

California Man Claims Mountain Lion Attack

Investigators find no evidence to support hiker's story.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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No proof of a cougar has been found near the Orange County, Calif., hiking spot where a man said he was attacked by a female mountain lion trying to protect her three cubs, said Marisa O'Neil, Orange County Parks public affairs specialist.

"California Fish and Game did not find any evidence of a cougar," she said Thursday, a day after the reported attack which resulted in a lockdown at a nearby elementary school that lasted several hours.

At approximately 9 a.m. Wednesday, park officials temporarily closed Limestone Canyon and Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park, after an unconfirmed report of a mountain lion attack. Based on an investigation by the California Department of Fish and Game and the recommendation of the Orange County Sheriff's Department, OC Parks decided to reopen the park at 6 p.m. Thursday, according to O'Neil.

"Public safety officials found no substantiated threat to public safety," she said in a statement. Hikers are urged to use caution and be aware of their surroundings when entering wilderness areas.

The report is under investigation.