



Rancho Simi Trailblazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at www.rsrpd.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

****NEW** RED FLAG WARNINGS CANCEL HIKE **NEW****



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

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

January 5, 2019

Devil Canyon to Browns Canyon Road*

9.6 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (1,050' elevation gain/loss)

The hike will begin as we drop into lower Devil Canyon just north of Hwy 118 near Topanga Canyon Blvd in Chatsworth. We will follow the heavily shaded course of the long-abandoned Devil Canyon Motorway as the trail heads upstream reaching a large dam in less than two miles. Continuing upstream the canyon soon widens and we'll pass through meadows and then hike through a large oak woodland in the upper section of the canyon. Upon reaching Browns Canyon Road, we'll take a break and enjoy the view to the southeast looking back along Devil Canyon and beyond. We'll then return the way we came. NOTE: If the day becomes too hot to continue upstream, we'll shorten the hike. Meet at the trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring camera, water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

Directions to Trailhead: From Simi Valley, take Highway 118 east to the Topanga Canyon Blvd exit. Turn left (north) and get in the right lane as you drive under Hwy 118. Turn left (west) on Poema Place and drive 0.25 mile uphill as the road curves northward to the second driveway on the right into Summerset Village (11500 to 11524 North Poema Place). Park on North Poema Place.

January 12, 2019

Long Canyon Work Party

The Trail Blazers January trail work party will be held Saturday January 19 on the Long Canyon Trail. Meet at the trailhead parking lot at Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Parkway at **8:00 AM**.

Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail. Tools will be provided.

We will work from 8:00 AM to Noon. As always, you are welcome to work for a shorter time period if you desire. Hope to see you there.

January 16, 2019

Club Meeting 5:30PM Park District: 4201 Guardian Street, Activity Room #2

Everyone is welcome to attend.

January 19, 2019

Las Lajas Canyon and Chumash Trail Loop

9 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (2,000' elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will start at the Las Lajas Canyon trailhead on Evening Sky Drive. We will begin by descending a short paved section of road into the canyon bottom; from there we'll follow a wide graded dirt road along a streambed north through the canyon, crossing the probably dry streambed three times. The steep canyon walls will provide shade as we enjoy an easy 3.5 mile trek up the canyon. Just before reaching the Poe Ranch gate we'll follow a dirt road leading up to an abandoned oil field and then on up to a junction with the Rocky Peak Fire Road. After reaching the Rocky Peak Fire Road, we'll head south toward the upper end of the Chumash Trail. Along the way we'll pass Fossil Hill (named for the shells of sea creatures left behind when the area was under a vast sea) and will be treated to panoramic views of mountains and canyons to the east, south and west. Upon reaching the upper end of the Chumash Trail, we'll follow it down to a connector trail to Evening Sky Drive to complete our loop hike. Meet at the Las Lajas Trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring camera, water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

Directions to Trailhead: Take the 118 fwy to the Yosemite Drive exit and go north. Continue 1.2 miles north on Yosemite Drive, to the intersection with Evening Sky Drive, and then turn right. Drive 0.5 mile east on Evening Sky Drive and park on either side of the street near the trailhead.

January 26, 2019

Johnson Motorway to Rocky Peak*

9 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (1,600' elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will begin by following an easement through Indian Springs Estates ("the Bel Air of the Valley") to the lower end of the unpaved Johnson Motorway, an old abandoned dirt and sandstone roadbed. We then follow the motorway as it climbs 3.5 miles to the Rocky Peak Fire Road, passing through a landscape of dramatic rock formations and providing views of the Santa Susana Mountains and Devil Canyon to the north. Upon reaching the fire road, we follow it southward for about a mile to a spur trail leading to Rocky Peak, enjoying views of Simi Valley, the San Fernando Valley and the surrounding mountains. We return the way we came. Meet at the trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring camera, water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

Directions to Trailhead: Take Hwy 118 east to the Rocky Peak exit in Santa Susana Pass. Turn right (south) and then turn left (east) onto Santa Susana Pass Road. Follow Santa Susana Pass Road 1.3 miles as it descends into the San Fernando Valley. Turn left (north) on Iverson Road and drive 0.3 mile to the Hwy 118 overpass. Park alongside Iverson Road on either side (without blocking the road) and wait for the leader(s).

