

From: [Andrew Hsu](#)
To: [P&R Comm](#)
Subject: Public Comment on (upper) Ralston road safety for bicycles and pedestrians
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2021 6:10:47 PM

Dear Parks and Rec Commissioners:

I am a long time resident of the Belmont-San Carlos area, a father of three and an experienced cyclist that rides upper Ralston on my bicycle nearly every day. Sadly, I am unable to attend tonight's meeting but would like to add my thoughts.

First, the work you are doing to improve Belmont is greatly appreciated, especially the attention to the efforts to build community by improving the local parks.

One of my concerns is the safety of pedestrian and bike travel in Belmont, especially for seniors and and for children going to school and accessing those parks. While I bike on upper Ralston daily, this road is extremely dangerous for most cyclists, as cars routinely travel 40+ mph (even 50+) on a road with no bike lanes and narrow shoulders. Additionally, traffic congestion during school commute hours is awful, but I believe most parents would not feel safe letting their children cycle or walk to schools. They are missing out on a great experience that includes exercise and building independence as well as the obvious community and environmental benefits we all reap when we use our cars less.

I am aware of Assembly Bill AB43 becoming law and making it feasible for Belmont to regulate the speed on the major arteries to schools and to access parks. I would like to see the speed on roads like Ralston and Alameda de las Pulgas reduced to 25 mph and speed bumps placed by the school zones. I would like to see police enforcement of traffic rules during the school commute hours. I see those things as "baby steps" that would not require much more expensive but greatly needed infrastructure changes such as protected bike lanes on those streets.

Thanks for your efforts and please consider these options.

Respectfully,
Andrew Hsu
San Carlos Resident (former Belmont resident)
Advocacy director, Peninsula Velo
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Board of Directors
Advisor, San Carlos Bikes!
Advisor, Carlmont HIgh School e-Bike club.

From:
To: [P&R Comm](#)
Subject: Park and Rec Commission Meeting 9/30/2021
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2021 12:41:40 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

Dear Park and Rec Commisioners

Regretfully I am unable to attend tonight's meeting. I appreciate the work you are doing to improve Belmont.

We have a big interest in increasing bicycle and pedestrian safety in Belmont. We'd like to increase percentage of students who can bicycle to school safely, have a safe place to leave their bikes, to reduce car traffic and promote independence in kids, as well as the health benefits. We also are interested in safe cycling for all community members. Right now I will not ride on Ralston; the area from Alameda heading west towards Highway 92 and the bike bridge is too dangerous with cars going 40 mph (and often faster) with no bike lane or protection. If I won't ride, I don't expect the Ralston Middle School community to feel safe riding either. With nearly all students getting transported in cars, traffic on Ralston is out of control. Encouraging students to walk or ride to school when we can ensure student safety is critical and would help meet several of your goals including making users feel safe, improving environmental resilience and sustainability (reducing traffic), and advancing community health and well-being by increasing physical activity.

Ultimately protected bike lanes on Ralston would be ideal, even if it means reducing the median. Short-term changes should involve reducing the speed limit on Ralston to 25 mph all the time. This would need enforcement, and could be facilitated with traffic warming techniques like speed bumps/humps that are being used in other parts of Belmont.

From: [Arnold Berman](#)
To: [P&R Comm](#)
Subject: PARK AND REC COMMISSION MEETING
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2021 12:39:17 PM

Sent from my iPad

Dear Parks and Rec Commissioners:

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend tonight's meeting but would like to add my thoughts.

Firstly, the work you are doing to improve Belmont is greatly appreciated, especially the attention to the efforts to build community by improving the local parks.

One of my concerns is the safety of pedestrian and bike travel in Belmont for seniors like myself and for the children going to school and accessing those parks. I live in the Cipriani neighborhood and enjoy going to nearby Waterdog Park walking or cycling. I have stopped cycling on the Ralston corridor to Hallmark, Canada Rd and Sawyer Camp trails as I do not feel safe cycling next to cars going 40+ mph on a road with no bike lanes and narrow shoulders. I will put the bike on a car and begin cycling outside Belmont. Likewise, I do not use my bike to go to Carlmont to shop or have coffee, for the same reason. The congestion during school commute hours is awful, but I believe most parents would not feel safe letting their children cycle or walk to schools as I did at that age. They

are missing out on a great experience that includes exercise and building independence as well as the obvious community and environmental benefits we all reap when we use our cars less.

