



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Volunteer of the Year!



Avid hiker and nature lover Mike Kuhn can remember the days when Simi Valley didn't have a single public recreation trail. Nowadays he's trekking through local pathways at least three times a week. A lot can change in 20 years. But one thing that hasn't changed is Kuhn's dedication to the trail system owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.

Current and longstanding executive chair of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers, who just turned 72-years old is a Simi resident and has given an enormous amount of time and energy to the volunteer organization, leading hikes and keeping the trails clean and clear for the benefit of all.

"I enjoy meeting the people (on hikes) and talking to them and sharing what knowledge I have," Kuhn said, "and making people a little more comfortable (in the) outdoors."

A Trail Blazer since 1993, Kuhn is one of the park district's longest-serving volunteers. He has contributed more than 6,300 hours to RSRPD's 80-mile trail system—which doesn't include unlogged hours during his first four years. Colleen Janssen, who oversees RSRPD's volunteer programs, said



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



Kuhn is deserving of praise for his longevity and quality of service and his devotion to the trails and outdoor areas in and around Simi Valley.

"He's pretty incredible," she said. "It's unusual to have somebody win it twice but that gives you an idea of how important and valuable his volunteer service is to our district."

To read more of this story, go to: <http://www.simivalleyacorn.com/news/2012-07-06/Neighbors/>

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at:
Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1
August 15, 2012

Upcoming Events

August 4th

Solstice Canyon

7 MRT - Moderate (1,400' elevation gain/loss) - Meet at **8AM**

August 11th

Mt. Pinos to the Lockwood Valley Shuttle

10 Miles one-way _ Moderate to Strenuous (800' elevation gain and 3,700' elevation loss) - Meet at **7AM**

August 15th - RSTB Meeting

August 18th

Mugu Peak La Jolla Valley Loop

9 MRT - Moderate (1,300' elevation gain) - Meet at **8AM**

August 25

Westwood Beach to Paradise Cove

6 MRT - Easy (425' of elevation gain/loss) - Meet at **8AM**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see 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.rsrpd.org> to see what is happening next!

YUCCA ROASTING

The chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), sometimes referred to as “Spanish bayonet” or as “our lord’s candle,” was a major food resource for the Chumash Indians. While the seeds, fruit, and pulp in the flower stalk were used, the primary use for food was to roast the “buds” of the plant in a roasting pit in the ground. Thus, the plant could be harvested year round for food – even during the winter and droughts.

The plant grows as a basal rosette of spine-tipped, sword-like leaves one-foot to two-feet long. To harvest the “bud,” the plant was removed from the ground using a long digging stick. The leaves were then removed from the base – usually by burning them off - and then roasting the buds in the ground over night. An excerpt from *A Historical, Political, and Natural Description of California* by Pedro Fages, written for the Viceroy in 1775 (translated by Herbert Ingram Priestley), page 50, contains a description of how this was done. Fages accompanied Gaspar de Portola into upper California in 1769 and then remained in California, traveling widely, for many years. He served as *comandante* of the “New Establishment” and was promoted to lieutenant colonel. Now his description:

“...There is a great deal of century plant of the species which the Mexicans call mescalí. The mode of using it is as follows: They make a hole in the ground, fill it in compactly with large firewood which they set on fire, and then throw on top a number of stones until the entire fire is covered but (not?) smothered. When the stones are red hot, they place among them the bud of the plant; this they protect with grass or moistened hay, throwing on top a large quantity of earth, leaving it

so for the space of twenty-four hours. The next day they take out their century plant roasted, or *tlatemado* as they say. It is juicy, sweet, and of a certain vinous flavor; indeed, very good wine can be made from it.”

While the “century plant” is referred to, no century plants, as they are known in Mexico, grow wild in California. Agaves do exist in the eastern Mojave Desert, but they clearly are not what is being referred to here within the area dominated by the mission system. The only plant that Fages could be referring to is the chaparral yucca. According to A. L. Kroeber, the premier California anthropologist of the first half of the 20th Century, the *Ventureño* Chumash word for yucca is *ta’apu*. Harrington also records roasting pits being used to cook *ta’apu*, a *Barbareño* word. The remains of roasting pits are common artifacts near villages and temporary camp sites. There is, however, some doubt whether *ta’apu* really means yucca. The work of Jan Timbrook suggests that it might not. In any case, the village was called *ta’apu* and is our source for the name “tapo.”