HIKE REPORTS

November 24, 2018 – Devil's Punchbowl to Devil's Chair

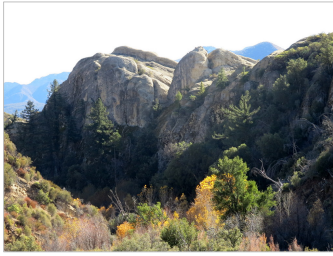


Twelve hikers met near the Nature Center in the Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area a few miles southeast of Pearblossom on a pleasant late autumn morning to hike the Devil's Punchbowl Trail to the Devil's Chair. Our hike began by climbing uphill on the Burkhart Trail for about a mile to a junction with the Devil's Punchbowl Trail.

We followed the partially pine-shaded Devil's Punchbowl Trail as it wound along the north slope of the San Gabriel Mountains overlooking the Antelope Valley; there was good visibility to the north including ever-changing views of spectacular rock formations.

The Devil's Punchbowl is the point at which the San Andreas Fault and the Punchbowl Fault meet; it's part of the San Andreas Rift Zone. The trail eventually descended to a junction with the spur trail leading out to the Devil's Chair which provided excellent "up-close" awe-inspiring views of the colorful geologic formations created by the friction between the two earthquake faults. After taking lots of photos and enjoying a rest/lunch break under some nearby pine trees, we retraced our route to the Nature Center where we looked at specimens of desert fauna, particularly various kinds of snakes and a cute small live owl perched behind the counter (it was rescued after one of its eyes was permanently injured). We returned home having hiked 8 miles with about 1,600' of elevation gain/loss in a unique geologic area.

December 1, 2018 – Piedra Blanca to Twin Forks Camp



13 hikers carpoled to the Piedra Blanca Trail [aka Gene Marshall National Recreation Trail] (22W03) trailhead at the east end of Rose Valley Road (6N31 off Hwy 33) in the Los Padres National Forest north of Ojai. It was a beautiful morning as we began the hike by descending to and crossing the Sespe Creek/River, the main watercourse in the southern Los Padres National Forest; it empties into the Santa Clara River in Fillmore.

While admiring the brilliant fall colors (mostly yellow) along the creek, we followed the trail as it entered the Sespe Wilderness and climbed the chaparral-covered slope to the magnificent Piedra Blanca (white rock) Formations — huge white rounded sandstone outcroppings sculpted by wind and water. After correcting a missed turn in the sometimes-hard-to-follow-across-the-rocky-landscape trail, we descended to Piedra Blanca Creek and followed it upstream to Twin Forks Camp (the turnaround point) where large conifers provided shade along the nearby creek which provided sounds of flowing water at times. After a leisurely lunch/rest break we retraced our route, stopping along the way at the large shady Piedra Blanca Camp where we viewed pictographs created by Chumash Indians on some of the boulders. We then returned to the trailhead for the drive home, having completed a pleasant 7.5-mile hike with about 1,400' of elevation gain/loss (which includes the “bonus” part of our hike among the huge white boulders caused by missing a turn in the trail). NOTE: Recent wildfires have so far spared the landscape through which we hiked.

December 8, 2018 – Echo Mountain via the Sam Merrill Trail



11 hikers carpoled to the trailhead of the Sam Merrill Trail which begins at the north end of Lake Avenue in Altadena on a very pleasant late-autumn morning with good visibility. We found parking a few blocks from the trailhead and then gathered at the gated entrance for a group photo.

