



# Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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## News Release

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### **Sheriff's Office Warns Public of Two Assaults And Seeks Public's Assistance**

**Goleta** – The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office has received two reports of assaults on women less than 72 hours apart in the Phelps Rd. and Haskell's Beach area. Similar suspect descriptions and motive leads the Sheriff's Office to believe these assaults are related.

On August 10, 2019 at approximately 12:45 in the afternoon, a 22-year-old woman was jogging on a dirt path along a creek in the area of Phelps Rd. and Ocean Walk Ln. As she jogged on the path, a man grabbed her by the arm, spinning her around towards him. The man grabbed her by the arm and shoulder and attempted to pull her closer to him. The victim, carrying her house keys in her hand, punched at the man in attempt to break free. The assailant then punched the 22-year-old victim in the face, then released his grasp. The victim was able run away, ultimately escaping to her nearby home where she called 9-1-1. The suspect was described by the victim as a white male, 40-50 years old, average height and weight, with a dirty brown-white beard. He was wearing a black shirt and smelled heavily of alcohol. The victim only sustained minor injury (redness and swelling) to her face during the assault.

On August 12, 2019 at approximately 10:30 PM, an 18-year-old woman was sitting near her vehicle parked in the Haskell's Beach parking area, waiting for friends. She noticed a man sitting in a dark colored vehicle in the same parking lot. The man exited his car and approached her asking if she was ok. The man placed his hand on her back as he spoke. The man then reached under the front of her shirt and sexually assaulted her. The 18-year-old victim then kicked at the suspect, striking him in the groin area. The suspect then fled to his vehicle and drove away as the victim ran towards her friends to call for help. The suspect was described by the victim as a white male, 50-60 years old, average height and weight, darker hair that went over his ears and forehead, and a white beard. He was wearing blue jeans and a dark grey hoodie sweatshirt, and smelled of marijuana and dirt. The suspect's vehicle was described as an older model, 4-door compact, possibly dark grey in color, similar to a Chevy Volt.

Due to the similar suspect descriptions, relatively similar location (isolated areas near rural access), and proximity of the attacks, the Sheriff's Office believes these assaults have been perpetrated by the same suspect.

The Sheriff's Office is asking for assistance from the public in identifying the suspect involved. If you see anyone matching the suspect's description in these areas, you are urged to call 9-1-1. Based on the victim's accounts, the suspect is believed to be a white male, 40-60 years old, average height and weight (5'10''-6'00'' / 175-200 lbs.) with a dirty white beard, wearing mused clothing or dirty in appearance. The suspect may be driving a small older model four door vehicle similar to a Chevy Volt.

The Sheriff's Office would like to remind the public of several tips to staying safe while enjoying our parks and open spaces:

- **Share Your Itinerary:** Let family or friends know where you are going, and when you expect to return.
- **Exercise in the Daylight:** When possible, enjoy the outdoors during daylight hours.
- **Carry a Cellphone:** Keep your cellphone accessible and fully charged so you can call for help if you sense trouble.
- **Safety in Numbers:** There is safety in numbers, avoid being in isolated places alone.
- **Limit the Music:** Cell Phone music apps and portable music devices can create a distraction and limit your senses to danger.
- **Take a Self Defense Class:** Understand your own abilities to defend yourself, and build your confidence.
- **Stay Alert:** One of the most important elements of your personal safety is your awareness of your surroundings. Stay alert to unusual places, persons and situations that make you feel uncomfortable. Your eyes, ears and intuition can be some of your greatest sources of self-protection.

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