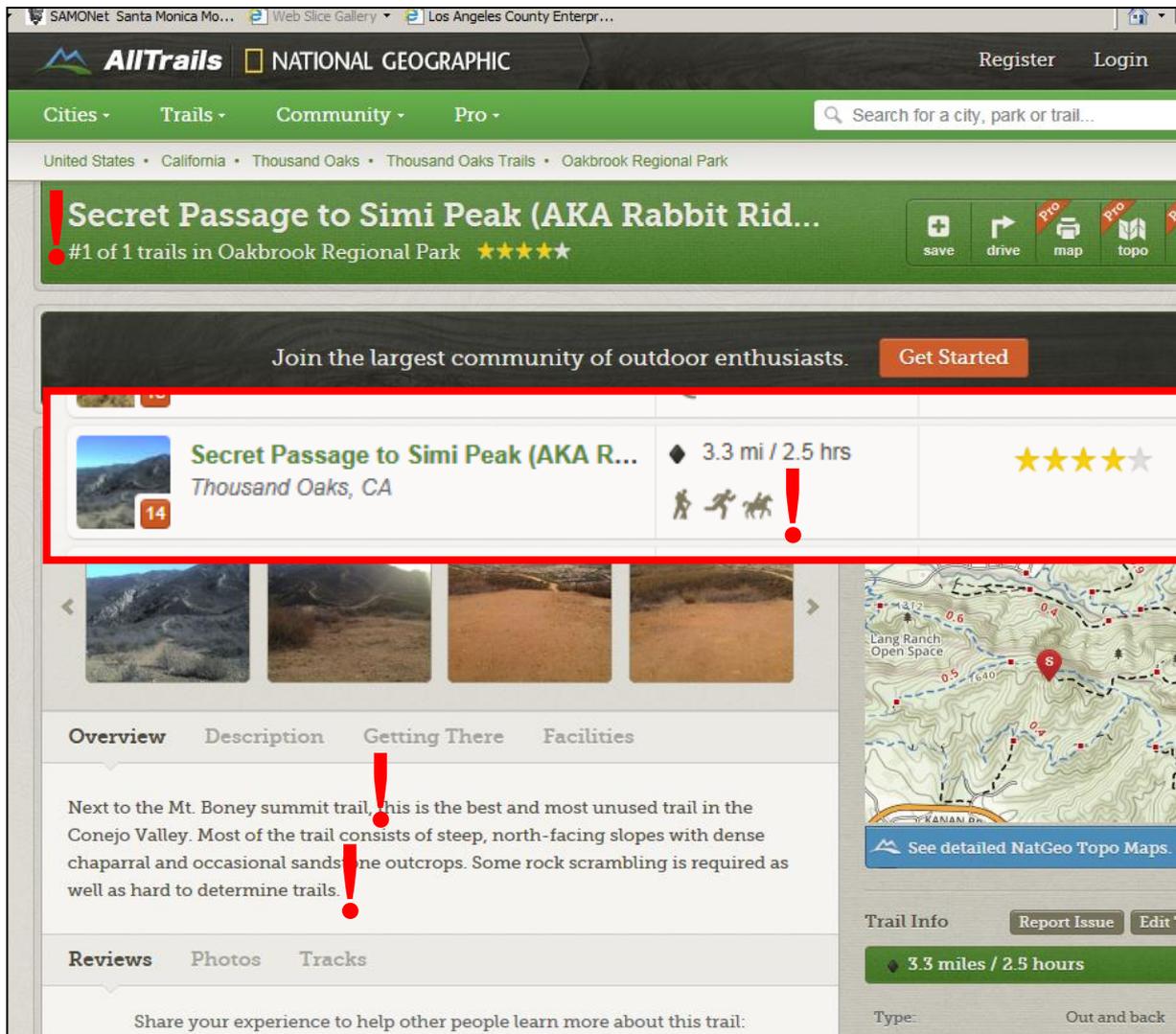
What about:

- Agency versus webmaster accountability?
- Trail planning?

Social Networking Websites - Trail Outings

Yes or No: You can go off-trail.

Trick Question. 😊
It depends on where, what you're doing, and if you're part of a group. See next slide.



