



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



JUNE WORK PARTY NATIONAL TRAILS DAY LOWER STAGECOACH TRAIL

The next work party will be held Saturday, June 3rd in conjunction with National Trails Day. We will meet at the east end of the parking lot of Corriganville Park at 8:00 AM and work to 12:00 Noon. As always, you are welcome to work for a shorter time period if you desire.

Directions: Take Kuehner south, turn left onto Smith Rd, and follow it to the end of the street. Parking lot is on the left. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

We will continue work on the Lower Stagecoach Trail out of Corriganville. Trail clearing will be done above the area cleared on the April work party. Hope to see you there.

John Sabol



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.



Janet Van Bibber and Ray Lombardi
Kathy Shalhoob
James Hayes

CALIFORNIA SYCAMORE

The California, or western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) is a 40-70 foot tall deciduous trees, which grows near and in creek beds. Its smooth, thin bark peels in whitish and greenish patches, giving it a mottled look. The leaves turn yellow in the fall before falling off. The bristly fruit is called a "button ball". Sycamores are a true humidlands tree, which have survived in the semi-arid west because they always have their roots in the water table. The largest sycamore tree in Simi Valley is in the southern median of Wood Ranch Parkway in Sycamore Canyon.

The California sycamore is used in landscaping in our area, however, the London Plane (European sycamore) is more commonly used. In recent years the Mexican sycamore is becoming more popular because it is resistant to mildew problems.

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
June 21, 2006

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 3rd
National Trails Day Work Party
Lower Stagecoach Trail
See article in column 1 for details.

JUNE 9th, 10th & 11th
Deer Group Camp Backpack Trip
- Big Bear Lake
Space is limited. Please **RSVP before June 19th**.

JUNE 24th
Sheep Camp Day Hike
10.5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (elevation change from 8900' to 8250')
Great panoramic views from the Condor Observation Point, and beautiful scenery hiking through Jeffery Pines. This is an all day event.

AUGUST 3rd - 6th
Glen Aulin - Tuolumne Meadows Backpack Trip
This very special event is limited to **Trailblazer members only**. Space is limited. Please **RSVP before July 21st**.

SEPTEMBER 9th
Matilija Creek Backpack Trip
More information coming soon...

More information on these events can be found at

<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at markinthepark@sbcglobal.net.

MAY 6th UPPER SANTA YNEZ CANYON HIKE

The Trail Blazers had a great hike in Santa Ynez Canyon last month. The weather was perfect hiking as the day was overcast and the area very scenic. Also, there were many wildflowers in bloom. We traveled down into the Canyon about 1-1/2 miles then off on a side trail to Santa Ynez falls. We followed a trail which traveled along the streambed much of the time. We had to be careful as there was a lot of Poison Oak along the trail.



From left to right: Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoy, Mike Kuhn, Doug Marsh, and Rafael Zepeda.

Photo by John Sabol

On the way, Martin discovered several California Newts in the stream and we took pictures of one he held in his hands. The California Newt is a salamander that lives a dual life. During the late summer and fall months, this species lives on land as a non-breeding eft, hiding under logs and in rock crevices. After the first winter rains, the terrestrial efts migrate to the water for breeding. Once in the water, they transform into an aquatic newt.



However, we never observed the falls as we reached a point that required using fixed ropes tied to trees to clamber up and over huge boulders. It seemed too dangerous and so we turned around and hiked back out to the main trail. We ate lunch and then headed back up trail. The day was warming up but still cool enough that the climb out of the canyon wasn't too hard. Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoy, Mike Kuhn, Doug Marsh, John Sabol and Rafael Zepeda were on the hike.

John Sabol

MAY 13th MATILIJA FALLS HIKE

Ten of us had a fine hike in Matilija Canyon on Saturday, May 13th. The water levels and brush were much higher than last year. At about four miles up the canyon, we found we could go no further when the brush overcame the trail to the right and the water became too deep on the left.

