



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



GROUP HIKES AND SAFETY

Organized group hikes involve people of all levels of skill and abilities. Some know the trail while others are on the trail for the first time. Group hikes, if properly conducted, can result in pleasant and relatively safe experiences.

Some rules which should be followed in order to have a successful hike include:

- As much as possible the group should stay together.
- When a trail junction is encountered, everyone should wait until the last person has arrived before proceeding. (If the group becomes separated and someone who does not know the trail reaches a trail junction, they have no way of knowing which trail to take. As a result, people can get lost.)
- When crossing streams, everyone should wait until the last person has gotten across before proceeding. (If each person proceeds after they have successfully crossed the stream, the process guarantees that many will end up out of sight of the other hikers.)
- Hike leaders make the final decision on route and how to proceed if an emergency arises.
- If an inexperienced hiker feels they must turn around and return to the trailhead, they should be accompanied by one or more hikers with knowledge of the trail.
- Hike leaders are responsible for knowing who is on the hike and how many are in the group.
- If one or more individuals decide to leave the group, then other members of the remaining group - preferably the hike leader - should be informed.

- Hike leaders must account for all hike participants before leaving the trailhead at the end of the hike.
- Hike leaders and other participants must notify members of the hiking group who are doing anything that endangers any other person. Rocks should not be thrown, wildlife harassed or handled, or slingshots used. Smoking is prohibited on our hikes.
- On land where dogs are permitted, they must be on leashes and under control of their owners at all times. (It is a state law that dogs must be on a leash and under control of their handlers where it can be reasonably assumed that one might encounter a member of the general public.)
- When encountering someone on horseback on the trail, hikers should move as far off the trail as possible and remain still. It is also good to engage the rider in conversation so that their horse can recognize you as a human being. (You, as a hiker, can endanger the safety of the horse and rider.)

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be at:
 Sycamore Drive Community Center
 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
7:00PM – July 20, 2011

Welcome, New Members!

Mary Rogers
 Suzanne Exner
 Robert Miller
 Jinell Becker



Upcoming Events

July 2nd - Mt. McCoy Trail and the Reagan Library
 3.6 MRT - Moderate
 (700' elevation gain)

July 5th - 10th Eastern Sierra Hiking and Camping Trip*

July 16th Malibu Creek State Park* 
 Moderate 6-8 MRT
 (600' elevation gain)

July 20th - Club Meeting

July 23rd Mt. Pinos to Sheep Camp*
 10.5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous
 (elevation change 8900' to 8250')

July 30th Solstice Canyon Loop*
 Moderate - 7 MRT (1,500' elevation gain)

More information about these events can be found on Page 5 and on the Activities page at <http://simitrailblazers.com>

A MOUND OF STONES

Nothing persists like stone. Archaeology is fixated on stones. Cultures are described by their stone tool assemblages. Stone lasts, where other materials, such as wood, baskets, and even bone, perish. When Moses first came down off of Mt. Sinai, according to the book of Exodus, he found the Hebrews worshipping a golden calf. He threw down the two stone tablets, on which were written the laws, and broke them. If the story is true, and because they were in the desert, those broken tablets may well still be on the surface of the ground, unrecognized, but still there. A man lines up some stones, carries a stone from one place to another, or builds a wall. For all practical purposes, he is creating a permanent record of an event, a cultural practice, a moment in the life of man. Stone lasts.

The 1861 U.S. Surveyor General's Office survey of El Rancho Simi exhibits a "mound of stones" at a turning point along the southwestern boundary of the rancho on the top of the ridge south of the southern end of Wood Ranch Parkway. The mound of stones was part of the survey. The mound, if it still exists, is a cultural artifact and deserves recognition and preservation. So, I thought it would be fun to see if it is still there. Locating the mound would not be as hard as it might seem, considering how apparently crude the map is. That survey was done with a transit and chain and was the basis of permanent property boundaries. Those same boundaries exist today. All you have to do is follow the fence lines.

So, I took a hike. Not surprisingly, the boundary was marked by the remnants of a barbed wire fence, and the turning point is marked by a steel pipe with a cap on it. Stones of a relatively uniform size are somewhat scattered about 20 feet away, with a couple of the stones adjacent to the modern marker. Other than those stones, the surface near the

boundary marker is pretty much free of rocks. Given the persistence of stone, the relative uniformity of the size of each stone and the concentration of those stones exactly where you would expect to find them, it is clear, at least to me, that they are the original mound piled there by the survey crew. A more recent survey, using better instruments, would have yielded a slightly different result even though the same surveying data were used. It is standard surveying practice, when re-surveying, to destroy old survey markers when new ones are installed. In any case, the presence of the original stones is comforting.

Another "mound of stones" is noted at another turning point on a high isolated ridge to the south-southeast, west of Simi Peak. I'll look for that one one of these days.

