



# 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.**

## 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**

## 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



## May Work Party

Our May work party was conducted on the Lower Stagecoach Trail. Participants included John Sabol, Mike Kuhn, Geneen Garcia, Monty Gonzalez, Martin DeGoey and Bart Hibbs. A lot of trail trimming and brush trimming was done. Much thank to all.



## 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. We are totally committed to the care and protection of our natural environment for the enjoyment of all. We do this through:

- Maintenance, development, and improvement of our trail system
- Cooperative promotion between all its users
- Exploration of sensitivities through interpretive classes and organized trail activities

## Welcome New Members

Jonathan Silva  
Dhanesh Katbamna

## RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at: Sycamore Drive Community Center 1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1  
**Wednesday: June 15, 2016**  
**5:30PM Everyone Welcome to attend!**

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

## Upcoming Events

**June 4th Switzer Falls and Bear Canyon\*** 8 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,000' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**June 11th Matilija Falls\*** 9 MRT - Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,000' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**June 15th Club Board Meeting** The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1 **5:30PM Everyone Welcome to attend!**

**June 18th Work Party – Mt. McCoy** **8AM**

**June 25th Wildwood Park - Arroyo Conejo Creek, Lynnmore Trail Loop\*** 7.9 MRT Loop - Moderate (1,200' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see [www.simitrailblazers.com/activities](http://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.rsprd.org> to see what is happening next!

## April 24th - Horn Canyon to Pines Trail Camp



13 hikers met at the Horn Canyon trailhead adjacent to the Thatcher School a few miles east of downtown Ojai on a nice spring morning. As our hike began, the trail rose gradually upward to the north along a dirt road flanked by wildflowers. The route soon became a shady trail that followed a pleasant creek (with water in it!) as it continued up toward the Nordhoff Ridge; there was an amazing array of lovely wildflowers adorning the path. After several easy stream crossings, the trail began to rise inexorably via switchbacks toward our destination and we were rewarded with great views of the Ojai Valley and onward to the ocean and Santa Cruz Island plus a view of a slice of Lake Casitas - and more beautiful wildflowers! Eventually we reached the Pines Trail Camp which provided cool breezes and some shade although most of the pine trees have been cut down or are dead but still standing [camping is no longer permitted in this campground]. After resting and eating lunch we returned the way we came, again admiring the beauty of the trail. We reached our vehicles and returned home having completed a somewhat demanding 5.5-mile hike with 1,845' of elevation gain/loss, planning to return again next year.

## April 30th - Towsley Canyon

11 hikers (plus one dog) met at the "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon" section of the 4,000-acre Santa Clarita Woodlands Park on a pleasant spring morning. We began hiking along a dirt road toward the Sonia Thompson Nature Center, crossing Towsley Creek on a concrete bridge. Soon we began a counterclockwise hike on the Towsley View Loop Trail. After passing through The Narrows section of Towsley Gorge, the trail began rising via switchbacks along the shaded eastern slope of the canyon. The verdant north-facing slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains rose steeply to the south. The single-track trail passed through sage scrub, stands of California walnut and bay laurel trees, and scattered oak trees

as we made our way to the 2,450' high point on the trail from which much of the Santa Clarita Valley could be seen. The hillsides were adorned by many blooming wildflowers which begged to be photographed. The trail then began dropping into shady Wiley Canyon which we followed downstream to a junction with the Canyon View Loop Trail which rose along the northern flank of the mountain before descending to the Sonia Thompson Nature Center. After a brief respite we were led on our first hike along a portion of the new Elder Loop Trail in the nearby Rivendale Park and Open Space which led us back to our vehicles. We returned home having completed a very pleasant 7.5 mile hike with over 1,600' of elevation gain/loss.

## May 8th - Fish Canyon Narrows

Despite forecasts of possible rain and thunderstorms, 15 hikers braved the elements for this unique hike.



