



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



HOLIDAY POTLUCK

Last year's party was so much fun, we're doing it again!

This year, the **Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Holiday Potluck Party**

will be held on **Wednesday, December 14th**

at **Al and Marty Richards' home.**

Please call Marty at **(805) 526-4414**

to discuss what you should bring.

OCTOBER WORK PARTY

During the October work party the brushing and weed-whipping of the Mt. McCoy Trail was completed. Much thanks to John Sabol (on the weed-whip) and to Bill Cespedes and Mike Kuhn (on the loppers). The trail is now in good shape.

There will not be a work party in November.



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.

HIKING NEWS



Sunday Evening Hike Time Change

The Sunday evening **Rocky Peak** hike will start at **4pm**, beginning in November.



Mt. San Antonio Ski Hut December 3rd & 4th

6 MRT - Strenuous overnigher. (2,200' elevation gain)

It doesn't get much better than this! The Hut is at the base of Mt. San Antonio (Mt. Baldy) at 8,200'. We'll only do 3 miles the first day and we have all day to do it.

Coming back the next day is all down hill. For those who want a real challenge, you can hike to the top of Mt. Baldy, using the Hut as your base camp.

We'll spend the night in the hut. All you need to bring is food, your sleeping bag, good boots and 2 - 3 quarts of water. We will cook our food on the hut's wood burning stove.

Space is limited. The cost is \$10 if you are a Sierra Club Member, and \$15 for non-members. To reserve your place, email markinthepark@sbcglobal.net.

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
November 16, 2005



Gloria Gormaz



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 rock 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 was 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 those regions, and we're stuck with it.

Mike Kuhn

THE BIG CAT

In-late November of 1999, my wife and I went to the Korean Barbecue near the southeastern corner of Sequoia Avenue and Los Angeles Avenue for dinner. We encountered a pickup truck with an open shell on the back, with a steel grill covering the opening, with two beautiful and relaxed mountain lions inside. The cats did not seem to be at all upset about the attention they were getting from the several families that were gathered around. The owners of the cats were having dinner in the restaurant. The animals are movie cats, are well cared for and loved. Their parents are also owned by the same folks. The cats were not what I expected to see in the back of the truck. I had expected to see some cute puppies or something of that order.

Mountain lions had been generally thought to include a menagerie of 32 subspecies, which are confined to the western hemisphere. The 32 subspecies had been thought to exist based on where they lived and differences in coloration. The endangered Florida panther is probably the best known of the presumed subspecies. Now, extensive DNA analysis has turned up just six subspecies - rather than the heretofore 32.

Researchers collected genetic samples from 209 mountain lions in zoos and in the wild across North and South America, including from the Florida panther, and from 106 of the animals from South America. They looked for sequence differences in three mitochondrial genes and 10 micro satellites - short bits of repetitive DNA sequences that lengthen and mutate through time and thus indicate the relatedness of organisms.

The researchers concluded that only one subspecies of mountain lion inhabits all of North America, rather than the 15 subspecies previously thought, another inhabits Central America and four (4) subspecies inhabit South America. The most genetically diverse subspecies inhabit Brazil and Paraguay south of the Amazon River, indicating that that population is the oldest and that cougars originated there and spread north from that area starting about 250,000 years ago. So, they are relatively recent arrivals in North America.

All of this suggests that if you want to rejuvenate the Florida panther population, you can just send in some California mountain lions and release them in the wild or use them for breeding programs in that state. We probably have a few to spare at this time.

Mike Kuhn



CHUMASH BURIALS ACCORDING TO FAGES

Pedro Fages was second in command during the 1769 Portola expedition from San Diego to occupy Monterey. This was the first land expedition through this part of California, so his observations come at a time when Chumash culture was unaffected by the Catholic Church and Spanish culture. Fages leaves us with an eye witness account of Chumash burial practices. In his own words, in translation from the Spanish:

