



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



ON THE EDGE

Do you want to get up close to a mountain lion and other wild animals you might encounter on the rural/urban fringe?

On Saturday March 11, 2006 at 1:30 pm, in the Multipurpose Room of the Rancho Santa Susana Community Center at 5005-C Los Angeles Avenue in Simi Valley, **The Mountain Lion Foundation** will present a program entitled:

"On the Edge"



Mountain Lion Cub
Photo is courtesy of the Mountain Lion Foundation

This program is a **live animal** presentation on wildlife/human conflict occurring on the urban edges, i.e., urban areas abutting natural areas, involving a variety of solutions to these encounters. The program will detail the specifics on each animal's biology and needs, resulting in an action/reaction resolution to the conflicts in urban backyards.

RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS

Are your old logo T-shirts worn out?

We still have short sleeve, long sleeve, and sweat shirts in assorted sizes and colors. Prices are:

- short sleeve \$12
- long sleeve \$14
- sweat shirt \$18



Please call Marty if you'd like to place an order: 805-526-4414.



Tish Adams



COVER FOR SPRING/SUMMER REPORTER

The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District is planning a cover for the Spring/Summer Reporter that will feature on-line registration for classes and programs. The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers have been invited to be included in the cover photograph.

The picture is planned for Saturday, January 21 (back-up rain date January 28) at 1:00 p.m. at the Rancho Simi Community Park Amphitheater (near the lagoon). The park is located near the northwestern corner of Erringer Road and Royal Avenue.

Please come dressed as hikers, i.e., the usual hiking cloths, walking stick, backpack and water bottle – or whatever. The Reporter goes out to every household in Simi Valley. Please let Mike Kuhn know if you plan to attend.

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be held at the Community Center

Room B-1
1692 Sycamore Drive
at 7:00 PM
on
January 18, 2006

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save these dates!

January 21 at 1pm

Pose for the Sprint/Summer Reporter cover – see article in column 2.

March 2nd – 5th

Death Valley hiking and camping trip – more information coming soon.

March 11th at 1:30pm

"On the Edge" live animal presentation – see article in column 1.

April 8th

Wildflower Walk – Antelope Valley – this will be an ALL DAY event.

Check out

<http://simitrailblazers.com>

for more information!

BUSH SUNFLOWER

California Encelia or Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*) is a sprawling woody perennial shrub from two to five feet high. It has bright yellow flowers with a dark center. This is a member of the *Asteraceae* family.

What appears to be a single flower is actually a cluster or head of flowers. The petals are each a ray flower and the center is made up of hundreds of disk flowers. The stems are covered with grayish-white fine hairs.

It is found in the Coastal Sage Scrub and the Chaparral plant associations.

Mike Kuhn



DECEMBER WORK PARTY – CHUMASH TRAIL

Our December 17 work party was held on the Chumash Trail. The primary focus was to reconstruct what is affectionately referred to as "ball bearing hill".

Much thanks to the efforts of Louise Pomes, John Sabol, Michael Kuhn, Alan Cueba, Bill Cespedes, Arlene Altshuler, and her wards Buffy and Champ.

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held **January 21**, on the **Lower StageCoach Trail**. See the hiking schedule for details.



Chumash Trail – ball bearing hill - Before and After
Photos by John Sabol



PEDRO FAGES' DESCRIPTION OF THE CALIFORNIA GRIZZLY BEAR

(from *A Historical, Political, and Natural Description of California* by Pedro Fages, translated by Herbert Ingram Priestley, Balena Press (1972), pp. 39-40)

Pedro Fages was second in command of the 1769 Portola expedition to settle Monterey. He gives the following description of California grizzly bears in San Luis Canyon – just up stream from present-day Avila Beach:

“In this canyon were seen whole troops of bears; they have the ground all plowed up from digging in it to find their sustenance in the roots which the land produces. They are ferocious brutes, hard to hunt; they attack the hunter with incredible quickness and courage, [so that] he can only escape on a swift horse. They do not give up unless they are shot either in the head or in the heart”.

This description closely parallels those of other explorers and mountain men. The grizzly bear was the ecological dominant in prehistoric California. While it is clear that California Indians occasionally killed grizzly bears, it is likely that they were much more frequently killed by bears. Their strategy for survival was to avoid grizzlies, including by setting fire to the natural vegetation around them every year. The grizzly preferred chaparral and dense woodlands and seemed to have avoided broad open areas. Since acorns were a favorite food of both the Indians and grizzly bears, acorn gathering in the fall must have been a risky business for the Indians.

