

THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY TRAILS COUNCIL

November 13, 2007

Parks and Recreation Department  
City of Santa Barbara  
PO Box 1990  
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

RE: Santa Barbara County Trails Council Trails Management Recommendation to the Front Country Trails Task Force and Agency Staff

Dear Front Country Trails Task Force and Agency Staff:

The Santa Barbara County Trails Council (Trails Council), a non-profit 501c4, was founded in 1966 with these specific purposes: (a) To conduct activities which further the planning, acquisition, construction, and maintenance of public trails in Santa Barbara County, (b) to be a strong voice for trails advocacy in Santa Barbara County, and (c) to promote responsible, safe, and environmentally sound trail development and uses.

The Trails Council board consists of a broad spectrum of hikers, bicyclists, equestrians and members of local trail advocacy organizations. The combined membership embodies a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the following areas: Santa Barbara County trail history, sustainable trail planning, design, and maintenance, volunteer coordination, trail volunteer and trail user education programs, and risk assessment and management.

The Trails Council has a number of past accomplishments that have benefited the Santa Barbara trails community:

- Acquisition of Rattlesnake Canyon for City Parks
- Acquisition of 14 acres north of Stevens Park to connect with the Arroyo Burro trailhead
- Creation of the 1969 County Trails Plan
- Creation of the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Commission (CRAHTAC)
- Creation of the Obern Bike Trail
- Partner in Baron Ranch planning

The Trails Council has a vested interest in fostering responsible, cohesive, coordinated, and comprehensive management of the Santa Barbara area trails for the benefit of the community. Towards this goal, the Trails Council is submitting the following Trails Management Recommendation consisting of short and long term steps.

## **Trails Council Trails Management Recommendation**

### Short-Term (Year 2008):

- Governmental agencies partner with one or more non-profit, representative trail advocacy organizations to assist in the implementation of short-term management steps.
- Inventory, assess and survey trails, and compile data in an organized presentable format.
- Trails management training. (Agency staff and trail advocates)
- Fund, design, and implement basic trail head signage on the original identified trails at minimum.
- Implement volunteer trail patrols and education.
- Review adaptive management options.

### Long-Term (Year 2009 and beyond):

- Secure long-term MOU and/or non-profit partnership.
- Development of "Best Practices" strategies for a long-term Trails Management Plan based on the trail inventory, assessment, and survey data.
- Assemble a Risk Assessment and Management Team.
- Assemble a trail funding team.
- Establish trail planning, design, and construction guidelines.
- Management of a trail maintenance program.
- Establish trail inspection system and maintenance polices agreed upon by the jurisdictions.
- Implement a trail difficulty rating system.
- Research, plan, and develop new trail opportunities beginning with the most easily attainable and/or upon existing easements.
- Further develop and modify signage system to be effective and universally understood.
- Develop a coordinated emergency plan with local safety agencies.
- Create a record keeping system.
- Develop an accident reporting and analysis system.

The Trails Council is optimistic about the success of the Task Force process. This is the first time in memory that the three land management agencies have begun to officially take a close look at our trails as a system. And, the Task Force is now investigating the kind of sophisticated management that is required for such a system to be successful. The Trails Council applauds the leadership taken by the Task Force, encourages the Task Force to continue productive steps forward, and appreciates this opportunity to present a management recommendation. The Trails Council also hopes to be a partner in the ongoing process by offering the cumulative wealth of knowledge and expertise our organization retains.

For the Santa Barbara Trails Council Board:

Sincerely,

Otis Calef, President