Social Networking Websites - Trail Outings, Illustrated

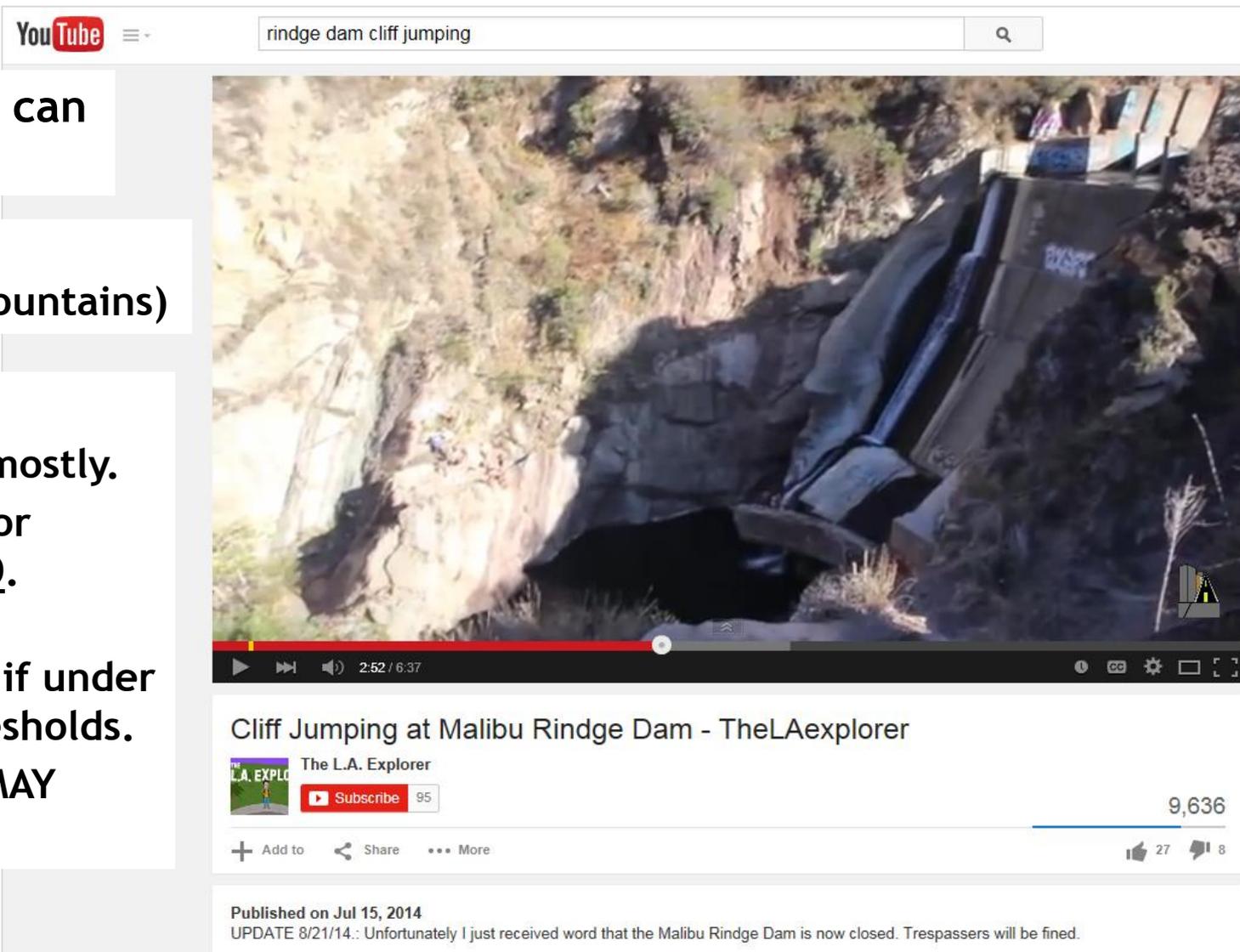
Yes or No: You can go off-trail.

State Parks: NO
(Santa Monica Mountains)

NPS—Depends:

- Hikers — YES, mostly.
- Bikes, horses, or dogs/pets — NO.
- Hiker Groups—
Currently YES, if under group size thresholds.

➤ **THIS POLICY MAY CHANGE.**



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player. The search bar at the top contains the text "rindge dam cliff jumping". The video title is "Cliff Jumping at Malibu Rindge Dam - TheLAexplorer". The channel name is "The L.A. Explorer" with a "Subscribe" button and "95" subscribers. The video has 9,636 views, 27 likes, and 8 dislikes. The video player shows a progress bar at 2:52 / 6:37. Below the video, there is a text update: "Published on Jul 15, 2014 UPDATE 8/21/14.: Unfortunately I just received word that the Malibu Rindge Dam is now closed. Trespassers will be fined."



Social Networking Websites - Geocaching

True or False: Geocaching (physical stash) is allowed.

Point Mugu State Park

Boney Mountain State Wilderness (dark green shading)

Circle X Ranch (NPS) Boundaries Not Illustrated

Sign Up Log In

State Parks: True and False!

- Prohibited in State Wilderness
- Allowed conditionally in other areas

NPS: False! Geocaching is prohibited.

- Abandoned property (virtual cache okay)
- Habitat damage from illegal access trails

Internet Advertising - Environmental Stewardship or Not?



CLIF® Bar Inspires Outdoor Adventure with Meet the Moment®

Adventurers Challenged to Embrace the Elements While Generating Donations for Non-Profits

Spreading aquatic invasives?
Trampling egg masses?
Stirring up sediments?

What about parks
closed at night?
Bright headlamps?

