



# 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

Multi-Purpose Room B  
The Mountain Lion Foundation  
will present a program entitled  
"On the Edge"



Mountain Lion Cub

Photo is courtesy of the  
Mountain Lion Foundation

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.

## 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  
September 21, 2005



Rafael Zepeda  
Fran Atkins

## 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.



## DON'T MIX SUNSCREEN AND BUG REPELLENT

People using sun block lotions should not use bug repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide).

New research, indicates that mixing the two could be dangerous. A scientist from Winnipeg who's been studying the issue for two years has found that combining sunscreen with DEET caused the skin to absorb the insect repellent more than three times faster than when used alone. This can cause side effects such as dizziness, seizures and drops in blood pressure.

John Sabol

## UPCOMING EVENTS

September 3<sup>rd</sup>

Live Animal Presentation by the Mountain Lion Foundation

See the article "ON THE EDGE" in Column 1 on this page.

September 17th

2005 Coastal Cleanup - Arroyo Simi

The Trail Blazers will be supporting Inland Waterway Cleanup in conjunction with Coastal Cleanup Day. Join us Saturday, September 17 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon, and make a difference! Simi Valley's Inland Waterway Cleanup site is Rancho Simi Community Park at the corner of Royal Avenue and Erringer Road. Be sure to wear gloves, long pants, sturdy shoes, sunscreen and a hat.

See the hiking schedule on page 5 for directions. For more information on Coastal Cleanup Day, call the City of Simi Valley at 583-6462.

September 22nd - 25th

Big Bear Lake

Weekend hiking extravaganza in the mountains above Big Bear Lake. Space is limited, so please email Mark at [markinthepark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:markinthepark@sbcglobal.net) to make reservations. We will be staying at a luxury condo in Big Bear Lake. For more information about the activities for the weekend, please surf on over to <http://www.bigbear.com>.

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

For more information on upcoming hikes and events, check out <http://www.simitrailblazers.com>.

## AUGUST TRAIL WORK PARTY

With many people out of town and on vacation we had a very small work party on the Mt. McCoy Trail on August 20 with only two people participating. The day started off cool and foggy but soon warmed up. Since it was an early start time and I had our gas powered brushcutter, we headed to the top of the trail to keep the noise away from nearby homes. Near the top where the heavy brush stopped, Arlene started lopping downtrail while I continued to the top to start cutting weed growth on both sides of the trail.

One of the problems of clearing a trail with a brush cutter using nylon cutting line is excessive line breakage due to rocks and heavy shrub stems hidden in the grass. Steel blades shouldn't be used in dry weather because of sparks generated when hitting rocks and the resultant fire danger.

I purchased a commercial cutting head recommended by a friend on the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council. It is an aluminum unit with plastic dome bottom. A straight section of heavy 0.155-inch diameter line is threaded through two holes in the head and extend radially. The head worked great and chewed through deer weed, buckwheat and sage plants without breaking.

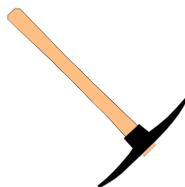
After clearing the trail down to Arlene's position I joined her in lopping brush. Some brush was used to block off a trail shortcut. We worked for nearly 5 hours and were very tired.

A lot more lopping is needed on the trail. There are also many shortcuts between the switchback sections from people shortcutting the trail. They need to be blocked. "Stay on Trail" signs might help.

Many thanks to Arlene Altshuler for joining the work party, otherwise I would have had to work alone.

The next work party will be held **Saturday September 17, 9:00 a.m. to Noon**. The Trail Blazers will be supporting Inland Waterway Cleanup in conjunction with Coastal Cleanup Day. **Meet at the northeast corner of Rancho Simi Community Park near where the Arroyo passes under Erringer Road.** The park is at the north-west corner of Royal Avenue and Erringer Road. (Note that Los Angeles Ave. and all major cross streets between Erringer and Sinaloa will be closed due to the Simi Valley Days Parade). Hope to see you there.

