



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Our bank will no longer accept dues or other checks made out to the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers. **ALL CHECKS must be made out to the Rancho Simi Foundation.**



Our April work party was conducted on the upper Mt. McCoy trail. Thanks much to Bart Hibbs, John Sabol and Mike Kuhn for a job well done.

IT'S TICK TIME AGAIN

Ticks are members of the arachnid order *Acar*, which includes about 24 families of mites. Yes, they have eight legs. There are 49 species of ticks in California. While we tend to think of them living and breeding exclusively to make our trips in the hills singularly unpleasant, they actually feed on a whole host of vertebrates, including dogs, cats, horses, cows, chickens, deer, rabbits, lizards, snakes, birds, turtles, mice, woodrats, squirrels and many other animals. Some species feed exclusively on single species, while others will feast on just about anything to which they can attach.

Ticks climb vegetation to a height that is about right for the species it is seeking. Some climb to the tips of branches

(Continued on page 3, bottom of third column)

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at: Sycamore Drive Community Center 1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1 **Wednesday: May 18, 2016 5:30PM** Everyone Welcome to attend!

* Not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.

Upcoming Events

May 7th Fish Canyon *

Narrows 11 MRT - Moderate (~1,000' elevation gain/loss) **7AM**

May 14th Triunfo Lookout, Canyon View Trail, Grotto *

Trail 6 MRT - Moderate (935' elevation gain / 1,235' elevation loss) Shuttle **8AM**

May 18th Club Board Meeting

The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1 **5:30PM Everyone Welcome to attend!**

May 21st Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail **8AM**

May 28th Topanga Lookout *

9.6 MRT – Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,700' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

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



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



Weekly hikes!!



Has anyone ever told you to take a hike?

Did you know that in Simi Valley you can take many hikes with the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers and explore the beauty of Simi Valley and other beautiful locations? We have so much fun taking photos, talking and just viewing the beautiful scenery like the photo above. We even enjoy going on overnight events. **Please join us** and see for yourself how much fun we have!

Hikes are every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and most Saturdays

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.

March 16th - Hole-in-the-Wall Rings Loop Trail



The plan was to arrive at the Black Canyon Equestrian & Group Campground mid to late afternoon, set up tents/RVs, and then hike the nearby Hole-in-the-Wall Rings Loop Trail. "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry." Les' Jeep broke down just east of Barstow, so sadly Les and Gary were unable to attend the event.

The Hole in the Wall area is a geologic wonder. From the USGS website: "About 18.5 million years ago, a powerful volcanic eruption blasted outward from the nearby Woods Mountains. Propelled by the force of rapidly rising and expanding gasses, a ground-hugging cloud of ash and rock fragments spread out at near super-sonic speeds across the countryside. Some of the rocks thrown out by the blast are 14-20 meters (60 feet) across - the largest ever documented! An area of over 600 km was covered with ash and rock fragments so hot that they welded together after they reached the ground. Almost instantly, hot, suffocating ash buried every living thing in the path of the blast. Whatever birds, mammals, and plants once flourished in Mojave Preserve at that time now lie entombed beneath the volcanic tuff that forms the colorful cliffs of Hole in the Wall."

Six hikers completed the 2 mile, 200' elevation loop and then headed back to the campground. The campground was spacious, quiet, isolated and clean. It was designed to support 50 people. Seven of us had the whole place to ourselves. Even the pit toilets didn't smell. We all turned in early in anticipation of our adventures the next morning.

March 17th - Barber Peak Loop Trail

The Barber Loop Trail circumnavigates Barber Peak, which is a prominent peak west of Hole in the Wall Campground. The trail passes the Opaline Cliffs to the northwest, and returns to the Hole-in-the-Wall area via Banshee Canyon. The loop was another

opportunity to enjoy the concentration of geologic formations. Desert flowers were in bloom and plentiful. We had a special opportunity to see a male Chuckwalla enjoying the morning sun. Five of us completed the 6.9 mile, 800' elevation gain loop.