Trailblazing?



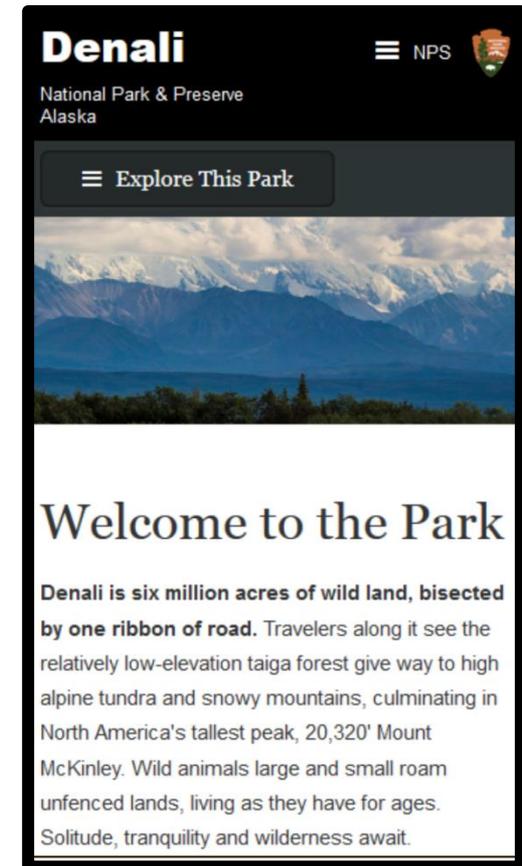
Inviting Search-and-Rescue?

National Park Service Website for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area: www.nps.gov/samo

- More than 300,000 visits each year, with a total of 1.14 million page views.
- 1/3 access the website via mobile devices.
- 70% of mobile users are on an iPhone or other iOS devices. 25% are on the Android platform.
- More people go to the “Plan Your Visit” section than any other section.

Coming Soon

Mobile Device Format



National Park Service Website: Nationwide Template Restructure

Current: Park features were differently collected and independently presented by each NPS park unit (trail highlights, visitor center hours, campground amenities).

2016: Centralized park information will be made available to the public and to website developers.

Structured Data

Taiga

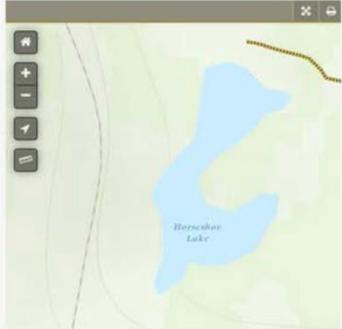
Highlights include spruce and aspen forests, wildflowers in early summer (June - July), berries in late summer and fall (August - September). Large stands of cottonwood and many wildflowers in the early summer (mid-June - early July).

 **Distance:** 0.5 mi (0.8 km) round trip

 **Difficulty:** Easy

 **Time:** 20 mins

[Show Less](#)



Elevation Gain: Approximately 80 ft (24 m)

Season: Year Round

Safety:
The rocks and boulders above the viewing platform are slippery even when dry; stay safe by staying on the paved trail. Scrambling off trail in this area has led to serious injuries. If you choose to park along Southside Drive, when getting out of your vehicle, watch for traffic and be cautious opening car doors and crossing the road.

External Reviews:
[Taiga Fall Trail Map Review](#) ›
[Trip Advisor Review](#) ›

[Download Trail Guide \(PDF, 166 kb\)](#)

Internet Information - Comparing Trail Info Websites



<u>Information Feature</u> No = Not on Website Yes = Found on Website Yes = Expect Incorrect Information or Difficulty Making Corrections	nps.gov/samo	Trails.LACounty.gov	Google Maps	OhRanger.com	AllTrails.com
Search by Trail Name	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Search by Park or ZIP code	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowed Uses	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Distance	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Elevation Change	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Park Land Boundaries	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Safety, Stewardship, Etiquette	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Volunteer Opportunity Info	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Open Editing	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Problem Reporting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sharing or Commenting	No	Linked	Yes	Yes	Yes



Can Social Media and Other Internet Trail Info Change the (Park) Landscape?

Absolutely!

Given the many other trip planning and trail websites, what role should park agencies like NPS and State Parks play?

- Should NPS or State Parks really be the place where the most up-to-date trail conditions are listed?
- Should we have the most accurate descriptions?
- Should NPS or State Parks create a space for reviews or leave them to Yelp and other social media sites?

Be a Source of Brief Correct Information!

What can agency staff do to combat trail misinformation?

- Partner with other agencies, like Los Angeles County, to provide agency-sanctioned trail website information.
- Provide links on agency websites to trusted trail information sites.
- Create accounts on trail info websites and begin submitting corrections to the point of becoming a trusted advisor.
- Post comments to combat misinfo, and pursue making contact with and working with the webmaster(s).

Involvement in Websites and Outreach to Webmasters, *en masse!*