



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the Community Center In the B-1 Room 1692 Sycamore At 7:00 PM On Wednesday February 16th.

Scouts adopt Mount McCoy Trail

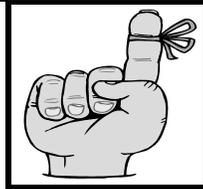
Simi Valley Scout Troop #622 completed the first of four Mount McCoy trail maintenance and improvement work projects scheduled for the year 2000. Eagle Scout Jason Franklin organized the Saturday January 22nd project. Twelve scouts and five parents arrived at the trailhead at 8:00 A. M. and after receiving their tools and a refresher lesson on how to work safely, started up the trail.

Today's focus was to widen narrow sections towards the top and repair switchbacks. Luckily those sections were in an area of plentiful rocks and boulders which were moved into place to shore up the trail. While some scouts used picks and maclouds, others carried rocks and cut and moved brush to block off the errant paths created by indiscriminate hikers.

We finished at 11:00 A.M. The group then hiked up to the cross for the benefit of those that hadn't previously enjoyed the view from the top. Although fog and clouds restricted visibility, it presented a nice overlook of the area. All members returned safely to the trailhead with nary a scratch, tired but satisfied with the effort.

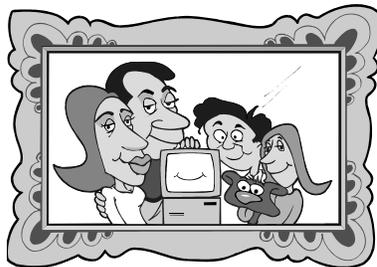
WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

The rapid expansion in urban areas throughout much of California is resulting in fragmentation of natural areas. Islands of natural areas that are too small for most large and medium sized species to survive in. They are more vulnerable to competition from domestic cats and introduced urban species such as black and Norwegian rats and house mice have increased crowding of native species and altered the nature of ecosystems. Animals that require large habitat areas must be able to move from one isolated patch to another in order to find enough food resources and to limit inbreeding. To avoid the loss of wildlife, biologists have advocated the maintenance of "wildlife corridors" connecting isolated patches of natural habi-



Just a reminder to the members who have overlooked renewing their Membership in the Ranch Simi Trail Blazers.

The renewal month and year are on the mailing label on the news letter after your name. Please check your date and renew if you are late. If you have paid and your label does not show it. Call me at my home so this can be corrected. John Downey at 805-526-8588



WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Kerry Iverson

tat.

Examples of isolated area occur in our own area as urban development expands up the outlying canyon areas. Roadways tend to connect one canyon with another - thus creating barriers to movement. The several hundred acre areas now bisected by the Canyon Overlook Trail in Wood Ranch are an example. The area is now completely isolated by housing and roadways. In order to move in and out of the area, larger species must cross roadways at the peril of life and limb. Coyotes, deer, raccoons and other animals are doing just that. However, they also tend to end up flat on the roads. Freeways, because of their size and chain link fencing, are nearly impassible.

Isolated pockets of natural areas are also impacted by domestic cats and dogs, which roam into those areas and pray on birds and rodents. The edge effect also works the other way in that coyotes, deer, bobcats, skunks, field and deer mice, and even mountain lions forage to one degree or another into the urban fringe. Those missing cats that are taken by coyotes and owls may have become victims by roaming into the wild areas or in their own back yards.

Little is known about the effectiveness of wildlife corridors. One study suggests that most animals will not use small culverts under roadways. Many species are, however, known to use large culverts, such as the "

wildlife corridor" under the freeway above Corriganville. Wildlife overpasses have been suggested for fostering movement in and out of the Santa Monica Mountains over the 101 Freeway. However, those studies that have examined this option have not been encouraging. Riparian corridors hold the most promise. However, those corridors tend to concentrate exotic species, such as cats, rats and house mice. So, without wide areas, riparian corridors have limited benefits. Hopefully, we will gain a greater understanding about what works and doesn't - before it's too late.



John Sabol, Arlene Altshuler, John Downey, Mike Kuhn,

New!! Thursday Afternoon Hikes

Starting in February, Through Daylight Savings Time, you now have a 4pm afternoon hike, and a 6pm evening hike. Please see the hiking schedule for details,

earning the Hornaday award, a national recognition given to exceptional efforts by an individual furthering conservation. As the miles of trails increase in Simi Valley, more volunteers are needed to keep them in safe, usable condition. The scout's participation lends considerable help to the Trail Blazers effort to meet these goals. We thank Jason and wish him continuing success.