I am aware of Assembly Bill AB43 becoming law and making it feasible for Belmont to regulate the speed on the major arteries to schools and to access parks. I would like to see the speed on roads like Ralston and Alameda de las Pulgas reduced to 25 mph and speed bumps placed by the school zones. I would like to see police enforcement of traffic rules during the school commute hours. I see those things as “baby steps” that would not require much more expensive but greatly needed infrastructure changes such as protected bike lanes on those streets.

Thanks for your efforts and please consider these options.

Sincerely, Arnie Berman

From: [Daniel Lovik](#)
To: [P&R Comm](#)
Subject: Waterdog for Everyone!
Date: Sunday, September 12, 2021 4:17:48 PM

Hi,

I rode Waterdog today with a good friend and we had a nice time. All others we met (hikers, bikers etc) were all very nice.

Please keep this park open for all activities!

Enjoy the adventure,

Daniel

From: [Deniz Bolbol](#)
To: [Ulla Foehr](#); [Chuck Cotten](#); [Craig Michaels](#); [Austin Lee](#); [Nicki Fox](#); [Avery Lyford](#); [Karl Mittelstadt](#); [Sanaa Kapur](#); [Jackson Gibbs](#); [Brigitte Shearer](#)
Subject: Research on Presence of Humans Disturbing Wildlife
Date: Saturday, September 11, 2021 12:37:46 PM

Hello P&R Commissioners & Director,

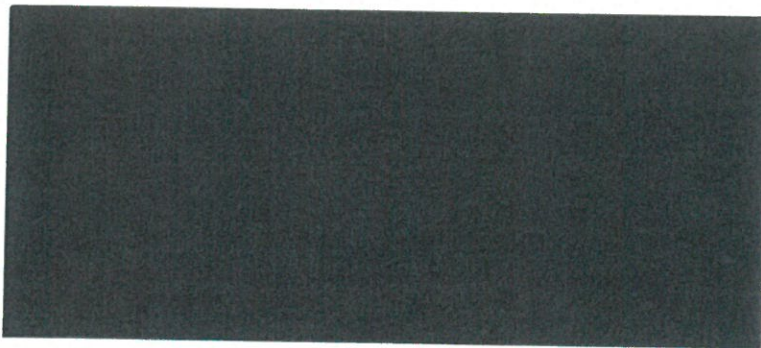
As per my public comments at the last Commission meeting, I hope you will take time to read the well-documented article below that addresses the negative impact human presence has on wildlife in open spaces. The article discusses how wildlife is pushed out - not only from the immediate area where the human usage occurs but also from a zone around that usage. This causes wildlife to lose access to important habitats and forces them to find other places to live (in our case usually streets and neighborhoods).

This issue, the disturbance caused by human presence, is directly related to trail density in open spaces: the more trails, the fewer places where wildlife can live (forage, nest, rest, etc) in a safe, undisturbed environment.

I hope you will consider wildlife when you make decisions about recreational usage of our open space. What some may consider a "playground" for their recreational usage is our wildlife's only natural habitat home in the area ... a home that is quickly deteriorating.

Thank you for your consideration.
Deniz Bolbol

[Don't hike so close to me: How the presence of humans can disturb wildlife up to half a mile away](#)



Don't hike so close to me: How the presence of humans can disturb wildli...

The presence of humans, or even the existence of the trails they hike on, can have detrimental effects on wildlife

Don't hike so close to me: How the presence of humans can disturb wildlife up to half a mile away

The presence of humans, or even the existence of the trails they hike on, can have detrimental effects on wildlife

By **SARAH REED - COURTNEY LARSON - JEREMY DERTIEN** PUBLISHED JULY 20, 2021 8:30AM (EDT)



Visitors hike the Vernal Fall trail in Yosemite National Park, California. Yosemite is one of the most popular national park destinations. (Sean Gallup/Getty Images)

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This article was originally published on [The Conversation](#).

