



# 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.**



## THE FIRST SOLDIERS IN CALIFORNIA

The first Spanish settlers of California were mostly soldiers. They were recruited primarily in the New Spain State of Sinaloa. Minimum height for a soldier was five feet. Consequently, in 1790, the average height of soldiers in California was 5'1", with the tallest soldier being 5'6". No doubt their diminutive stature by today's standard reflected poor nutrition.

Military records include very detailed physical descriptions of each soldier. Height, weight, skin color, hair texture and color, scars, shape of the nose and any other distinguishing characteristics were recorded. While that kind of detail seems puzzling, there was no photography at the time, and the military needed that kind of information in the event of desertion.

Mike Kuhn  
11-30-04

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at <http://www.rsrpd.org> to see what is happening next!



### 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



### 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 CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at:  
Sycamore Drive Community Center  
1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1  
**Wednesday: July 20, 2016 5:30PM**  
*Everyone Welcome to attend!*

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

### Upcoming Events

**July 2nd Mt. McCoy to the Reagan Library** 6 MRT - Moderate (800' elevation gain) **8AM**

**July 9th Westward Beach to Point Dume to Paradise Cove\*** 5 MRT - Easy (425' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**July 16th Mt. Waterman\*** 6.4 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,350' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**July 20th Club Board Meeting** The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1 **5:30PM Everyone Welcome to attend!**

**July 23rd Danielson Memorial via the Fossil Trail\*** 6 Mile Lollipop Loop - Moderate (1,000' of elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

**July 30th East Canyon to Mission Point\*** 8 MRT - Moderate (1,400' 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.

## May 14th - Triunfo Lookout, Canyon View Trail, Grotto Trail

13 hikers carpooled to the day-use-parking area (1,631') below the Circle X Ranger Station on Yerba Buena Road in the Santa Monica Mountains and dropped off a shuttle vehicle; we then carpooled to the Sandstone Peak Trail parking lot (2,066') on Yerba Buena Road near Triunfo Pass (2,100') in the Santa Monica Mountains on a cool overcast spring morning. We began PART ONE one of our two-part hike downhill on the Canyon View Trail which lived up to its name and there were many wildflowers along the trail. After hiking 1.5 miles we reached the junction with the Grotto Trail as it headed downstream for about a mile along the West Fork of the Arroyo Sequit, enjoying the canyon views including stunning rock formations and a variety of beautiful wildflowers. After climbing carefully over some large boulders filling the streambed we reached The Grotto (1,215') where some water was pooled but there was no waterfall due to the continuing drought. We took a lunch/rest break and then followed the Grotto Trail up to our shuttle vehicle which we used to retrieve our other vehicles. We then carpooled a few miles north/northeast to the dirt parking area along Yerba Buena Road where we began PART TWO of our hike. We started hiking along the dirt Yellow Hill Fire Road; soon the path was bordered by a stunning seemingly never-ending display of blooming sticky monkey flower. Reaching a fork in the trail we turned left and followed the abandoned access road up to the ruins of the Triunfo Lookout (2,658') from which there were breathtaking views in all directions, though the view over the ocean was obscured. We returned to the Yellow Hill Fire Road and followed it a short distance down to the SMMRA Backbone Trail which we followed eastward to a short unmarked connector trail which led us back to our vehicles. We then returned home having completed a 6.5 mile hike with about 1,300' of elevation gain/loss.

## May 28th - Hondo Canyon to Topanga Lookout

Ten hikers arrived on a cool overcast morning at the trailhead located 0.4 mile northwest of "downtown" Topanga along Old Topanga Canyon Road where the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area's "Backbone Trail" crosses the road. As we began our hike up the steep north-facing mountain slope we crossed a dry streambed and soon passed through pretty meadows filled with dry yellow grasses and dotted with oak trees and interesting rock formations. Next we reached a wonderful pink gorge on the right (west) side of the trail where a small waterfall is sometimes visible (but not today). As we continued upward through chaparral, there were glimpses of the pink-colored sedimentary rock

formations/cliffs (the Sespe Formation) that form the west side of the canyon. We then entered a dense forest comprised mostly of oak and bay laurel trees; the trail was also adorned with ferns, moss-covered rocks, and lots of very healthy poison oak. After negotiating a long series of heavily shaded switchbacks through the forest we neared Saddle Peak Road. However, we headed west on a lovely trail that paralleled the road; it was adorned with a variety of blooming wildflowers. Upon reaching the old Topanga Tower Motorway we left the Backbone Trail and headed north to the end of the road where there was once a fire lookout tower. After a lunch/rest break we retraced our steps and returned home having completed a 10.9-mile hike with 2,350' of elevation gain/loss on a very pleasant day for hiking.