The weather was completely overcast when we left Simi Valley, but it was bright and sunny at the trailhead. Temperatures were moderate during the whole hike. The first two miles of the trail followed a wide road through private property, which later gave way to easy-to-negotiate single-track. About three miles in, the trail faded into slow but sure boulder hopping. The trail became more difficult to negotiate the further we went. The whole canyon was a scenic delight with a myriad of colorful wildflowers. Swimming holes were abundant as was the poison oak.



From left to right: Doug Marsh, Raphael Zepeda, Doug Temple, John Sabol, Alan Cueba, Margarita Marsh and Ursula Christie.

Photo by Mark Gilmore

Shortly before our turn-around point, there was a section where the moss made the trail quite slippery. A few of us found it quite difficult to maintain our balance and suffered some minor bumps and bruises. The mud and the moss made a mess of our packs and clothes. There were no serious injuries.



Alan Cueba's sidekick Koby, making sure others get just as wet as he did after a stream crossing.

We hope to get all the way to the waterfall this September, during our backpack trip in the same canyon. The water level should be much lower then, so we should be able to boulder-hop right up the canyon all the way to the waterfall at about 4.5 mile point. I hope to see you all in Matilija Canyon this September!

WILLOWBROOK SITE

Sometime during the late-1970s I had occasion to conduct an archaeological walkover on a ranch on the northern side of Royal Avenue, east of First Street, where Willowbrook Lane is today. The parcel contained a late-19th Century farmhouse and outbuildings near Royal Avenue. The remainder of the land, extending north to the Arroyo Simi, was vacant. The “Phase I” archaeological survey was required because an application for residential development had been filed with the city.

What I found midway on the long narrow parcel was what appeared to be a very puzzling Native American archaeological site from the historic period. Some traditional debitage from stone working and tools were present along with bits of broken glass, pieces of metal and other cultural debris from the first third of the 20th Century. The site seemed to be contained within the subject property, was roughly circular, and all of the cultural material seemed to have been the product of one type of activity. What did it all mean?

After discovering the site, I was able to talk to the elderly owner of the property who still lived in the farmhouse. I discussed with her what I had found. She indicated that she had memories from the 1920s of her father giving permission to a group of Indians to camp on their property while gathering acorns in the surrounding hills. She said that they camped about half way to the Arroyo Simi from Royal Avenue – “down there somewhere”. She thought that they had come about three years in a row.

All of this made a lot of sense. They had found a rancher who was willing to let them stay on his land. Either they were told where to stay on the property, or they set up camp far enough away from the farmhouse to respect the privacy of their host and still be close enough to the well for water. It is also possible that they were next to a distributary of the arroyo which still had water in it during the fall season – although it seems unlikely. The distributary was there, but the water table would have been significantly drawn down by then.

Interestingly, during the 1920s they were still pursuing the one part of their traditional gathering strategy that was possible and did not conflict with the resource needs of land owners, who had no interest in gathering the acorns on their own property. These Chumash people, at least I assume that they were Chumash, were still employing some stone-tool technology. Did any of these Indians, whom she indicated came from Ventura, have roots in Simi Valley? We will never know. However, it is interesting that as late as the 1920s some individuals were still pursuing a part of their traditional subsistence regime with an annual trip to Simi Valley. It is sad that this was but a shadow of what once had been.

Mike Kuhn

IMPACT OF EXOTIC GRASS ON PIÑON/JUNIPER COMMUNITY

In 2005 the mid-elevations of the Mojave Natural Preserve experienced a devastating wildfire that consumed tens of thousands of acres of piñon pine/juniper plant association. The effect of the fire was that all woody plants, including the pines and junipers, were burned into the roots – well below the surface of the ground. It is the opinion of the managers of the preserve that the piñon/juniper plant association will not recover and is now gone.

The piñon/juniper plant association is a climax community that now covers vast portions of the Mojave Desert and Great Basin mountain ranges. Dry lightning strikes are a part of the desert ecosystem, yet there does not seem to be a common history of this level of destruction. Why has this happened?

