



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



## Volunteers Needed!!



If anyone is interested in volunteering for the **work parties chair** or the **Publicity chair**

contact Mike Kuhn at:  
[mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com](mailto:mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com)



Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at <http://www.rsrpd.org> to see what is happening next!

**RSTB CLUB MEETING**  
This month's RSTB meeting will be at:  
Sycamore Drive Community Center  
1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1  
**Wednesday: November 19, 2014**  
**5:30PM (NOTE: Early Start Time)**  
*Everyone Welcome to attend!*

*\* Not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.*

**Weekly hikes!!**

**Has anyone ever told you to take hike?**

Did you know that in Simi Valley you can take many hikes with the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers and explore the beauty of Simi Valley and other beautiful locations? We have so much fun taking photos, talking and just viewing the beautiful scenery like the photo above.

**Hikes are every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and most Saturdays**



**Upcoming Events**

**November 1st Las Lajas Canyon, Rocky Peak Fire Road, Chumash Trail** 9.5 MRT Loop - Moderate to Strenuous (1,800' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**November 8th Sandstone Peak via the Mishe Mokwa Trail\*** 7 MRT Loop - Moderate to Strenuous (1,500' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**November 15th Work Party Lower Stagecoach Trail** **8AM**

**November 19th Club Meeting**  
The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1  
**Everyone Welcome to attend! (NOTE: Early Start Time) 5:30PM**

**November 22nd Placerita Canyon - Los Pinetos Trail - Wilson Saddle Loop Hike\***  
7.5 MRT Loop - Moderate to Strenuous (1,900' elevation gain/loss)

**November 29th Chivo Canyon, Tapo Canyon Overlook, Eastern Ridge, Cliff Trail** 6.2 MRT Loop – Moderate (1,400' elevation gain/loss)

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see [www.simitrailblazers.com/activities](http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities) for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.



## EARLY GRAIN FARMING IN SIMI

From Janet Scott Cameron's book, Simi Grows Up (1963), pages 22:

"The early farmers raised grain exclusively. Naturally the horses, mules and farm animals formed the nucleus of their equipment. In the winter the land was plowed, harrowed, and the grain sown – in the early days broadcast from a seeder at the back of a low wagon, then harrowed again. Prior to the use of the combine for harvesting each rancher had a portable outfit – all horse-drawn: one or more headers, a steam engine, a separator, a derrick-table, twelve net wagons, a cook-house

(continued on page 2; col 1)

**RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS**

Sporting the beautiful RSTB logo, these are great shirts! Please call Mike Kuhn if you'd like to order at 805-583-2345.

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



**WELCOME NEW MEMBER**  
Deidre Roberts

(continued from page 1; col 1)

on wheels, a straw-buck, and various extra wagons in case of emergency. This equipment required a crew of forty-eight to fifty men and about thirty-six horses. When the grain was ripe it was headed and dumped into windrows, usually a crew shocked it up for easier loading. Most of the crews were Chinese. Old Chang, who ran a laundry in Hueneme, a fine fellow, headed the Chinese in this area, acting as their employment agent and banker.

In the threshing season the routine went something like this: the teamsters would get their pitchers and net wagons into the field by seven o'clock in the morning. These pitchers worked together, taking care of two wagons. As soon as a load was ready the driver took it toward the derrick-table, waiting in line until his turn to get it unloaded. The unloading was done by horse-power, one or two horses being hitched to a rope, which pulled the net filled with hay out of the wagon and dumped it into the hopper. As soon as the net was in place then away to the field for another load. On the derrick-table were two hoe-downs and two feeders and two extra men. The sack-hole gang consisted of filler and two sack-sewers. There was considerable rivalry between the sack-sewers as to neatness and speed. Joe Horner held this title in Simi for many years. A straw-buck with a buck-pole was used to keep the straw away from the separator. Then there was the water-buck to haul water for the steam engine.

