



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



## ON THE EDGE

*Do you want to get up close to a mountain lion and other wild animals you might encounter on the rural/urban fringe?*

On Saturday, September 3, at 2:00 p.m., at the Sycamore Drive Community Center (1692 Sycamore Drive), in General Purpose Room B, the Mountain Lion Foundation will present a program entitled "On the Edge." This program is a *live animal* presentation on wildlife/human conflict occurring on the urban edges, i.e., urban areas abutting natural areas, involving a variety of solutions to these encounters. The program will detail the specifics on each animal's biology and needs, resulting in an action/reaction resolution to the conflicts in urban backyards.



## NATIONAL TRAILS DAY WORK PARTY

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers tackled the Lower Stagecoach Trail out of Corriganville Park for National Trails Day (Saturday, June 4).

Thank you to John Sabol, who picked up and returned the tools and spent a hard 4 hours running the weed whip, Caroline Carroll, Mike Kuhn, Bill Cespedes, Louise Pomes and Arlene Altshuler for more than 20 hours of hard labor in the sun.

The trail still needs work but is passable. The upper one quarter of the trail still needs weed whipping and the tread of the entire trail needs work in places.

There will be no work party in July.



**Welcome!**

**Julie Jansen  
Les Wilson  
Karen Schroeder  
Gloria Galindo  
Anne Guibor**

For more information on upcoming hikes and events, check out

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

## 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.

## 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  
**July 20, 2005**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### July 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Cottonwood Lakes Backpack

Wilderness Permit spaces are still available, so call or email Mark Gilmore to reserve your place. The cost is \$5 per person. See schedule for more information.

### August 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Mt. San Antonio Ski Hut

6 MRT - Strenuous overnighter. (2,200' elevation gain) It doesn't get much better than this! The hut is at the base of Mt. San Antonio (Mt. Baldy) at 8,200'. We'll spend the night in the hut. All you need to bring is food and your sleeping bag. We can cook our food on the hut's wood burning stove. The cost is \$10 for Sierra Club members, and \$15 for non-members. Space is limited, so call or email Mark Gilmore to reserve your place.

### August 25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> Dinky Lakes Backpack

6 MRT - Moderate (924' elevation gain) This backpack has some of the most beautiful lakes and meadows in the whole Southwestern Sierra. The trailhead is at 8,590'. Well set up our base camp at First Dinky Lake (9,514'). From base camp, there are several picturesque lakes and peaks to day hike. Wilderness Permit spaces are limited, so call or email Mark Gilmore to reserve your place. The cost is \$5 per person.

### September 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Big Bear Lake

Save these dates.  
More information coming soon.

## DES RAVINA

In 1861 the U.S. Surveyor General California produced a map of 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 Fernandeno 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.

The use of the word “*Des*” with the Spanish word for ravine is probably a mistake - perhaps included on the map by either a French speaking surveyor or by an Anglo-American surveyor with a classical education, which included French but would not have included Spanish - assuming that is that the surveyor for the U.S. Surveyor General received his education in the northeastern United States. The proper Spanish would have been *de Ravina* or more likely *le Ravina*. In any case, it is not the only misspelling of Spanish on the map.

The name “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 vaqueros and sheepherders. The Chumash had names for most things, just as we do. They did not name things for people. Once a person had died, 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 maid 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 impossible.

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 transportation route. We do know that occasional stagecoach rides were taken over the old route into the first decade of this century. There is still graffiti in the canyon from the 1920s, so *Des Ravina* must have continued to attract the curious.

Mike Kuhn

## TARANTULAS

These creatures are the terror of the night. If you don’t think so, just imagine waking up with one of these giant spiders crawling on your face. Fortunately, when we encounter them on the trail, they generally don’t move very quickly. (Although, they can move quickly.) They do carry venom. However, the poison is very mild, and you really have to threaten them to get bitten.

They sometimes seem so gentle that some people like to handle them. However, there are little hairs covered with barbs on the end of their abdomen. When you molest tarantulas, they can rub those tiny hairs off onto your fingers. Those fingers then go into your eyes, where those tiny hairs can be transferred into your eyeballs. The hairs are very irritating and generally stay in there for about a year. Some tropical tarantulas, which end up in pet stores, are more poisonous and have even more irritating hairs than our local species. So, as cute and cuddly as one person in 10,000 thinks they are, they are best left alone.

Mike Kuhn

*Tarantula found during the Rocky Peak Hike*  
(Photo by John Sabol)



*Pine Green-Gentian*  
(*Swertia neglecta*)

*Taken near Lilly Meadows*  
(Photo by Arlene Altshuler)

## CHUMASH CURES

The Chumash had many treatments and cures for illnesses. Here are a few.



Toloache (*Datura wrightii*) was used with extreme caution, because the plant is highly toxic, with many deaths among the Chumash reported as well as during modern times. When a sick person was given toloache, relatives would gather around to sing and dance and shout to keep the person who was ill from falling asleep (they apparently recognized the danger of a person falling asleep and lapsing into a coma and death). Fernando Librado said that in measuring how much to give a sick person, you should use a person who has a short last joint on the fourth finger. In that way, they give a short measure. When the person who has been given the toloache awakens (apparently many did fall asleep), they must not drink water. The person who has administered the toloache may provide the ill person some little bit of warm water so that the ill person can wash out their mouth. After that they must abstain from all water for two days, eat only a light acorn gruel with clam or cotton-tail or some other light meat, and abstain from sleeping with their spouse for 21 days. Great credence was given to dreams while under in effects of toloache.



