



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



## SUNDAY EVENING HIKE TIME CHANGE

It's that time again. You know... Daylight Savings Time has begun and it's time to move the Sunday Evening Hike ahead one hour. So...

Starting in April, and through the month of October, the **Sunday Evening Hike** will start at **5pm**. Don't forget to mark your calendar!



## NEW WEB SITE

We have a new web site! Mark Gilmore has graciously taken over the care and updating of our RSTB website. The new address is:

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

Mark has added a News section, a newsletter archive, a Contacts page, and a place for pictures from our members. When you get a chance, check it out!!

## WORK PARTY CHAIR NEEDED

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers need a Work Party leader. Duties involve planning and leading one trail work party a month including picking up and returning needed tools from our tool shed at the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Sycamore Drive maintenance yard.

No experience is necessary. We have several knowledgeable, experienced work party leaders who will provide training and work along with you until you are comfortable with the duties.



**Welcome!**

**Farra Harless  
Floyd and Mary Martin  
Karleen Volz, Sharon Hamilton,  
Daniel Hamilton,  
and Christopher Hamilton**

## 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.



## RSTB CLUB MEETING

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

Room B-1  
1692 Sycamore Drive  
at 7:00 PM  
on  
**April 20, 2005**

## EXOTIC GRASSES IN CALIFORNIA

Exotic species have spread rapidly throughout the world with modern civilization and advanced forms of transportation. In California, exotic annual grasses and forbs have supplanted native perennial grasses over nearly a quarter of the state. At an August meeting of the Ecological Society of America a team of scholars from Santa Barbara and one from Minnesota reported on what they have found out about why these exotic grasses have been so successful.

Three hypotheses were investigated. First, the exotics might dominate resources such as sunlight and water; second, they might be winning out because the sparse natives produce too few seeds to retake the fields; and third, grasses, whether exotic or native, are not easily dislodged once they have become established. Field experiments were done near the coast in southern California. They found that mixtures of exotics, including black mustard, ripgut brome and soft chess, used less water, nitrogen and sunlight than a mixture of five native grasses, including California brome and purple needlegrass. They also found that the natives were able to retake patches of exotic grasses if the researchers planted more native seeds. Seed abundance was the key. Trying to re-establish native grasslands won't be easy and more research is certainly needed. After all, areas of exotic annual grasses usually contain a seed bank of tens of thousands of seeds per square meter – a formidable impediment to native perennial grasses. [excerpted from *Science* (September 6, 2002), pp. 1635 and 1637]

Mike Kuhn

## MOUNTAIN LION TALK

On Saturday, March 19, 2005, the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District hosted a presentation by Christa M. Mann, Field Representative, Mountain Lion Foundation. Her talk and power point presentation was entitled “Living with Mountain Lions.” Thirty-seven people were in attendance. Three things that I learned that I didn’t know are:

1. Mountain lion’s front feet are larger than their rear feet.
2. **Most of the time they walk so their rear feet step onto the same places out of which their front feet just stepped. I had long puzzled why the big cat tracks I found didn’t seem to show more prints. I guess that I wasn’t bright enough to figure it out on my own. By the way, this habit allows mountain lions to make less noise – they can see where they are putting their front paws, but not where they are putting their rear paws.**
3. When mountain lions mate, they will copulate 50-90 times a day for a seven to eight day period. The female screams during copulation. I have read about the screams of mountain lions. Each of my sources indicated that it was not known what was going on during the screaming. However, two of the sources said that people hearing the screams first described the sound as that of a woman, then as that of one or more people, and then eventually of that of an animal.

Some years ago, while coming down the Chumash Trail, in the dark, on one of our Thursday evening hikes, I and everyone else on the hike were treated to the screams of a mountain lion. The screams came at regular intervals and seemed to persist until we were out of hearing range. Our reactions were just as described above – so I concluded that we were listening to a mountain lion. The following week, John Sabol was a few minutes late in catching up with the rest of the group. He explained the he was delayed while listening to the same sound coming from a point about a quarter of a mile further down the same canyon. It now seems that these two events may have been part of the same mating event of the same two mountain lions.