Fortunately the only rain we encountered fell as we were driving to the starting point of our hike at the gate at the east "end" of Templin Highway north of Castaic Lake. It was a cloudy day with pleasant temperatures during the entire hike. We began by descending northeast along the closed paved road to a concrete bridge at the mouth of Cienega Canyon [which is quite overgrown]. Passing by and continuing southward as the road turned to dirt we soon veered left (eastward) onto the abandoned easy-to-follow Warm Springs-Fish Canyon Truck Trail which passed through a narrow gorge and was bordered by a variety of beautiful blooming wildflowers; after several paved creek crossings we reached the abandoned Cienega Campground (nearly three miles from our starting point). We immediately left the Truck Trail and headed north along a lovely shaded single-track trail for about a mile to "Pianobox" [an old mining claim] where there's a campsite. The single-track trail ended as we entered the Fish Canyon Narrows and we found ourselves rock hopping, pushing through brush, and crisscrossing the creek to follow stretches of "use" trail for the next mile or so. The stream was flowing and provided a musical accompaniment as we hiked carefully through the narrow canyon bordered by very scenic reddish hundred-foot rock walls and populated with oaks and alders. We eventually reached the Rogers Trail Camp in a small oak-shaded clearing on an oak- and sycamore-shaded bench. After we took a much-needed lunch-and-rest break we returned the way we came and returned home having completed an 11 mile hike with 1,000' of elevation gain/loss, a hike described in 2009 by Los Angeles Magazine as the best hike in Los Angeles!



# RSTB Calendar JUNE



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	3	4 Switzer Falls and Bear Canyon* <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule
5 Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b>  See Schedule	6	7 Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	8	9 Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	10	11 Matilija Falls* <b>8AM</b> See Schedule
12 Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b>  See Schedule	13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carol Tucker Ray Malphrus	14 Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	15 Club Meeting <b>5:30PM</b> <i>Everyone Welcome to attend!</i>  See Schedule	16 Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	17	18 Work Party - Mt. McCoy <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b> See Schedule 	20 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Richard Webb	21 Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Phil Ankrom Ronald Slifka	22   <i>Happy Birthday</i> Linda Mann Alice Buchanan	23 Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	24	25 Wildwood Park - Arroyo Conejo Creek, Lynnmere Trail Loop* <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule
26 Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b>  See Schedule	27	28 Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	29	30 Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> James Hanley		

**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](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
Work Parties Chair:	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>		<b>Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345</b>
Hiking Chair:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
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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**

## **PLANT SUCCESSION ALONG THE CHUMASH TRAIL FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER 2003 FIRE**

October 2003 witnessed a devastating fire in the mountains north of Simi Valley. The Chumash Trail wanders through some of the worst affected areas. What is offered here are some observations about the effect of the fire on the natural vegetation and the sequence of plant succession through the summer of 2005. It is my intent to update this description from time to time.

The Chumash Trail went through ruderal grasslands, which were made up primarily of Mediterranean grasses with some herbaceous species and laurel sumac, grasslands for the first few hundred yards north of the trailhead. The vegetation over the next 0.6 of a mile was dominated by a mixture of coastal sage scrub and chaparral. Above the 0.6 mile mark was mature chaparral. While the lower portions of the trail had been affected by wildfires several times during the previous 30+ years, the area above the 1.1 mile point had not burned during that period. As a result, the chaparral was dense and generally six or more feet high. The chaparral was dominated by chamise and hoary-leaved ceanothus, with a smattering of laurel sumac, toyon, sugar bush, hollyleaf cherry, deerweed, yerba santa and a few other species, especially along the upper one half mile section of the trail.

The immediate effect of the fire was to burn the entire area adjacent to the trail. Some areas of the ruderal grasslands near the bottom of the trail (but away from the trail itself) remained unburned due to aggressive fire protection efforts and the lower heat potential of burning dried grasses and annual herbaceous plants, such as mustards and sweet fennel. The coastal sage scrub/chaparral is made up of fairly low, widely spaced plants with a moderate fuel load. While the grasslands and coastal sage scrub/chaparral were burned,

moderate fire temperatures did not, in general, destroy the stumps of perennial plants or the entire seed load in the upper few inches of the soil. The chaparral, especially on the north-facing steep slopes where the fuel load was greatest, burned with intense heat. As a result, the stumps of most species were entirely consumed and much of the seed reservoir in the upper layer of the soil was turned to ash. Following the fire, wind-blown ash contributed to air pollution in the valley and drifted over the trail mixed with lacquer-like crusts from the condensation of volatile hydrocarbons from perennial shrubs. Condensation of volatilized hydrocarbons driven below the surface of the soil has contributed to excessive runoff during winter rains. These hydrophobic soils have resulted in elevated rates of soil erosion and mass siltation of waterways, including of the basin behind the Las Lajas Stormwater Detention Dam. The mixture of ash and the lacquer-like crusts were highly subject to both wind and water erosion and does not densify well when trying to rebuild trails.