We started up the well-maintained trail via a series of switchbacks that climbed steadily up the east slope of Los Flores Canyon, benefiting from the shade provided by the mountain for the first two-thirds of the hike upward. As the trail rose we enjoyed increasingly wide views of the surrounding mountainous topography. The trail eventually 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, passing nearby shade-producing Coulter pine trees (planted in the 1940's) and oak trees along the way. 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 inspecting the ruins and enjoying a leisurely lunch/rest break, we began our return trip down the mountain. We arrived at our vehicles having hiked 6.5 miles with an elevation gain/loss of about 1,500' and headed home, grateful for the abundance of nice well-maintained trails in the San Gabriel Mountains Front Range.

December 14, 2018 – Holiday Party Potluck



Ursula Christie once again hosted the holiday get together at her home. Fourteen people came together for the food, festivities and camaraderie. Retiring Newsletter Editor Linda Martins-Mann received a beautiful plaque for her eight years service.

December 15, 2018 – Work Party – Lower Stagecoach Trail - Upper Section



The December 15 work party was on the lower Stagecoach Trail - from the top down. The soil dampness was perfect to compact the soil. Thanks to the participants: Martin DeGoey, John Sabol, Kelly Demel, Kyler Demel, Mike Kuhn, and Paul Friedeborn.

Rancho Simi Trail Blazer Logo Merchandise



Sporting the beautiful RSTB logo, these are great tops! Limited quantities and sizes are still available. Please call Mike Kuhn at 805-583-2345 for available sizes.

Short-sleeves are \$12
Long-sleeves are \$14
Sweatshirts are \$18

Memberships

Annual tax deductible memberships are \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families. You can signup or renew on our website and pay through PayPal if you have an account. Go to <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/membership/>. Or, you can still pay with a check if you prefer and mail it with the form in this newsletter to the address on the form. We do not have an automated system to notify members when their membership has expired. However, we will try to email you in the month of expiration.

CHIVO AND LAS LLAJAS REGIONAL STORMWATER DETENTION DAMS

During the late-1970s the Ventura County Flood Control District had funds earmarked for regional stormwater detention basins at the mouths of Chivo and Las Lajas Canyons, located just north of the Simi Valley Golf Course. The dams were considered to be the most cost-effective way of effecting downstream flood control – all the way to the Pacific Ocean. An environmental document was prepared and considered by the county. The adequacy of that document was challenged by an environmental group largely on the basis that the effects on public health of construction-related dust-borne San Joaquin Valley fever spores had not been considered. The challenge to the environmental document and the redrafting and circulation of the environmental impact report resulted in a two-year delay in the project. By the time the new environmental document had been approved the cost of the two-dam project had escalated beyond the monies available. As a result, there was only enough money to build the Las Lajas Dam.

CHIVO AND LAS LLAJAS REGIONAL STORMWATER DETENTION DAMS continued

At the time, the 100-year flood discharge at the mouth of Las Lajas Canyon was calculated to be 9,500 cubic feet per second. The effect of the dam was to reduce the discharge to 500 cubic feet per second during the same peak event. That one dam has done much toward reducing the hazard of flooding in Simi Valley.

The opposition to the adequacy of the original environmental document had been led by Ann Rock, a local citizen. Subsequently, Mrs. Rock was appointed to the Simi Valley Planning Commission and later (1982-1990) served on the City Council.

During the early 1990s the City received a multi-million dollar grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The purpose of the grant was to fund 90 percent of the costs of projects that would reduce the potential for flooding during the 100-year event. The first project to be built under that program was a stormwater detention dam upstream from the mouth of Sand Canyon (north of the eastern end of the Simi Valley Town Center). Dams were also considered and proposed on Dry Canyon (north of the Simi Valley Hospital) and at the mouth of Chivo Canyon. (Yes, the same dam that had been previously proposed.) Ultimately, both dams were rejected as not being cost effective. (Cost figures can never be fully determined until all geotechnical studies have been completed and engineering plans have been approved.) With stricter seismic standards following the Northridge Earthquake, it was determined that it would be necessary to extend both dams down to bedrock. The necessity to do that had not been considered previously. Neither of those dams have been constructed. Until recently, a portion of the Las Lajas Channel, between the Alamo and Cochran Street crossings, was relatively unimproved and underfit for the 100-year flood. In other words, there was a potential for flooding even during minor flood events. Monies from the grant were used to make necessary channel improvement in that area.