Mike Kuhn
7-12-06 (revised 8-27-07)



A STONE CAIRN

During an archaeological survey of a portion of the Big Sky Ranch in 1989, a large cairn of fieldstones was identified. The pile of stones was approximately nine feet across and two and one half feet high. Some of the stones were more than a foot in diameter. The pile of stones was certainly man made, but there was no way of telling when or by who it was assembled, or for what purpose. Its physical nature is clear, but its origin is an enigma. There were archaeological resources in the immediate area, but none directly associated with the pile of stones.

The Chumash Indians did create rectangular or oval shaped piles of stones, usually two or three stones high, as shrines associated with winter solstice ceremonies. This pile of stones doesn't seem to be strategically

located to serve as a winter solstice ceremonial shrine. There is no indication that any form of historic cultivation took place in the immediate area. Archaeological testing by RMW Paleo Associates, under archaeologist Ron Bissell, yielded no answers.

Cairns were assembled for many purposes throughout prehistory and history. Sometimes they covered burials, sometimes they represented shrines, sometimes they were boundary, claim or trail markers, and sometimes they were simply piles of stones cleared from fields during cultivation. I have read of one account where Indians in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada built cairns of stones to mark the spots where an Indian was attacked and killed – or badly injured – by a grizzly bear.

Ron Bissell relates a story about a large cairn near an excavation that he was involved with. Local residents told him that a retired gentleman built the cairn. On his daily constitutional, he would add a stone - and sometimes a flower. This practice went on for more than 20 years. However, many local citizens are now convinced that the cairn conceals something of importance! Our pile was destroyed during the grading for the Lost Canyons Golf Courses. We will never know the origin of the cairn. Some things will remain a mystery.

Mike Kuhn
6-18-07 (revised 4-26-10)

Trailblazer T-Shirts & Sweatshirts

T-shirts in short and long sleeves. Price is \$12, \$14, or \$18, depending on style. To order, call Mike at 805-583-2345.



June 18th - Echo Mountain (White City) via the Sam Merrill Trail + Mt. Lowe Rail Bed Trail



Seven hikers left Simi Valley shortly after 6:30 a.m. and headed east via Hwy 118 and Hwy 210 to Arcadia and then north via Santa Anita Avenue to Chantry Flat (the end of the road) to hike in Big Santa

Anita Canyon. However, the parking lot was full when we arrived and the area was quite foggy. Therefore, we decided to go to “Plan B” and hike the Sam Merrill Trail which begins at the north end of Lake Avenue in Altadena. We started up the well-maintained trail via a series of switchbacks that climbed steadily up the east slope of Los Flores Canyon, benefitting from the cool, foggy morning. The trail soon reached the old rail bed of the Mount Lowe Railway (built in the 1890’s) and we enjoyed a level walk over to the White City ruins where we reviewed the history of the area and imagined how exciting it must have been over a hundred years ago. White City (named for the elegant white-painted Echo Mountain House Hotel which opened in 1896, but burned in 1900) was conceived by Professor Thaddeus S. C. Lowe (for whom Mt. Lowe is named) and engineer David J. Macpherson. In addition to the main hotel, a second smaller hotel (The Chalet), an observatory, and a small zoo were built. Supporting infrastructure included a powerhouse, machine shop, reservoir, and the world’s most powerful searchlight. The resort drew more than three million visitors from 1896 to 1936. The incline railway was abandoned in 1938. After a quick lunch, we decided to follow the four-mile route of the Alpine Division of the Mt. Lowe Railway (the rail bed now a foot trail) one mile west to the Cape of Good Hope where the rail bed

curved northward. After checking our map and noting the much-improved visibility on the mountain, we decided to continue following the rail bed (now a rocky dirt road)



as it climbed the mountain toward the Mt. Lowe Campground and the end of the line at Ye Alpine Tavern. The route was ablaze with a variety of beautiful blooming wildflowers and bordered by conifers as we gained elevation. A sunbathing rattlesnake made its presence known along the way (we took photos). About a mile short of the end of the rail line, we decided to return to the trailhead. We arrived at our vehicles having hiked 12.4

miles with an elevation gain/loss of 2,203’ on what turned out to be a beautiful day.

June 11th - Reyes Peak & Chorro Grande Shuttle

13 hikers met at the carpool point near the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road on an overcast morning. Since it was to be a one-way hike, we took four vehicles to the lower end of the Chorro Grande Trail (4,080’) via Madera Road, Hwy 23, Hwy 101, and Hwy 33. We parked

one of the vehicles there and then everyone boarded the other three vehicles for the 7-mile drive along poorly maintained Pine Mountain Road (6N06) to its east end (6,980’). After assembling our hiking gear, we set out along a



short stretch of abandoned road and then followed a “use” trail as it climbed fairly steeply through the forest toward Reyes Peak (7,514’) which we reached after hiking one mile. Since there were no clouds or fog this far inland, we were treated to sweeping views of the mountainous terrain of parts of the Matilija Wilderness, the Sespe Wilderness, and the Dick Smith Wilderness as well as the Lockwood



and Cuyama Valleys. We returned to the parking lot at the east end of Pine Mountain Road and hiked westward along it one mile to the upper end of the Chorro Grande Trail (7,160’).

