



April 4, 2015

Supervisor Todd Spitzer, Chair
OC Board of Supervisors
333 W. Santa Ana Blvd. 5th Floor
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Recent Trail Incident at O'Neill Park

Dear Supervisor Spitzer,

I am writing on behalf of the Safe Trails Coalition to thank you for your swift and actionable response to the recent dog attack on three horses and riders in O'Neill Regional Park. We are pleased to see the meaningful efforts to catch the perpetrators and appreciate your concerted efforts to keep trail users safe in our parks.

The Safe Trails Coalition was formed three years ago by Audubon California, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, Laguna Canyon Foundation, Sea and Sage Audubon, and Sierra Club. Collectively and along with our more than 30 supporting organizations, our focus is to find the balance between recreational needs and resource protection in our parks, preserves, and natural lands.

The incident at O'Neill Regional Park last week reiterates the continued need for public education about park rules, trail safety, and trail etiquette. While off-leash dogs are only one challenge facing parks, park managers, and trail users, the Safe Trails Coalition sees this as an opportunity to re-enforce to the public why park rules exist in the first place. We also support the continued use of park signage, informational kiosks and consistent enforcement of posted rules.

To this end, we have been working closely with Stacy Blackwood and the OC Parks staff. We appreciate her recent efforts to increase educational and outreach efforts in Orange County parks. This County is blessed with an impressive and important wildland preserve system, and the Safe Trails Coalition is committed to protecting this habitat and encouraging responsible trail use.

We offer our assistance to you, the Board of Supervisors, and Stacy to aid in this situation while simultaneously ensuring our park visitors remain safe on the trails and that our resources remain protected.

We would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you, to introduce to you the Coalition, and to share ideas and solutions. Should you wish to discuss this, please phone me directly at 714-779-7561.

Thank you for your time and attention. Your efforts are much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Melanie Schlotterbeck
Safe Trails Coalition Coordinator

cc: Supervisor Bartlett, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Do, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Nelson, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Steel, Board of Supervisors
Stacy Blackwood, OC Parks