While there may be a number of factors that have contributed to this catastrophe, the primary contributing factor seems to boil down to the invasion of an exotic grass from Eurasia. That grass is known as cheat grass, and as downy brome (*Bromus tectorum*). Prehistorically, the piñon/juniper forests were made up of scattered piñon pine and juniper trees with some scattered perennial understory plants. While lightning strikes have always resulted in fires, there has generally not been enough understory vegetation to facilitate widespread fire. The grass has been present long before the establishment of the preserve. It has been a disaster waiting to happen.

This event raises the question of whether exotic grasses, primarily bromes, have altered the fire ecology in our part of the state. The answer is probably “most certainly”. However, most of our local plant associations are already fire-climax – the same cannot be said for the piñon/juniper plant association.

Mike Kuhn

ERRINGER ADOBE

Back in the good old days during the depression, when most people in Simi Valley had very little money, one farm family on the eastern side of Erringer Road north of Cochran Street started their home with an adobe. Later, they added on with one or more wood-framed additions. When I came to Simi Valley in the 1970s, you could not tell from the outside that any portion of the home was adobe. Eventually the land was sold and the house was demolished to make way for what is today El Torito Restaurant and Cantina.

That family had built using adobe because that was what they could afford. The reality was that the Spanish and Mexican families during the late-18th and 19th centuries used adobe construction because that was the only practical building material other than wattle and daub (i.e., woven willow branches plastered with mud). As far as I know, only the Simi Adobe remains.

Mike Kuhn



RSTB Calendar

June 2006



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	2	3 Work Party Lower Stagecoach Trail See Schedule
4 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	5 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Robert Knapp</i>	6 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	7	8 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	9 Big Bear Lake Backpack See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Kurt Dahlgren</i>	10 Big Bear Lake Backpack See Schedule
11 Big Bear Lake Backpack Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	12	13 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Carol Tucker</i>	14 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Fred Tonsing</i>	15 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	16	17 Latigo Canyon See Schedule
18 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	19	20 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	21 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Phil Ankrom</i>	22 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	23	24 Sheep Camp Day Hike See Schedule
25 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	26	27 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	28	29 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	30	



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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Long Canyon

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, 3.0 MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

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, 5.2 MRT)

JUNE HIKES

June 3rd - National Trails Day Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail

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.

June 9th, 10th & 11th - Deer Group Camp Backpack Trip - Big Bear Lake**

6 MRT - Moderate (1400' elevation gain) - We happened upon this camp while hiking the Pine Knot Trail last year. Everyone fell in love with the camp and we knew we found the perfect place for our first backpack of the year. The area is reminiscent of the Southwestern Sierras. An outdoor toilet (no roof) and bar-b-queue pit is provided. The camp is next to a beautiful cascading creek and lush green meadow. It is a perfect beginner's backpack trip too. Space is limited. Your reservation must be made no later than May 19th. Please call or send email to Mark Gilmore to make your reservation. There will be a small fee for the reservation, which will be divided equally among all those who attend. This is National Forest land, so ***you will need an Adventure Pass to park your car at the trailhead.***

June 17th - Latigo Canyon to Castro Crest**

6.4 MRT - Moderate (1,200' elevation gain)

Beautiful hike on the Castro Crest Backbone Trail into Upper Solstice Canyon. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water, a snack and bug juice. Wear Boots.

June 24th - Sheep Camp Day Hike**

10.5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (elevation change from 8900' to 8250') Great panoramic views from the Condor Observation Point, and beautiful scenery hiking through Jeffery Pines. There is a spring box with year round water at the camp. The water does need to be filtered. Bring 2 to 3 qts of water (and/or a water filter), and lunch. Wear boots. Meet 7 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. An Adventure Pass will be needed. The drive is 1 1/2 hours each way. This is an all day event.

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

 No dogs allowed on trail(s).

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.

<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
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Work Parties Chair:		*** OPEN ***	
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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

Name(s) _____ Birth Mo. ____ Day ____

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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 93063-0399

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



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