



Enhancing public awareness of the importance of maintaining and restoring the unique natural habitat within Chino Hills

State Park through interpretive and educational activities.

Search and Rescue in CHSP

How not to be a Customer



Protected Birds in CHSP

[Learn More](#) (Scroll Down)



Blast from the Past

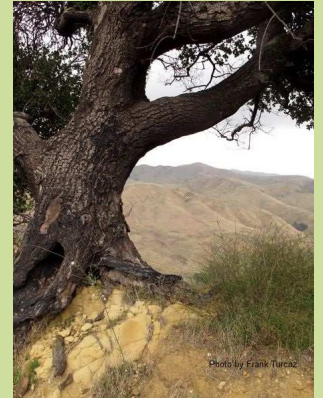
Notes to the Bicycle Assistance Unit in 1993



Just because Chino Hills State Park may not have high mountains or seemingly endless wilderness terrain, does not mean the Park is immune to search and rescue efforts. [Read More](#) (Scroll Down)

Trail Clearing Work in CHSP

[Read More](#) (Scroll Down)



Do you have something to share for the next Newsletter?

Do you have something you want to share about an experience in the Park, such as a special sighting of an animal or bird or plant, or maybe a romance or a friendship you made while in the park?

Contact Eric at eric@chinohillsstatepark.org.



Anyone visiting the Chino Hills State Park in the spring will know the challenges presented by the incredible growth of introduced plants: especially yellow mustard and thistle. [Read More](#) (Scroll Down)

Search and Rescue in CHSP: How Not to Be a Customer

Here in Southern California, the search and rescue incidents you often hear or read about often occur in the mountains of the Angeles or San Bernardino National Forests. It makes sense, these contain high altitude mountains with many terrain hazards, in addition to extreme alpine conditions during the winter months. However, just because Chino Hills State Park may not have high mountains or seemingly endless wilderness terrain, does not mean the Park is immune to search and rescue efforts.

Just this past spring, a female hiker in the park was bitten by a rattlesnake. Fire department personnel provided the first response, but soon, a sheriff's rescue helicopter was required to hoist the victim for quicker medical aid. In March 2022, sheriff's search and rescue ground personnel searched the Park throughout the night for a missing boy. Luckily, soon after sunrise, and with the help of helicopter crews, he was located safe and uninjured. These are just a couple of examples of people needing assistance in CHSP over the years. Most ended with a positive outcome, but over the years have also been a few fatalities within the Park. The bottom line is CHSP is definitely large enough to have its own set of hazards that require a search and rescue response.

So, what can you do, to help lessen the odds that you will be a search and rescue "customer"? Here are a few easy-to-follow suggestions to make sure you get back from your day at the Park safe and without a search and rescue response.

Have a hiking plan

- Tell someone where you will be hiking and when you expect to return.
- Know the name of the trail in CHSP you will be hiking on and have a map.
- Think about the weather; If it is extremely hot, hold off for cooler temps.
- Know where you are going and know what kind of terrain you will be hiking on.
- Don't hike alone - it's safer and more fun to do the trail with a friend.

- Know your limitations. Don't do more than you are able.

Have the essentials

- Bring plenty of water (One quart for short hikes - much more for longer hikes).
- For longer hikes, bring high energy snacks and food, such as sports bars.
- A back pack is preferable for you to keep your hands free while hiking.
- A cell phone and if you have one a personal locator beacon device.
- Be prepared for weather changes, layer your clothing.
- Wear appropriate footwear, preferably hiking boots.
- Bring a hat, sunblock, and basic first aid supplies.

What to do when you need help

- S.T.O.P. (Stop, Think, Observe, Plan). Your brain is your #1 survival tool.
- If you are lost or injured, do not panic.
- If you need help, first try your cell phone, if not working, shout loudly and wave your arms to get another person's attention.
- If there is more than one in your party, send someone for help.
- Know your location. Look for the nearest trail marker or any noticeable landmark such as a bench, wash or tree.
- Identify the emergency situation (Be specific regarding the injury condition).

Trail Clearing in the State Park

Anyone visiting the Chino Hills State Park in the spring will know the challenges presented by the incredible growth of introduced plants: especially yellow mustard and thistle. The mustard in particular can reduce a road or trail to a dense, impenetrable growth 8 feet tall. As a result, an immense amount of work is required to clear the 90 miles of roads and trails in the park, especially in big rain years. The maintenance workers have their hands full clearing roads and creating defensible space for fire safety.

Luckily, there are a few hardy souls who are willing to donate their time to clear trails. On June 6, 8 volunteers and 4 state park employees descended on the popular Bovinian Delight trail and managed to clear nearly the entire length. The park workers used line trimmers with volunteers raking after them. Other volunteers used shovels, and other hand tools to remove ruts, and clear growth. It was a tremendous effort, and our sincere thanks go out to everyone who participated.

