



February 19, 2016

1st Lt. Matthew Gregory
Camp Pendleton
Marine Corps Base Public Affairs Office
Box 555019
Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5019

RE: Recent Efforts to Reduce Trespassing

Dear 1st Lt. Gregory:

I am writing on behalf of the Safe Trails Coalition regarding the January 19, 2016 newspaper article in the San Diego Union-Tribune titled “Marines Crack Down on Trail Trespassing.” The Coalition was pleased to see the article coverage and that the Marines take seriously its need to protect the personnel and public—even if it means the unfortunate step of citing violators.

By way of background, 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.

Camp Pendleton has an extremely unique situation in that the land is mostly undeveloped (which appeals to the recreational crowds); the public has a misconception that because of its “public” ownership it must be public land; and there is a growing enthusiasm for more access and improved trail systems. These factors, among others, have likely led to the historic use of unauthorized trail systems. Unfortunately, there is a very real threat to recreational users that may not even realize they are in immediate danger due to the live trainings occurring on the base. We are dismayed that the existing signage did not prevent trail users from illegally entering the base. This has been one of the ongoing struggles other parks, preserves, and natural lands have faced.

Since our primary purpose is to ensure safe trail experiences for all the user groups (including the lesser recognized groups such as naturalists, birders, photographers, etc.), we are grateful the Marines have implemented a program that puts safety first. We’d like to offer our support and encouragement to the Marines for ongoing education and signage, and if needed future trespassing citation days. Our hope is that word will spread among the user groups to stay off the base and stay safe. Keep up the great work and we appreciate your service to this country.

Sincerely,

Melanie Schlotterbeck
Coalition Coordinator

ENCLOSED: Safe Trails Coalition Factsheet