## June 11th - Matilija Falls



Thirteen hikers met at the trailhead at the west end of Matilija Road a few miles northwest of Ojai on a pleasant late-spring morning. The hike began along a road that headed west through the private Matilija Canyon

Ranch Wildlife Refuge where we passed by a large cage housing several peacocks. The stream crossing at the 0.4-mile mark was easy since there was no water in the creek at that point. After a little over a mile our route crossed through a lovely private ranch via a dirt road that hikers are restricted to; several of us spotted a grazing doe. At about the 2-mile mark the dirt road became a narrow trail as it wound through a shady poison-oak-paradise stretch. In fact, since the route closely followed Matilija Creek the rest of the way, poison oak was frequently present [long pants and a long-sleeved shirt are recommended]. After a while we stopped by the flowing stream at a particularly lovely spot and took a short break (and some photos). Continuing upstream the maintained trail ended and we began to scramble and boulder hop, frequently finding short open stretches of trail. Occasionally we were required to cross the stream in order to continue. We were rewarded for our effort by beautiful scenery including the flowing creek, several large pools of water, vast expanses of sedimentary rock layers, an extensive riparian oak woodland, towering canyon walls, and many wildflowers including Matilija poppies. At about the 4.5-mile mark we reached a cascade with a beautiful shaded campsite just above it. We took a rest-and-lunch break in this idyllic location. Continuing on upstream we soon reached the fabled waterfall(s) which were unfortunately completely dry and rested briefly. The scrambling and boulder-hopping going downstream seemed considerably easier than going upstream and the scenery was just as beautiful. When we reached a large deep pool of water we spotted the rarely seen "Matilija Merman" frolicking in the water. After we made it back to our vehicles we returned home having completed a strenuous 10.25 mile hike with around 1,250' of elevation gain/loss.



# 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		
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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

## WEST NILE VIRUS

[by Kevin Schargen, *Outdoor California*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (March-April 2005), page 14]

In 1999, West Nile virus (WNV) appeared in New York City. After claiming the lives of innumerable crows and several humans, this mosquito-borne disease began its migration to the West Coast. Today, it's present in most California counties.

Although serious complications can result from a WNV infection (including life-threatening brain swelling), most people who contract the virus either experience mild clinical signs or remain unaffected. Typically, the severe form of the disease is restricted to young children, adults over 50, and immuno-compromised individuals.

Signs of infection include general body achiness, an elevated body temperature, and swollen lymph nodes. Individuals with the serious form of WNV may experience weakness of the muscles, neck stiffness, and debilitating nervous signs (including tremors, disorientation, and paralysis).

West Nile virus isn't the only insect-borne virus capable of causing disease in humans. Western equine encephalitis and California encephalitis, for example, are both spread by mosquitoes and have the potential to cause permanent neurological damage. Vomiting, nausea, chills, and an elevated body temperature are typical early signs of infection.

The best defense is to avoid exposure to the bugs. Since mosquitoes require still water to reproduce, it's best to empty all water-containing vessels that are in the vicinity of the home (such as watering cans, wheelbarrows, flowerpots, and pool covers). Also, punch holes in the bottom of open-topped garbage bins to allow water to drain freely, and routinely unclog gutters and drains. To keep the house mosquito-free, window screens should be scanned regularly and repaired or patched as necessary. Most mosquitoes prefer to glide in the still air of the night, so the nocturnal outdoor adventurer is advised to pack skin-concealing clothing, close-toed shoes, a mosquito-proof tent, and plenty of bug spray.

## STATUS OF CALIFORNIA CONDORS

(adapted from Anna Lena Phillips, "Junk Food," *American Scientist*, Vol. 95 (September-October 2007), pp. 402-403)

The California condor is a valuable scavenger species – cleaning up after us by eating flesh and even bones from carrion. Since their near extinction 35 years ago, largely from eating lead bullet fragments in the meat they consumed, they have recovered from a low of 22 individuals in the 1980s to a current population of about 285 (year 2007 statistic). In order to prevent lead ingestion, the 22 birds were convinced to enter captive breeding programs in California zoos. Now there are 69 birds in the wild in California and many in Arizona. Those in the wild have started producing nestlings, however, their survival is threaten by a new, unanticipated problem – consumption of junk!

