



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



DECEMBER WORK PARTY

The next work party will be on the **Hummingbird Trail** on the **SECOND Saturday of December, Dec. 14.**

Meet on Kuehner Drive just north of the 118 freeway at 8:00AM. We will work from **8:00 AM to Noon.** Hope to see you there.



Work Parties Chair

MOUNTAIN LION NEEDS OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

There is a lot of talk and print these days about "wildlife corridors" and the need to maintain connectivity between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Los Padres National Forest in northern Ventura County with the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Santa Monica Mountains, the Simi Hills and the Santa Susana Mountains each are wildlife habitat areas. However, for large wildlife species, with large home range needs, these individual ranges may not be large enough to sustain long term breeding populations. Long term isolation of the Santa Monica Mountains from other areas may, over the long run, result in the extirpation of some species. Grizzly and black bears once were present in the Santa Monica's – no longer. It is likely that the Santa Monica Mountains simply aren't big enough to sustain breeding populations.

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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.



ANNUAL POT LUCK HOLIDAY PARTY

This year's Annual Pot Luck Holiday Party will be hosted by Ursula Christie, on **Wednesday December 18th, starting at 6:30pm.**

Please call Marty Richards at 526-4414 to RSVP and find out what to bring.

Directions to Ursula's house:

Go South on First Street to the traffic light at Mellow Lane (*about 2 miles from the 118 Freeway*).

Turn right on Mellow Lane, and right again on Pinecliff Place.

The house is at the end of the cul-de-sac at **576 Pinecliff Place.**

THE WINTER SOLSTICE

The winter solstice is an astronomical event that occurs once a year in the orbit of the Earth around the Sun in the northern hemisphere. (The southern hemisphere also experiences a winter solstice - six months before and after our own.) The winter solstice represents the shortest daylight period and the longest period of darkness of the year. Prehistorically around the world, for most middle and high latitude societies, the winter solstice played a part in religious beliefs. Christmas is celebrated on December 25, because that date was chosen in an effort to displace the pagan religions of northern Europe. They have passed, but we are left with the Christmas tree, yule tides, and other vestages of the past. (Yulemen wore rabbit costumes and ran around communities in hedonistic revelries. The Easter bunny is a vestige of the Yuleman.)

For the Chumash, the winter solstice ceremony was the most important event of the year. The daylight period was getting shorter and shorter; food was getting more and more scarce; and the world was getting colder and colder. The right ceremony had to be performed at the right time or the world would be plunged into darkness, and the creatures of the night would rule the earth. The ceremony marked the birth of a new child - the Sun - the chief diety of the Chumash. Many such ceremonial sites have been identified around Simi Valley. They include devices, associated with the rising sun, which enabled the Chumash to predict when the solstice would occur so that the right people could be gathered together for the performance of the right ceremony at sunrise.

ECHOES OF THE PAST, PART II

The Chumash Indians lived here, at least seasonally, for thousands of years prior to the coming of European culture. Then they were gone. Only a faint vestige remains in the form of some individuals and families who claim descent from the Chumash, along with many other biological strains of the family of man. Yet there are some remnants of the Chumash presence in the form of place names, including names that we might never have thought originated with the Chumash. Remember, most of the people who were on the land during the Spanish and Mexican periods of settlement were Chumash Indians. They became the vaqueros and sheep herders, and represented nearly all of the laborers at the missions and all of the ranchos. Even the ranch hands originally employed by the Gillibrands were Chumash Indians. By the 1880s their primary language was Spanish and they had begun to speak English as well – still, many remembered their native tongue.

Let's start with purely Chumash names:

Simi', *Shimiji*, *Shimiyi* – This was the name of the village at the western end of the valley. It appears to have been used too, we can surmise, for the area from Santa Susana Pass on the east, to Somis on the west. That area was known as “the Simi” and is still listed on U.S. Geological Survey maps as Simi Valley and the “Little Simi Valley.” It is the name of our valley, the city and the main drain out of the valley (the Arroyo Simi). The name, I now believe, refers to cirrus clouds, which are harbingers of storms. The name originates from residents of the Oxnard Plain, who would not start a journey to the Simi when cirrus clouds were present in the sky over the Tapo. For, in those days, Simi was only seasonally occupied.