Two hikers opted to hike New York Peak. Despite a good hike description from a book, and some coaching from a local Ranger, they were unable to find the route. They were treated to a private tour of the nearby Rock House, adjacent the Rock Spring Loop Trail. The Rock House is full of history:

"While fighting in Europe during World War I, Bert Smith was exposed to poison gasses used during that war. Returning to the U.S. with scarred lungs, Bert eventually moved to the Mojave Desert in the late 1920s. When Bert built his Rock House and started living here in 1929, it was a desperate attempt to regain his health. Although he expected to survive only a short time, he lived here until 1954 - 25 years!"

April 2nd - Nordhoff Peak Lookout Tower via the Pratt Trail



12 hikers met at the Pratt Trail trailhead near the north end of Signal Street in Ojai (just northwest of the Stewart Canyon Debris Basin) on a pleasant spring morning. As our hike began, the trail rose through a shady woodland with a smattering of wildflowers and lots of wild cucumber plants. After a mile the trail reached a plateau above the canyon with great views of the Ojai Valley. Eventually we reached a junction with the Cozy Dell Road where we encountered a group of yoga practitioners who were enjoying the nice day. The Pratt Trail then continued unrelentingly upward toward Nordhoff Peak, providing increasingly scenic views all the way to Lake Casitas and the Channel Islands. Wildflowers continued to adorn the trail and there was a surprising abundance of shade which helped us endure the rising temperature. Around noon several members of our group reached Nordhoff Ridge Road where we could see the lookout tower a mile to the east. A temporary physical ailment experienced by a member of our group caused us to return slowly to our vehicles. We then returned home having completed a hike of over 10 miles with an elevation gain/loss of over 3,000'.



RSTB Calendar MAY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	2 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Terry Simon	3 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	4	5 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Hannah Kuhn Robert D. Lisenby	6	7 Fish Canyon Narrows * 7AM See Schedule
8 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule 	9	10 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jim Vandenberg	11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> John Coyle.	12 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carol Tucker	14 Triunfo Lookout, Canyon View Trail, Grotto Trail * 8AM See Schedule
15 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	16	17 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Mann	18 Club Meeting 5:30PM <i>Everyone Welcome to attend!</i> See Schedule	19 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	20	21 Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail 8AM See Schedule
22 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Tyler Harris	23	24 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	25	26 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	27 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Cueba	28 Topanga Lookout * 8AM See Schedule
29 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	30  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Bonnie Bouley	31 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule				

SANTA ANA WILDFIRE THREAT INDEX - Provides a 6 day forecast of Santa Ana Winds Wildfire Threats on a color coded map <http://psgeodata.fs.fed.us/sawti/>

CALIFORNIA FIRE WEATHER MAP - Provides actual Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_redflagwarning.php (Scroll down to map)

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

Executive Chair:	Mike Kuhn	HM (805) 583-2345	hannahmike@me.com
Treasurer:	Santiago Homsí		
Park District Liaison:	Jeannie Liss	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
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Newsletter Editor:	Linda Mann		linda.martins.mann@simitrailblazers.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 _____ 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.

Mail Mailing address _____

Email Email address _____

How did you find out about the RSTB? _____

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

Rancho Simi Foundation and mail it to **RSTB, P.O. Box 1231, Simi Valley, CA 93062**



