



# Caspers Wilderness Park

33491 Ortega Highway  
P.O. Box 395  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
949-923-2210

WILDERNESS  
PARK

DAY USE: 7:00 A.M. – SUNSET | TRAILS: MAY BE CLOSED FOR UP TO THREE DAYS FOLLOWING RAIN

*Caspers Wilderness Park is an 8,000-acre protected preserve nestled among the river terraces and sandstone canyons of the western coastal Santa Ana Mountains. The largest park in the OC Parks system, its many fertile valleys are complemented by groves of native Coast Live Oaks and magnificent stands of California Sycamore. Seasonal wildflower displays and running streams add to this wilderness park's rich beauty, and abundant wildlife can be seen from the park's numerous trails.*

## CASPER'S WILDERNESS PARK AMENITIES.



## A BRIEF HISTORY.

The land that is now Caspers Wilderness Park was originally occupied by the Juaneños, a hunting and gathering tribe of Native Americans. Spain took control of the area beginning with the arrival of the Portola Expedition in 1769. Spanish land grants followed, with Juan Forster acquiring 226,000 acres, the Rancho Santa Marguerita y las Flores, in the 1840s.

Early in the 20th century, the O'Neill family acquired all of the rancho within Orange County and established the Rancho Santa Marguerita Company. In 1941, the O'Neill's sold a parcel of 10,152 acres to Eugene Starr, and the property, with Bell Canyon serving as its backbone, became the Starr Ranch. Following Starr's death in 1963, the Starr Foundation was established to manage the property.

In 1973, the foundation deeded the northern portion of the ranch to the National Audubon Society for a wildlife sanctuary. The southern portion, 5,500 acres, was later purchased in 1974 by the Orange County Board of Supervisors under the direction of Chairman Ronald W. Caspers for use as a regional park.

In April 1974, the Starr Viejo Regional Park was opened as a wilderness day use and camping facility. Later that year, Ronald W. Caspers, along with members of his family and friends, were lost at sea off the coast of Baja California, and the Board of Supervisors changed the name of the park to Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park in his honor.

In 1984, the park was expanded to its present size of approximately 8,000 acres through the acquisition of additional land from the Rancho Santa Marguerita Company.

## HORSE RIDING AND CAMPING

Caspers Wilderness Park has equestrian facilities not only for riding, but also for camping. You can ride all day, then serenade your horse and fellow campers at night with your six-string and harmonica.

## WATCH FOR FOSSILS

This entire park used to be covered by the Pacific Ocean. If you keep a sharp eye out, especially in the park's riverbeds, you might see marine fossils that have washed down from the surrounding hills.

## A BEAUTIFUL WAY TO GET WATER

Located in the Old Corral day use area is a historic windmill. It was originally used to pump water from a 50-foot deep well to a nearby cattle trough. It's no longer used to pump water, but it still brings enjoyment to those who view it.



**"Take a walk on the Nature Trail. You can stroll under a beautiful, shady canopy provided by the Sycamores and Live Oaks. If you're quiet, you might be able to spot a mule deer grazing on the grass."**



## WISH YOU COULD DO MORE? YOU CAN.



## DO YOUR KIDS LIKE TO HIKE?

They won't know until they try. For many people, their first walk along a shady dirt path begins a lifelong love and appreciation for the amazing beauty and magnificence that's found only in nature.



## STAR GAZE

Experience the sky in a whole new way at Caspers Wilderness Park. Watch the moon rise, look for constellations or catch a shooting star from the comfort of your campsite.

## SORRY BOY, NOT THIS TIME.

We're dog lovers too, but wilderness parks just aren't the right parks for dogs. Dogs affect the native animals in unnatural ways. When marking their territory, dogs signal the animals that there's a predator in the area, which affects feeding and even breeding patterns. We know your dog is part of the family, but when you visit Caspers Wilderness Park, please leave him or her at home.

It's a big job maintaining a wilderness park. If you feel like pitching in, we can always use an extra set of hands. Volunteer opportunities include trail docents (guides), mountain bike trail assistants, backcountry trail maintenance and more. If you're over 18 and feel like getting some exercise that also benefits others, please call the park office.

**PARK OFFICE HOURS:** MON. – FRI. 7:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

**CAMPING:** CHECK-IN 2:00 P.M., CHECK-OUT 12:00 P.M.

For interpretive hikes and astronomy programs, contact the park office at 949-923-2210.

866-OC PARKS | [casperwilderness.park@ocparks.com](http://casperwilderness.park@ocparks.com) | [www.ocparks.com/caspers](http://www.ocparks.com/caspers)

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OC Parks has been entrusted with the care and protection of this park. Help us preserve our county's natural and cultural resources for your and your fellow guests' future enjoyment. Please check with your Park Ranger for this park's specific rules, or see them online at [www.ocparks.com](http://www.ocparks.com).

