



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



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



Thank you Ursula Christie again for welcoming us into your beautifully decorated home for our annual potluck holiday party.



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.

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

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at: Sycamore Drive Community Center 1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1
Wednesday: January 18, 2017
5:30PM Everyone Welcome to at-

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

Upcoming Events

January 7th Trippet Ranch to Eagle Rock/Hub Junction + Musch Trail 7.1 mile loop – Moderate (1,350' of elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

January 14th Cheesboro Canyon/Palo Comado Loop 10.3-mile loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (1,200' elevation gain/loss) or 5.5-mile loop – Easy-to-moderate (800' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

January 18th Club Board Meeting The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1 **5:30PM Everyone Welcome to attend!**

January 21st Work Party – The Hummingbird Trail 8AM

January 28th Backbone Trail Part 1: Ray Miller Trailhead Reservations are required to attend. Please go to our website calendar to make your reservation.
<http://www.simitrailblazers.com/index.php/calendar> 9.8 Miles – (1,086' elevation gain) **8AM**

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



Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/index.php/calendar/> for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.



January

November 12th – Ferndell Park to Mt. Hollywood and Mt. Lee



12 hikers car-pooled to the Ferndell area (600') near the southwest corner of Griffith Park on a pleasant autumn morning. Our hike began on a well-shaded trail dominated by

large oak and sycamore trees, but soon began climbing northward on the busy East Observatory Trail (a dirt fire road), reaching the Griffith Park Observatory (1,131') in a mile or so. After a group photo was taken, we continued northward on the busy Charlie Turner Trail through the Berlin Forest and then crossed the Mt. Hollywood Drive tunnel and followed another busy dirt fire road as it wound its way uphill to the Mount Hollywood overlook (1,625'), the highest point in Griffith Park. The 360-degree view of the surrounding area was clearer than usual. After taking a break, we headed north and then west (passing near Mt. Bell and Mt. Chapel) via a combination of dirt fire roads and a couple of deserted narrow single-track trails to the top of Mt. Lee (1,680'), just above the famous Hollywood sign. We returned to our vehicles via Mt. Lee Drive, the Mulholland Trail, the abandoned Mt. Hollywood Drive, and the West Trail, reaching them just as a light rain started. Happy but tired, we headed home having completed a 9.6-mile hike with 1,850' of elevation gain/loss on a nice day for hiking.

November 26th – Tapo Canyon Open Space

24 hikers met at the trailhead (1,145') of the Tapo Canyon Open Space Trail (T23) in Simi Valley on a chilly autumn morning to work off some of the "Thanksgiving-calories" we had consumed a couple of days before. We headed northward along the nearly flat dirt road which was bordered with new bright-green grass and numerous oak trees that have so far survived the ongoing drought. After a mile or so the road rose steadily to a narrow pass and a dirt-road junction (1,535') where we took a break and enjoyed the views of the "valley" before us and the rows of mountainous ridges to the northeast. Resuming our hike, we took the right fork (leaving T23) and began the loop portion of our hike as we followed an unnamed section of dirt road downhill through a pretty oak woodland until we reached its eastern junction (1,276') with T23. After a short break, we took the left fork and again followed T23 as it rose gently to the west through a large "valley" before rising fairly steeply to the southwest to another dirt road junction (1,620', the highest point on our hike). We enjoyed the scenery from this viewpoint and then took the left fork and followed T23 back to the narrow pass (completing the

loop) and then on down to the original trailhead. We completed our leisurely hike under a clear blue sky with a pleasantly cool temperature having hiked about 4.5 miles with a total elevation gain/loss of about 750'.

