



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS

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short sleeve \$12
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Who Are The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers?

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers is a volunteer organization of outdoor enthusiasts consisting of bikers, equestrians, hikers, and naturalists. The Trail Blazers are totally committed to the care and protection of their natural environment for the enjoyment of all. They care for the trails through regular maintenance, development, and improvement of the trail system, the cooperative promotion between all its users and the exploration of sensitivities through interpretive classes and organized trail activities. The Trail Blazers formed in late 1992. Their first major activity as a group was to participate in the California Trail Days by clearing and cutting a trail on the Hummingbird Creek property; property which had been recently acquired by The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. This group was formed to retain and enhance the open spaces and cut new trails as well as maintain existing trails. For more information on the Trail Blazers, view:

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com/about/index.html>



April 21st 2012 - Work Party: Chivo Canyon



Our April work party was held on the Chivo Canyon Trail. A landslide in the recent past few years had severely undermined a portion of the trail bed and obliterated about 100 feet of the trail. We widened the inside portion of the trail and cut a useable trail across the landslide. Thanks to Julie Warner, John Sabol, Bart Hibbs, Mike Kuhn and Martin DeGoey for their hard work in the sun and the heat.

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be at:
Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
7:00PM – May 16, 2012

Upcoming Events

May 5th

Backbone Trail Part 8: Trippet Ranch to Will Rogers State Historic Park Shuttle*

11 Miles - (1,422' elevation gain) - Moderate to Strenuous - Meet at **8AM**



May 12th

Tri-Peaks and the Mishe Mokwa Trail*

7.8 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,700' elevation gain)
Meet at **8AM**

May 16th

Club Meeting - 7PM

May 19th

Work Party - Chivo Canyon

Meet at **8AM**

May 26th

Chivo Canyon

6 MRT - Easy to Moderate (800' elevation gain)
Meet at **8AM**

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.

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

CALIFORNIA GRIZZLIES VERSUS THE BLACK BEAR

When Spanish settlers first entered California, the rule-of-thumb was that black bears were the bears of needleleaf forests and grizzly bears occupied chaparral, oak woodlands and marshy areas. Of course, there were exceptions to the rule-of-thumb. Still there were vast portions of the state where there were no grizzlies or black bears and major areas where there were only grizzlies. Along the coast, black bears extended as far south as northern Sonoma and Napa counties, north into the Eureka Mountains, across the northern portion of the state along the western fringes of the Modoc Plateau and south through the coniferous forest areas of the Sierra Nevada into southern Kern County. Black bear were not present in Ventura, Santa Barbara or Los Angeles counties or in counties to the south. Neither black nor grizzly bears were present in the Colorado or Mojave deserts, the Great Basin or the greatest portion of the Modoc Plateau. (One firm report of a grizzly does come from the Warner Range in the northeastern corner of California.) The grizzly bear was present through the rest of the state except for the very northwestern corner and those areas without grizzlies or black bears. The original range of these two types of bears has been reconstructed rather historical accounts and by archaeological evidence. (For example, I worked on an archaeological dig on the Tejon Ranch where a grizzly bear claw was found – pretty good proof that grizzlies had roamed the area. Of course, there are many historical accounts of grizzly bears in the same area.) However, where grizzly bears were abundant, black bears were not plentiful. By the same token, where black bears were plentiful, there were few grizzly bears. For example, there are many accounts of grizzly bears in the high country of the Sierra Nevada – there were just fewer of them.

Grizzlies were the ecological dominant where they roamed. They were avoided by the Indians. Because of their size, prowess and temperament, they could preempt any available food before other large animals, including man. Weighing up to 1,000 pounds, their food requirement, especially in terms of meat, meant that they were the

