



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Announcing New Tuesday Night Hike Location!

Starting in March, the regular Tuesday night hike will be at Las Lajas Canyon. Suitable for beginners, this 3¾-mile round trip hike follows a seasonal stream along a wide graded dirt road in the bottom of the canyon. Optionally turn around sooner or hike further up the canyon. More information and directions to the trailhead can be found on Page 5 of this newsletter and also on the Activities page of the website. Bring a friend and join us for a nice evening hike!



Welcome, New Members!

Martina Banev, Christine Calvert, Diana and Katie Prater, Jesse Mansfield, Maria and Gloria Silva, Theresa Bush

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be at: Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
7:00PM – March 16, 2011



California Trail Days Mark Your Calendars!

Simi Valley will be participating in the state-wide California Trail Days project. This event is held in communities throughout the state to celebrate nature trails and the benefits they bring to hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers will host a trail rehabilitation project on the North Ridge Trail, located in the northeast part of Simi Valley.

Adults, and teens ages 12 and over accompanied by a parent or guardian, can help on **Saturday, April 16, from 8am to 12 pm** with trail work. The Trail Blazers will provide all tools and project supervision. Volunteers do not have to be members of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers to help with this project.

Very soon, volunteers can register for this event on the website. Please look for the California Trail Days project section on the homepage at www.simitrailblazers.com.

Upcoming Events

March 5th

*Sandstone Peak Loop via the Mishe Mokwa Trail**

7 MRT - Moderate (1500' elevation gain/loss)

March 10th - 13th

*Family Camping and Hiking Event - Joshua Tree National Park**

March 16th

Club Meeting

March 19th

Work Party

Upper Chumash Trail

March 26th

*Vasquez Rocks and a Pacific Coast Trail Section**

9.2 miles one-way - Moderately strenuous (2,611' elevation gain and 2,356' elevation loss)

More information about these events can be found on Page 5 and on the Activities page at <http://simitrailblazers.com>

RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS

Sporting the beautiful RSTB logo, these are great shirts! Please call Marty if you'd like to order at 805-526-4414.

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



1834 DESCRIPTION OF TRAILS OVER SANTA SUSANA PASS

A report, dated July 25, 1834, was prepared by the Mayor of the Port of Santa Barbara, Counsel Jose' Maria Garcia, for transmittal to Mexico City on the Santa Barbara Presidio District. The report describes three routes from the San Fernando Valley over Santa Susana Pass.

"The middle road is the most frequently used, its starting point being beautified by a leafy grove of coast live oaks and sycamore trees. Starting the ascent, there is a spring of excellent but limited water. The ascent is rocky and difficult to the top, and the descent, although rough, is made pleasurable by a leafy grove and, halfway, a stream of delicious but intermittently flowing water. At the foot of the descent is a grove of the same species of trees and an abundance of pasturage. At the right of this road, there is another less steep climb, initially through rough vegetation. At a short distance, there is a running spring among native trees. This road merges with the first.

The third road is to the left. At its base there is a small grove of valley oaks. Ascending over wasteland, there is another small flowing spring halfway up among a few trees. The climb becomes increasingly difficult, hampered by rugged growth and boulders.

This road continues until it joins with the other two to form a single route, which descends to a small plain.

...Nearby is a fine spring known as Las Lajas which provides water for the plantings of corn, beans, etc."

From this description it is clear that three tracks extended from the San Fernando Valley side to the top of

the pass. The Simi Valley side seems to have had only one route. One of the three routes must have been what later was referred to as the Stagecoach Road. My guess is that the Devil's Slide route was the last one described. Trying to identify the other two routes would be interesting. It may be possible after a brush fire.

Thrown in at the end is the comment about the agriculture associated with "...a fine spring known as Las Lajas..." which supported irrigated agriculture. It is possible that Jose' Maria Garcia was not very familiar the Simi Valley and was referring to Arroyo del Las Lajas, now known as "Las Lajas." Las Lajas Canyon carries water year round and could have provided irrigation water for the canyon below its confluence with Chivo Canyon. The spelling of Las Lajas is show on all the early maps during the Anglo-American period of settlement as "Las Lajas," which means "layered rocks" in Spanish. "Llajas" is not Spanish for anything. It appears that the U.S. Geological Survey simply made a mistake.

Mike Kuhn
4-25-10



ACORN PESTS

Acorns are usually attacked by two insect genera. They are the filbertworm (*Cydia latiferreana*) and several species of filbert weevils (*Curculio* spp.). Small closed blemishes are egg laying sites and can be found on viable acorns. Small holes, about the size of small pencil lead, are insect exit holes.

Those acorns are usually quite chewed up inside and full of insect feces. Acorns that are light in weight or which deform easily when squeezed are usually insect damaged. If the acorns are intended for planting or for eating, the long-used flotation test is as good as any. All acorns are put into a bucket of

water. Those that sink are usually viable.

Birds seem to know the difference between a good and a bad acorn. When an equally large number of good and bad acorns are left out on a feeding tray for scrub jays, the birds almost always take only the viable acorns.

Various fungi can also colonize and decay acorns. Since the damp cool environment found in a refrigerator is similar to the winter environment provided by nature, the loss of some acorns kept in refrigerators is expected.

Nature compensates for bad acorn years by producing persistent seedlings in the understories of mature oaks. Seedlings can persist for years as only a few inches tall. During this period, they normally develop robust root systems, usually eight or more feet deep. Consequently, if the overstory tree or trees perish, the seedlings are in a good position to take off. The production of a massive root system while the seedling remains small is the reason that acorns that are germinated in pots should only be kept in the pots for one year.