In order to reduce the ingestion of lead bullet fragments from carcasses, wildlife managers put out food for the adults every third day. In Southern California the feeding station is as close as two miles to the nearest condor nest. The condors, it seems, now have a lot of free time, and are getting into mischief – that is they are attracted to the abundant brightly colored trash that is left in the wild and around oil fields. They have been bringing back to their nestlings a prodigious amount of that trash. Adult condors regurgitate their meals to feed to nestlings, so adult condors are able to relieve themselves of the trash, which they collect. However, their nestlings do not have that ability. The results are that the junk they eat lodges in their crops and gizzards severely limiting the absorption of nutrients and, in some cases, they experience life-threatening metal toxicity. One x-ray of a dead nestling included in the above-noted article exhibits nine metal bottle caps, one flip-top opener, a spring and other unidentifiable items. The body of another nestling contained 30 metal items, 54 of glass, 28 pieces of plastic and two miscellaneous items – a total of 200.5 grams of junk. Another contained 193.5 grams. Two of the nine Los Padres chicks that hatched between 2001 and 2005 died as a direct result of junk ingestion, while several others died of junk-related complications. The reintroduced population in Arizona has had much less trouble with trash ingestion. Most of the birthing locations in the Grand Canyon are far from feeding stations – up to 50 miles. The birds have far less time on their wings and their terri-

tory contains far less trash because of its isolation. Condors in Arizona also have a far more diverse natural food supply than their California brethren.

It is clear that hunting with bullets that contain lead must be abandoned within condor territory. Copper bullets are available that can meet the needs of hunters. Aversion therapy for trash-eating California condors or retraining junk-tossing humans may be the best bets for the survival of the California condor.

Mike Kuhn  
11-14-07 (revised 12-2-12)

## THE CALIFORNIA ISLE

The first mention of the name "California" can be found in a novel by Garci Rodriguez Ordonez de Montalvo and entitled *Las Sergas de Esplandian* (c. 1510). In translation:

"Know ye that on the right hand of the Indies there is an island called California, very near the Terrestrial Paradise and inhabited by black women without a single man among them and living in the manner of Amazons. They are robust of body, strong and passionate in heart, and of great valor. Their island is one of the most rugged in the world with bold rocks and crags. Their arms are all of gold, as is the harness of the wild beasts which, after taming, they ride. In all the island there is no other metal...."

The fictitious name came to be associated with Baja California, which is rugged indeed. Certainly, what we now call Baja California was long thought to be an island and was only shown to be a peninsula in 1540. Anyway, the name came to be applied to upper and lower California.

Mike Kuhn  
12-23-04 (revised 4-28-10)



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.



## 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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## JULY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

### July 2nd Mt. McCoy to the Reagan Library

6 MRT - Moderate (800' 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 quarts of water. Wear boots. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.

### July 9th Westward Beach to Point Dume to Paradise Cove\*

5 MRT - Easy (425' elevation gain/loss)

The trail leads up from Westward Beach and over Point Dume to Dume Beach and then along the beach for a couple of miles to Paradise Cove (a site used in movies and TV series, including The Rockford Files), the Paradise Cove Beach Cafe (with its free-to-the-public beach chairs), and the nearby pier. The return hike follows the beach back to Point Dume where there are observation points for whale, seal, and dolphin watching. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring a snack and 2 quarts of water. Wear shoes that are good for walking on the beach that you don't mind possibly getting wet.

### July 16th Mt. Waterman\*

6.4 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,350' elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will start (6,777') along the Angeles Crest Highway (Highway 2) on a dirt road leading up to the Mt. Waterman Ski Area. We'll go to the right another mile or so to Mt. Waterman peak (8,038'). We can either return the way we came OR we can complete a loop that follows a dirt road down through Waterman Village (the ski area). **NOTE:** An Adventure Pass or Senior Pass must be displayed on all parked vehicles. Meet at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride at **8AM**. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

### July 20th Club Meeting *Everyone Welcome to attend!*

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

### July 23rd Danielson Memorial via the Fossil Trail\*

6 Mile Lollipop Loop - Moderate (1,000' of elevation gain/loss)

Our hike in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) will begin by following the Wendy Trail in Newbury Park to the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center at Rancho Sierra Vista. As we complete our loop hike we'll stop at a waterfall along the way. 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.

### July 30th East Canyon to Mission Point\*

8 MRT - Moderate (1,400' elevation gain/loss)

The trail begins a mile southeast of the entrance to Towsley Canyon on "The Old Road." It follows the East Canyon Motorway southward as it climbs to a Douglas Fir grove at the crest of the Santa Susana Mountains. It then follows the shady Corral Sunshine Motorway southeast to Mission Point with panoramic views to the south. Bring 2-3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at **8AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride

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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>**