tail that wagged the rest of the ecological community. The decline and ultimate extermination of the California grizzly must have had enormous ecological ramifications for plants and animals all the way down the food chain. The nature of California changed forever. Kroeber, in 1925, estimated that in 1769 California contained approximately 133,000 Indians. Most of those Indians were concentrated along the coast and inland estuaries, as well as the marshlands of the Central Valley. The Indians of California had little defense against grizzly bears. At times, grizzly bears would attack and kill Indians. Sometimes they simply saw Indians as part of their food supply. The Indians' survival strategy was to stay clear of the great bears whenever possible. Avoid encounters! Convert chaparral to grasslands through annual burning. Keep villages and temporary camps in open areas. Don't wander around at night. Stay away from mature chaparral. Of course, a big problem came when it was time to gather acorns. Grizzly bears depended on masting on acorns to fatten up for the fall and winter scarcity of food. A good example of this strategy was the big village on the coast where Santa Barbara is today and the general paucity of villages where Montecito is today. The Indians stayed out of the oak-forest areas whenever possible. They gathered acorns in number, i.e., family groups. Hopefully, the grizzlies were more interested in eating their fill than in disputes over the crops from individual trees. Grizzly bear numbers increased during the mission and rancho periods of settlement. The grizzlies viewed cattle, sheep, hogs and equine species as a new and expanded food supply. It simply was easier to take livestock than wild food. The vaqueros did their best to minimize predation on livestock, but they were few in number and had few firearms. A muzzle loading rifle or musket was poor offense against grizzlies. Early American travelers encountered grizzlies. However, with the gold rush, which was focused in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada – prime grizzly bear habitat – the battle became intense. Bear meat was food, and bear robes were used as beds. Gold miners and farmers, who had livestock, and farmers whose crops were eaten by the bears, could not tolerate so large a carnivore in their midst. Anglo-Americans came better

armed and in greater number than their Spanish and Mexican predecessors. Indeed, bear meat was standard fare in market places – often selling for 20-30 cents a pound in Ventura. In the end, the mere presence of a California grizzly – anywhere – was not tolerated. They were gunned down and poisoned out of existence.

As the number of grizzlies declined, the number of black bear increased, and black bears expanded their range into what had originally been exclusively grizzly territory. In northern Ventura and Santa Barbara counties they extended their range out from the Tehachapi area. Now they are found throughout the National Forest areas of those counties and occasionally show up in Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Ventura, and the northern fringe of the San Fernando Valley. Black bears have historically been released into Monterey, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties. I remember some years back when a substantial number of Yosemite National Park "problem bears" were released in the Lockwood Valley of northern Ventura County – without first notifying local residents, or the Boy Scout or Girl Scout camp personnel in the area, or, I was told later, National Forest personnel in the area. They are now present in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains.

Mike Kuhn
6-30-07

Trailblazers Newsletter *Delivery Options*

Did you know you can receive your newsletter copy by email? To request email delivery, please send your request to:

newsletter@simitrailblazers.com

You can request just the email copy or receive an email copy in addition to the print copy by regular mail.

March 31st 2012 - Backbone Trail Part 6: Malibu Canyon Road Trailhead (Piuma Road) to the Saddle Peak/Stunt Road Trailhead Shuttle



Seven hikers assembled in a dirt parking lot deep in the Santa Monica Mountains to hike the sixth section of the Backbone Trail on an overcast morning marked by mist and a very light drizzle. The hike began at the easy-to-miss trailhead located a couple of hundred yards east of Malibu Canyon Road on the south side of Piuma Road (there's a small sign). The trail immediately crossed a seasonal creek and began climbing to the east along the heavily shaded north side of the mountain; ferns were abundant and a variety of wildflowers were blooming. The trail provided an excellent warm-up as it gained about 350' per mile for the first 2.5 miles. After crossing Piuma Road the trail climbed noticeably more steeply through continuing shade (mostly provided by ceanothus) for the next 2.5 miles until it reached a trail junction near Stunt Road. After a short



lunch break, we continued up the mountain to Saddle Peak where the view was impaired by fog. Along the way we were presented with views of some beautiful rock formations that towered above us. We then descended past a large water tank to Stunt Road and our shuttle vehicles, thus completing a 7.3-mile one-way hike with about 2,500' of elevation gain.

