

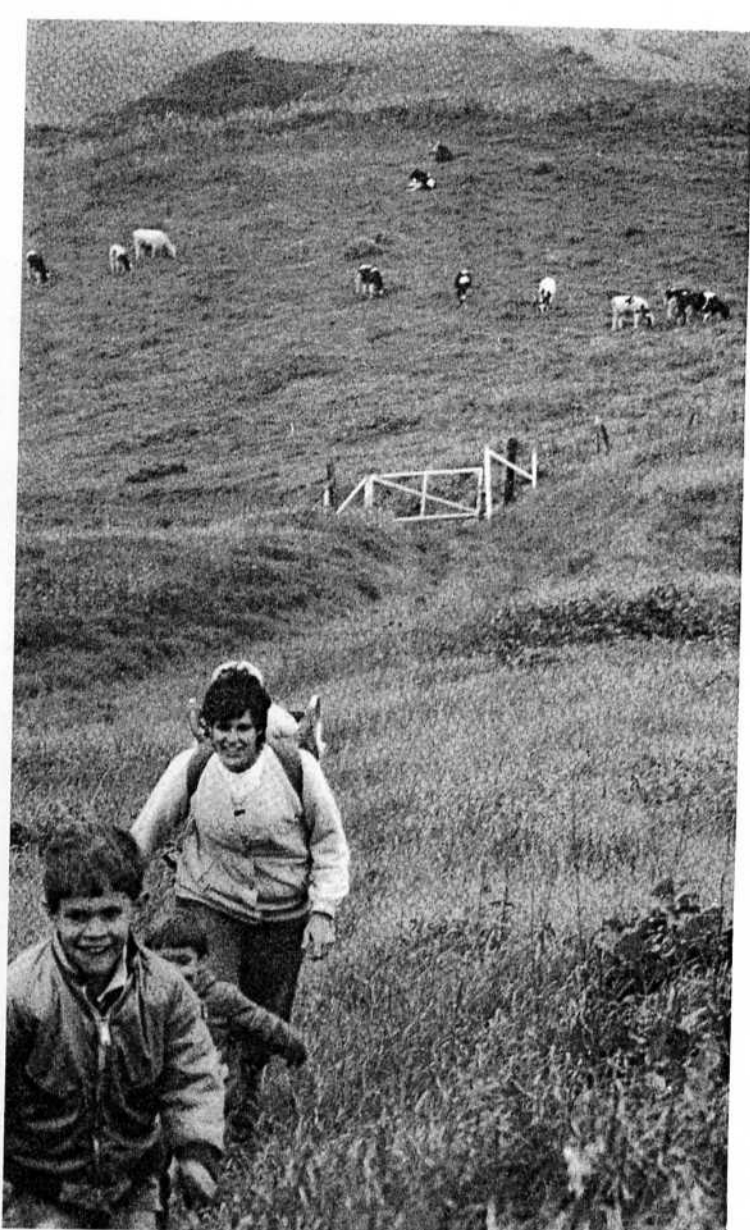


Ranger station—former ranch headquarters—is a short walk from the road; pictograph points the way



Mounted volunteers patrol park on weekends, directing visitors, giving first aid

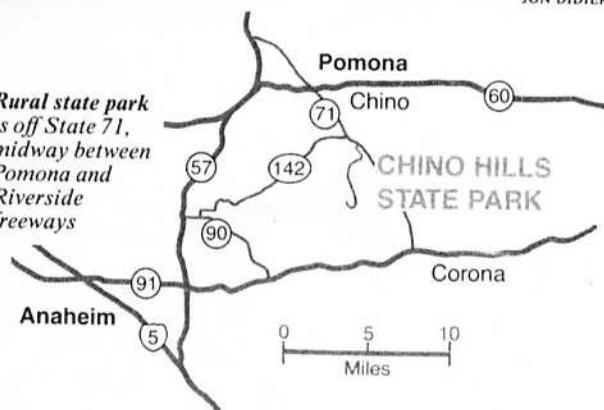
Wading through knee-deep grass, visitors climb knoll to overlook



JON DIDIER

California's newest state park, 10,000-acre Chino Hills

Rural state park is off State 71, midway between Pomona and Riverside freeways



The bucolic setting of Chino Hills—California's newest state park—would seem miles from its urban surroundings. Only the overhead power lines give away that its scenic hills are within an hour of half the state's population.

Although virtually undeveloped, the 9,735-acre park has many attractions. Hikers can enjoy a 2-mile walk along a creek, returning on an old road through one of the state's largest remaining groves

of Southern California black walnut trees. Picnickers will find cool shade under sycamores at eight tables in the primitive campground, where campers can set up for \$3 a night. Miles of unmarked riding trails beckon equestrians.

Chino Hills—off State Highway 71 between Chino and Corona—has been open 9 to 5 daily since January. (Formerly, it was open weekends and holidays only.)

The park is the state's most expensive

ever, with some \$47 million spent to date and hopes to acquire—through purchase or donation—a total of 13,000 acres. Development plans include 35 miles of hiking and 62 miles of riding trails, as well as two more entry roads and several camping and picnic areas.

The approach to the park

To reach the entrance from the Pomona Freeway (State 60), drive south on the



Bird-watchers hoping to spy resident albino red-tailed hawk get ranger's help atop knoll at scenic overlook

Corona Freeway (State 71). Turn right onto Los Serranos Road, then make a quick left onto Pomona-Rincon Road.

Just beyond a brickyard, an easement road at 15838 Pomona-Rincon Road leads to the park entrance. (The park is marked only from the opposite direction.) You'll be on a dirt road from this point, so call ahead for road conditions during wet weather: (714) 597-1541 from 8 to 5 weekdays. There's a per-car charge of \$2 at the gate; dogs cost 50 cents.

Dotting the hills around you, yellow monkey flowers and a smattering of late-season lupine may still color the ripening grass. Near the road, black-and-white Holsteins munch quietly, reminders of the farms that once covered much of the country. As you pass through the park gate, look for the mouth of a badger's burrow.

Hikes and camping off the main road

From the main dirt road, you can reach all park facilities. About a mile beyond the entrance, a turnoff on the left leads to a scenic view point. Two miles in, watch for the entrance to the campground (water, chemical toilets) on the left. At the crest of the hill just beyond the campground, you'll see the equestrian staging area (water trough, chemical toilets) for unloading horse trailers. A sign, about ½ mile up the road, directs you to the park office and ranger station; the road soon dead-ends at the hiking trailhead.

Before you set out on your own, be sure to stop at the ranger station for a good look at a large topographic map locating trails and facilities. Maps and brochures will be available later this year. □

Inside corral fence of former ranch, picnickers share table near ranger station