In the end, it seems that a dam at the mouth of Chivo Canyon was a bad idea. Even if no one had challenged the environmental document on the 1970s project, there probably would not have been enough money to construct the dam. Because the dam would have been over 25 feet in height, it would have been subject to review by the California Division of Dam Safety. When the dam was first considered, the Simi-Santa Rosa fault was not considered to be active. Sometime in the early 1990s the fault was reclassified as "active" by the State of California. That fault crosses Chivo Canyon within hundreds of feet upstream of the proposed dam site. The proximity of the dam to the known traces of the Simi-Santa Rosa fault would not necessarily preclude the construction of the dam, but it certainly casts a long shadow over a dam at that location.

As luck would have it, the connection of Yosemite Avenue with Cottonwood Drive resulted in a road crossing at the mouth of Chivo Canyon. The roadfill was engineered with culvert intake facilities to pass water under the elevated road and a separate elevated system to function as a spillway during really large storm events. The north side impoundment can accommodate many feet of sediments before rising to the lower culvert. This system functions as a de facto detention dam and basin and has resulted in further reductions on the 100-year flood flow all the way to the ocean.

At this point in time, the canyon is largely owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and is available for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Mike Kuhn

REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Red Flag Warnings and Rain cancels the hike – 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).

Tuesday Evening - Mt. McCoy Trail - **New - No Hike November through March during Standard Time**

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 north end of Flanagan Drive. (Moderate to Strenuous - 5.4 MRT - 1300' total elevation gain.)

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice.


Please see <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/calendar/> for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.

	<div>RSTB Calendar</div> <div>January 2019</div>					
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day No Hike	2	3 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	4	5 Devil Canyon to Browns Canyon Rd* 8AM See Upcoming Events
6 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	7	8 See Schedule change	9	10 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	11	12 Long Canyon Work Party 8AM See Upcoming Events Happy Birthday Vera Teller
13 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	14	15 See Schedule change	16 Club Meeting 5:30PM	17 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	18	19 Las Lajas Canyon & Chumash Trail Loop 8AM See Upcoming Events
20 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	21 Martin Luther King Day	22 See Schedule change Happy Birthday John Quinn	23	24 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	25	26 Johnson Motorway to Rocky Peak* 8AM See Upcoming Events
27 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	28	29 See Schedule change	30 Happy Birthday Daniel Degoe	31 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Aileen Vandenberg		

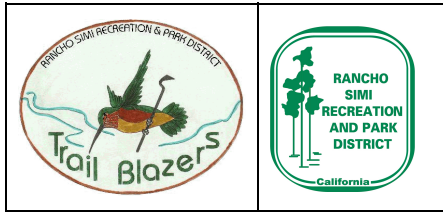
SANTA ANA WILDFIRE THREAT INDEX - Provides a 6 day forecast of Santa Ana Winds Wildfire Threats on a color coded map
<http://psgeodata.fs.fed.us/sawti/>

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)

* 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.

Full descriptions of these hikes and activities are available at <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/calendar/>



RSTB
P.O. Box 1231
Simi Valley, CA 93062

_____ **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 _____

Address _____

Family memberships: Please list names and birthdays of additional family members (Month & Day Only)

Phone (provide up to two numbers): work/home/cell _____

Newsletters are distributed by email only. Contact the Membership Chair if you require a copy by US mail.

Email address _____

How did you find out about the RSTB? _____

Please make out tax deductible member donation check for the year to:
Rancho Simi Foundation and mail it to **RSTB, P.O. Box 1231, Simi Valley, CA 93062**

Rancho Simi Trailblazers <i>A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation</i>			
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