April 7th 2012 - Backbone Trail Part 7: Saddle Peak (Stunt Road) to Trippet Ranch Shuttle

Five hikers carpoled to the trailhead at the west end of Saddle Peak Road in the Santa Monica Mountains on a

pleasant spring morning. Soon after the hike began the trail began descending into Hondo Canyon via a long series of switchbacks through a dense forest comprised



mostly of oak and bay laurel trees; the trail was also adorned with ferns, moss-covered rocks, and lots of very healthy poison oak. Occasionally there were stunning views of the pink-colored sedimentary rock formations/cliffs (the Sespe Formation) that form the west side of the canyon. As the trail drew closer to Old Topanga Canyon Road the trail passed through grassy meadows dotted with oak trees and interesting rock formations and we crossed a shallow creek to reach the road. After crossing the road we followed a confusing section of the trail as it led us to Greenleaf Canyon Road which we followed a short distance to Topanga Canyon Blvd which we carefully crossed. The (Dead Horse) trail then climbed steadily through chaparral until it reached a very large meadow bordered by a fence which it followed to a ranch road leading a short distance to the Trippet Ranch parking lot, thus completing a very pleasant 6.6-mile one-way hike with 936' of elevation gain and 2,074' of elevation loss.





RSTB Calendar May



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	2	3 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	4	5 Backbone Trail Part 8: Trippet Ranch*  See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Robert D. Lisenby Hannah Kuhn
6 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	7	8 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	9	10 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jim Vandenberg	11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Fran Atkins	12 Tri-Peaks and the Mishe Mokwa Trail See Schedule
13 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	14	15 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jesse Mansfield	16 Club Meeting 7 PM See Schedule <i>ALL members are invited to attend</i>	17 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Mann	18 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Lisa Poley	19 Work Party - Chivo Canyon See Schedule
20 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	21	22 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	23	24 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	25 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Cueba	26 Chivo Canyon See Schedule
27 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	28 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Dilika Puthalath	29 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Phyllis Tewfik	30 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Bonnie Bouley	31 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule		

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.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **5 PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. Take the Rocky Peak exit on the 118 Freeway and head north over the freeway. Park at the trailhead or across the bridge on the Santa Susana Pass Road. (Strenuous - 4.8 MRT - 1,200' elevation gain)

Tuesday Evening - Las Lajas Canyon

Meet at **6:30 PM** at the Evening Sky Drive trailhead. Take the 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 - 3.75 MRT - 348' total elevation gain)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** at Chumash trailhead. Directions: Take the 118 Freeway to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite and turn right on Flanagan Dr. The trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Drive. (Moderate to Strenuous - 5.4 MRT - 1,210' total elevation gain)

MAY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

May 5th

Backbone Trail Part 8: Trippet Ranch to Will Rogers State Historic Park Shuttle*

11 Miles - (1,422' 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 the beginning and ending trailhead. The parking fee at both trailheads is \$12. 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 trail map view: <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/bbtm/Day8.jpg>
Check it out the National Park Systems Backbone Trail System flier: <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/BackboneTrail.pdf>

May 12th

Tri-Peaks and the Mishe Mokwa Trail *

7.8 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,700' elevation gain)

We will see spectacular views and rock formations, four prominent peaks, including the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains, and explore a cave. A short side-trip to Balanced Rock is included. Meet at **8 AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots. **Note: If you want to explore the cave, be sure and bring at least one strong flashlight.**

May 16th

Club Meeting

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

May 19th

Work Party - Chivo Canyon

8 AM to Noon. 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. Directions: From Simi Valley, take Hwy 118 to Yosemite Avenue and head north (past McDonald's). Drive 1.9 miles and then turn right (north) on Westwood St. Park near the junction of Yosemite Ave (aka Cottonwood Dr.) and Westwood St. Please do your best to minimize the impact on the residents of the neighborhood.

May 26th

Chivo Canyon

6 MRT - Easy to Moderate (800' elevation gain)

Meet at 8 AM. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots. Trailhead: In Simi Valley, take Hwy 118 to Yosemite Avenue and head north (past McDonald's). Drive 1.9 miles and then turn right (north) on Westwood St. Park near the junction of Yosemite Ave (aka Cottonwood Dr.) and Westwood St. Please do your best to minimize the impact on the residents of the neighborhood.

* 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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