



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



JUNE WORK PARTY

Six Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Chumash Trail for NATIONAL TRAIL DAY on Saturday, June 1. We again drove up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead. We all worked as a team on a single bad section of trail located at the 2 mile mark just below the area we call "Flat Rocks". A very steep side slope made this area difficult to traverse. Large rocks were placed along the down slope edge of the trail to form a dam for the loads of rock that were used to fill and level the area. Wheelbarrows of dirt were then pored over the top to finish the tread. We worked from 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM.

On our way down Rocky Peak Fire Road we stopped and managed to break off/smash down a section of an old steel culvert buried in the road. The culvert had been caught by the road scraper and was sticking 6 inches of sharp metal up in the middle of the road (bad for fast downhill bikers). We then met at Chuy's on our way home. Many thanks to the following workers who did a great job:

Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrom, Bill Cespedes, Tom Frye, Mike Kuhn, and John Sabol.

Work Parties Chair

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We can use some new hike leaders. Any volunteers? Some of our old standbys are getting burnt out. Please contact either Mike Kuhn, John Sabol or Arlene Altshuler.

JULY WORK PARTY

The next work party will be held **Saturday July 20, 2002**, on the **Hummingbird Trail**. We hope to close off many of the trail shortcuts that both hikers and bikers are using.

We will meet on Kuehner Drive just north of the 118 freeway at **7:00 AM** and work to 11:00 AM. **NOTE THE EARLY START TIME**. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Roger and Diana Peebles
Gail Unterberger**

RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the
Community Center
Room B-1
1692 Sycamore Drive
At 7:00 PM
On
Wednesday, July 17th

SATURDAY MORNING HIKE TIME CHANGE

During July and August, we'll be meeting at **7am** for our Saturday morning hikes (unless otherwise posted).

JULY BACKPACKING TRIP

We are planning an overnight backpacking trip to **Sheep Camp** on **July 13th - 14th**. Those who would like to go, please contact me for more information.

WILDFLOWER SLIDE SHOW

There may not be many wildflowers this year, but we have built up quite a slide collection over the years.

We'll be showing the second half of our wildflower slides at our July meeting. Come see what will bloom, if given enough water.

DINKEY LAKES BASIN BACKPACKING TRIP

We are planning a four (4) day backpacking trip into the Dinkey Lakes Basin, **August 23rd - 26th**. Dinkey Lakes Basin is located east of Fresno and south of Shaver Lake in the southern Sierra Nevada. The trailhead starts at about 8400 feet. Three (3) miles later and about 800 feet elevation gain you get to First Dinkey Lake. Our intent is to spend two nights there, or some other nearby lake, and to range out on day hikes to some of the other 11 lakes within easy hiking distance. The air is thin, the scenery is most pleasing and it is easy to get to.

**PEDRO FAGES' COMMENTS
FROM THE PORTOLA
EXPEDITION ON THE CHUMASH**

The following extracts from a work by Pedro Fages on the 1769 expedition of Gaspar de Portola are offered here as one of the first direct observations of the Chumash people. These observations are virtually the only accounts of the Chumash before the overwhelming hand of western civilization had come to bear.

“The occupations and ordinary pursuits of these people are limited; some of them follow fishing, others engage in their small carpentry jobs; some make strings of beads, others grind red, white, and blue paint clays, and a certain kind of plumbiferous stones, which serve for the men to paint themselves with when they are celebrating and dancing or when they go to war, and which are used by the women for their usual adornment. They make variously shaped plates from the roots of the oak and the alder trees, and also mortars, crocks, and plates of black stone, all of which they cut out with flint, certainly with great skill and dexterity. They make an infinite number of arrows. The women go about their seed-sowing, bringing the wood for the use of the house, the water, and other provisions. They skillfully weave trays, baskets, and pitchers for various purposes; these are well made with thread of grass roots of various colors.”

Fages describes craft specialization, including fishing, carpentry, and bead making. Fishing, of course, was a coastal pursuit, as was bead making. Both men and women used body decoration in the form of paints of various colors for ceremonies. Wooden plates and bowls were made. The black stone referred to was steatite, which was traded from Santa Catalina Island. Women are referred to as the drawers of water and the gatherers of wood. But they are also referred to as “seed sowers.” This latter reference may again provide a hint of some form of proto-agriculture using grass seeds.

“Finally, that nothing may be omitted in the narrative, I will tell [the customs]

Cont. in Col. 2

Cont. from Col. 1

which these Indians observe in their dances. The women go to them well painted, and dressed as has been described, carrying in both hands bundles of feathers of various colors. The men go entirely naked, but very much painted. Only two pairs from each sex are chosen to perform the dance, and two musicians, who play their flutes. Nearly all the others who are present increase the noise with their rattles made of cane dried and split, at the same time singing, very displeasingly for us, who are not accustomed to distressing the ear with this kind of composition.”

Here we see that both men and women danced. Women’s modesty was maintained, while men obviously had a different sense of modesty than we now hold. Musical instruments seem to be limited to flutes and rattles (sorry, no drums). Fages’ reaction to the music made on these occasions remind me of my own reaction to some of the music of our own times.

The final excerpt from the Fages account describes what he observed in the San Luis Obispo area - the northern-most part of the Chumash territory.