U.S. Postage

RSTB
P.O. Box 1231
Simi Valley, CA 93062

DES RAVINA

In 1861 the U.S. Surveyor General of California produced a map of El Rancho Simi that was part of the confirmation of the rancho to Jose de la Guerra Y Noriega. On that map, the canyon that extends from the present western orifice of the railroad tunnel at the eastern end of Simi Valley to present day Lilac Lane is labeled "Des Ravina." There are few names on the map, so it must be assumed that "the Ravine" was significant in the area and a well-known landform. *Des Ravina* contained the trail in and out of Simi Valley at the eastern end of the valley. It was critical to communication and transportation in the area. The presence of a *Fernandeño* Indian shrine on Devil's Slide and a Chumash Indian temporary camp near the western end suggests that *Des Ravina* started as an Indian trail over Santa Susana Pass (*Kashewi* to the Chumash). Later, it became the *El Camino Real* during Spanish and early Mexican periods of settlement, it served as part of the Stagecoach Road from 1861 to 1875, and remained the only route over the pass until the "Freight Road" was completed in 1899. In 1861 the construction on the western slope of the pass, through *Des Ravina*, of the Stagecoach Road would have been underway.

The name "the Ravine" is simple and descriptive. It seems to follow the Chumash tradition of naming places. The pass was simply called "the pass" by the Indians. The term "the Tripas" simply referred an interior space in the mountains. So, *Des Ravina* probably comes from the Chumash and was translated into Spanish by those Chumash Indians who remained on the land and became the laborers, the vaqueros and the shepherders. The Chumash had names for most things, just as we do. They did not name things for people. Once a person had died and the mourning ceremony had been performed, their name was never again spoken or used. Their universe was very limited, so too then was their choice of names.

During the prehistoric period, *Des Ravina* would have been relatively clear of the thick brush and poison oak that can be found there today. The Indians set fire to grass and brushlands each year as a way of improving the production of pioneer plants such as perennial grasses, red maids and chia. Those plants produced important seed crops. So the canyon was easily maintained as a travel route. During the Spanish/Mexican period, wildfires were much less frequent, so the brush must have been thicker in the canyon in

those days. If you observe the canyon today, you will be struck by just how precipitous the walls of the canyon are. *Des Ravina* was an obvious route for the Indians and for Spanish/Mexicans for foot traffic and for people on mules, donkeys or horses. But when attempts were made to improve the trail so that it could accommodate wheeled vehicles, such as stagecoaches, it must have been very difficult to maintain a path that was wide enough for a single vehicle, let alone for two vehicles to pass. Use by freight wagons must have been problematic.

With the coming of the railroad to Chatsworth and the desire of the new Anglo-American farmers to get their crops to market by the shortest and cheapest route, it was inevitable that public pressure would develop for a different and wider route over the mountain - which inevitably resulted in the abandonment of *Des Ravina* as a maintained transportation route. We do know that occasional stagecoach rides were taken over the old route into the first decade of the 20th Century. There is still graffiti in the canyon from the 1920s, so *Des Ravina* must have continued to attract the curious.

Mike Kuhn
11-11-04 (revised 10-9-12)

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT IN 1974

When I moved here in 1974, with my wife, Hannah, and son, David (3 years old), there was not much to do for entertainment. On some summer evenings we would go to the vacant parcel on the northern side of Cochran Street east of Stow Street and watch the cowboys lasso steers. Yes, good family entertainment and it didn't cost anything. I guess we all miss some parts of the good old days.

Mike Kuhn
12-24-04

GETTING OLDER AND THE JOYS OF LIFE

I had a new passport picture taken recently - my passport will expire next month. So, I had the opportunity to look at precisely the same pose, the same hair style and the same expression taken by the same camera just ten years apart. Looks like the same fella, but the skin tone and hair are grayer, and the left eyelid droops even more than it did ten years ago. Yes, there was the proof staring back at me. I have aged. I still have my

first passport (1963). I am a young whipper-snapper in that picture - pinstriped suit and all. My expression is that of youth, more all-knowing than the last two pictures. Life is sobering. You trade firmity for time. My journey through life is still underway, I know where I've been and have a pretty good idea where I'm going. No more career choices. I enjoy a wide circle of friends - past and present colleagues, community members, the people you run into here and there and still keep in touch with and Rancho Simi Trail Blazers. So, life is good - even if I am getting grayer, slower and less all knowing. In fact - I think I left all-knowing way back.

