



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



JANUARY WORK PARTY

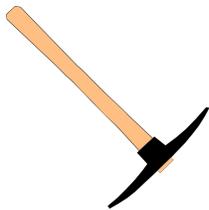
The next work party will be on the

Upper Hummingbird Trail
on
Saturday, January 18, 2003

Meet on Kuehner Drive just north of the 118 freeway at 8:00AM. Several vehicles will then drive personnel up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead.

We will work from **8:00 AM to Noon**. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair



DECEMBER TRAIL WORK PARTY

Seven Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Hummingbird Trail for the December Trail Work Party. The ground was still damp from the rain and we lopped brush, pulled in trail berms, filled in ruts, dug water drainage dips and repaired rain-damaged trail edges. We worked from 8:00 AM to Noon and as usual met at Chuy's on our way home. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrom, Al Bandel, Louise Pomes, Chuck Portoghesi, John Sabol and Don Steeley.

Work Parties Chair

INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN ROCK ART

Over the years I have had a passing interest in visiting Indian rock art sites, photographing the motifs, and in some cases recording them. I often include rock art in slide shows about the Chumash and other Indian groups. Those images, after all, are the closest form of a lexicon or writing that we have. Again and again, the question arises about the meaning of images. I have often rendered my own interpretation of some of the images. In some cases the interpretation is simple - such as "an eagle dancer," a "big horned sheep," an "atalatl," or a "rattlesnake." Those interpretations are superficial at best and in some cases may be wrong. They do not tell us why they were made

The fact is that it is very difficult to interpret images from a very different long gone culture. It is likely that interpretations of the meaning of some of that rock art even by contemporaries of those who make the images would not always be correct. Like me, you have probably observed graffiti on railroad cars, freeway retaining walls and overpasses, etc. and wondered what they mean. Attempts at interpretation by an individual of an alien culture sometimes thousands of years removed strikes me as feeble at best.

A review of the recorded oral tradition of Indian groups presents some promise of added insights into the meaning of rock art. Dr. David S. Whitley, an archaeologist who has contributed many insights into the interpretation of rock art, suggests that reviewing the oral tradition of groups can provide some insights. In his work in the Coso Range on the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, he uses oral history of several nearby groups in drawing the conclusion that the rainmaking shaman had big horned sheep as traditional "dream helpers" and that rattlesnakes were often associated with the rainmaking ritual. The great abundance of the big horned sheep motif in the Great Basin has often been attributed to "hunting magic." However, Dr. Whitley argues convincingly that rainmaking is the real significance of those images. Certainly, it is unlikely that big horned sheep were ever abundant enough to offer a major source of food for Great Basin peoples.

Certainly, a complete inventory of rock art, the ages of the rock art, and their environmental setting is a first step if we are to have any meaningful discussion

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed in Corriganville, to take school children on docent hikes during the week. No prior training is necessary. We will train you.

Learn about the history of Corriganville and native plants and animals, and pass this knowledge on to others.

For more information or to become a volunteer, please contact Colleen Janssen at 805-584-4453.

RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the
Community Center
Room B-1
1692 Sycamore Drive
At 7:00 PM
On

SPANISH/MEXICAN TRAILS

Early Spanish travelers were probably guided by Indians. In any case, they traveled routes already established by the Indians. During the Mission Period, the route up and down California ran from mission to mission, and the shortest route between Mission San Buenaventura and the San Fernando Mission, was through Simi Valley.

It was the El Camino Real, or King's Highway. That route ran over Santa Susana Pass, following an Indian trail, across Simi Valley north of the Arroyo Simi, crossing the Arroyo Simi about where Erringer Road crosses today. It then ran westerly south of the Simi, or Pico Adobe, out the Tierra Rejada Valley, and through the Los Posas Valley.

Alfred Robinson, in *Life in California*, describes a night spent at the Simi Adobe on his way to the Pueblo de Los Angeles in the 1830s. The 1858 U.S. Government survey of the area exhibits an east-west trail just north of the Arroyo Simi at present day Tapo Street. According to Historian Charles F. Outland, until the 1860s, it is unlikely that any wheeled vehicle ever crossed Santa Susana Pass. There simply was no mechanism established to improve the trail for use by wagons.

With the secularization of the missions in 1834, the main route up and down California in this area ran between significant settlements. So the main route shifted south of the Simi Hills to what we now refer to as the "101 corridor." That route ran from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara. The old route between Ventura and the "Sime" and on to San Fernando remained and is shown on the 1858 map.

It does appear that by 1834 there were at least three routes from the San Fernando Valley to the pass. In an 1834 report to Mexico on the precinct of the Presidio of Santa Barbara, it is reported that besides the route to the east in Simi Valley, there were three routes to the west - Quimisa Road, Tierra "*Rajada*" Road and the Simi Road.

