



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



ALL NOW ARE FOREVER LOST!

John Peabody Harrington was employed by the American Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institute to collect information about North American Indians from Indians. He did a great deal of work with the Chumash. One of his Ventura informants during the early part of the 20th century noted that he had left Ventura when he was 17 and had then lived for many years in the Salinas, California, area. When he returned to Ventura to live, there were still many full blooded Chumash Indians living in the area. At the time of his interviews with Harrington, he said that there were only four full-blooded Chumash left in the area. One, he noted, was in the hospital and would probably die there. Another, he said, doesn't know anything about his Chumash heritage. A woman, he said, lives over on a particular street. And, finally, there was himself. As he talked, he seemed to realize how much he had forgotten. He could not remember the names of some villages. Some names he could remember hearing and could repeat, but no longer remembered what the names were connected with. He slowly seemed to understand the mortality of his culture - that the Chumash life that had persisted for so many millennia in this place was passing out of the collective memory. Finally, he lamented, "Not only the rancherias but all the canadas and little places had names. All now are forever lost!"

Mike Kuhn
11-10-04



Welcome, New Members!

Bill & Kai Gillespie

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



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

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be at:
Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
7:00PM – February 15, 2012

Upcoming Events

February 4th

Backbone Trail Part 1: Ray Miller Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle*

9.8 Miles - (1,086' elevation gain) - Moderate to Strenuous
Meet at **8 AM**



February 11th

Backbone Trail Part 2: Mishe Mokwa Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle*

12.5 Miles - (900' elevation gain - 3,000' elevation loss) - Moderate to Strenuous
Meet at **8 AM**



February 15

Club Meeting - All members are invited and welcome to attend.
7 PM

February 18th

Work Party - The Chumash Trail
8 AM to Noon.

February 25th

Backbone Trail Part 3: Backbone Trailhead (across from Mishe Mokwa Trailhead) to Encinal Canyon Road Trailhead Shuttle*

10.0 Miles - (830' elevation gain) - Moderate to Strenuous - Meet at **8 AM**



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

A CHUMASH CAVE

Following the Chatsworth Fire of October 2005 I was taken to a cave, on private property, in the hills around Simi Valley. The entrance to the cave had previously been obscured by dense vegetation, including a dense stand of poison oak at the entrance. Most of the vegetation was destroyed by the fire, although we still had to push our way past some poison oak in order to get into the cave. The entrance to the cave is partially blocked by rock fall, but the cave itself appears to have a stable ceiling. It is quite large – large enough to seat 30 or 40 people comfortably.

My host had been directed to the cave by the son of an employee of the owners of the ranch. The young man said that he had played in the cave when he was growing up. Evidence of historical use is still present in the cave. Some beer and soda cans litter a portion of the cave floor. (The beer cans were dated 1986.) A part of the frame of an external frame backpack is present on the floor, along with some other debris. Some graffiti has been carved into the walls of the cave. The only date that I noticed is consistent with the date of the beer cans. It is also clear that the cave was used by Chumash Indians during the late period (500-1800 C.E.). A substantial midden is present outside of the cave entrance, and a midden may be present inside the cave.

One artifact in the cave, a basket hopper, is especially well preserved. The bottoms of worn baskets were cut out and the remainder of the basket was adhered either to a flat slab of stone, which was much larger than the bottom of the basket, or to a concave stone, which was only slightly larger in diameter than the bottom of the basket. Food material, such as the pits of acorns or hollyleaf cherries (*Prunus ilicifolia*) were pounded in the bottom. The basket portion of the hopper served to keep the crushed debris

corralled. The kind of basket hopper in our cave is the large-based type, which was intended to remain in camp. The small based basket hopper would be taken by women when they went out to gather vegetable products and was used to process foodstuffs in the field. The basket hopper was light enough to be portable, whereas the first type needed to remain in camp because it was too heavy to be portable for any great distance. Several examples of the portable type of stone bases with asphaltum are on display at the Strathearn Historical Park Museum. The state of preservation of our basket hopper base is so good that some of the base of the basket portion is still present in the asphaltum – a relatively unusual find.

Mike Kuhn

11-10-05 (revised 5-9-10)

A MASTODON SLEPT HERE

Up until the end of the Pleistocene Epoch and a little beyond, Simi Valley, like the rest of North America, shared a rich Pleistocene fauna. These were the critters of storybooks – the stuff of the Page Museum of the La Brea Tar Pits. There were dire wolves, gigantic short-faced bears, American lions, saber-tooth cats, western horses, tapirs, peccaries, camels (big ones in this case), giant bison (*Bison antiquus*), southern mammoths, mastodons, giant ground sloths, small ground sloths, and many other now extinct critters. Their decline had begun approximately 14,500 years ago. All were extinct by about 7,500 years ago. Perhaps changes in climate, but, more likely, the advent of the American Indian and vanquished these animals from the earth, only to be known from the fossil record.