I spent most of Christmas day working on a trail alone in the mountains. It was perfectly clear and the weather was cool and the soil good for grooming. The winter sun yielded constantly changing vistas. It was quiet away from the City. Every now and again one or more hikers or mountain bike riders would come by. We chatted, I handed out some trail brochures and a couple of Trail Blazer newsletters, and they all thanked me for the good work I was doing. I felt good about being there and doing what I was doing - something for others. The sunset was marvelous as I walked out of the mountains. Yes, life is good.

Mike Kuhn
12-24-04

(Continued from page 1, middle row)

several feet off of the ground, while others climb only grass - seeking much shorter prey. When a prey animal comes along and brushes up against the plant, ticks are transferred to their host. This behavior is called "questing". Ticks are attracted to carbon dioxide - a sure sign of a living, breathing animal.

If you find a tick on you, don't panic. They often will wander around on you and your clothing for up to 24 hours before feeding. That's plenty of time for the normal person to detect their presence, to shower, or to change clothes two or more times. There is little chance of disease transmission until they start feeding. Even if a tick does bury its hypostome into you, there is relatively little danger of disease transmission, other than infection. So, proper tick removal is important.

Mike Kuhn
11-15-04



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 HIKE (Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **5PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead on the northern side of the Rocky Peak exit from State Route 118. 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)

(We Meet at 5PM during daylight saving time.)

Tuesday Evening - Mt. McCoy Trail

Meet at **6PM** in the parking lot, located to the south of Donut Delite, near the NE corner of Madera and Royal. (Moderate - 4.0 MRT - 600' elevation gain)

Thursday Evening - Chumash Trail

Meet at **6PM** 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 - 1300' total elevation gain.)

MAY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

May 7th Fish Canyon Narrows *

11 MRT - Moderate (~1,000' elevation gain/loss)

We'll head north on a lovely single-track trail in Fish Canyon through which a pleasant stream flows. We'll have many easy stream crossings in the Narrows as it passes through hundred-foot cliffs with red rock walls reminiscent of the Zion National Park's Virgin River Narrows. We'll turn around at a backpacking campsite where there's a fork in the trail. **NOTE:** In 2009 Los Angeles Magazine published a list of "the ten best hikes in Los Angeles" and selected this hike as number one. Meet at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride at **7AM**. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

May 14th Triunfo Lookout, Canyon View Trail, Grotto Trail *

6 MRT - Moderate (935' elevation gain / 1,235' elevation loss) Shuttle

NOTE: This hike was rescheduled from April 9th due to the rain storm that day.

PART ONE of our two-part hike - We'll drive to the Circle X Ranch and drop off our shuttle vehicle(s); then we'll carpool one (1) mile back up Yerba Buena Road to the Canyon View Trail trailhead (across Yerba Buena Road from the Sandstone Peak Trail trailhead).

PART TWO of our two-part hike - After retrieving our other vehicle(s), we'll drive 1.6 miles northeast on Yerba Buena Road to an unsigned dirt parking area on the south/ocean side. We'll hike in a counter-clockwise loop with an out-and-back spur that will take us to the ruins of the Triunfo Fire Lookout (2,658') with 360 degree views of mountains and ocean; the remainder of the loop will be along a section of the Santa Monica Mountains Backbone Trail. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

May 18th Club Meeting *Everyone Welcome to attend!*


5:30 PM - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

May 21st Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail

Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will do trail grooming and widening, and cutting back some brush. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended. Directions: From Kuehner Drive and the 118 Freeway, head south to the intersection of Kuehner Drive and Smith Road, where you turn left (east). Meet at the eastern end of the dirt parking lot.

May 28th Topanga Lookout *

9.6 MRT – Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,700' elevation gain/loss) Our hike along a beautiful, shady section of the Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains will begin along Old Topanga Canyon Road and will climb up to Saddle Peak Road from which we'll hike about a mile to Topanga Lookout, the former site of a fire lookout tower; we'll return via the same route. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

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.

Full descriptions of these hikes and activities are available at <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/index.html>