Mike Kuhn

VALLEY OAK

The valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) is the largest of the three native oak trees in the Simi Valley area and the largest oak species in North America. The largest trees have massive trunks, often four to five feet in diameter – and elsewhere some have trunks that are seven to nine foot in diameter. Massive gnarly limbs are sometimes more than three feet in diameter. Some trees have spreads of more than 90 feet and occasionally attain heights of 100 feet. Some have been determined to be 1,000 or more years old, however, life spans of 500 to 700 years are far more common.

The eastern end of the valley floor, roughly east of Stearns Street, was dominated by an open stand of this oak. Valley oaks are winter-deciduous; that is they lose their leaves during the late-fall and remain barren through the winter months. This characteristic is possible in our summer drought environment because they only grow where their roots extend below the water table. Indeed, they are often referred to as “water oaks”.

As the trees get older, fire and insect damage, with the accompanying rotting of the heart wood, results in the loss, due to collapse, of massive limbs. Eventually, most of the upper story biomass is lost, leaving a massive trunk with a few small, re-sprouted limbs. The trees eventually die, allowing under story saplings to take their places.

The trunks are shielded by a thick bark that is the color of pewter and has a blocky structure like the back of an alligator. The leaves are one to two and one half inches long, are deeply lobed with a felt-like feel. The trees transpire massive quantities of water into the air. They generally thrive in deep, nutrient-rich soils. As a result, they grow rapidly and may achieve large size, with trunks of three to four feet in diameter in as little as 150 to 200 years. Because of the tendency for large branches to eventually collapse, slower growing trees, where conditions are less ideal, tend to live longer.

Valley Oaks are common throughout the Central Valley of California, the Coastal Ranges, the Tehachapi Range, the foothills of the Sierra Nevada and on Santa Catalina and Santa Cruz islands. A large stand has been preserved as a park along the eastern side of Interstate 5 north of Stockton. However, as in Simi Valley, most of the old growth valley oaks have been, and continue to be, cleared for grazing (Although studies now demonstrate that the grazing capacity of valley oak covered land is greater than for land that has been cleared.), agriculture and for firewood. When I was growing up, a neighbor who grew up in Fresno said that he had worked as a young man in cutting down valley oak trees for fuel wood. At that time people both cooked and heated with wood. He said that they had to travel out about 20 miles from town to find standing trees to cut down.

The valley oaks were the monarchs of our state - what a tragic loss.

Mike Kuhn

SHOLKOHO'ON

Richard Applegate, in "An Index of Chumash Placenames", *Papers on the Chumash*, San Luis Obispo County Archaeological Society, Occasional Paper Number Nine (1975), page 41, lists the placename "*sholkoho'on*" as a "Ventureño village near Simi". He does not cite a specific source for the name other than most are from the works of John Peabody Harrington. However, he also cites a number of other sources for some names. He also cites his own 1974 article on Chumash placenames as a source for many of the placenames in his 1975 work. *Sholkoho'on* is not discussed in his 1974 article. On the map, which accompanies his 1975 publication, *sholkoho'on* is placed on the northern side of the Arroyo Simi well east of Brea Canyon and well west of Meier Canyon. This name and its location have long puzzled me. I have not seen any source, other than Applegate, for the name and am unaware of even a rumor of an archaeological site that could represent *sholkoho'on*.

I now think that the answer may relate to the confusion caused by our current understanding by what we mean when we refer to "Simi" and what the Chumash were referring to when they spoke of "the *Simi*". The Chumash "*Simi*" was a geographical location that included what we now refer to as the Little Simi Valley as well as Simi Valley. In other words, the *Simi*' extended from Santa Susana Pass westerly nearly to modern-day Somis. Applegate's location for *sholkoho'on* can be explained by his imperfect knowledge of local Chumash geography. So, where might *sholkoho'on* have been?

Well, we are looking for a village-sized archaeological site in the *Simi*'. It so happens that there is a village-sized site, with a dependable water supply in Moorpark. As far as I know, no name is associated with that site. I have wondered about this lack of a name for such a large village site. Certainly it is too far removed from the fused shale deposits that were the *raison d'être* for the village of *Quimisac*. The fused shale deposits simply could not be guarded and controlled from a remote site. So that site is not an alternative site for the village of *Quimisac*. (Chumash villages were relocated every few years in order for the inhabitants to remove themselves from the accumulated organic refuse that was part and parcel with a lack of a sewer system and isolated garbage dump. Village sites inevitably got to smell pretty bad and developed a population of unwanted vermin.)