Change in command

After two years as the Work Party Chair its now time to turn the honor over to John Sabol. Of all our members, no one puts in as much time on the trails, from leading hikes, picking up others trash, selecting the trails to work, doing the work, and sacrificing his body to the extent that John does (especially to the ravages of poison oak!) Whatever has been accomplished in these two years has in a very large part been the result of his dedication. Please continue to work with him as you have with me.

And a remembrance.

When you hike the trail to the cross on Mount McCoy, give thanks to our prior Work Party Chair, Tom Smith whom we lost with his wife in an auto accident. Tom directed the building of this great trail. We miss his enthusiasm, leadership, and friendly demeanor.

Safe and happy hiking,

Bob Altieri



Saddle Creek hike: Tom Frye, Leslie ??, John Downey, Martin DeGoey, Margarita Marsh, John Sabol, and Arlene Altshuler

JANUARY TRAIL WORK PARTIES

Two work parties were held this month. Work was done on both the Hummingbird and Mount McCoy Trails.

On the Hummingbird Trail, cool weather and slightly damp soil allowed us to finally remove the dished shape of part of the trail by pulling in the outside edge berms. Work was concentrated on the lower half of the trail and consisted of berm work and filling in and smoothing the trail surface. In addition, two areas with huge rocks forming large steps in the path, were leveled by placing rock slabs at the base of the step to form a ramp. We worked from 8:00-12:00 and as usual, met at Chuy's after finishing. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrom, Gary Cremeans, Martin DeGoey, John Downey, Tom Frye, Michael Kuhn and John Sabol.

The next work party will be held February 19 on the Chumash Trail and we will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair

John Sabol



CHUMASH USES OF MUGWORT

Mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*) Is a common streamside plant in this area and is reputed to prevent the effects of poison oak. Since both plants are usually found together, this idea is very comforting. Jan Timbrook has reported many medical uses of mugwort as reported by the Chumash to various ethnographers. Some of her findings, mixed with a few of my own, are reported here.

Mugwort was used by the Chumash Indians as a tea to settle one's stomach and as a constrictant on wounds. I've tried it as a tea – very nice. However, its use as a constrictant seems to have been in the form of burning a cone of dried and pulverized leaves on wounds to cauterize the injured area. This method was also used to treat skin cancers and rheumatism. Older Indians around the turn of the century had many scars, especially on their legs, from the practice in the old days. Called “Apin” by the Chumash, It was considered one of the more important remedies for illness, along with the ingestion of red ants, sea water, and datura, and blood letting. Stone tubes, as part of a doctor's equipment, containing burning mugwort was used to induce blistering over a “diseased area.” It appears that the Chumash, at least in modern times, rubbed mugwort on the rash caused by poison oak or applied it as a tea to rashes. When measles came along, they would use mugwort on skin eruptions. The tea is consumed for headaches and asthma and to counteract severe fright. The leaves were applied for headaches and for toothaches. Cups containing mugwort smoke were applied to a person's back to take away pain.

Mike Kuhn



FEBRUARY

2000



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Chumash Hike starting at 4 & 6 PM this month See Schedule	4	5 Solstice Canyon Hike Meet at 8 am Read schedule
6 Happy Birthday Harry Heflin Rocky peak Hike at 4 PM See schedule	7	8	9	10 Chumash Hike starting at 4 & 6 PM this month See Schedule	11	12 Malibu Creek State Park Walkabout 13½ MRT Meet at 8 am See schedule
13 Happy Birthday Charles Portoghest Rocky peak Hike at 4 PM See schedule	14	15	16 Happy Birthday Darold Farr RSTB meeting at 7:00 PM See page 1	17 Chumash Hike starting at 4 & 6 PM this month See Schedule	18	19 Chumash Trail Work Party 8 to noon See schedule
20 Happy Birthday Mary Ann Campbell & Steve Schmidt Rocky peak Hike at 4 PM See schedule	21	22 Happy Birthday Dan MacDougall	23	24 Happy Birthday Teri Trudel Connie Ankom Chumash Hike starting at 4 & 6 See schedule	25 Happy Birthday David Siefert	26 O'Melveny Trail Hike Meet at 8 AM See schedule
27 Rocky peak Hike at 4 PM See schedule	28 Happy Birthday Pete Means & Amy Young	29				

