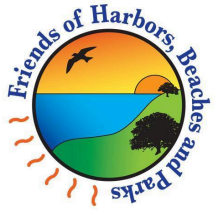


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Park Legacy Project Maps All Regional and Wilderness Parks in Orange County for their Conservation History

NEWPORT BEACH, CA - For seven years, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) has been on an adventure to uncover the history behind every land donation, mitigation, and dedication for our beloved 15 regional parks and seven wilderness parks. The results are two exciting, interactive digital story maps that's now live and are ready for exploration! These maps include downloadable documents, a quick rundown of acquisition terms, and details about any easements are recorded with the properties.

“Every park has a story to tell, and we’ve captured just a snapshot of the effort and dedication that went into preserving these lands,” said Melanie Schlotterbeck, consultant to FHBP. “This project not only gives an overview of decades of conservation work, but also highlights the diverse reasons these beautiful landscapes were originally protected.”

While some park parcels were purchased, in other instances lands were dedicated as developments occurred nearby or donated from landowners. Many parcels were tied to The Irvine Company through conservation easements, gifts, or mitigation. For instance, did you know that Orange County was the first county in California to create a regional park? Irvine Regional Park dedicated in 1897 by James Irvine and his then fledgling business The Irvine Company was a pioneer visionary for our regional park system.

This and many other parks are also part of Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCP) and Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP), offering even stronger habitat and species protections. Orange County was also the first California county to develop an NCCP/HCP to offset residential, commercial, transportation, and other infrastructure impacts. The Central-Coastal NCCP/HCP has at least nine parks enrolled, and the Southern HCP has several South County parks within its boundaries as well.

Those who are curious about the timeline of our regional park system can log on to the [FHBP.org website](http://FHBP.org) to learn more about each one's history. Using the OC Public Works [Land Records website](#) to outline the transaction documents, nearly every parcel has PDF information available. To make it even more user friendly, FHBP consultants created a summary of the documents. They learned a lot about the natural, ecological, cultural, educational, and recreational reasons behind each park. For example, parcels within Irvine Regional Park (parcels 101, 102, and 103) and nearly all of Mason Regional Park have use limitations including a prohibition on the sale of intoxicating beverages.

While some historical documents may seem a bit dry, many Nature Preserves included as part of the Irvine Ranch Open Space contain forward-thinking ideas. There, six management units included climate change mitigation covenants—proof that even decades ago there were concerns about the future and need for carbon offsets. With this history, we're hopeful that Orange County will continue to be a leader with its conservation efforts.

“This project isn't just about mapping history; it's about celebrating the visionaries who made these parks a reality. So, the next time you lace up your hiking boots, hop on your mountain bike, or saddle up your horse, remember the passion and care that went into preserving these lands for all to enjoy,” Michael Wellborn, FHBP Board President added.

This Park Legacy Project is split into two parts: regional parks and wilderness parks, each with its own responsive story map. Thanks to a subscription to the ESRI software platform, ArcGIS Online, available to non-profits at a discount, FHBP was able to create this educational tool for the public's benefit—all housed in the cloud.

FHBP is extremely proud of this achievement and excited to present this tool to the public. We hope park enthusiasts will embark on a journey through time and nature with these new interactive story maps and uncover the rich history of Orange County's parks!

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Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that was founded to promote, protect, and enhance the harbors, beaches, parks, trails, open spaces, natural preserves, and historic sites in Orange County, California. Learn more on our website at: www.FHBP.org.