Ta'apu – This was the name of perhaps the largest village in this area and the only village with a resident *wot* (chief) at the beginning of the historic period. “*Ta'apu*” is the Ventureño name of the plant we refer to as chaparral yucca, Spanish dagger, and our lord's candle. It was an important plant to the Chumash –

important enough to name a village after. It gave the name to Tapo Canyon, Tapo Canyon Road and Tapo Street (Earlier “Tapo Road”).

Somna – This was the name of a Chumash village at the western extreme of “the Simi.” The name means “big barranca.” The name is preserved today as Somis – still located in the area of the village of *Somna* at the big barranca.

Kimichaq – This was a Chumash Indian village in Happy Camp Canyon, north of Moorpark. The village controlled a major part of the regional trade in fused shale, a stone tool material with a concoidal fracture from which arrowheads were manufactured. During the early days of the missions, Indians from the village generally were listed by the padres as being from the village of *Quimisa* or *Quimisac*. While we don't know the meaning of the name of the village, it is preserved today in the name of the short little street that runs from Los Angeles Avenue into Oak Park – Quimisa Road.

These were some of the places, so what about some of the trails? Here I just want to make a point. Trails used by the Chumash were usually named for where they were going. The Chumash were a practical people – simplicity is best. We do the same thing. Los Angeles Avenue ran from Ventura to downtown Los Angeles through Simi Valley. Perhaps even this is a left over from what the Chumash called the road after Los Angeles was established under the Spanish and later Mexican governments.

In any case, there was a Simi Road between the Conejo Valley and the village of Simi. That road ran south along present day Madera Road lowlands of the Wood Ranch and south along the western boundary of the old Wood Ranch. Until the road over the Noriegan Grade was built, that was the way between the two valleys.

The trails to the village of *Ta'apu* ran up the two Tapo Canyons – one north from Simi Valley and the other south from the village of *Kamulus* (modern day Camulos

Ranch) – yes, a Tapo Canyon on both sides of the mountain range, for the marked the trails to the village of *Ta'apu*.

The trail to the village of *Kimichaq* from Simi Valley was the *Kimichaq* Trail. During the Mexican period, it became the Quimisa Road even though it simply ran west out of Simi Valley along the Arroyo Simi. Remember that short little road to Oak Park? Somehow the name Quimisa hung on.

Lower Happy Camp Canyon was called *Canada de Somis* during the Mexican period. It was the trail from the village of *Quimisac* to the village of *Somna*, i.e., Somis.

The name Castaic comes down to us from the name of the Chumash Indian village of *Kashtiq*, which was the name of the village up near Frazier Park by Castaic Lake. The name Castaic is displaced because the name of the trail to the village was named for the village to which the trail led. That trail started down in the Castaic area.

Then there are the Spanish language names on the land. What has become apparent is that many, if not most of the Spanish names that have come down to us are probably of Chumash origin. Some of those names have now been translated into English. Some examples are:

Tierra Rejada (*Tierra Rajada*) – means “cracked earth.” We know the Chumash name for the valley. It too means “cracked earth.” The clayey soils of the Tierra Rejada Valley develop deep wide cracks during the late spring when the ground dries out.

Alamos Canyon – “alamos” refers to Sycamore trees. Several valleys around Simi carry the names of trees. These too may have a Chumash origin. However, there isn't a shred of evidence to support this. There is

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Sycamore Canyon on the Wood Ranch. There was *Canada de los Alisos* (*alisos* refers to Sycamore trees), later Big Sycamore Canyon, which is now called Meier Canyon. There is Oak Canyon of the old Wood Ranch.

There is Brea Canyon (originally *Canada de la Brea*) north of the Chumash village of *Simi*'. "Brea" is a heavy petroleum that seeps out of the ground. There are major seeps in Brea Canyon. The village of *Simi*' apparently traded *brea* to other Indian peoples.

The Hummingbird's Nest Ranch was called *El Nido de la Chupa Rosa* by the Spanish. This translates as the "nest of the hummingbird." The name clearly is of Chumash origin, because reference to the nest of a particular kind of bird was reference to a sacred place. Birds could fly to the spirit world.