Over the last 200 years or so, oak seedlings have had to contend with new environmental factors, such as hotter fires, livestock predation and introduced weedy species of grasses that can shade out the oak seedlings. Hopefully, man as the new environmental agent that has cause a decline in the rate of oak regeneration will get his collective act together so that our native oak trees do not disappear within the next thousand years or so.

Mike Kuhn
10-27-04

**February 12th 2011 - Big Sky Ranch:
Whiteface Mountain Shuttle Hike**



16 hikers (+ one cute dog) met in the parking lot at Big Sky Park on a windy morning, determined to scale White Face Mountain just north of the Big Sky housing development in Simi Valley. Once ready, we walked up to the nearby trailhead on the south side of the large water tank and began climbing the ridge to the northwest of the softball fields. The trail initially led upward to a narrow, but level, path (with drop-offs on both sides) leading northeast to the main trail heading north. The brisk wind and the possibility of a serious fall kept our attention riveted to the trail. We then climbed steeply for a while until the trail leveled off again and then dropped a bit as it approached the final fairly lengthy ascent. This final section presented some steep stretches that required careful maneuvering. Heidi (the dog) was impressive as she ascended the trail and demonstrated why four legs are sometimes better than two. Eventually we found ourselves atop White Face Mountain with panoramic views of the city and the surrounding mountainous terrain. We hiked to the east for better views of the Tapo Canyon area and then embarked on the exploratory part of the hike. We followed fire roads through the picturesque countryside which was green as a result of winter rains, enjoying distant views of the Simi Hills and the Channel Islands. We headed home having completed a 9-mile hike with 1,600' of elevation gain.

**February 5th 2011 - Johnson Motorway to
Rocky Peak**

17 hikers + two dogs met at the carpool point at the Stearns Street Park-and-Ride lot in Simi Valley on a pleasant winter morning and then traveled to the trailhead, at the northwest end of Poema Place (just outside the gate to Indian Falls Estates) in Chatsworth. After walking through Indian Falls Estates, carefully following the green-line easement painted on the street while gazing at the expensive homes along the way, we reached the beginning

of the unpaved Johnson Motorway. The trail (an old dirt and sandstone roadbed) rose westward until it met a short driveway, leading north to the ruins of the ranch house that was built by Ann and Neils Johnson who were the first English-speaking homesteaders in the San Fernando Valley; they built their home in Chatsworth park in the 1870s. Leaving the ruins, we followed the Johnson Motorway as it passed through a landscape of dramatic rock formations, climbing steadily toward the Rocky Peak Fire Road. After 3.5 miles we reached the fire road where we took a short break. Seven of the hikers decided to return to the trailhead; the remaining ten hikers headed southward along the Rocky Peak Fire Road enjoying views of both Simi Valley and the San Fernando Valley. Upon reaching the short trail leading eastward to Rocky Peak, we made our way over to the peak where we enjoyed panoramic views of the surrounding area, including some snow atop a distant peak in the San Gabriel Mountains. We retraced our route downhill back to our vehicles and returned home. The hike all the way to Rocky Peak and back was 9 miles with about 1,600' of total elevation gain.





RSTB Calendar March 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
		1 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Roger Steffen	2 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Martin DeGoey	3 Chumash Trail 6:00PM See Schedule	4	5 Sandstone Peak via the Mishe Mokwa Trail* 8AM See Schedule		
	6 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4:00PM See Schedule	7 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Geeta Bayyaram	8 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Colleen Janssen	9	10 11 12 Joshua Tree National Park March 10-13		10 Chumash Trail 6:00PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Loralie Dorfman	11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Pat Peters
13 <div style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Joshua Tree</div> Daylight Saving Time begins Rocky Peak Fire Road 5:00PM See Schedule	14	15 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	16 Club Meeting 7 PM	17 Chumash Trail 6:00PM See Schedule	18	19 Work Party Upper Chumash Trail See Schedule		
20 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5:00 PM See Schedule	21 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Songmi Margolin	22 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	23 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Judy Cohen	24 Chumash Trail 6:00PM See Schedule	25	26 Vasquez Rocks and section of Pacific Coast Trail* See Schedule		
27 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5:00 PM See Schedule	28	29 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	30	31 Chumash Trail 6:00PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Larry Ribbeck				



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **4 PM (5 PM during Daylight Savings Time)** 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. Directions: Take Hwy 118 to the Yosemite Ave exit; head north 1/3 mile (passing McDonald's) to 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, 3¾ MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** at the 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. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 5.2 MRT)

MARCH HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

March 5th

Sandstone Peak Loop (via the Mishe Mokwa Trail)*

7 MRT - Moderate (1500' elevation gain/loss) See a wide variety of vegetation, spectacular rock formations, and the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. **Meet at 8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

March 10th - 13th

Joshua Tree National Park* RESERVATIONS ARE NOW CLOSED

This event is a family camping and hiking trip to Joshua Tree National Park. First come first served. Active Rancho Simi Trail Blazer membership is required. You are responsible for your portion of the campground fee. Between \$10 and \$20 is expected, per person. There is also \$15 per car entrance fee. For more information about Joshua Tree, visit the National Park Service web site at <http://www.nps.gov/jotr/>.

March 16th - Club Meeting

7PM - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

March 19th

Work Party - Upper Chumash Trail

See the website for more details.

March 26th

Vasquez Rocks and Section of the Pacific Crest Trail*

9.2 miles one-way - Moderately strenuous (2,611' elevation gain and 2,356' elevation loss) Requires a fairly short vehicle shuttle. We will hike a section of the Pacific Crest Trail from Soledad Canyon Road to Vasquez Rocks County Park (near Agua Dulce) which has been filmed in many movies, TV shows, and commercials. Meet at **8AM** at the **118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride**. Bring 2 quarts of water and lunch.

* 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

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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.

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

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