Mike Kuhn
2-23-06 (revised 11-7-11)

YELLOWSTONE, ASPEN AND WOLVES

As reported in *Science*, Vol. 317 (July 27, 2007), pp. 438-439, to grow a healthy stand of quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) in Yellowstone National Park, you need a pack of wolves. Aspens are long-lived clones, which live for centuries and possibly for millennia. They sprout from roots, forming nearly pure stands. However, they have not been reproducing in Yellowstone for more than the last half century. Indeed, valley bottoms have become relative shrub and tree free, with severe soil erosion. With the reintroduction of the wolf (*Canis lupis*)

in 1995, dense stands of aspen, willows, cottonwoods and shrubbery are again thriving in canyon bottoms. The demise of the aspen seems to have occurred because the population of elk (*Cervus elaphus*) in the park rose with the purposeful extermination of the wolf in the park by the U.S. Government. Elk feed heavily on the new growth of the aspen and other trees - eliminating reproduction. The introduction of the wolf (wolves take an elk every few days) along with the elks’ fear of being caught within dense stands of aspen by wolves, which can maneuver more readily in dense cover, has resulted in the rapid re-growth of aspen stands and other trees in the bottomlands. The higher stands of aspen on the sides of canyons have not yet seemed to have benefited to the same degree from the return of wolves to their former habitat. Since the wolf was absent in the park for more than 70 years, the return of the high stands may be just a matter of time.

These events lend credence to the notion that a cascade effect can occur when a top predator is removed from an ecosystem. The return of the wolf is leading to a more biologically diverse and healthier ecosystem.

Mike Kuhn
8-6-07



July 7, 2012 - Mt. McCoy to the Reagan Library



At 8 AM this morning, ten hikers arrived at the Donut Delite parking lot, before walking up to the Mt. McCoy trailhead. It was a cool morning, just perfect for the many switchback climb ahead of us. From the top, we could see the heavy marine layer to the west. To the east, the view was clear and unobstructed. Arriving the Reagan Library, the group split up and went exploring. Some of us spent our time inside, others enjoyed the gardens, and still others tried to walk around the whole library, discovering the F14-A aircraft on the north side of the Library. We returned to our cars, before the heat of the day caught up with us, having completed a 6 mile trek with 800' of elevation gain.

June 29, 2012 - July 2, 2012 - Santa Rosa Island Backpack

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2012 – Travel to Santa Rosa Island, backpack to Water Canyon Campground, walk on Water Canyon Beach, and hike the Torrey Pines Trail – 7.1 miles w/700' elevation gain/loss



Sixteen eager Hikers Assembled around 7:00 a.m. at the Island Packers facility in Ventura Harbor with their backpacking, hiking, and

camping gear, looking forward to exploring Santa Rosa Island, one of the more remote of the five islands in the Channel Islands National Park. By 8:00 a.m. all passengers and their gear were aboard the boat and the journey began. The boat ride was somewhat rough since there was a strong oncoming wind. Once we were in deeper water in the Santa Barbara Channel, we spotted many seals and Anacapa Island

was visible to the south. After dropping quite a few passengers off at Scorpion Harbor on Santa Cruz Island (the largest of the Channel Islands), the boat continued along the south side of 22-mile-long Santa Cruz Island to the new pier on Santa Rosa Island (the second largest island). We were greeted by a volunteer-host couple on the pier and were told that the campsites in the Water Canyon Campground were first-come first-served. After strapping on our backpacks we hiked 1.5 miles (with only 175' of elevation gain) along the Coastal Road to the campground where we selected four campsites and set up our tents. The campground had two very nice bathrooms with running water and one solar-heated shower as well as a view of the surrounding mountains and the ocean. Taking advantage of the beautiful day, we hiked over to Water Canyon Beach in Bechers Bay and strolled along its lovely white sand while admiring the beauty of the ocean and the bay. Next we followed the Coastal Road to the Torrey Pines Trail trailhead. The Torrey Pine is the rarest pine species in the United States, growing only on Santa Rosa Island and in San Diego County. We followed the trail as it climbed several hundred feet uphill and wound through the long-needled trees, providing spectacular views of forest and ocean. 20-plus mph wind made it difficult to sleep that night despite a wooden wind shelter at each campsite.

