CITY OF MALIBU
Official Press Release

April 15, 2026

Malibu to MRCA: Stop the Spin — Our Lawsuit Protects Trail Users, Does Not Restrict Their Access

(Malibu, CA) - April 15, 2026 - The City of Malibu is deeply troubled by the misleading **Instagram post** published by MRCA Parks, which falsely implies that the City is attempting to close Escondido Canyon Park or block the public from using local trails. That claim is factually wrong, and MRCA knows it after reading our **press release** and **FAQ**.

Let us be unambiguous: Malibu has not closed, and is not seeking to close, Escondido Canyon Park or the Waterfalls. Nowhere in our complaint does the City seek to restrict public access. In fact, the entire purpose of this lawsuit is the opposite: to ensure that these trails are safe, properly managed, and accessible to everyone who wants to enjoy them.

What the City's lawsuit does address is a documented, years-long pattern of dangerous mismanagement by MRCA, including:

- Grossly inadequate brush and fuel clearance on MRCA's approximately 75,000 acres, less than 200 acres treated in the year before the Broad and Franklin Fires, which together burned thousands of acres, destroyed 20 homes, and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of Malibu residents.

- A chronic lack of parking forces trail users onto Pacific Coast Highway, one of the most dangerous roads in California. The City formally warned MRCA of this danger in writing as early as July 2024. MRCA ignored those warnings. On February 8, 2026, Joshua Farmer was struck and killed on PCH near Winding Way, adjacent to these very trails.

- Failure to consistently enforce sunset trail closures leaves hikers stranded in the dark and requires emergency response.

- Environmental damage to sensitive coastal resources and failure to comply with the California Coastal Act.

MRCA's attempt to reframe this lawsuit as an attack on public access does not address the serious safety and management failures documented in our complaint. Malibu did not take this step lightly. For more than a year, the City worked in good faith with MRCA to resolve these concerns collaboratively. When those efforts failed, legal action became our only option.

Malibu remains firmly committed to open-space preservation and public trail access. We urge MRCA to match that commitment, not with false Instagram posts designed to inflame the public, but with the responsible, sustained vegetation management and safety measures that the law requires and that our community deserves.

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