



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.



LETICIA ZETTNER

JANUARY WORK PARTY

The Trail Blazers worked on the bottom of the Lower Stagecoach Trail on January 21. Much thanks to Bill Cespedes, Sandra Fernandez-Achenbach, Jim Achenbach, and Mike Kuhn for there good efforts.



CALIFORNIA BUCKWHEAT

California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) is one the most common plants of the Venturan coastal sage scrub vegetation association. It has "fascicled" (bunched together) gray-green leaves. Flowers are small and lack petals, but there are six showy sepals. Color of the flowers varies from white to pinkish.



RSTB CLUB MEETING

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

Room A-3 Upstairs
1692 Sycamore Drive
at 7:00 PM
on
February 15, 2006

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2nd - 5th

Death Valley hiking/camping trip 
This very special event is limited to **Trailblazer members only**. Space is limited, so please **RSVP before Feb. 16th**. We will be tent camping at the Furnace Creek campground. There will be a \$20 per car park entry fee as well as a campground fee.

MARCH 11th

Live Animal Presentation
"On the Edge" at 1:30pm
- see article in column 1.

APRIL 8th

Wildflower Walk - Antelope Valley
- It's flower season again! This will be an ALL DAY event.

MAY 24TH - MAY 29TH

Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip 
This very special event is limited to **Trailblazer members only**. Space is limited, so **RSVP as soon as possible**. We will be camping at the Upper Pines Campground. There will be a campground fee, and a \$20 per car park entry fee.

JUNE 9th, 10th & 11th

Deer Group Camp Backpack Trip - Big Bear Lake
Space is limited. Please **RSVP before May 19th**.

JUNE 24th

Santa Cruz Island 
Space is limited and fills up quickly; please **RSVP before May 12th**. The cost is \$46 per person. We must be at the Island Packers dock no later than 7:30.

More information on these events can be found at

<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at markinthepark@sbcglobal.net.

CHIVO AND LAS LLAJAS REGIONAL STORM WATER DETENTION DAMS

During the late-1970s the Ventura County Flood Control District had funds earmarked for regional storm water detention basins at the mouths of Chivo and Las Llajas canyons, located just north of the Simi Valley Golf Course. The dams were considered to be the most cost-effective way of effecting downstream flood control – all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

An environmental document was prepared and considered by the county. The adequacy of that document was challenged by an environmental group largely on the basis that the effects on public health of construction-related dust-borne San Joaquin Valley fever spores had not been considered. The challenge to the environmental document and the redrafting and circulation of the environmental impact report resulted in a two-year delay in the project.

By the time the new environmental document had been approved the cost of the two-dam project had escalated beyond the monies available. Subsequently, there was only enough money to build the Las Llajas Dam. At the time, the 100-year flood discharge at the mouth of Las Llajas Canyon was calculated to be 9,500 cubic feet per second. The effect of the dam was to reduce the discharge to 500 cubic feet per second during the same peak event. That one dam has done much toward reducing the hazard of flooding in Simi Valley.

The opposition to the adequacy of the original environmental document had been led by Ann Rock, a local citizen. Subsequently, Mrs. Rock was appointed to the Simi Valley Planning Commission and later (1982-1990) served on the City Council.

During the early 1990s the City received a multi-million dollar grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The purpose of the grant was to fund 90 percent of the costs of projects that would reduce the potential for flooding during the 100-year event. The first project to be built under that program was a storm water detention dam upstream from the mouth of Sand Canyon (north of Robinsons May). Dams were also considered and proposed on Dry Canyon (north of the Simi Valley Hospital) and at the mouth of Chivo Canyon. (Yes, the same dam that had been previously proposed.)

Ultimately, both dams were rejected as not being cost effective. (Cost figures can never be fully determined until all geotechnical studies have been completed and engineering plans have been approved.) With stricter seismic standards following the Northridge Earthquake, it was determined that it would be necessary to extend both dams down to bedrock. The necessity to do that had not been considered previously.

Neither of those dams has been constructed. Until recently, a portion of the Las Llajas Channel, between the Alamo and Cochran Street crossings, was relatively unimproved and underfit for the 100-year flood. In other words, there was a potential for flooding even during minor flood events. Monies

from the grant were used to make necessary channel improvement in that area.

In the end, it seems that a dam at the mouth of Chivo Canyon was a bad idea. Even if no one had challenged the environmental document on the 1970s project, there probably would not have been enough money to construct the dam.

Because the dam would have been over 25' in height, it would have been subject to review by the California Division of Safety of Dams. When the dam was first considered, the Simi-Santa Rosa fault was not considered to be active. Sometime in the early 1990s the fault was reclassified as “active” by the State of California. That fault crosses Chivo Canyon within hundreds of feet upstream of the proposed dam site. The proximity of the dam to the known traces of the Simi-Santa Rosa fault would not necessarily preclude the construction of the dam, but it certainly casts a long shadow over a dam at that location.

At this point in time, the canyon is owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and is available for hiking.

Mike Kuhn



A very washed out Santa Paula Canyon trail.

*Left to right: Chuck Portoghesi, Alan Cueba,
and Bill Cespedes.*

Photo by John Sabol

QUAKING ASPEN*

The quaking aspen is the most widely distributed tree in North America, extending across the northern part of the United States and Canada to the Great Lakes region to the eastern seaboard and into the northern high mountains of Mexico. In the Sierra Nevada of California they grow in small clusters to stands of several hundred acres.

They occupy a variety of habitats from meadows to riparian zones, moraines, old volcanic flows and talus slopes. The common factor is that the seeds need a mineral soil to sprout on. This condition can be provided by fire, avalanche, volcanic flows, or human disturbance. Aspen often occur on the edge of forests, such as clearings for roads. Clearcut forestry in the high Sierras benefited aspen, while fire suppression has reduced the density and distribution of the trees.