“Their houses, shaped like half-globes, are neatly built; each one is capable of sheltering four or five families which, being kin, are accustomed to living together. The houses have one door on the east, and one on the west, with a skylight in the roof, halfway between. Their beds are built up high on bedsteads, which are here called ‘tapextles,’ of heavy sticks; a reed mat serving as a mattress, and four others as curtains, forming bedrooms. Beneath the bedsteads are the beds of the little Indians, commodiously arranged. The men do not often sleep in their houses at night; but carrying with them their arms, bow and quiver, they are accustomed to congregate in numbers in great subterranean caves, where they pass the night in sheer terror; [if they stayed at home] they might be surprised in their beds by the enemy whilst defenseless on account of

Cont. in Col. 3

Cont. from Col. 2

the presence of their wives and children. They also congregate thus in order to keep watch, spy upon, set traps for and surprise those who may be taken off their guard, for they are a warlike people, always roaming from village to village at odds with everyone.”

This text describes large communal houses. The skylight, of course, is the smoke hole, even though no hearth is mentioned. The doors facing the east and the west probably had religious significance. However, their practical role was to let in the first light of the new day and the last light of the day. Certainly, in the days before candles, flashlights or nightlights, people were indoors when it got dark and remained inside until it began to be light. The darkness was a world of great danger. It was not wise to be about.

The second part of the text, describes a remarkable world of fear. The fear was apparently not in response to their strange visitors, for the men occupied subterranean caves. The implication was that any intruders with mayhem on their minds, would not disturb the women and children. The strategy of safety in numbers seems to have been assumed. It is possible that Portola and his band stumbled upon a community wrapped up in a state of war. With whom, we cannot even guess. Surely, it was a temporary condition rather than a state of affairs that was part of everyday life.

Well, these are Pedro Fages’ observations on the Chumash. Unbeknownst





Above: Arlene Altshuler holding the Volunteer of the Year 2001 award.

Below: Just a reminder that it's getting warm enough for snakes to make an appearance. This rattlesnake showed up on one of our Sunday evening Rocky Peak hikes.



CHUMASH NATURAL PARK

The Chumash Indians settled where there was water. Seasonal camps also required a nearby source of water. One apparently long occupied site complex was what we long referred to as the "Indian Hills Caves." Now it is the "Chumash Natural Park" and is owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation

Cont. in Col. 2



Cloudburst Summit Hike in the Angeles Forest (left to right): Gary Cremeans, Arlene Altshuler, Tom Frye, Gary ???, Carol Tucker, John Sabol.

Cont. from Col. 1

and Park District. It has long been an oasis in a sometimes desperately arid environment. Why has there always been water there?

The caves and the geological formations to the east and the west consist of the Santa Susana Formation. Like the Chatsworth Formation, the Santa Susana Formation was deposited largely as "turbidites." That is they represent near shore deposits which collapsed into deep marine canyons in the form of very large turbidity currents. The caves themselves, consist of sandstone strata, which dip to the west by 20-30 degrees. West of the sandstone is very dark gray, crumbly siltstone with ellipsoidal fractures. As the siltstone weathers, when exposed to air, it ravel and breaks down into clay.

The siltstone has a very high capacity to hold water. The formation is full of water and only drains to the east through low points in the sandstone strata. The sandstone acts as an aquatard, or barrier to the movement of groundwater. One of

Cont. in Col. 3

Cont. from Col. 2

the two low points in the sandstone ridge has not dried up in the many years that I have observed the area prior to the construction of the Indian Hills Ridge homes. That dependable supply of water along with the presence of caves made it a very attractive place for the Chumash. Their use of the site is reflected in the name of the developments, i.e., Indian Hills and Indian Hills Ridge, and the name of the park.

Development of the Indian Hills Ridge project required dewatering of the formation using a Japanese nylon wicking system, the installation of permanent sub-drains, and the temporary surcharging of graded material over the site, some 30 feet in depth, in order to squeeze water out of the formation. Those subdrains, plus runoff into the storm drains, have increased the flow of water and have extended the riparian wetlands on the Mt. Sinai property to the southeast.

Visit the Chumash Park but watch out for rattlesnakes and poison oak.

Mike Kuhn



July

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	5	6 Sage Ranch Hike See Schedule
7 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	8	9	10	11 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	12 <i>Happy Birthday Karl Meyers</i>	13 Sheep Camp Backpack Trip See Schedule
14 Sheep Camp Backpack Trip See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Mike Kuhn</i>	15	16	17 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	18 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	19	20 Hummingbird Work Party See Schedule
21 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	22 <i>Happy Birthday Judi Sevcik Liz Williams</i>	23	24	25 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	26	27 China Flat Hike See Schedule
28 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	29	30	31			



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- July 4 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- July 6 Sage Ranch**
Easy to moderate 2.6 MRT loop. Check out the local plant life and beautiful scenery. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 7am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 1 - 2 qts. of water and a snack, wear boots.
- July 7 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- July 11 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- July 13-14 Sheep Camp Backpacking Trip**
This will be an overnight backpacking trip in the Los Padres. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. For more information and RSVP, please call 805-581-9735.
- July 18 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- July 20 Hummingbird Creek - Work Party**
Help maintain one of Simi Valley's more scenic trails. Directions - 118 Fwy to Kuehner exit. Meet north of freeway on Kuehner. We will be working from 7am - 11am. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- July 21 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- July 25 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- July 27 China Flat to Simi Peak**
Strenuous, approx. 6 MRT with 1000' elevation gain. Bring two quarts of water and a snack, wear boots. Directions: take 101 Fwy to Lindero Canyon. Follow Lindero Canyon to King James Court. Park on one of the sidestreets near the arroyo, just east of King James Court. Do not park in the bike lane on Lindero Canyon. Meet at 7:30am near the arroyo trailhead.
- July 38 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)

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.

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

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-----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 _____

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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 630399, Simi Valley, Ca 93063-0399

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