Vegetative re-growth during the first winter and spring following the fire was sparse at best in the chaparral and coastal sage scrub/chaparral. Re-growth in the ruderal grasslands was generally vigorous. Throughout the entire burn area liliaceae, with their bulbs well below the surface of the soil, made a spectacular showing. Four species mariposa lilies, soap plant, star lily, and blue dicks were profuse. Most yuccas also regenerated but were most common on south-facing slopes. Some annual plants began to grow, although sparsely. Chamise showed some signs of coming back through crown sprouting. A few fire poppies were noted. Surprisingly, yellow-throated phacelia were common along the top half mile of the trail where it was not noted before the fire.

The second winter and spring has witnessed a complete return of the ruderal grasslands, with all of the herbaceous species. Chamise is

making a good recovery in the chamise area, as with toyon, yerba santa, hollyleaf cherry, laurel sumac, sugarbush and deerweed. The santa susana tarplant, which grows primarily out of joints in massive sandstone outcroppings, has returned fully. Surprisingly, star lilies are much less common this second growing season – perhaps because they have been shaded out by chamise of annual plants. During the spring, the slopes were covered by bindweed and scarlet larkspur was profuse in wide areas. Of special note is that I cannot recall seeing even a single hoary-leaved ceanothus anywhere on the slopes the first two years after the fire. It is possible that the extreme heat of the fire destroyed most of the seed reservoir. As of the spring of 2016 only occasional hoary-leaved ceanothuses have reappeared. Those individuals are small. No fire poppies were noted this spring – at least by me. Rose snapdragon is far more common and widespread along the upper half mile of the trail than before the fire. The yellow-throated phacelia first seen on the upper half mile of the trail the first year after the fire is either absent this year or much less common.

More than 10 years ago, i.e., from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s, woolly blue-curly dominated a flat at the headwaters of White Oaks Canyon – so much so that we called it the “Woolly Blue-curly Flat.” Their profusion appeared to be the results of the effect of the Halloween Fire of the early 1980s. Eventually, plant succession resulted in chamise taking over so that fewer and fewer woolly blue-curly were present. I expected that they would return following the 2003 fire. So far that has not happened. A few are present along the trail across the flat and the chamise has re-sprouted vigorously.

Mike Kuhn  
8-7-05 (revised 5-22-16)



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**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.)

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**JUNE HIKES AND ACTIVITIES**

**June 4th Switzer Falls and Bear Canyon\***

8 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,000' elevation gain/loss)  
Our hike will begin at the lower Switzer Picnic Area parking lot and will follow a shady trail for a mile or so before emerging into the sunlight and rising to skirt a narrow gorge. The trail then drops into the Arroyo Seco a short distance downstream from Switzer Falls. We'll follow the trail downstream to the Bear Canyon junction and then hike upstream in Bear Canyon as far as the Bear Canyon Trail Camp (if conditions permit). Meet at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride at **8AM**. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

**June 11th Matilija Falls\***

9 MRT - Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,000' elevation gain/loss)  
At about the two-mile mark we'll follow a narrow trail as it winds through a shady poison oak paradise [long pants and a long-sleeved shirt are recommended]. Our route will follow Matilija Creek the rest of the way and will involve some scrambling and boulder hopping as well as frequent short open stretches of trail and occasional stream crossings. The reward for our effort will be beautiful scenery including the flowing creek, many large pools of water, vast expanses of sedimentary rock layers, an extensive riparian oak woodland, towering canyon walls, occasional wildflowers and, eventually, the Matilija waterfalls. 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.

**June 15th Club Meeting *Everyone Welcome to attend!***

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

**June 18th Work Party - Mt. McCoy**

Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will be removing rocks, doing some lopping to increase trail clearance, and some trail trimming. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended. Meet at western end of Washburn Street at the trailhead.

**June 25th Wildwood Park - Arroyo Conejo Creek, Lynnmere Trail Loop\***

Our hike will begin by descending into the shady canyon through which the Arroyo Conejo Creek runs. The trail (an old dirt road) passes through a pleasant woodland of oak and walnut trees; we'll cross the creek four times (hiking poles are advised) before reaching the new (2005) Hill Canyon Wetlands, home of coots, mallards, herons, and pond turtles. Leaving the wetlands, we'll make our final "wet" stream crossing and then follow a route that will take us upstream through Wildwood Canyon and Paradise Falls. Then we'll hike up a fairly steep dirt road until it meets the Lynnmere Trail. Taking the west fork, we'll follow the trail around the north side of the mountain to the top of the mountain, affording us with a spectacular 360-degree view of the surrounding mountains. We'll then descend back to the original trailhead. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

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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>**