



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vandalism Necessitates Closure of Turtle Ridge Trail

Recently-restored native habitat along trail was damaged.

IRVINE (February 15, 2012) -- Turtle Ridge Trail was closed Monday after habitat restoration areas near the trail were vandalized, including destruction of several recently-planted Laurel Sumac hedges. An Irvine Police Department sergeant discovered native plant seedlings had been trampled, restoration notification signs pulled out of the ground, and trail markers destroyed along the trail in Bommer Canyon.

The public trail was completed by Irvine Ranch Conservancy in November 2011, and was the subject of a grant from REI and hundreds of hours of community volunteer work. Native plant restoration is key to trail building, helping to preserve the surrounding delicate habitat. The Turtle Ridge Trail in Irvine's Open Space Preserve was open daily from dawn until dusk for hiking and biking. The Irvine Police Department regularly patrols Irvine's Open Space Preserve.

The trail was closed to allow City of Irvine and Irvine Ranch Conservancy staff to assess and repair the damage, in compliance with the state Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) public recreation and access policies. The City of Irvine contracts with Irvine Ranch Conservancy to manage and restore open space areas, including native plant restoration and trail construction in accordance with the NCCP.

Irvine Ranch Conservancy staff plan a restoration program for February 24, and hope to re-open the trail in March. Members of the public affected by the trail closure can participate in the restoration, and can help by reporting inappropriate use.

"After so many people in the community worked together to develop this trail, it's a shame that the actions of a few have caused the trail to be closed to all," said Brian Fisk, City of Irvine Director of Community Services. "Unfortunately, a

temporary trail closure is necessary to protect the native habitat for future recreational use.”

Located adjacent to the Turtle Ridge neighborhood of Irvine, the unique, two-mile trail takes users through three different types of native habitat on its way up to panoramic views of Irvine and surrounding mountains. To participate in this or other trail maintenance, visit www.irlandmarks.org and click on “Activities and Programs.”

Trail users who see inappropriate activity on the trails during the day can call Irvine Ranch Conservancy at (714) 508-4762. The Irvine Police Department is investigating the vandalism, and anyone with information is encouraged to call Detective Alex Kim at 949-724-7199.

City of Irvine

The City of Irvine has a population of more than 212,000, spans 65 square miles and is recognized as one of America's safest and most successful master-planned urban communities. Top-rated educational institutions, an enterprising business atmosphere, sound environmental stewardship, and respect for diversity all contribute to Irvine's enviable quality of life. This family-friendly city features more than 16,000 acres of parks, sports fields and dedicated open space and is the home of the Orange County Great Park – the first great metropolitan park of the 21st century. For more information, please visit www.cityofirvine.org

Irvine Ranch Conservancy

Irvine Ranch Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-advocacy organization created in 2005 to protect the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, enhancing the public's connection to the land while helping partners and landowners with all aspects of stewardship. The Conservancy offers a variety of free, guided outdoor programs for all nature enthusiasts including hiking, mountain biking, horse-back riding and much more. For more information, visit www.irlandmarks.org.

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