



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



## SEPTEMBER WORK PARTY

Six Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to support the cleanup of the Arroyo Simi as part of Inland Waterway Cleanup on Coastal Cleanup Day, Saturday, September 20. We signed in, picked up trash collection bags and drinking water, then entered the arroyo. We didn't have to move far to start filling our bags.

Most of the trash removed from the arroyo consisted of bottles, cans, pieces of Styrofoam, plastic bags, and paper. Among the odd items were numerous shopping carts, 80 feet of fire hose, a roll of chain link fencing, a 4x8 sheet of plywood, a mattress, the plastic rear cover of a TV set, metal pipes and posts, a bicycle, a Daisy BB Gun, and a water fountain head.

As disheartening as it was to see that much trash, I was encouraged by the life I saw in the arroyo. I observed many schools of small fish, an occasional crayfish or frog, as well as ducks, sandpipers, and egrets.

We worked from 9:00 AM to Noon. Many thanks to the following workers: Arlene Altshuler, Joe Ferrall, Tom Frye, Kelli Ham, John Sabol, and Bruce Severy.

Work Parties Chair  
John Sabol

### 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.



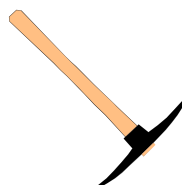
### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Monica Dionne  
Suzanne Exner  
Dayana Jamine  
Eli-Ane Phillips-Minks  
David Wagner

## OCTOBER WORK PARTY

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held on Saturday, October 18, on the Long Canyon Trail. We will meet in the trailhead parking lot at the junction of Long Canyon and Wood Ranch Parkway at 8:00 AM. We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair  
John Sabol



## HIKING NEWS

### New Trail Easement

On September 18, 2003, the Rancho Simi Park District accepted an easement, including for trail purposes, across a private parcel where a water tank is located south of Mt. McCoy. That easement will now permit hikers and bikers to/from the water tank road off of Presidential Drive over to Mt. McCoy. It is part of the public trail linkage between the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Simi Hills through to the Santa Susana Mountains. Well done Park District!

### Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Fund Trail Brochures

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers has provided \$200 for a portion of the cost of a new printing of trail brochures. The brochures help promote informed use of our trails and provide outdoor education.

### WE'VE MOVED! RSTB HAS A NEW WEBSITE

For those of you who use the Internet to check out our hiking schedule, please note that <http://rstb.homestead.com> will no longer be updated. We now have a new Website which will allow for more expansion:

<http://rstb.topcities.com>

Check it out on occasion to see what's new!

### 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 Wednesday, October 15, 2003

## WISHON RESERVOIR TRIP

Eleven people and two dogs turned out for this 4-day backpacking trip on Sept. 5-8, 2003. Participants included Arlene Altshuler and her two dogs, Caroline Carroll, Gary Cremeans, Martin DeGoey, Jodene Downey, Margarita Marsh, John Sabol, Tom Siebert, Doug Temple, Sam Tewfik and Phyllis Tewfik.

On Friday morning we left Simi Valley, heading up I-5 to CA-99 and Fresno, where we turned east through Clovis to Prather. We got gas for our vehicles and lunch in Prather, and picked up our wilderness permits at the nearby Pineridge Ranger Station. Then we drove on past Shaver Lake for another 30 miles to Wishon Reservoir.

We crossed over the Reservoir dam and parked our vehicles at the trailhead. Backpacks only from there, as we started up the Woodchuck Trail at an elevation of 6680 feet. Our planned destination was 5 miles up the trail to an unnamed campsite in the John Muir Wilderness in an area called "Woodchuck Country." The trail is beautiful, winding up through Lodgepole Pine forest. We were in shade most of the time. The trail is very steep in places and rough with a lot of baseball-sized granite rocks scattered along the way.

The going was slow and at just under 3 miles, we reached "Blizzard Camp" at 7250 feet elevation. We'd gained only 600 feet in elevation, but it felt like much more. The rough trail had tired us out and, since it was getting late and the camp was near a nice stream, we decided to camp there for the night. We set up our tents, built a fire, and cooked our supper. After talking around the campfire for a while, everyone turned in early.

Another steep climb out of Blizzard Camp awaited us the next morning. Since we were already 3 miles in, we decided to hike up to the "Moore Boys Camp" campsite at 6 miles in, which would put us closer to our dayhike destinations of Chimney, Marsh, and

Woodchuck Lakes. When the lead group reached our original unnamed campsite destination, Gary and Martin dropped their packs and went ahead to scout the "Moore Boys Camp" campsite. They returned to warn the rest of us that it was swampy there with lots of vegetation and no stream so, since we weren't sure of water until we reached one of the lakes, we decided to camp at the our original unnamed campsite 5 miles in (and at 8000 feet). We again set up camp by a wonderfully cool and clear stream. Trout could be seen almost every time we went to the stream for water. Several people went on a dayhike to the lakes. Since firewood was plentiful, we once again had a campfire in the evening.