John Sabol



## 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.

## PLANT SUCCESSION ALONG THE CHUMASH TRAIL FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER 2003 FIRE

October 2003 witnessed a devastating fire in the mountains north of Simi Valley. The Chumash Trail wanders through some of the worst affected areas. What is offered here are some observations about the affect of the fire on the natural vegetation and the sequence of plant succession through the summer of 2005. It is my intent to update this description from time to time.

The Chumash Trail went through ruderal, i.e., made up primarily of Mediterranean grasses with some herbaceous species and laurel sumac, and grasslands for the first few hundred yards north of the trailhead. The vegetation over the next 0.6 of a mile was dominated by a mixture of coastal sage scrub and chaparral. Above the 0.6 mile mark was mature chaparral.

While the lower portions of the trail had been affected by wildfires several times during the previous 30+ years, the area above the 1.1 mile point had not burned during that period. As a result, the chaparral was dense and generally six or more feet high. The chaparral was dominated by chamise and hoary-leaved ceanothus, with a smattering of laurel sumac, toyon, sugar bush, hollyleaf cherry, deerweed, yerba santa and a few other species, especially along the upper one half mile section of the trail.

The immediate affect of the fire was to burn the entire area adjacent to the trail. Some areas of the ruderal grasslands near the bottom of the trail (but away from the trail itself) remained unburned due to aggressive fire protection efforts and the lower heat potential of burning dried grasses and annual herbaceous plants, such as mustards and sweet fennel. The coastal sage scrub/chaparral is made up of fairly low, widely spaced plants with a moderate fuel load. While the grasslands and coastal sage scrub/chaparral were burned, moderate fire temperatures did not, in general, destroy the stumps of perennial plants or the entire seed load in the upper few inches of the soil. The chaparral, especially on the north-facing steep slopes where the fuel load was greatest, burned with intense heat. As a result, the stumps of most species were entirely consumed and much of the seed reservoir in the upper layer of the soil was turned to ash.

Following the fire, wind-blown ash contributed to air pollution in the valley and drifted over the trail mixed with lacquer-like crusts from the condensation of volatile hydrocarbons from perennial shrubs. Condensation of volatilized hydrocarbons driven below the surface of the soil has contributed to excessive runoff during winter rains. These hydrophobic soils have resulted in elevated rates of soil erosion and mass siltation of waterways, including the basin behind the Las Lajas Stormwater Detention Dam. The mixture of ash and the lacquer-like crusts were highly subject to both wind and water erosion and does not densify well when trying to rebuild trails.

Vegetative re-growth during the first winter and spring following the fire was sparse at best in the chaparral and

coastal sage scrub/chaparral. Re-growth in the ruderal grasslands was generally vigorous. Throughout the entire burn area liliaceae, with their bulbs well below the surface of the soil, made a spectacular showing. Four species of mariposa lilies, soap plant, star lily, and blue dicks were profuse. Most yuccas also regenerated but were most common on south-facing slopes. Some annual plants began to grow, although sparsely. Chamise showed some signs of coming back through crown sprouting. A few fire poppies were noted. Surprisingly, yellow-throated phacelia were common along the top half mile of the trail where it was not noted before the fire.

The second winter and spring has witnessed a complete return of the ruderal grasslands, with all of the herbaceous species. Chamise is making a good recovery in the chamise area, along with toyon, yerba santa, hollyleaf cherry, laural sumac, sugarbush and deerweed. The Santa Susana tarplant, which grows primarily out of joints in massive sandstone outcroppings, has returned fully. Surprisingly, star lilies are much less common this second growing season – perhaps because they have been shaded out by chamise or annual plants.



*Santa Susana Tar Plant*  
(*Hemizonia minthornii*)



*Star Lily*  
(*Zigadenus fremontii*)

During the spring, the slopes were covered by bindweed and scarlet larkspur was profuse in wide areas. Of special note is that I cannot recall seeing even a single hoary-leaved ceanothus anywhere on the slopes. It is possible that the extreme heat in the chaparral area burned that species deeply below the ground surface, so no crown-sprouting was possible. Perhaps the hoary-leaved ceanothus will yet return if seeds survived the fire. No fire poppies were noted this spring – at least by me. Rose snapdragon is far more common and widespread along the upper half mile of the trail than before the fire. The yellow-throated phacelia first seen on the upper half mile of the trail the first year after the fire is either absent this year or much less common.