Red ants (probably the California harvester ant) were also used. When taken internally, an ant doctor, usually an old woman, would administer the treatment. The sick person would be given a mixture of hundreds of live ants mixed with down. In other cases, the patient would lie or stand naked on a red anthill, which had been broken into. This resulted in the ants biting the patient hundreds of time. The effects of the bites, which contain formic acid, were said to render cures. The victim, who often fainted during the ordeal, would be rubbed all over with green sycamore leaves and then with freshly chewed tobacco. Doctors were paid only if the patient got well.

When people became seriously ill, it was often assumed that they were being poisoned by someone. Great efforts were taken to determine who the poisoning party was. During the early mission period, as the Indians died in great numbers, many Chumash medicine men were killed by their own people, for it was assumed that they were the cause of so many deaths.

Seawater was probably used most often to effect cures. Several quarts of water were given to the ill person. This normally resulted in vomiting, which the Chumash believed expelled whatever was causing the person to be sick.

Two cures for epilepsy are recorded. One was to drink some deer blood. This, of course, had to be done as soon as a deer had been killed, so the patient had to follow a deer hunter around in order to be there when the kill occurred. The other cure was to eat the throbbing heart of a crow. For this latter cure to work, one had to abstain from sex for 21 days.

Rheumatism was sometime cured by wrapping the rheumatic part with a dead rattlesnake. People with rheumatism sometimes carried dead rattlesnakes around with them in their pockets.

Mike Kuhn



*Mark Sheele, resting by the Big Tujunga River after the Strawberry Meadows hike.*



*Margarita Marsh and Rafael taking a break at Three Falls, on the way to Lilly Meadows.*



*Margarita Marsh, Arlene Altshuler, and Rafael, at the beginning of the Lilly Meadows hike. (Photo by John Sabol)*



# RSTB Calendar

## July 2005



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Sheep Camp Day Hike See Schedule
3 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	4	5 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Kathy Baffone Kelli Ham</i>	6	7 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	8 Cottonwood Lakes Backpack	9 Cottonwood Lakes Backpack
10 Cottonwood Lakes Backpack  Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	11 Cottonwood Lakes Backpack <i>Happy Birthday Carrie McCline</i>	12 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	13	14 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Mike Kuhn</i>	15 <i>Happy Birthday Robert Eselin</i>	16 Jalama Beach See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Bruce Severy</i>
17 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	18	19 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	20 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 <i>Happy Birthday Monica Dionne</i>	21 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	22 <i>Happy Birthday Judi Sevcik Liz Williams</i>	23 Big Sycamore Canyon See Schedule
24 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	25	26 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	27	28 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	29	30 Sam Merrill Trail See Schedule
31 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule						





# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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## Hiking Schedule



### REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

#### 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)

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### JULY HIKES

#### July 2nd -- 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.

#### July 8th - 11th -- Cottonwood Lakes Backpack \*\*

10 MRT - Moderate (1000' elevation gain)

This is one of the most beautiful backpack trips in the Southeastern Sierra. The trailhead is 10,040'. We'll hike in five miles and set up our base camp. From there, we can do a lakes loop day hike, or head on up to New Army Pass (12,400') and maybe even Cirque Peak (12,900'). For a serious workout, you can bag Mt. Langley (14,023'). Campfires are not allowed on this trip. Wilderness Permit spaces are limited, so email Mark Gilmore to reserve your place. The cost is \$5 per person.

#### July 16th -- Jalama Beach to Point Conception \*\*

10 MRT (easy to moderate - 100' elevation gain)

Possibly the best beach hike on one of the longest, most natural beaches in California. On most days, after the first mile or two, don't expect to see another human. Be on the lookout, however, for a host of wildlife that can be seen on the sand and bluffs and in the ocean and sky -- deer, sea lions, harbor seals, dolphins, coyotes, raccoons, birds of prey and whales. After the hike, check out the Jalama Beach Restaurant inside the store. The Jalama burger, which the restaurant says is world famous and Sunset magazine gives high praise, is a must for burger lovers. **Meet at 7 AM**, near Donut Delite on the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water and good beach shoes.

#### July 23rd -- Big Sycamore Canyon - Hike to the Ocean \*\*

This eight mile, one-way shuttle hike to the ocean is all down hill. When we get to the beach, we'll have lunch. Please RSVP Mark Gilmore before July 16<sup>th</sup> for details on when and where to meet.

#### July 30th -- Echo Mountain via Sam Merrill Trail \*\*

5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,400' elevation gain)

Professor Thaddeus S. C. Lowe's mountain railway and resort was Southern California's must-visit attraction, drawing more than three million visitors from 1896 to 1936. Echo Mountain (3207'), known as "The White City," was the heart of the resort with its elegant Echo Mountain House hotel, chalet, observatory, and small zoo. It has all since vanished, but this fascinating hike takes you to the ruins of this official historic landmark. **Meet at 7 AM**, near Donut Delite on the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 qts. of water and lunch. Wear sturdy boots.

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**\*\* These hikes are not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.**

**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.**

<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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-----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 \_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone wk/hm \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



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