Quimisa Road ran along the northern

side of the Arroyo Simi toward Moorpark, following the old Chumash Indian trail to the village of *Kimishax* (*Quimisas*) in present day Happy Camp Canyon. The Tierra "*Rajada*" Road was the El Camino Real. The Simi Road ran between the Simi Adobe and the Conejo Valley through present day Wood Ranch. It too followed the route of an old Indian trail to and from the Chumash village of *Simi'*. The 1858 survey exhibits a "trail" through the pass between Simi Valley and the Conejo Valley. All of these "roads" of course were little more than trails.

The trail between the Simi Adobe and the De la Guerra Adobe ran down Tapo Canyon, then westerly north of the first ridge on the northern side of Simi Valley, and then down Dry Canyon through the present day Lost Canyons golf courses. The trail, according to the 1858 survey, hugged the base of the hills over to the mouth of Sand Canyon and then south-westerly to the Simi Adobe. It too probably followed the old Indian trail between the Chumash villages of "*Simi*" and "*Ta'apu*."

The Dominguez Trail was noted by the archaeologist Richard Van Volkanburg as extending between the village of *Ta'apu* northerly over the head of Las Lajas Canyon, through Brown's Canyon into the San Fernando Valley. A similar trail extended up Las Lajas Canyon to Brown's Canyon into the San Fernando Valley.

There also seems to have been an early Spanish trail which came over the hills from the top of Woolsey Canyon down to the hanging valley on the northern edge of the former Sage Ranch, and hence down the eastern fork of Meier Canyon. There is still remnant Spanish graffiti along the route.

Finally, there was an old trail north out of the Tapo over the Santa Susana Mountains down to Camulos on the Santa Clara River. That trail was the old Indian trail to the village of *Ta'apu*. It may have been used by members of the Portola Expedition in 1769, and certainly was

THE OAK WOODLANDS PLANT COMMUNITY

The Oak Woodland Plant Community occupies canyon bottoms and shaded hillsides. Dominated by the coast live oak in the better shaded areas and by the valley oak on broad flats, with an understory of other trees, shrubs, annual and perennial grass species, and herbaceous plants, this vegetative community has long given way to agricultural clearing, fuel, wood cutting, and urbanization.

"Sherwood Forest" of Corriganville fame is made up almost entirely of coast live oaks, while the "*El Roblaro*," or more open oak grassland which once occupied the eastern end of Simi Valley was made up primarily of valley oaks. Oak Canyon off of Long Canyon in Wood Ranch remains as does the coast live oak forest on the western part of China Flat. (China Flat includes the largest poison oak plant that I have ever seen. The trunk is about nine (9) inches in diameter and the upper story of the plant occupies the canopy of a coast live oak. This massive poison oak plant is very likely 50-100 years old.) The Santa Susana Knoll also is an oak woodland - which along with the massive sandstone rock outcropping of the Chatsworth Formation is what gives the Knolls much of its charm.

Characteristic plants of the Oak Woodlands Plant Community include:

Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

Valley Oak (*Q. lobata*)

Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)

Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)

California Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*)

Purple Nightshade (*Solanum Xanti*)

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)



Lower Zuma Canyon Trail

People (left to right): Tom Frye, Arlene Altshuler, Chuck Portoghesi, Sheri Hastings, Terry DeSilva, and Mike

THE CALIFORNIA RED-LEGGED FROG (*Rana aurora draytonii*)

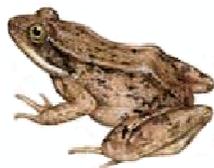
The California red-legged frog is the largest native frog in the western United States. It was widespread in California's perennial streams and was the topic of Mark Twain's "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." Since the beginning of the California gold rush, the red-legged frog has been eliminated from more than 70 percent of its habitat.

Beginning in 1849, whole mountains were washed away in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada as part of the widespread placer mining. Nearly every stream on the eastern side of the Central Valley of California was choked with silt and sediments, destroying thousands of acres of frog habitat. It was an enormous ecological disaster.

During the late 1800s and the early 1900s the red-legged frog was harvested for food in the San Francisco Bay area and the Central Valley, with approximately 80,000 frogs harvested each year. As the harvest declined, the bullfrog was introduced (in 1896) to help satisfy the demand for frog legs. As a result, the red-legged frog soon became prey for the much larger bullfrog. The predation of bullfrogs on red-legged frogs continues to be a major factor in the decline of this native species.