Millions of Americans are traveling this summer as pandemic restrictions wind down. [Rental bookings](#) and





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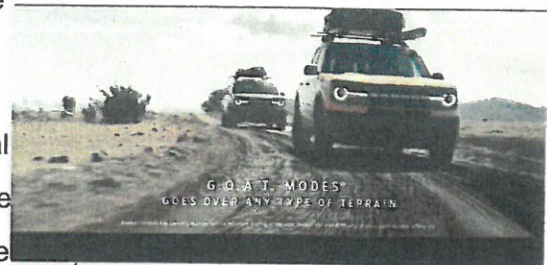
In a **recent review** of hundreds of studies covering many species, we found that the presence of humans can alter wild animal and bird behavior patterns at much greater distances than most people may think. Small mammals and birds may change their behavior when hikers or birders come within 300 feet (100 meters) – the length of a football field. Large birds like eagles and hawks can be affected when humans are over 1,300 feet (400 meters) away – roughly a quarter of a mile. And large mammals like elk and moose can be affected by humans up to 3,300 feet (1,000 meters) away – more than half a mile.

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Many recent studies and reports have shown that the world is facing a **biodiversity crisis**. Over the past 50 years, Earth has lost so many species that many scientists believe **extinction** – due mainly to human activities.

Ad (0:24)



Protected areas, from local open spaces to national parks, are vital also are places where people like to spend time in nature. We believe should understand and respect this balance between outdoor recre

How human presence affects wildlife



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change their behavior in response to human activities.

Decades of research have shown that outdoor recreation, whether it's hiking, cross-country skiing or riding all-terrain vehicles, **has negative effects on wildlife**. The most obvious signs are behavioral changes: Animals may flee from nearby people, decrease the time they feed and abandon nests or dens.

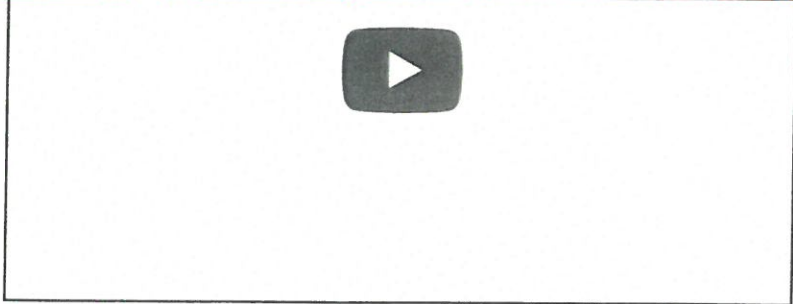
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A promotional graphic for "Salon Talks" with a red background. It features two video thumbnails. The left one shows Mary Elizabeth Williams with the text "MARY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS SALON". The right one shows Patricia Cornwell with the text "PATRICIA CORNWELL AUTHOR, 'AUTOPSY'". Below the thumbnails is the text "is the food,". The "salon talks" logo is in the top right corner.

Other effects are harder to see, but can have serious consequences for animals' health and survival. Wild animals that detect humans can experience physiological changes, such as increased heart rates and elevated levels of stress hormones.

And humans' outdoor activities can degrade habitat that wild species reproduction. **Human voices, off-leash dogs and campsite overuse** unusable for many wild species.





Disturbing shorebirds can cause them to stop eating, stop feeding their young or flee their nests, leaving chicks vulnerable.

Effects of human presence vary for different species

For our study we examined 330 peer-reviewed articles spanning 38 years to locate thresholds at which recreation activities negatively affected wild animals and birds. The main thresholds we found were related to distances between wildlife and people or trails. But we also found other important factors, including the number of daily park visitors and the decibel levels of people's conversations.

The studies that we reviewed covered over a dozen different types of motorized and nonmotorized recreation. While it might seem that motorized activities would have a bigger impact, some studies have found that dispersed "quiet" activities, such as day hiking, biking and wildlife viewing, can also affect which wild species will use a protected area.