More than 10 years ago, i.e., from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s, woolly blue-curls dominated a flat at the headwaters of White Oaks Canyon – so much so that we called it the “Woolly Blue-curls Flat”. Their profusion appeared to be the results of the effect of the Halloween Fire of the early 1980s. Eventually, plant succession resulted in chamise taking over so that fewer and fewer woolly blue-curls were present. I expected that they would return following the 2003 fire. So far that has not happened. I can still hope that they might yet return in a big way. A few are present along the trail across the flat and the chamise has re-sprouted vigorously.

It will be interesting to see what the Spring and Summer of 2006 brings.

Mike Kuhn



# RSTB Calendar September 2005



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>2</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Doug Temple</i>	<b>3</b> <b>Solstice Canyon</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <hr/> <b>ON THE EDGE</b> <b>Live Animal</b> <b>Presentation 2pm</b> <b>See Page 1</b>
<b>4</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>5pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>7</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Sandra Fernandez-</i> <i>Achenbach</i>	<b>8</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>La Jolla Valley</b> <b>Loop</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>11</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>5pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>12</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Debbie DeGoey</i>	<b>13</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>16</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Sandra Duarte</i>	<b>17</b> <b>Arroyo Simi</b> <b>Coastal Cleanup</b> <b>Work Party</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>18</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>5pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>21</b> <b>RSTB Meeting</b> <b>See Page 1</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Big Bear Lake</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <hr/> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Ray Johnson</i>	<b>23</b> <b>Big Bear Lake</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <hr/> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Michele Sumandra</i> <i>Les Wilson</i>	<b>24</b> <b>Big Bear Lake</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>25</b> <b>Big Bear Lake</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <hr/> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>5pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Cesar Fabros</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Ellswyth Owen</i>	<b>30</b>	



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

## 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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### SEPTEMBER HIKES

#### September 3rd - Solstice Canyon\*\*

3 MRT with option for steep 3 MRT - Easy (600' elevation gain)

Great views of Point Dume and the ocean from the canyon ridge. Bring snack, 2 - quarts of water, bug juice and sunscreen. Wear boots. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.

#### September 10th - Ray Miller / La Jolla Valley Loop\*\*

6.5 MRT - Moderate. (1000' elevation gain)

We will start and finish at the Ray Miller Trailhead. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water, a snack and bug juice. Wear Boots.

#### September 17th - 2005 Coastal Cleanup - Arroyo Simi\*\*

Join us **Saturday, September 17 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon.** Come and support Simi Valley's Inland Waterway Cleanup. Join the cleanup and make a difference! Simi Valley's Inland Waterway Cleanup site is Rancho Simi Community Park at the corner of Royal Avenue and Erringer Road. Meet at the northeast corner of the park near where the Arroyo passes under Erringer Road.

**Directions:** (Please note that Los Angeles Ave. and all major cross streets between Erringer and Sinaloa will be closed due to the Simi Valley Days Parade.) Going east on the 118, exit at Madera; go south to Royal; turn left and go to Erringer. Going west on the 118, exit Sycamore Drive, go south to Royal, turn right and go to Erringer. Be sure to wear gloves, long pants, sturdy shoes, sunscreen and a hat. For more information call the City of Simi Valley at 583-6462.

#### September 22nd - 25th - Big Bear Lake\*\*

Weekend hiking extravaganza in the mountains above Big Bear Lake. Space is limited, so please email Mark at [markinthepark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:markinthepark@sbcglobal.net) to make reservations. We will be staying at a luxury condo in Big Bear Lake. For more information about the activities for the weekend, please see surf on over to <http://www.bigbear.com>.

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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
Treasurer:	Peter Ely	HM (805) 523-1409	
Park District Liaison:	Colleen Janssen	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
Work Parties Chair:		*** OPEN ***	
Hiking Chair:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
Vice Hiking Chair:	John Sabol	HM (805) 583-2541	jtsabol@sbcglobal.net
Website:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
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Newsletter Editor:	Arlene Altshuler	HM (805) 581-9735	arlene.altshuler@mindbox.com

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**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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