December 2nd – Christmas Holiday Party Potluck

Ursula Christie again welcomed us into her beautifully decorated home for our annual potluck holiday party. A wide variety of foodstuffs accumulated on the tables as a steady stream of "Trail Blazers" arrived to partake in the festivities. The participants quickly took advantage of the rare opportunity to spend non-hiking time with "old" friends – some of whom they had not seen since last year's party – as small conversational groups formed and re-formed to trade news of each other's recent activities and discuss plans for future activities. Soon the various culinary delights could no longer be ignored and we began sampling the plentiful delicacies. As usual, everyone looked even better than usual (hiking gear) in their holiday dress. After a sit-down dinner (during which it was impossible not to overeat!), we continued hobnobbing before taking our leave with holiday well wishes and promises to see one another soon. Not surprisingly, we had been unable to devour all of the food that the guests had brought so there were some delightful "leftovers" to take home, such as slices of a delicious chocolate cake. We are all grateful for this wonderful opportunity to spend time with good friends, especially Ursula, who is truly one-of-a-kind!

December 10th – Tierra Rejada Park Exploratory Hike

16 hikers met at Stargaze Park in Simi Valley on a chilly, foggy late autumn morning. After assembling and preparing for very light drizzle, we headed north to the trailhead entrance into Tierra Rejada "Park." We immediately noticed some heavy equipment being used to grade a portion of the hillside on the west (uphill) side of the recently restriped asphalt path that is apparently an extension of the bike trail that runs along the Arroyo Simi [the reason for the grading was not evident]. When we reached the eastern end of an Edison Road we headed uphill to the west along it, stopping briefly for a group photo. Visibility was severely limited due to the dense fog but the chilly temperature made our upward climb easier than the usual hot sunny weather we've experienced during this hike in the past. Surprisingly there was lots of bright green grass on the hillsides. Eventually we headed south and then climbed west along an abandoned ridge road that would usually have afforded 360-degree views of the surrounding area, but the fog was still fairly dense. After taking a break at our turnaround point on another high ridge to the northwest, we mostly retraced our steps with the notable exception that near the end of the hike we followed an access road adjacent to the Arroyo Simi where we heard the plant-choked stream flowing and actually saw a miniature water cascade at one point. By the time we reached our vehicles the fog had lifted considerably and we had completed a relatively pleasant 7.7-mile hike with 1,600' of elevation gain on a rain-free morning.



RSTB Calendar JANUARY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule 	2	3 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	4	5 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	6	7 Trippet Ranch to Eagle Rock/Hub Junction + Musch Trail 8AM See Schedule
8 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	9	10 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Robert D. Galletly Blan Quita San Luis	11	12 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Daisy Wang	13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Bill Cespedes	14 Cheesboro Canyon/Palo Comado Loop 8AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Randy Shoemaker
15 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	16	17 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule January 17, 2017  Martin Luther King	18 Club Meeting 5:30PM <i>Everyone Welcome to attend!</i> See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Chris Quinn Harry San Luis	19 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	20 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Stephanie Farrar	21 Work Party – The Hummingbird Trail 8AM See Schedule
22 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	23 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jhoanne Kuhnly	24 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	25	26 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	27	28 Backbone Trail Part 1: Ray Miller Trailhead 8AM See Schedule
29 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	30	31 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule				

SANTA ANA WILDFIRE THREAT INDEX - Provides a 6 day forecast of Santa Ana Winds Wildfire Threats on a color coded map <http://psgeodata.fs.fed.us/sawti/>

CALIFORNIA FIRE WEATHER MAP - Provides actual Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_redflagwarning.php (Scroll down to map)

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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Publicity Chair:	VOLUNTEER NEEDED		Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345
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.

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

(continued from December issue)

PLANT SUCCESSION ALONG THE CHUMASH TRAIL FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER 2003 FIRE

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 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, as 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 of annual plants. 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 com-

mon 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, wooly blue-curly dominated a flat at the headwaters of White Oaks Canyon – so much so that we called it the “Wooly Blue-curly 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 wooly blue-curly 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
8-7-05

A LONG TAIL

There are mountain lions in our hills. They are rarely seen. Nearly all avid hikers and mountain bike enthusiasts have never seen one in the wild. Yet, those of us who spend a lot of time hiking, if we pay attention, often see their tracks. There are mountain lions in our hills.