We still don't know for sure whether the village site in Moorpark is *sholkoho'on*. However, it seems like the best guess for the moment.

Mike Kuhn



Shooting Star
(*Dodecatheon clelandii sanctarum*)

PEDRO FAGES' DESCRIPTION OF YUCCA BULBS ROASTING

[from *A Historical, Political, and Natural Description of California* by Pedro Fages, translated by Herbert Ingram Priestley, Balena Press (1972), p. 50

Pedro Fages was second in command of the 1769 and 1770 Portola expeditions to Monterey. He later served as the most respected Spanish governors of California. This description reports on the roasting of yucca [*Yucca whipplei* ssp. *intermedia*] bulbs in pits in the earth. The description refers to the century plant; however, clearly, the plant involved was the yucca. No century plants or agaves were present in the San Luis Obispo area in 1769-1770.

"There is a great deal of century plant of the species which the Mexicans call *mescali*. The mode of using it is as follows: They make a hole in the ground, fill it in compactly with large firewood which they set on fire, and then throw on top a number of stones until the entire fire is covered but [not] smothered. When the stones are red hot, they place among them the bud of the plant; this they protect with grass or moistened hay, throwing on top a large quantity of earth, leaving it so for the space of twenty-four hours. The next day they take out their century plant roasted, or *tlatemado* as they say. It is juicy, sweet, and of a certain vinous flavor; indeed, very good wine can be made from it".

Many bulbs were actually gathered and roasted together – food for many people. The yucca would thus yield food throughout the years – a hedge against starvation. The Ventureño Chumash name for the yucca was *ta'apu*. In the Simi Valley area, the Indians named the largest village after the plant. The name "Tapo" comes down to us from the name of the village and the trails to the village.

Mike Kuhn



China Flat hike, left to right: Gary Cremeans, Bill Cespedes, Margarita Marsh, and Doug Marsh. Photo by John Sabol.



RSTB Calendar January 2006



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gabe Sende</i> <i>Karleen Volz</i>	2	3	4	5 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	6 <i>Happy birthday</i> <i>Tom Siebert</i>	7 Sandstone Peak See Schedule
8 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	9	10 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	11	12 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	13	14 Grotto Trail See Schedule
15 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	16	17 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	18 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	19 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy birthday</i> <i>Floyd Martin</i>	20	21 Work Party Lower StageCoach Trail See Schedule
22 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	23	24 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	25	26 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	27	28 Santa Paula Cyn See Schedule
29 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	30 <i>Happy birthday</i> <i>Daniel DeGoey</i>	31 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule				



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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Long Canyon

Meet at 6:30pm in Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Pkwy. (Moderate, 3.0 MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (Strenuous, 5.2 MRT)

JANUARY HIKES

January 7th - Sandstone Peak (via the Mishe Mokwa Trail)*

7 MRT - Moderate (1500' elevation gain/loss)

See a wide variety of vegetation, spectacular rock formations, and the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. Meet at 8AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

January 14th - Grotto Trail (Circle X)*

5 MRT - Moderate (700' elevation gain)

Traverse the Canyon View trail to the west fork of the Arroyo Sequit, down to "The Grotto". Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts water and snack, and a pair of shoes/sandals that you don't mind getting wet. Wear boots.

January 21th - Lower StageCoach Trail Work Party

Directions: Take Kuehner south, turn left onto Smith Rd, and follow it to the end of the street. Parking lot is on the left. Meet in Corriganville parking lot at 8am. We will be working from 8am – noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

January 28th - Santa Paula Canyon*

8.1 MRT - Moderate (1000' elevation gain)

The trail takes you through picturesque St. Thomas Aquinas College, then along the shady banks of Santa Paula Creek, with plentiful swimming holes, capped by a spectacular 25 foot waterfall just past Big Cone Camp. Bring 2 - 3 quarts water and snack, and a pair of shoes/sandals that you don't mind getting wet. Wear boots.

**** These hikes are not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.**

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.

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

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MEMBERSHIP

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

Single.....\$10

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How did you find out about the RSTB _____

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