

Oceanside Trail

FAQ's

Q. Why is this trail being constructed?

A: This trail significantly increases recreational opportunities by providing an entirely new trail that increases the park's trail network by over 20% while also offering a car-free mode of access to the tidepool areas. Visitors can now hike with an ocean view, and walk to the tidepools area without needing to walk the narrow road shoulder.

The trailhead starts at the top of the Whale Watch & Kelp Forest Overlook trail, south of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse. The trail leads down the bluffs and connects to the Coastal Trail and parking lot adjacent to the tide pools area. In addition to overlooking the ocean, this trail will pass by historic coastal defense structures, and give visitors the opportunity to hike in extremely rare undeveloped coastal scrub environments that are home to diverse plant and animal life.

Q: What is the name of the trail?

A: The new trail will be named the Oceanside trail, so as to correspond with the Bayside trail, and with each coastal trail at Cabrillo facing the ocean and the bay respectively. The new trail's name may be changed at some point in the future should a more appropriate name present itself.

Q: Where is the funding coming from?

A: Funding for the trail comes in cooperation from a grant from the National Park Foundation, GRoW @ Annenberg, and generous contributions to Cabrillo National Monument Foundation. National Park Service entrance fees will be used in addition to the donor funds. If you are interested in learning more about this project, visit our partners at Cabrillo National Monument Foundation cnmf.org/trail

Q: Can I ride my bike or use a stroller on the trail?

A: No, the trail is for hiking only. The terrain of the trail is not stroller-friendly or friendly to other wheeled vehicles as it has steep steps and a high elevation gradient. It is also important to hike it single file, because of narrow portions.

Q: Will the new trail be wheelchair accessible?

A: Unfortunately due to the steep gradient of the hill, the trail will not be wheel-chair accessible. For wheelchair accessible options, check out the Mobility Services page. The new trail is considered strenuous and will have stair steps, steep areas, uneven surfaces, and switchbacks. It will be narrow with a steep angled slope greater than 15% running slope in some spots.

Q: Are Pets allowed on the new Trail?

A: No. Pets are only allowed in a small portion of the park on the Coastal Trail. More information on pet regulations is available here [Pet Restrictions](#). Service Animals are permitted on a leash anywhere in the park. Emotional support, therapy, and companion animals are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). More information on Service Animals is available here [Service Animals in National Parks](#)

Q: How can I return to the Lighthouse area once I hike down?

A: There is no ground transportation or shuttle service at the bottom of the trail. Visitors enjoying the trail down are expected to return by foot, the same means with which they went down. Park rangers can only provide transportation in emergency rescue situations. Plan on

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taking twice as long to hike up as it took to hike down.

Q: Is there cell phone service or wifi on the trail?

A: Cell phone service is normally available at the upper trailhead. The trail is very close to the border with Mexico, so many visitors receive international roaming messages on their phones. There is generally no cell phone service at the bottom of the trail or at the tidepool area.

Q: What hours of the day will the trail be open?

A: Cabrillo National Monument is open every day from 9 am to 5 pm. The trail will open at 9 am and close at 4 pm to allow visitors enough time to hike back to the top. Rangers cannot provide transportation for visitors.

Q: Were tribes consulted?

A: Yes. Tribal Historic Preservation offices for Indigenous groups in the area were consulted to make sure the trail would not damage any cultural resources.

Q. I have a concern. How do I share my concerns with park management?

A: The public can submit their comments on this project in the following ways:

- Online: cabr_info@nps.gov
- Phone: You can leave a detailed message or request someone calls you back: 619-523-4280.

Q: Will any natural or cultural resources be negatively impacted by the trail?

A: Through the Trail Management Plan, approved in 2019, we explored the potential effects on natural and cultural resources during the construction process. Cultural resources such as military historic structures and cultural landscapes may be affected by increased visitation. To address and minimize the potential effects, we are engaged in ongoing consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and subject matter experts.

For natural resources, construction could affect rare plant species and some sensitive wildlife. The trail corridor was recently surveyed for species of concern and slightly re-routed to avoid habitat for a rare plant. The park consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the potential impacts to 0.49 acres of habitat. The NPS implemented 0.51 acres of restoration in other areas of the park to create habitat to replace the habitat displaced by the new trail.

Q: Will there be fencing to keep people on trails?

A: Yes, fencing may be used in specific sensitive areas including switchbacks and near cultural resources. Park management is assessing the need for fencing to protect natural and cultural resources. Visitors can do their part to protect the trail corridor by staying on the trail. Cutting switchbacks and not staying on trail not only erodes the existing trail, it also harms plants and animals that live on or near it, in addition to opening up visitors to risk of rattlesnakes, ticks, and stinging insects.

Q: What will happen to vegetation that is removed for trail construction?

A: There is an ongoing plant salvage operation to re-locate them to other areas of the park. We are collecting seed from plants that are not likely to survive being transplanted to ensure genetic stock of the park's plants are maintained.