Sunday was spent on day hikes to the lakes. One hike explored Chimney and Marsh Lakes; a second, Woodchuck Lake. Some of the braver souls went swimming. On our way back to camp we saw several fat Yellow-Bellied Marmots. Now we understood why the trail and surrounding area is called Woodchuck. Woodchucks are not only found in the eastern US--it turns out that woodchucks, groundhogs, and marmots are all closely related within the same genus, *Marmota*. The names are often used interchangeably.

The weather throughout our trip was perfect, cool and clear. In the afternoons we did see signs of thunderheads building in the west, but no bad weather materialized. Since it was late in the season, we had no mosquitoes. Neither did we detect any sign of bears. Since we were at a relatively low elevation, altitude sickness was limited to a headache or two during the day hikes, which disappeared when we got back down to camp.

On Monday after breakfast, we packed up camp and started back to the cars. After reaching the trailhead, we drove back across the dam, again had lunch in Prather. Finally, we headed on home with memories of a great backpack.

John Sabol



*Start of the Woodchuck Trail Backpack Trip; left to right: Margarita Marsh, Tom Siebert, Phyllis Tewfik, Arlene Altshuler, Sam Tewfik, John Sabol, Jodene Downey, Doug Temple, and Martin DeGoey. Photo by Gary Cremeans.*



*At the Woodchuck Trailhead; left to right: Martin DeGoey, Doug Temple, Arlene Altshuler, Sam Tewfik, Phyllis Tewfik, Jodene Downey, Gary Cremeans, Margarita Marsh, Tom Siebert, and Caroline Carroll. Photo by John Sabol.*



*On Simi Peak hike, left to right: Margarita Marsh, Mike Kuhn, Arlene Altshuler, and John Sabol. Photo by Gary Cremeans.*

## THE TAPO SUBDIVISION

When we talk about subdivisions today, we think of tracts of homes, usually a one-storied model and two or three two-storied models offered with three or more different facades. Many subdivisions in the 1950s and 1960s were all one-storied units. With time, the desire of buyers to maximize square footage has led to many developers offering only two-storied units. However, the first subdivision in Simi evolved from the passage of the ownership of El Rancho Simi from the de la Guerra family into the hands of Anglo-Americans. During the late-1880s, the Simi Land and Water Company subdivided their lands in Simi Valley in order to sell off large ranch and farm parcels. Those parcels were usually 20 or more acres, and some parcels were of thousands of acres. These large lot sales occurred with the coming of the transcontinental railroad into southern California; however, it was long before railroad service came to Simi Valley.

Remember that this was before there were any public roads, so rail service was the absolute key to any successful agricultural enterprise where the product could not walk to market. In 1872, for example, Charles Emerson Hoar leased the eastern half of Simi Valley. He raised sheep, which produced wool, which could be marketed without spoilage. Gradually, that practice gave way to dry land farming of barley/oats for livestock feed. Still, the sheep could be grazed on the stubble. The dry land production of grain was still a large-parcel operation.

Finally, in 1900 the railroad came into Simi Valley from the west and the tunnels to connect the Southern Pacific Railroad segments between Chatsworth and Santa Susana were begun. With the coming of the railroad there was a gradual shift to irrigated agriculture and smaller farm lots. Eastern farm immigrants were unaccustomed to irrigating crops. Others came from country where water was simply diverted from rivers and other streams. Southern California, and coastal California in general, with its Mediterranean climate, i.e., summer drought, provided little surface water during the critical summer and fall months.

The slow nature of this transformation occurred because methods of getting water out of the ground in order to irrigate crops were an evolving technology. Water from hand-dug wells or derived from springs was used for domestic supply. Indeed, the Simi Hotel, located where Simi High School now stands, piped its water in from the spring on the Hummingbird's Nest Ranch. No one here had any experience with extracting water from the ground in large enough quantities keep field crops and orchards going. At the western end of the valley, artesian wells and the windmill enabled some broad-scale irrigation. How to effect large-scale irrigation became a quest which resulted in the emergence of the California agricultural landscape.

A good local example of this emergence was the development of the Tapo subdivision. That effort was begun about 1910 by the Patterson Ranch Company. It involved the land north of Alamo Street, east of Sycamore Drive and west of Tapo Street. Subdivision #1 extended from present day Tapo Canyon Road (then Tapo Drive—and, yes, there was also a Tapo Road, which is now Tapo Street) west to Lemon Drive. The sale included trees that had been planted in 1910. California fan palms were planted on the northern side of Palm Drive (now Alamo Street) about 1918. Subdivision #2 extended from Lemon Drive to Sycamore Drive. These subdivisions included roads, an irrigation system, and a domestic water supply. Subdivision #s 3 and 4 began in 1918 and included lands north of Subdivision #s 1 and 2. Subdivision # 5 extended easterly to Tapo Street. By 1920 all parcels had been sold. Many of the original ranch houses are still present in amongst the later residential subdivisions.