We think we know this land and certainly are a part of this place now, but our view is only a snippet of time and even those changes. Sure, we know the Indians were here, and the people

up from Mexico, and the farmers and herders and all of that, but we forget that there was a time before people, when the hills probably looked different than the way they do today and when the strange menagerie of animals roamed this place.

Well, during the first week of the new year (2002) a mastodon was unearthed in Sand Canyon about a half mile north of the northern end of Erringer Road. It is thought to have died and then been buried and incorporated into a landslide. A momentous find! There have only been parts of a few found in California and most have included only a few bones.

Mastodons were not true elephants, although they looked like a long low version of elephants. The mastodon family (*Mammutidae*) first lived in North Africa about 40 million years ago and reached America about 15 million years ago. They had tusks and individual somewhat conical teeth. They stood 6-10 feet at the shoulders and were up to 15 feet long. In general, they were squat compared to modern elephants. We know from frozen specimens that they had reddish brown hair.

The paleontologist, who made the discovery while serving as a paleontological monitor on a grading project, was a brand new college graduate on her first day of professional employment. The mastodon she found was the most complete ever found in California. (After hitting it big on your first day on the job as a professional all else has to be anticlimactic.)

Well, our mastodon has now been carted off to the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History for cleaning, stabilization of the bones and study. One day we may find out what those bones revealed.

Mike Kuhn

12-24-04 (revised 1-17-12)

December 10th 2011 - Los Robles Trail Shuttle



6 hikers met at the Stearns Street Park-and-ride lot at 7:00 a.m. on a chilly-but-clear morning. Since it was to be a one-way hike, we dropped two shuttle vehicles off at the White Horse Canyon trailhead in Westlake Village and then drove to the parking lot at the west end of the Los Robles Trail on Potrero Road in Newbury Park. We followed the Los Robles Trail as it wound its way along the mountain slopes to Angel Vista overlooking the Conejo Valley, Camarillo, Boney Mountain, Anacapa Island, and Santa Cruz Island. Continuing along the trail as it rose and fell we had excellent views of Hidden Valley and its horse ranches. After passing the junction with a short connector trail that leads to Moorpark Road, the trail climbed eastward back up the mountain where we paused to enjoy the view of the Topa Topa Mountains to the north. Continuing eastward we spotted a deer and eventually reached the upper end of the White Horse Canyon Trail. We followed it to the southeast, descending to its trailhead on Potrero Road (where we had parked our shuttle vehicles) having completed a lengthy 10.8-mile hike with 2,077' of elevation gain. We retrieved our other vehicles and returned to Simi Valley, tired but grateful for a very pleasant hike.

December 24th 2011 - Sage Ranch Loop



12 hikers arrived at the parking lot in Sage Ranch Park in the Simi Hills via Black Canyon Road on a cool, clear morning. The 625-acre park is located just north of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) (aka Rocketdyne/Boeing) at an elevation of 2,000'. It is chock-full of world-class sandstone rock formations and has lots of picnic tables shaded by large oak trees. Shortly after we began our hike, we were rewarded with expansive views of

Simi Valley and the mountains to the north. We explored various side trails and climbed up on Sandstone Ridge, a long, steep rock formation rising alongside the trail on the west side; it afforded us with excellent views of the once-bustling SSFL. The beautiful setting was enhanced by many oak trees and large patches of bright green grass. All too soon, we completed our short, but delightful, holiday stroll (3.3 miles with about 500' of elevation gain).

December 31st 2011 - The Hummingbird Trail

15 hikers met in the dirt parking area on the east side of Kuehner Avenue just north of Hwy 118 in Simi Valley to hike the Hummingbird Trail. It was a cool, clear morning as we began our eastward climb to the Rocky Peak Fire Road. The trail passed through (and on) a variety of imposing sandstone rock formations along the way including very large boulders and giant slabs of sandstone rock, many with small "caves." There were sweeping views of eastern Simi Valley, the Santa Susana Mountains, and the Simi Hills (including the Boeing/Rocketdyne facility). Reaching the Rocky Peak Fire Road, we rested and talked with some of the many bicycle riders and other hikers who were also enjoying the pleasant morning and the beautiful scenery – and working off some of those extra holiday calories! We retraced our route and reached the trailhead having completed a 4.6-mile hike with 1,341' of elevation gain/loss.