We then began our five-mile 3,000’ descent to our shuttle vehicle. After passing through Jeffrey and Ponderosa pines for about one mile we reached Chorro Spring (6,400’) which

has water year-round. Continuing our trek, the flora soon changed to scrub oak, Manzanita, and rabbitbrush (chaparral) providing us with great views to the south of the Sespe Creek drainage and Ortega Hill (5,660’) in the Matilija Wilderness. As we

approached Oak Camp (4,550’) alders grew in profusion along the creek which bubbled pleasantly. As we neared the end of the hike we were treated to views of huge white boulders (piedra blanca). We encountered a wide



variety of blooming wildflowers along the entire trail. After retrieving the three vehicles we had left on Pine Mountain, we returned to Simi Valley, having completed a moderately strenuous hike of 8.25 miles with 957’ of elevation gain and 3,800’ of elevation loss.



RSTB Calendar July 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Mt. McCoy Trail and the Reagan Library 8AM See Schedule
3 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule	4	5	6	7	8	9
Eastern Sierra Hiking and Camping Trip* July 5 – 10						
		Las Lajas Canyon 6:30 PM Happy Birthday Kelli Ham	Happy Birthday Christopher Hamilton	Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule	Happy Birthday Rafael Zepeda Joe Simon	
10 Eastern Sierra July 5 - 10 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM <i>(Hike will take place if a hike leader is available)</i>	11 Happy Birthday Robert Miller Richard Bradley Carrie McCline	12 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	13	14 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Mike Kuhn	15 Happy Birthday Gloria Silva	16 Malibu Creek State Park* 8AM  See Schedule Happy Birthday Nicholas Carroll
17 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule	18	19 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	20 Club Meeting 7 PM See Schedule	21 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule	22	23 Mt. Pinos to Sheep Camp* 7AM See Schedule
24 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule	25 Happy Birthday Nick Margolin	26 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	27 Happy Birthday Marilyn Green	28 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Christine Calvert	29	30 Solstice Canyon Loop* 8AM See Schedule
31 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule						

REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **5 PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. Take the Rocky Peak exit from the 118 Fwy. Meet at the north end of the bridge; don't park on the bridge. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Las Lajas Canyon

Meet at **6:30 PM** at the Evening Sky Drive trailhead. Take the 118 Fwy to the Yosemite Ave exit; head north past McDonalds and the stop sign at Alamo Street; continue 0.85 mile north on Yosemite Ave to the stop sign at Evening Sky Drive; turn right (east) and drive 0.5 mile to the trailhead; park on either side of the street. (Easy-to-moderate depending on distance hiked, 3¼ MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** at Chumash trailhead. Take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 5.2 MRT)

JULY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

July 2nd - Mt. McCoy Trail and the Reagan Library

3.6 MRT - Moderate (700' elevation gain)

Hike up to an isolated knoll in a 200 acre open space region at the western end of Simi Valley. At the summit (1,325') is a white cross, erected in 1941, and a 360 degree view. From there it's about another half mile to the Reagan Library. Bring a snack and 2 to 3 quarts of water. Wear boots. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.

July 5th - 10th - Eastern Sierra Hiking and Camping Trip*

This very special event is limited to Trail Blazer members only. This trip is for the entire family. You may join in on the yet to be planned hikes, or simply enjoy the sights. We will be tent camping at the **Oh Ridge Campground**. For more info about the campground, go to: <http://1.usa.gov/ohridge>. There is a non-refundable campground fee, shared equally among all those who sign up. Please plan to arrive the afternoon of July 5th. The droves of holiday weekend campers will be gone by then!

July 16th - Malibu Creek State Park*



Moderate 6-8 MRT (600' elevation gain)

Hike to the old M*A*S*H site. Countless movies have been filmed in this park. We have several options on the way, depending on the desires of the group. We'll see Century Lake and the Rock Pool. For more information about Malibu Creek State Park, please go here: <http://1.usa.gov/MalibuCreekSP>. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

July 20th - Club Meeting

7PM - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

July 23rd – Mt. Pinos to Sheep Camp*

10.5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (elevation change from 8900' to 8250')

This hike offers 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 quarts of water (and/or a water filter), and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at **7AM** the Stearns St. Park & Ride. The drive is 1 1/2 hours each way.

July 30th - Solstice Canyon Loop*

Moderate - 7 MRT (1,500' elevation gain)

Take the Solstice Canyon Trail to the Sostomo Trail, continuing on the Deer Valley Loop Trail, then to shady Tropical Terrace/waterfall. Return on the Rising Sun Trail. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. For more information about this hike, please go to

<http://www.nps.gov/samo/planyourvisit/solsticecanyon.htm> and <http://simitrailblazers.com/activities/Solstice.jpg>.

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



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.** <http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

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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 _____ 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 _____

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

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