R.E. Harrington, in his book, *Early Days of Simi Valley* (1961), page 39, discusses the quest for water for the Tapo subdivision. Mr. Oxnard, the president of the Patterson Ranch Company and one of the founders of the town of Oxnard, first had wells drilled along Alamo Street, with no success. Then they went into Tapo Canyon, where little water was found, despite surface flow. Then they went into the cienaga up where the Gillibrand office is today.

That water was taken by open ditch to the two reservoirs at the northern end of the subdivisions. This seems to have happened about 1911. One reservoir was at the northern end of Reservoir Drive and the other at the northern end of Lemon Drive. Still more water was needed as the subdivision was expanded. A submerged dam at the narrows below the cienaga was tried, with little success. Finally, they found out what everyone else in California would conclude, that deeper wells with air-lift pumps were needed. And with that, subdivision was a great success.

## ITINERANT SHEEP AND SHEEPHERDERS

In the days prior to about 1990 sheep and sheepherders would arrive in Simi Valley each spring and early summer. They were usually turned loose in the foothills where the land was not used for cattle. The owners of the sheep paid a modest price for the privilege of letting their stock graze the ruderal grasslands down to the ground, providing some revenue for the landowners. Then the sheep and their herders were gone, off to the high desert country, I suppose. I remember sheep on the old Runkle, the Getty (Big Sky), and the Douglas ranches, to name a few.

One of the last flocks to graze the valley was turned loose on the Douglas Ranch. The sheep raised so much dust that it drifted over the east end of the valley and created a problem for residents there. At the time, the ranch was owned by the Casden Company. When contacted, their representative indicated that he knew nothing about any sheep and indicated that no one had permission to run sheep there. That incident occurred sometime in the 1980s.

Around the same time, someone shot and killed a sheepherder in the Tierra Rejada Valley. The murder, as I recall, was never solved. Shortly afterward, a sheepherder in Sand Canyon was encountered purportedly carrying a Thompson submachine gun. I am sure that the herder felt very alone and vulnerable. I wonder if the coyotes stayed away?

Mike Kuhn



# October

## 2003



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Mark Janowicz	3	4 Mishe Mokwa See Schedule Happy Birthday Marty Richards
5 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	6 Happy Birthday Annie Hess	7 Happy Birthday Kathy Brody	8	9 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	10	11 Pt. Mugu Cabin Trail See Schedule
12 Long Canyon 9am hike  Rocky Peak 5pm hike  See Schedule	13 Happy Birthday Bev Frye	14	15 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	16 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	17	18 Long Canyon Work Party See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	20	21 Happy Birthday John Whitson Brian McKee	22 Happy Birthday Margarita Marsh	23 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	24	25 Saddle Peak See Schedule
26 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Lisa Klockenteger	27	28 Happy Birthday Mark Gilmore	29	30 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	31	



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

## Hiking Schedule



- October 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 Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- October 4 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 - 3 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots.
- October 5 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- October 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 Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- October 11 Pt. Mugu Cabin Trail (Danielson Memorial)**  
Moderate 6 MRT hike with approx. 1000' elevation gain/loss. Visit a waterfall and the Danielson Memorial, view the Oxnard Plain and Channel Islands from Old Boney Road. 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. water and snack. Wear boots.
- October 12 Sunday AM Hike – Long Canyon Trail**  
Meet at **9am** in the Long Canyon parking lot, at the corner of Long Canyon Rd and Wood Ranch Parkway. (Moderate - strenuous, mileage depends on the hike leader)
- October 12 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- October 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 Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- October 18 Long Canyon Work Party**  
Meet at the trailhead at 8am. Directions: From the 118 fwy, get off at First St. and go south. First St. will change names and become Long Canyon Rd. Continue to the intersection of Long Canyon and Wood Ranch Pkwy. Park in the trailhead parking lot at the intersection. 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.
- October 19 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- October 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 Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- October 25 Saddle Creek to Saddle Peak**  
Moderate to strenuous 10 MRT hike with 1600' elevation gain/loss on a segment of the backbone trail between Las Virgenes and Stunt Road. 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 lunch, wear boots.
- October 26 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- October 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 Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)

**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://rstb.topcities.com>

**RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS**

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345, WK (805)583-6776
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
SECRETARY:	DAVID WAGNER	HM (805) 577-5931
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
WORK PARTIES CHAIR:	JOHN SABOL	HM (805) 583-2541
HIKING CHAIR & WEBSITE:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735
WAYS & MEANS CHAIR:	MARTY RICHARDS	HM (805) 526-4414
PUBLICITY CHAIR:	URSULA CHRISTIE	HM (805) 527-5338
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	BRUCE SEVERY	HM (805) 526-1831

-----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 \_\_\_\_\_

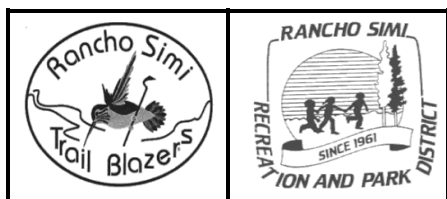
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone wk/hm \_\_\_\_\_

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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