A few months later, we heard the same sound during the daytime in lower La Jolla Canyon.

Our thanks to Ms. Mann and the Mountain Lion Foundation.

Mike Kuhn



## EL ROBLARO

When the Spanish arrived in Simi Valley, they found the eastern end of the valley, that is the area roughly east of present day Stearns Street, covered with an oak-grass woodland, dominated by mature valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*). That woodland was referred to as *El Roblaro*. The name is probably a translation from the Chumash into Spanish by those early vaqueros and sheepherders, who were Chumash Indians.

The significance of the name to the Chumash, if any, is not known. However, it is directly descriptive. The great abundance of place names such as *Canada Aliso*, *Canada de los Alisos*, and *Canada de los Alamos*, that refer to trees, most certainly reflect a Chumash concern rather than a Spanish preoccupation.

The Spanish and Mexican settlers primarily occupied the “Tapo” and what is now Strathearn Historical Park. Land use pressure was confined largely to grazing of sheep and cattle. The cattle no doubt destroyed seedling oaks, but they would have had little impact on the mature oaks.

The event of Anglo-American farmers was accompanied by a demand for fuel wood - both for cooking and heating. Oaks, willows, cottonwoods and sycamore trees were just about the only trees in the valley. Of those trees, both valley and coast live oaks were the most numerous by far and represented the highest quality fuel. Clearing of the land for crop production also resulted in the cutting of oak trees.

By the time that the great boom in suburbanization came along in the late-1950s and early 1960s, the number of remaining large valley oaks where *El Roblaro* once stood was probably fewer than 100. Today, no more than a few dozen of those trees remain. Where the old “Ten Oaks” trailer park once stood, only five of the old monarchs are still there. Other trees have fallen victim to new roads, subdivisions, old age, and mismanagement. *El Roblaro* is no more.

Mike Kuhn



## SCRUB OAK

Scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*) is the smallest of our native oak trees in the Simi Valley area. This shrub or small tree has thick leathery leaves with spiny margins. It has stout rigid branches and is usually found on north facing slopes in the chaparral vegetation association. It provides shelter and food, in the form of acorns, to animals. Scrub oaks sprout quickly after a fire, and the soft new growth is browsed by deer. There is a substantial stand of scrub oaks along the Chumash Trail just beyond the first rock outcroppings next to the trail.

## WHAT'S BLOOMING?

Here are some pictures of what's blooming this time of year:



Purple Owl's Clover (*Castilleja densiflora*)



Sticky Phacelia (*Phacelia viscida*)



Fiesta Flower (*Pholistoma aurium*)

## TAPO

Some names are borne by communities. They are so identified with a place that they are used over and over again. They fit like a glove and give comfort to long term residents, who may know nothing of their origins or meanings or connections to the community. Yet, they are cherished as though witness to something sacred to that place. "Tapo" is such a name to Simi Valley. Indeed, it appears no place else - is cherished by no other community. So, what does it mean and where does it come from?

The name "Tapo" is the Anglicized version of the name of the Chumash Indian village in Tapo Canyon. The village appears in various forms in the baptismal records of the San Fernando and the Ventura missions. Versions include *Taapu* (34), *Taapu'*, *Tapu* (4), *Taapa* and *Toapu* - among others. The most consistent rendition - offered by two Chumash Indian informants of John Peabody Harrington - is *Ta'apu*. Certainly, the padres did not have a parallel to a guttural stop in Spanish. So, their rendition as "*Taapu*" is as close to the linguistic version of "*Ta'apu*" as they could come. In addition, one Chumash and one Fernandeano informant rendered the pronunciation *Ta'a'pu*.

*Ta'apu* was the largest of the three villages in the Simi Valley area, being about twice the size of *Simi'* or *Quimisac*. *Ta'apu* was the only village with a chief, *i.e.*, *wot*, and that *wot* was the chief of the other two villages and the land from the tops of the mountains north and south from Santa Susana Pass (*Kashiwe*) westerly to a short distance east of Somis.

The trails to the village of *Ta'apu* were named after the village to which they led. As a result, there is a "Tapo Canyon" on the U.S. Geological Survey map on both the northern and the southern sides of the Santa Susana Mountains. Both trails (canyons) led to the village of *Ta'apu*.