During the late-1800s, the Central Valley was converted first to grazing land and dryland farming, and then water was diverted from streams for irrigation. Riparian habitat was stripped and streams were channelized. Livestock grazing stripped away vegetation and broke down the banks along streams, further eliminating red-legged frog habitat. These changes resulted in the loss of more than 90 percent of the riparian habitat, with most of the loss occurring before 1939. The red-legged frog was eliminated from the Central Valley by 1960, and the historic populations in the Sierra Nevada foothills were greatly reduced by the construction of multiple reservoirs on nearly every stream, the introduction of exotic species, and drought.

The present distribution ranges from Sonoma and Butte counties in the north to Riverside County in the south. The frog is found primarily in the wetlands and coastal drainages of central California. Only four sites in its entire former range are thought to support more than 350 individuals. To date, none have been found in Simi Valley. This is the sad state of the California red-legged frog.



[Source: Trends and Solutions: A Quad Knopf Inc.

CURING AND TAPO BRANDY

Between 1912 and 1915, John P. Harrington, an anthropologist and linguist with the American Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institute, intensely interviewed Fernando Librado, *Kitsepawit*, a Chumash Indian. Fernando had been born sometime between 1804 and 1820. In any event, he had vivid memories of life during the Mission, Mexican and Anglo-American periods of settlement in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. His words have been transcribed by Travis Hudson from Harrington's notes and are herein excerpted from *Breath of the Sun*. These stories provide valuable insights into Indian life during these periods as well as into the "old ways." The words in parentheses are offered to explain the text.

"...L.A.M. Ortega was working at the County Clerk's office in Santa Barbara, and he felt a pain in his chest. He went to our (Chumash Indian) doctors and several people, and all of them had given up the attempt to cure him. Ortega had even seen Dr. Brinkerhoff, having ridden around in the doctor's wagon with him. The Jose Garcia was the one, however, who effected a cure. He got a half gallon of brandy from Tapo, and he put dried leaves of yerba santa in it and set it outdoors over night, and in a cool place indoors during the day. (Yerba santa, or holy herb, was used for a variety of medical applications.) Each morning, for several days, Jose would rub this balsam on Ortega's chest and also gave him a small cup of it to drink. After a time Ortega noticed his pain was gone, and it has not returned to this day." (p. 57)

Grapes, for wine and brandy, were grown in Tapo Canyon from the Mission period onward, and the resulting spirits were transported throughout the region. Here we see a Chumash doctor using a traditional herbal cure with something (brandy) from the new culture.





January

2003



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gabe Sende</i> Happy New Year!	2 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	3	4 Los Robles See Schedule
5 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	6	7	8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Wayne Dunn</i>	9 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	10	11 Mishe Mokwa See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Laura Wood</i>
12 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	13	14	15 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	16 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	17	18 Hummingbird Creek Work Party See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Mary Falkenstein</i>	20	21	22	23 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	24	25 Palo Comado See Schedule
26 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Evelyn Bandel</i>	27	28	29	30 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Daniel DeGoey</i>	31	



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- January 2 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- January 4 Los Robles**
Leader's choice. Moderate 4 - 8 MRT. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Bring snack and 2 - 3 qts of water, wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- January 5 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 9 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- January 11 Circle X Ranch - Mishe Mokwa Trail to Sandstone Peak**
Moderate 7 MRT hike with 1500' elevation gain/loss. See a wide variety of vegetation, spectacular rock formations, and the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots.
- January 12 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 16 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- January 18 Hummingbird Creek Work Party**
Help maintain one of Simi Valley's more scenic trails. Directions - 118 Fwy to Kuehner exit. Meet north of freeway on Kuehner. We will be working from 8am - noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and
- January 19 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 23 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- January 25 Palo Comado Canyon**
Moderate to strenuous 10 MRT hike. Hike up Palo Comado Canyon, past the Sheep Corral and Sulphur Springs, and back along Cheesebro Canyon. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 qts. of water and snack, bug juice. Wear boots.
- January 26 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 30 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan

For more information on hikes/work parties, contact the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at 805-584-4400.

Special Note: - On all hikes and work parties, bring water and wear lug-soled boots. Hikes will be cancelled if it rains.

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345, WK (805)583-6776
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
SECRETARY:	STEFANI HOWARD	HM (818) 885-0407
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
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COMMUNICATION / PUB.CHAIR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735

-----cut out and return with your payment-----

MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a New () or Renewing () member of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers for the annual donation fee of:

Single.....\$10 Family..... \$15

Name(s) _____ Birth Mo. ____ Day ____

Address _____

Email Address _____ Phone wk/hm _____

How did you find out about the RSTB _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:
“Rancho Simi Foundation” mail it to **“RSTB, P.O. Box 630399, Simi Valley, Ca 93063-0399**
Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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