

Cyclists accused of trespassing, bikes confiscated

By Lyndsay Winkley, San Diego Union Tribune

Mountain biker Damian Hiley was hours into a Saturday ride on a West Sycamore Canyon trail in Scripps Ranch – one he’s been excited to try out for some time – when he and his cycling group came upon a man standing in the middle of the trail, a gun at his hip.

“At first I thought they were looking for someone or that it was a police raid,” he said. “I was blown away when they told us we had stepped into the eastern boundary of the (Marine Corps Air Station Miramar) base.”

Hiley and his group were escorted around a bend where six to eight Marines in vests and flight suits stood next to a pile of bikes. The Marines explained the riders were being ticketed for trespassing on federal land and that their bicycles were being confiscated.

Marines issued tickets to 50 people for trespassing and impounded 45 bikes and three motorcycles over the weekend, said 1st Lt. Matthew Gregory, the base’s public affairs officer.

All the riders got a ticket and may have to pay a fine, depending on what a judge decides on their assigned court date, which could be four to six weeks away. The group was told they would get their bikes back after the ticket was handled.

Hiley’s group had no choice but to hike more than two miles back to their cars – in cycling shoes. They took a different

route back, and ended up passing signs that read, "Keep Out." If similar signs had been placed where they crossed into base, they would have been hard to miss, he said.

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