While reproduction by seed does occur, it most commonly reproduces through sprouting from the roots of existing tree. This vegetative regeneration results in a pioneer plant effect following fires. The root structure of a tree that has burnt to the ground can still generate many new trees in just a few years. Sucker growth can result in ten-foot high trees in just a couple of years.

Because aspen are deciduous and generally grow in wetter settings than coniferous forests, fire generally doesn't go to the crown but stays on the ground. Fire, then, does not produce as hot a fire as those experienced in coniferous forests. The trees are spaced further apart than are trees in a coniferous forest, and aspen do not provide a fuel ladder to the crown of the stand.

Because of the sucker growth, aspen have a 50 or more year head start before coniferous trees can get large enough to shade out the aspen. As a consequence, our forestry policy of fire suppression has had a major negative effect on the abundance and distribution of aspen.

Because of the filtered light and rich leaf fall, aspen groves support many more animals than do coniferous forests. A greater variety of insects live under and on aspen as well as more species of birds. Deer eat the leaves and rabbits nibble the branches and buds.

While aspen seem to have a life span of about 100 years, their regeneration by sucker growth, a type of cloning, makes it impossible to determine how old a tree or grove really is. The largest known aspen is 97 feet high and has a circumference of 125 inches. It is located in the Tahoe Basin.



Aspen leaves shimmer or “quake” in the wind. Besides providing a spectacular image to the eye, a rattling sound is emitted that is quite unique. In the fall the aspen leaves turn yellow before falling from the tree. A tour of the aspen zone along the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada in mid- to late-October provides California's best fall colors.

*Adapted from Eric Winford, “Aspen and Oaks in the Tahoe Basin,” *Outdoor California*, Vol. 66, No 1.4 (July-August 2005)

Mike Kuhn



BATS HAVE A FEEL FOR FLIGHT

[Condensed from Greg Miller, *Science* 310,1260(2005)]

In the 1780's a noted French biologist proposed that bats used their sense of touch to fly and maneuver in the dark. This theory was strengthened when anatomists in the 19th Century discovered that bats had a latticework of tiny bumps on their wings that contained tactile receptor cells. Somewhat later, a naturalist suggested that bats depend instead on echolocation, where the bats give off high-pitched sounds and interpret the return echoes. However, it wasn't until the 1930's, when researchers first recorded the high-pitched sounds bats make to echolocate, that proof of echolocation was realized.

Up until recently, it has been accepted that bats depend entirely on this echolocation to execute the complex aerial maneuvers required in capturing prey or avoiding obstacles.

John Zook, a biologist at Ohio State University in Athens, was curious about the tactile receptor cells. Studying them under a microscope, he noted that they all had a tiny hair poking out of the center. Nerve recordings revealed that the receptor cells were very sensitive to the air flowing across the wing. Because air turbulence can signal that a wing is losing lift, Zook thought that the tactile cells might help bats to adjust the angle and curvature of their wings during tight turning maneuvers to avoid stalling out in midair.

To test this theory the researcher used Nair, a depilating cream, to remove the tiny hairs from the bats' wings. The bats were then videotaped in flight as they caught mealworms shot out of an air cannon in an enclosed space. They flew perfectly well – in a straight line, but when the bats had to make a 90-degree turn, their elevation control was erratic. Sometimes they would hit the ceiling. When the hairs grew back, the bats regained their flying skills.

The study provides convincing evidence that the bats' tactile sense is important for their flight and prey capturing ability.

John Sabol



RSTB Calendar February 2006



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Caroline Carroll</i>	2 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	3	4 Lang Ranch See Schedule
5 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	6 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Phil Pratt</i>	7 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Tish Adams</i>	8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>John Atwood</i>	9 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	10	11 Wildwood See Schedule
12 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Chuck Portoghesi</i> <i>Farra Harless</i>	14 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Doug Marsh</i>	15 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	16 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	17 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gina Stewart</i>	18 Hummingbird Creek Trail Work Party See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gloria Gormaz</i>	20 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Mary Ann Campbell</i>	21 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	22 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Lorraine Ferrall</i>	23 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	24 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Connie Ankrom</i>	25 Upper Stage Coach Trail Loop See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>David Seifert</i>
25 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	26	27 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	28			



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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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)

FEBRUARY HIKES

February 4th - Lang Ranch**

5 MRT - Moderate (750' elevation gain)

Hike the trails in the Lang Ranch area. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

February 11th - Wildwood Park**

5 MRT - Moderate (500' elevation gain & loss)

Nice views of Santa Rosa Valley and the Topatopa mountains. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

February 18th - Hummingbird Creek Trail Work Party

Directions: From Highway 118 Simi Valley Freeway, exit on Kuehner Drive and go north. Trailhead is on the right. We will be working from 8AM until noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

February 25th - Upper Stagecoach Trail Loop

5 MRT - Moderate (900' elevation gain and loss)

This is a loop hike on the Upper Stagecoach trail unlike anything we've done before. Meet at 8 AM at the entrance to the Upper Stagecoach Trail on the left side of Lilac Lane. Bring 2 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

Directions - From Simi Valley, exit 118 Fwy at Kuehner and go south, continuing up Santa Susana Pass. Lilac Lane is on the right, just before Rocky Peak Road. From the SF Valley, take 118 to Rocky Peak Road. Go over the Fwy and turn right (west) onto Santa Susana Pass. Turn left on Lilac Lane.

**** 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

Executive Chair:	Mike Kuhn	HM (805) 583-2345	hannahmike@adelphia.net
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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

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 630445, Simi Valley, Ca 93063

Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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