Even "Burro Flat" comes to us from the Chumash. The place had the Spanish name of *Putrero del Burro*. (A proper spelling would be *Potrero*) It appears that the reference is to a shaman's cave with an equine image that is located on Burro Flat.

As I have noted here, some names either directly or indirectly from the Chumash have changed and are in danger of being forgotten. Big Sycamore Canyon – now Meier Canyon – is one of those. Another is *Cuchillo de Huarace* (properly *Huarache*), which is now called "Whiteface." The name seems to imply (in Spanish) that if you are going to go over the trail which crosses a saddle just east of Whiteface, you better wear a pair of sandals. (The Chumash only wore sandals when they were going to go on a long trip or over rough ground.) The name seems to have changed to Whiteface sometime during the 1940s.

There are a number of other place names that have come down to us from the Chumash. However, those mentioned here are the main place



Lower Zuma Canyon Exploratory Hike, left to right: Tom Frye, Arlene Altshuler, Terry DeSilva, Bill Cespedes, Chuck Portoghesi, Sheri Hastings, and Gary Cremeans.



Bob Altieri and John Sabol working on the Upper Stage Coach trail.

NOVEMBER TRAIL WORK PARTY

Nine Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Upper Stage Coach Trail for the November Trail Work Party. The day was clear and sunny and thankfully not too warm. A lot of 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:

Bob Altieri, Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrum, Tom Frye, Mike Kuhn, Louise Pomes, Chuck Portoghesi, John Sabol and Don Steeley.

Work Parties Chair

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Recently, the Santa Susana Mountains had two or three bears that remained throughout the year. One bear is reported to have spent part of one year in the Simi Hills. Those bear populations, of course, simply cannot be sustained. The bears would not have enough bears to breed with without suffering interbreeding. Natural mortality will result in their deaths. Future wet years may result in occasional other bear visitors.

In 1982, Mark Knight assessed the requirements for mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains. He concluded that the home range of a mountain lion in the Santa Monicas varies, depending on sex, from 20 to 36 square miles. Since adult male lions do their best to kill other adult males that they encounter, these figures resulted in Mr. Knight's conclusion that the Santa Monica Mountains can only support a population of approximately 13 mountain lions. Thirteen lions simply are not a large enough population to remain genetically viable – hence the need for genetic augmentation through wildlife corridors.

The assumption is also made that what is good for mountain lions is good for other large species, such as deer, bobcats, raccoons, badgers, gray foxes and





December

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	2	3	4 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Linda Travis</i>	5 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	6	7 Newton Canyon See Schedule
8 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	9	10 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Robert D. Galletly</i>	11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Sharon Gochoel</i> <i>Rae Knapp</i>	12 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gary Valle</i> <i>Bill Cespedes</i>	14 Hummingbird Creek Work Party See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Samantha Cope</i>
15 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	16	17	18 Annual Pot Luck Holiday Party	19 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Tom Travis</i>	20	21 Winter Solstice Long Canyon to Lang Ranch See Schedule
22 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	23	24	25 Merry Xmas!	26 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	27	28 Wildwood Park See Schedule
29 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	30	31				



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



December 1 Sunday Evening Hike

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)

December 5 Thursday Evening Hike

Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan

December 7 Newton Canyon

Moderate 6 MRT hike with approx. 1200' elevation loss/gain. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Bring snack and 2 - 3 qts of water, bug juice. Wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner

December 8 Sunday Evening Hike

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)

December 12 Thursday Evening Hike

Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan

December 14 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

December 15 Sunday Evening Hike

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)

December 19 Thursday Evening Hike

Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan

December 21 Long Canyon to Lang Ranch Exploratory

Moderate to strenuous, approx. 6 MRT. Directions: take 118 Fwy to First Street exit. Take First Street south (it becomes Long Canyon Rd) approx. 4 miles, until it intersects Wood Ranch Pkwy. Meet at 8:30am in parking lot at the intersection of

December 22 Sunday Evening Hike

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)

December 26 Thursday Evening Hike

Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan

December 28 Wildwood Park

Moderate 4 - 6 MRT. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near

December 29 Sunday Evening Hike

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 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.homestead.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345, WK (805)583-6776
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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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