Pitchers received \$1.50 and board per day; the wagon drivers \$1.25 and board; tablemen about \$2.00 and board; sack-hole men about \$2.50 to \$3.00 and board; separator and oiler men \$6.00 and board; engineer \$4.00 and board; firemen \$2.00 and board. The Chinese pitchers boarded themselves so they received a little more. They has their own tents. Their food, mostly fish in kegs, pickled and dried, and dried ducks came from China. It smelled terrible. Then they had rice and eggs and some kind of vegetable. The boss had to supply them with keep water ahead so each Chinaman could have his bath every night in the little tub they kept for that purpose. Generally a Chinese cook looked after the cook-house for the Mexicans and Americans. The food was good and there was lots of it: fresh pork, salted side meat, potatoes, bread, beans, milk, coffee. The men were paid every Saturday night. The boss or his son would go to Hueneme and bring back the money – in four-bit pieces. Of

course there were some family men working on the outfits who went home on Saturday nights but the regular California ranch hand would stay and gamble. Some of the men were professional gamblers, although their antes were small. They worked all week – not for wages they got but for the fun of gambling all night every Saturday.

The sacks of grain were piled in great stacks at each setting. When the harvest was over the boss took it to the wharf at Hueneme. The teamsters loaded up the day before, using a big wagon and a second one as a trailer. One teamster could handle this outfit with eight to sixteen horses or mules. He started early in the morning between three and four o'clock to get over the worst part of the road and to Springville by dark. Then by getting on the road between Little Simi and Springville was either very sandy or very rutty due to heavy loads. To overcome this, the farmers hauled manure and covered roads with it and then kept piling on straw from the barley fields. Most teamsters had a string of bells on the lead horse. People living along the route said they always knew who was coming by the chime of the bells. The teamster generally controlled his team by a jerkline although one could sometimes be seen riding his lead horse or the wheeler."

Mike Kuhn  
10-26-03

## 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 understory 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  
11-13-05



## September 27th - Arroyo Simi Bike Path Ride - Madera Road to Ralston Street



It was one of those beautiful September mornings, where the scattered clouds painted a magic patchwork in the sky. Water species were plentiful in the Arroyo, especially at the western end. We saw two different Great Blue Herons, dozens of egrets, and a multitude of mallards, coots and grebes. Under our drought conditions, many parts of the Arroyo were dry, but there was still sufficient water to support a struggling ecosystem. The previous time we rode the Arroyo, we didn't go quite as far. Thanks to Betty, we were able to extend the ride a few miles further. Upon returning to our cars, we completed exactly 16 miles, with about 350' of total elevation gain and loss. It was a shame we didn't have more participants. The ride was a great change of pace.

## October 4th - Mt. Williamson from Islip Saddle via Angeles Crest Highway



On a day when the temperature in Simi Valley was forecast to reach 104 degrees Fahrenheit, four hikers carpooled to Islip Saddle in the much-cooler San Gabriel

Mountains [Angeles National Forest]. The trailhead temperature was 70 degrees as our hike began along the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from the Islip Saddle parking lot (6,670'). The trail entered a pine-scented forest as it climbed steadily up Mt. Williamson to the northwest. After nearly two miles of pleasant hiking (including cool breezes) we reached the official peak (8,214') of the mountain, an open area that afforded views of the surrounding mountains and the Antelope Valley. We then continued our hike along the Pleasant View Ridge, crossing two other "peaks" on Mt. Williamson, until we reached the ridge's end where we enjoyed another spectacular view of the surrounding area. We retraced our route to the parking lot and returned home to the scalding 104-degree high temperature that had been forecast, happy to have enjoyed an almost-perfect hike with temperatures in the 70's throughout the hike, having completed a 5.8-mile hike with 1,947' of elevation gain/loss.

## October 12th - Devil's Punchbowl Trail to Devil's Chair



Nine joyful hikers met at the Stearns Street Park & Ride and carpooled to the trailhead, located at the Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area above Palmdale. The Punchbowl itself is situated at the intersection of two major earthquake faults, forming the San Andreas Rift Zone, so it is also the site of some very spectacular geological formations. The trail from the visitor center meets the Pacific Crest Trail, called the Burkhart Trail junction, about a mile up the hill. The trail also traverses a beautiful pine forest and offers expansive views of the Antelope Valley to the north. It was a clear and warm day and the mercury stopped just short of 80 degrees. On October 10th, President Obama designated a good portion of the San Gabriel Mountains as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The Punchbowl area is within the northern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains, so it is now part of the new Monument. All in all, we hiked 8 miles, with about 1,600' of total elevation gain/loss. Everyone agreed it was a most enjoyable hike.





Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see [www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/](http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/) for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.



**REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES**  
*(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)*

**Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road**

Meet at **4PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. Take the Rocky Peak exit on the 118 Freeway and head north over the freeway. Park at the trailhead or across the bridge on the Santa Susana Pass Road. (Strenuous - 4.8 MRT - 1,200' elevation gain)

**Tuesday Evening - Mt. McCoy Trail**

Meet at **6PM** in the parking lot, located to the south of Donut Delite, located near the NE corner of Madera and Royal. (Moderate - 4.0 MRT - 675' elevation gain)

**Thursday Evening - Chumash Trail**

Meet at **6PM** at Chumash trailhead. Directions: Take the 118 Freeway to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite and turn right on Flanagan Dr. The trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Drive. (Moderate to Strenuous - 5.4 MRT - 1300' total elevation gain.)

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**NOVEMBER HIKES AND ACTIVITIES**

**November 1st Las Lajas Canyon, Rocky Peak Fire Road, Chumash Trail**

9.5 MRT Loop - Moderate to Strenuous (1,800' elevation gain/loss)  
Our hike will start at the Las Lajas Canyon trailhead on Evening Sky Drive. Meet at **8AM** at the Evening Sky Drive Las Lajas trailhead. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and a snack.

**November 8th Sandstone Peak via the Mishe Mokwa Trail\***

7 MRT Loop - Moderate to Strenuous (1,500' elevation gain/loss)  
Our hike begins at the point where the Santa Monica Mountains Backbone Trail (BBT) crosses Yerba Buena Road at Triunfo Pass (2,100'). We'll follow the Mishe-Mokwa Trail as it climbs westward and then drops into a shaded canyon; there will be views of the red sandstone Echo Cliffs, Boney Mountain, and Balanced Rock. After passing Split Rock the trail will take us up the mountain to a spur trail leading to Inspiration Point (2,800') and then to the spur trail leading to Sandstone Peak (3,111'), aka Mt. Allen, the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. After enjoying the spectacular views we'll complete the loop back to the Mishe Mokwa Trail and our vehicles. Bring lunch and 2 to 3 quarts of water. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.

**November 15th Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail**

Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will do trail grooming and widening, and cutting back some brush. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended.  
Directions: From Kuehner Drive and the 118 Freeway, head south to the intersection of Kuehner Drive and Smith Road, where you turn right (east). Meet at the eastern end of the dirt parking lot.

**November 19th Everyone Welcome to attend! (NOTE: Early Start Time)**

**5:30PM** - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1


**November 22nd Placerita Canyon - Los Pinetos Trail - Wilson Saddle Loop Hike\***

7.5 MRT Loop - Moderate to Strenuous (1,900' elevation gain/loss)  
Our hike will begin near the Placerita Canyon Nature Center. We will hike two miles eastward through Placerita Canyon to Walker Ranch and will then head south on the Los Pinetos Trail which climbs steadily toward Wilson Saddle and the Santa Clara Divide Road. Meet at **8AM** at the Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring 2 - 4 quarts of water and lunch.

**November 29th Chivo Canyon, Tapo Canyon Overlook, Eastern Ridge, Cliff Trail**

6.2 MRT Loop - Moderate (1,400' elevation gain/loss)  
We'll start our hike by descending into the mouth of Chivo Canyon from Cottonwood Drive. We'll complete our loop hike along a section of the old Marr Ranch Road and the Cliff Trail. Directions to meeting place: From Simi Valley, take Highway 118 to Yosemite Avenue. Drive 1.9 miles north to Westwood Street. Turn right on Westwood Street and park your car. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and a snack.

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No dogs  allowed on trail(s). For additional 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.  
**Full descriptions of these hikes and activities are available at** <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/index.html>

# RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

*A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation*

Executive Chair:	Mike Kuhn	HM (805) 583-2345	hannahmike@me.com
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-----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 \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_

Family memberships: Please list names and birthdays of additional family members (Month & Day Only)

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (provide up to two numbers): work/home/cell \_\_\_\_\_

How do you want to receive the Newsletter? Check all that apply.

Mail Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

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How did you find out about the RSTB? \_\_\_\_\_

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:

Rancho Simi Foundation and mail it to RSTB, P.O. Box 630445, Simi Valley, CA 93063-0399



U.S. Postage

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