A few weeks ago we read in the Los Angeles Times that mountain lion P-39 is assumed to have been hit and killed by a motor vehicle while trying to cross the 118 Freeway east of the Rocky Peak Interchange. Her GPS collar was found mangled in the center divider of the freeway, however, no carcass was found. A picture of her two kittens appeared widely in the press during the summer of 2016. If she is dead, she would have left her now orphaned kittens, now about six months old, to survive on their own – a doubtful proposition. Life is never easy in the wild.

Sometime in late November or early December 2016 I encountered a couple go down the Chumash Trail. They explained excitedly that they had been in the Rocky Peak highlands at the southern-most rock outcropping on the eastern end just a few days before. They sat on the edge of the rock dangling their legs over the edge – just enjoying the ambiance on a nice day. They were startled by a loud snarling noise below them. They both felt it was mountain lion vocalization. In a panic, they retreated from the area. In describing this event they seemed to relive that panic. Their word came fast and was jumbled those days later. They admitted that they did not see the source of the sound. However, I assumed they were correct. After all, there are mountain lions in our hills.

On December 18, 2016 I led a hike up the Rock Peak Trail. One of our hikers, Mark Scheele, out-paced the rest of us. At about the 0.75 mile point we were overtaken by a Simi Valley Police officer on a motorcycle. He explained that he was responded to an emergency and that there were supposedly to incapacitated individuals about 2 1/2 miles up the trail from the bottom. Within another minute we observed a bright yellow SUV making its way up the unmaintained fire road. It was either a police or fire vehicle – it never overtook us – instead waited below. Then we saw a bright yellow County of Ventura helicopter heading up towards the uplands. At about the 0.85 mile mark we encountered the police officer on the motorcycle coming down the fire road. He explained that he was escorting the “victims” down to that SUV after which they would be driven back to their car. I then talked briefly with the victims.

Mike Kuhn
12-21-16

(Continued in February)



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.



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKE (Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **4PM** 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 - 3.07 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.)

JANUARY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

January 7th Trippet Ranch to Eagle Rock/Hub Junction + Musch Trail

7.1 mile loop – Moderate (1,350' of elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will begin along the Nature Trail and will then head up the Eagle Springs Fire Road to the awe-inspiring Eagle Rock monolith. After exploring Eagle Rock we'll follow a fire road eastward to Hub Junction and then loop back to Eagle Junction where we'll begin hiking down the pleasantly shaded Musch Trail as we return to the parking lot. 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.

January 14th Cheesboro Canyon/Palo Comado Loop

10.3-mile loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (1,200' elevation gain/loss) or 5.5-mile loop – Easy-to-moderate (800' elevation gain/loss) Enjoy the sweeping mountain vistas, oak woodlands, and interesting rock formations along the trail. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

NOTE: Hikers desiring the shorter option can use the Ranch Center Connector Road as a shortcut between the two canyons.

January 18th Club Meeting *Everyone Welcome to attend!*


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

January 21st Work Party – The Hummingbird Trail

Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will do trail grooming and widening, reconstruct water bars, and also cut back some brush. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended. **Directions:** From Kuehner Drive and the 118 Freeway, head north on Kuehner Drive, and park adjacent the trailhead at end of the road. Be sure to park between the no-parking zone signs.

January 28th Backbone Trail Part 1: Ray Miller Trailhead to the Big Sycamore Canyon Trailhead Shuttle **Reservations are required to attend. Please go to our website calendar to make your reservation.**

(<http://www.simitrailblazers.com/index.php/calendar>) 9.8 Miles – (1,086' elevation gain) – Moderate to Strenuous *This special event is open to active Trail Blazer members only.* Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Please remember, this hike requires ample shuttle cars, so be prepared to drive your car from Donut Delite to both the beginning and ending trailheads in Mugu State Park. The parking fee is \$12 at Big Sycamore Canyon Campground parking lot. The parking fee is \$8 at La Jolla Canyon parking lot. Parking fees will be shared between everyone in attendance. Shuttle car driving directions will be distributed at Donut Delite. Bring 2 – 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear sturdy boots.

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/index.php/calendar/>