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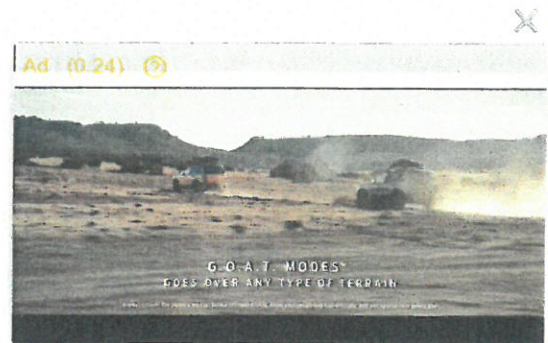
that

have been historically hunted are more likely to recognize – and flee from – a person walking than a person in a motorized vehicle.

Generally, larger animals need more distance, though the relationship is clearer for birds than mammals. We found that for birds, as bird size increased, so did the threshold distance. The smallest birds could tolerate humans within 65 feet (20 meters), while the largest birds had thresholds of roughly 2,000 feet (600 meters). Previous research has found a similar relationship. We did not find that this relationship existed as clearly for mammals.

We found little research on impact thresholds for amphibians and reptiles, such as lizards, frogs, turtles and snakes. A growing body of evidence shows that amphibians and reptiles are disturbed and negatively affected by recreation. So far, however, it's unclear whether those effects reflect mainly the distance to people, the number of visitors or other factors.

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Human recreation starts to affect wild creatures' behavior and physical state at different distances. Small mammals and birds tolerate closer recreation than do larger birds of prey and large mammals. Sarah Markes, CC BY-ND

How to reduce your impact on wildlife

While there's much still to learn, we know enough to identify some simple actions people can take to minimize their impacts on wildlife. First, keep your distance. Although some species or individual animals will become used to human presence at close range, many others won't. And it can be hard to tell when you are stressing an animal and potentially endangering both it and yourself.

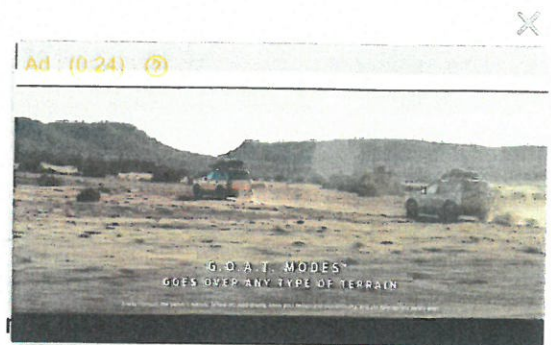
Second, respect closed areas and stay on trails. For example, in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, wildlife managers **seasonally close some backcountry ski areas** to protect critical habitat for bighorn sheep and reduce stress on other species like moose, elk and mule deer. And rangers in Maine's Acadia National Park **close several trails annually near peregrine falcon nests**. This reduces stress to nesting **endangered species recover**.





Getting involved with educational or volunteer programs is a great way to learn about wildlife and help maintain undisturbed areas. As our research shows, balancing recreation with conservation means opening some areas to human use and keeping others entirely or mostly undisturbed.

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As development **fragments wild habitat** and climate change forces movement corridors between protected areas become even more important. Our research suggests that creating recreation-free wildlife corridors of at least 3,300 feet (1,000 meters) wide can enable most species to

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Jeremy Dertien, PhD Candidate in Forestry and Environmental Conservation, [Clemson University](#) ; Courtney Larson, Adjunct Assistant Professor, [University of Wyoming](#), and Sarah Reed, Affiliate Faculty in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, [Colorado State University](#)

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From:
To: [P&R Comm](#)
Subject: agenda item 6c, Presentation and Outdoor Recreation suggestions
Date: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 2:36:06 PM

Hi,

I just heard that there is a meeting tonight to discuss outdoor recreation in Belmont. I am unable to attend but feel strongly that Belmont needs safer streets for cycling, with protected lanes on Ralston from beginning to end. Kids need a safe lane to get to and from school and activities, and other commuters and recreational riders need safe lanes to ride. Most neighboring cities have provided safe bicycle lanes and it is time Belmont creates them before we have more tragedies.

Thank you.

Susan Tobachnik