January 7th 2012 - La Tuna Canyon Park to Plantation Lateral



Fifteen hikers met at the Stearns Street Park & Ride and carpooled to the trailhead at La Tuna Canyon Park. It was a perfect hiking weather day

with clear skies to the north, and low ground-hugging clouds to the south. We hiked up the shady side on the mountain, where there were new grasses growing and wishbone in bloom. When our small trail reached the fire road, there were large strategically placed lounge-chairs, affording a perfect place to enjoy the view out to the ocean on a clear day. After eating lunch, we proceeded to the very top of the mountain, where we saw a communications site with tall towers, antennas, cement foundations and a cistern. We hiked back down the same trail and carpooled back to Simi Valley. There are many more trails in the area, so we plan to return and do some exploring in the future.



RSTB Calendar February



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Happy Birthday Caroline Carroll	2 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	3	4 Backbone Trail Part 1: Ray Miller Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle*  See Schedule
5 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4 PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Mona Steffen	6	7 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	8 Happy Birthday John Atwood	9 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	10	11 Backbone Trail Part 2: Mishe Mokwa Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle*  See Schedule
12 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Joey Simon	13	14 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Paula Lightfoot Doug Marsh	15 Club Meeting 7 PM See Schedule	16 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	17 Happy Birthday Sally Grant	18 Work Party Chumash Trail 8AM - NOON See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Melissa Steffen Pete Lestrel	20 Happy Birthday Mary Ann Campbell	21 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	22 Happy Birthday Lorraine Ferrall	23 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Karen Schroder	24 Happy Birthday Connie Ankrom	25 Backbone Trail Part 3: Backbone Trailhead (across from Mishe Mokwa Trailhead) to Encinal Canyon Road Trailhead Shuttle*  See Schedule Happy Birthday David Seifert
26 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Dave Goldberg	27	28 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	29			

REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **4 PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. Take the Rocky Peak exit from the 118 Fwy. Meet at the north end of the bridge; don't park on the bridge. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Las Lajas Canyon

Meet at **6:30 PM** at the Evening Sky Drive trailhead. Take the 118 Fwy to the Yosemite Ave exit; head north past McDonalds and the stop sign at Alamo Street; continue 0.85 mile north on Yosemite Ave to the stop sign at Evening Sky Drive; turn right (east) and drive 0.5 mile to the trailhead; park on either side of the street. (Easy-to-moderate depending on distance hiked, 3¼ MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** at Chumash trailhead. Take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 5.2 MRT)

FEBRUARY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

February 4th

Backbone Trail Part 1: Ray Miller Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle* 

9.8 Miles - (1,086' elevation gain) - Moderate to Strenuous

Meet at **8 AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Please remember, this hike requires ample shuttle cars, so be prepared to drive your car from Donut Delite to both the beginning and ending trailheads in Mugu State Park. The parking fee is \$12 at Big Sycamore Canyon Campground parking lot. The parking fee is \$8 at La Jolla Canyon parking lot. Parking fees will be shared between everyone in attendance. Shuttle car driving directions will be distributed at Donut Delite. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear sturdy boots. To view the trail map view this:

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/bbtm/Day1.jpg> To view the National Park Systems Backbone Trail System flier, view this: <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/BackboneTrail.pdf>

February 11th

Backbone Trail Part 2: Mishe Mokwa Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle* 

12.5 Miles - (900' elevation gain - 3,000' elevation loss) - Moderate to Strenuous

Meet at **8 AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. The parking fee is \$12 at Big Sycamore Canyon Campground parking lot. Parking fees will be shared between everyone in attendance. Shuttle car driving directions will be distributed at Donut Delite. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear sturdy boots. Same as February 4th!

February 15th

Club Meeting

All members are invited and welcome to attend. Meet at **7 PM** - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

February 18th

Work Party - The Chumash Trail


8 AM to Noon. Meet at the northern end of Flannigan Drive. All tools will be provided. Bring two quarts of water, snacks, gloves and sun glasses. Wear a hat, long pants, and hiking shoes or boots.

February 25th

Backbone Trail Part 3: Backbone Trailhead (across from Mishe Mokwa Trailhead) to Encinal Canyon Road Trailhead Shuttle* 

10.0 Miles - (830' elevation gain) - Moderate to Strenuous

Meet at **8 AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. There are no parking fees at either trailhead. Shuttle car driving directions will be distributed at Donut Delite. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear sturdy boots. Same as February 4th!

* Not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.  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.** <http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

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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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

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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.

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

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