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2012 – Backpack from Water Canyon Campground to the pier, hike to the Carrington Point State Marine Reserve, and leave Santa Rosa Island – 9.7 miles w/800' elevation gain/loss

After breaking camp and leaving our backpacks on the pier [for later loading on the boat], we hiked up the bluff in the



northeastern corner of the island on a beautiful day. We passed through a dazzling display of unbelievably beautiful wildflowers and, as we gained elevation, were rewarded with

expansive views of the island's seashore as well as the western end of Santa Cruz Island. Eventually we reached an overlook of the Carrington Point State Marine Reserve where we observed a pinniped (seals, sea lions) rookery. We enjoyed a pleasant boat ride with a following wind back to Ventura Harbor including great views of Santa Cruz Island (including our boat entering the Painted Cave) and the appearance of many dolphins and humpback whales. The trip was a huge success (despite the strong wind at night); Santa Rosa Island is truly a "hidden treasure" in our own backyard. Santa Rosa Island is truly a "hidden treasure" in our own backyard.



RSTB Calendar

August



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Elfriede Cespedes	3 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Linda Barry	4 Solstice Canyon See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Betty Cameron
5 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Chelsea Carroll	6	7 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Cassie Simon	8	9 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	10	11 Mt. Pinos to the Lockwood Valley Shuttle See Schedule
12 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Kevin Gallagher	13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Kurt Godden	14 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule	15 Club Meeting 7PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Rita Zepeda	16 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Katy Cueba	17	18 Mugu Peak See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Sheila Kuntz Cheri Lanier
19 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	20 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Mark Scheele	21 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jinell Becker Al Richards	22	23 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Sung Limb	24	25 Westwood Beach to Paradise Cove See Schedule
26 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Dave Peters	27	28 Las Lajas Canyon 6:30PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Lara Pydde	29	30 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	31	



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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 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)

Tuesday Evening - Las Lajas Canyon

Meet at **6:30 PM** at the Evening Sky Drive trailhead. Take the 118 to the Yosemite Ave exit. Head north 1/3 mile (passing McDonald's) to 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 - 3.75 MRT - 348' total elevation gain)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** 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 - 1,210' total elevation gain)

AUGUST HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

August 4th

Solstice Canyon

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

Hike upstream in shady Solstice Canyon and then follow the Sostomo Trail as it climbs through chaparral and coastal sage with stream crossings, oak woodlands, and grassy meadows. Meet at **8 AM**, near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Wear boots. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Visit Trailblazers [activities page](#) for more information.

August 11th

Mt. Pinos to the Lockwood Valley Shuttle

10 Miles one-way - Moderate to Strenuous (800' elevation gain and 3,700' elevation loss)

Mt. Pinos (8,831') to Camp Three Falls (5,400') via Sheep Primitive Camp (8,200') and Lily Meadows (6,500') and a long car shuttle. Tumamait-Mt. Pinos Trail (21W03) to the North Fork Trail (22W02) to Boy Scout Camp Road in Lockwood Valley. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots. This is an all day event. Meet at **7 AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride.

August 15th

Club Meeting

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

August 18th

Mugu Peak La Jolla Valley Loop

9 MRT - Moderate (1,300' elevation gain)

After about a mile and a half, the rolling hills and grasslands of La Jolla Valley will spread out before us. We will see a tranquil pond on our left, and then head west across the entire expanse of the valley. At about 6 miles we will take a cutoff trail that takes us up to the top of the 1,266' Mugu Peak. After enjoying the peak, we'll rejoin the main trail for an easy 2 mile trek back to the car. Meet at **8 AM**, near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Wear boots. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch.

August 25

Westward Beach to Paradise Cove

6 MRT - Easy (425' of elevation gain/loss)

The trail from Westward Beach leads up 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 Café (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 **8 AM**, near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Wear boots and/or good beach shoes. Bring 2 quarts of water and lunch.

* 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

Executive Chair:	Mike Kuhn	HM (805) 583-2345	hannahmike@me.com
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Park District Liaison:	Colleen Janssen	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
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Publicity Chair:	<i>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</i>		
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.

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

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