If you would like to take part in future trail maintenance efforts send an email to eric@chinohillsstatepark.org.

Protected Birds in CHSP

Chino Hills State Park is well loved as an oasis for hiking, running, mountain biking, birding, and viewing beautiful Spring wildflowers. It is also an important biodiversity hotspot with multiple habitats and an extensive wildlife corridor connecting regional protected open spaces. The Park is home to more than 200 species of birds and mammals, plus numerous reptiles, amphibians, insects, and other invertebrates. Of the Park's many avian inhabitants, two stand out for their special qualities. These are the Least Bell's Vireo and the California Gnatcatcher.

The Least Bell's Vireo is listed as endangered federally and by the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Urban

development has caused massive destruction of riparian habitat throughout the bird's range, impacting population numbers. Add climate-change induced excessive heat and parasitic nesting by Brown-headed Cowbirds, and the Least Bell's Vireo is fighting to survive. Chino Hills State Park's riparian habitat is critically important as it attracts these little birds every year for nesting and fledging their young.

The California Gnatcatcher is listed as a federally threatened species and a Bird Species of Special Concern by the state of California for many of the same reasons as the Least Bell's Vireo. The birds live year-round in Chino Hills State Park's coastal sage scrub habitat, but outside the Park the destruction and degradation of their preferred habitat has greatly dwindled population numbers.

Both the Least Bell's Vireo and the California Gnatcatcher are beneficial to Chino Hills State Park as they consume large quantities of insects, caterpillars, and spiders, helping to keep the populations in balance. Both birds are observable indicators of the health of their respective habitats within the Park. Preserving more open spaces and maintaining healthy native habitats are critical for these birds to survive. Recent wildfires have devastated the Park and great effort is made to preserve and re-establish native habitats. Conservation efforts are undertaken in the Park during the Least Bell's Vireo breeding season and can result in the temporary closure of some trails and sections of the Park. We see this as a small price to pay in doing our part to help these birds survive and in keeping Chino Hills State Park a vibrant place, full of diverse life.

Least Bell's Vireo



California Gnatcatcher



Referenced Articles: Learn more about these birds:

1. Chino Hills State Park official website, About the Park: Wildlife https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21973
2. CHSPIA website, Natural Resources: Birds <http://www.chinohillsstatepark.org/natural-resources/birds>
3. Los Angeles Times, *Disbelief Over a Charred Chino Hills State Park*, 2008 <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-chinohills29-2008nov29-story.html>
4. Daily Bulletin, *This 320-acre parcel adjacent to Chino Hills State Park has been preserved*, 2020 <https://www.dailybulletin.com/2020/07/31/this-320-acre-parcel-adjacent-to-chino-hills-state-park-has-been-preserved/>
5. Audubon.org website, California Gnatcatcher (*Poliotila californica*) <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/california-gnatcatcher>
6. Santa Ana Watershed Association 2021 report, Status and Management of the Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher in the Santa Ana River Watershed, 2021, and Summary Data by Site and Watershed-wide, 2000-2021 http://www.sawatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2021_SAWA_LBVI_REPORT_FINAL.pdf
7. Chino Hills State Park Brochure <https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/648/files/ChinoHillsFinalWebLayout2018.pdf>

Blast from the Past

This article was written for the Bicycle Assistance Unit in 1993. The more things change, the more they stay the same:

OK, you have stopped a cyclist who's going 30 miles an hour down Telegraph Canyon. Which of us hasn't (stopped a speeder, I mean). Or perhaps you are just taking a break and someone stops to talk to you. What are you going to tell them?

The main items to cover are:

- The speed limit everywhere in the Park is 15 MPH.

- Explain which single track trails are open to bikes and which are not. Only Raptor Ridge, Faultline, and Bovinian are available for bike usage. While on the subject of closures you should mention the current status of Telegraph Canyon and North Ridge. Both are closed to the public. Do not tell anyone that it is OK for them to enter an area that is closed to them. Park staff is serious about this issue. I spent a half hour observing Ranger Bob issuing warnings to all users exiting the Park via the Lemon Grove entrance (*now the Discovery Center entrance*), taking name and addresses and discussing the \$150 fine that will be assessed if these individuals are caught in the closed area again.
- Discuss proper trail etiquette with all Park visitors

Again, as Seve has reminded us, please maintain a positive presence in the Park. Be as pleasant as possible in your encounters with the public. Avoid yelling, "SLOW DOWN" if at all possible.

www.ChinoHillsStatePark.org

Donate to help CHSPIA support Chino Hills State Park



CHSPIA is a non-profit volunteer based organization that assists the California Department of Parks and Recreation in maintaining and restoring Chino Hills State Park. Through interpretive programs and volunteer support designed to enhance visitor experiences, CHSPIA fosters appreciation and the enlightened use of the State Park. All funds raised go directly to CHSPIA to support interpretive activities, events and other programs.

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