As late as the 1930s, a number of sources refer to "Tapu" Creek, "Tapu" Ranch and "the Tapu". The linguist John Peabody Harrington noted that the "u" at the end of a word in the Ventureño Chumash language is possibly an unaccented "o". Indeed, in the Barbareño dialect, the word is rendered as "*topo*." So, this may explain how the final "u" became an "o".

Richard VanValkenburg, in his 1933 notes on file at the Los Angeles County Museum, indicated that the word *ta'apu* means "yucca", which refers to the *Yucca whipplei* ssp. *intermedia*, or more commonly referred to as "Spanish dagger" and "our lord's candle." Different parts of the yucca can be eaten at various times of the year. The plant supplied cordage and rope to the Indians. The bulb at the base of the leaves provided food any time of the year. So, the yucca was a very important plant to the Chumash.

So, that's it - no mystery - Tapo is our own. It is a link to the past of this place.

Mike Kuhn



# RSTB Calendar

## April 2005



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Long Canyon to Simi Peak See Schedule
3 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Mike McCrary</i>	4	5 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	6	7 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	8 <i>Happy Birthday Louise Pomes</i>	9 Antelope Valley See Schedule
10 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	11	12 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	13	14 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	15 <i>Happy Birthday John Sabol</i>	16 Wildwood from CLU See Schedule
17 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	18 <i>Happy Birthday Nichole Baffone</i>	19 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	20 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	21 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	22	23 Lower Stage Coach Trail Work Party See Schedule
24 Flower Walk Chumash Trail 9am - Noon See Schedule	25 <i>Happy Birthday Cody Frank</i>	26 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Gary Cremeans</i>	27	28 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	29	30 O'Melveny Park See Schedule



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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## Hiking Schedule



- April 2 Long Canyon to Simi Peak**  
Strenuous 9 MRT with 1300' elevation gain/loss. 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 **8am** at the intersection of Long Canyon Rd and Wood Ranch Pkwy. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.
- April 3 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **5pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- April 5 Tuesday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 7 Thursday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 9 Antelope Valley**  
It's flower season again, and we'll be driving out to Antelope Valley to check out the local plant life and beautiful scenery. This will be an ALL DAY event. This is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring your camera, water and lunch, wear boots.
- April 10 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **5pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- April 12 Tuesday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 14 Thursday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 16 Wildwood Park – Santa Rosa Trail**  
Moderate 5 MRT with 500' elevation gain/loss. Nice views of Santa Rosa Valley and the Topatopa mountains. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 qts. of water and snack, wear boots.
- April 17 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **5pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- April 19 Tuesday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 21 Thursday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 23 Lower Stagecoach Trail Work Party**  
Directions: Take Kuehner south, turn left onto Smith Rd, and follow it to the end of the street. Parking lot is on the left. Meet in Corriganville parking lot at 8am. We will be working from 8am - Noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- April 24 Chumash Trail Flower Walk**  
Meet at 9am at the Chumash trailhead. Check out the wildflowers on the Chumash trail. Directions – take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. This walk is approximately 3 hours. Bring your camera, 2 qts. of water, and a snack. Wear boots.
- April 26 Tuesday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 28 Thursday Evening Hike**  
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 MRT**)
- April 30 O'Melveny Park Hike**  
Moderate - strenuous 7 MRT hike with 1200' elevation gain/loss. See great views of San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys from Mission Point. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 – 3 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots.

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
Treasurer:	Peter Ely	HM (805) 523-1409	
Park District Liaison:	Colleen Janssen	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
Work Parties Chair:		*** OPEN ***	
Hiking Chair:	Arlene Altshuler	HM (805) 581-9735	arlene.altshuler@mindbox.com
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Website:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
Ways & Means Chair:	Marty Richards	HM (805) 526-4414	
Publicity Chair:	Judi Sevcik	HM (805) 581-4340	judisevcik@earthlink.net
Newsletter Editor:	Arlene Altshuler	HM (805) 581-9735	arlene.altshuler@mindbox.com

**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 630445, Simi Valley, Ca 93063

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



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