When an Indian dies, they carry the body to the adulatory, or place near the village dedicated to their idols. There they celebrate the mortuary ceremony, and watch all the following night, some of them gathered about a huge fire until daybreak; then come all the rest (men and women), and four of them begin the ceremony. One Indian, smoking tobacco in a large stone pipe, goes first; he is followed by the other three, all passing three times around the body; but each time he passes the head, his companions lift the skin with which deceased is covered, that the priest may blow upon it three mouthfuls of smoke. On arriving at the feet, they all four together stop to sing I know not what manner of laudation. Then come the near and remote relatives of the deceased, each one giving to the chief celebrant a string of beads (shell money), something over a span in length. Then immediately there is raised a sorrowful outcry and lamentation from all the mourners. When this sort of solemn response is ended, the four ministers take up the body, and all the Indians follow them, singing, to the cemetery which they have prepared for the purpose, where it is given sepulture; with the body are buried some little things made by the deceased person; some other objects are deposited round about the spot where the body rests, and over it, thrust into the earth, is raised a spear or very long rod, painted in various colors. At the foot of this rod are left a few relics, which naturally represent the ability and kind of occupation which the man had while he was living. If the deceased is a woman, they leave strung on the rod some of the boxes and baskets which she was accustomed to weave.

In some respects, it is remarkable that members of the Portola Expedition witnessed any burials. However, the text suggests that burials of both men and women were observed and that the ceremony was much the same for each. The reference to smoke being blown over the body probably involved the burning of native tobacco.

Burials were important religious ceremonies for the Chumash. Even though the Indians were experiencing the most important historical event in their own history, this first encounter with men from a totally alien culture - men with horses, with swords and other metal objects, woven cloth and firearms - the dead still had to be attended to and could not wait.

Mike Kuhn

STATUS OF THE CHANNEL ISLAND FOX

One of the adaptations that occurs when larger mammalian species experience long term isolation on small islands is that they become smaller. On the three largest islands in the Santa Barbara Channel, i.e., Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel, the gray fox evolved into pygmy gray foxes, forming distinct subspecies on each island. Until recently, each of those three islands contained thousands of these housecat-sized critters. They had persisted through the introduction of domestic livestock and severe overgrazing. They were the top of the food chain – other than man – and since they didn't eat grass and didn't prey on livestock, we simply thought they were cute.

Then in the 1990s golden eagles flew from the mainland, found abundant piglets on Santa Cruz Islands, and decided to stay. While they were at it, they began taking skunks and foxes and flew over to Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands, where the foxes were the main attraction since there were no piglets on those islands. With the creation of the Channel Islands National Park, a major effort has been made to eliminate feral pigs and sheep. As the piglet population declined, the golden eagles turned even more to the little foxes for sustenance. Between 1994 and 2000 the number of foxes declined by 95% and only 120 were known to remain. At the low point, for example, only 18 foxes remained on San Miguel Island.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has responded to the crisis in three ways. First they tried to remove all of the golden eagles from the Channel Islands. Since they are a protected species, they had to be live-captured. Forty-one golden eagles have been relocated to the mainland. Some golden eagles remain. Second, bald eagles, which feed mainly on fish, were reintroduced to the islands in order to dissuade the return of golden eagles. Finally, foxes were live-recaptured on Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands and captive-breeding programs were established. No captive-breeding program was established on Santa Cruz Island because a larger population of foxes remained on the island.

Currently 48 foxes are in captivity on San Miguel Island and 18 are in the wild. There are 51 foxes in the breeding program on Santa Rosa Island and 21 in the wild. More than 100 pups were born in the wild and in the breeding program this year. Because of continued predation by golden eagles, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to release half of the captive foxes into the wild on Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands this year.

The killing of pigs on Santa Cruz Island continues but is being challenged in court by a national animal rights group and a Santa Barbara County businessman.

Mike Kuhn



Channel Island Pygmy Fox Cubs

ANOTHER MEANING FOR SOMIS

One of John Peabody Harrington's informants indicated that *somna* was the name of the village where Calleguas Creek exits from the Little Simi Valley towards the Oxnard Plain. His informant gave the meaning of *somna* as "big barranca". Somis is now located where the village was located and is assumed to reflect the name of the village.

Applegate (1974) indicates that Somis may come from the Ventureno Chumash *so mis*, which means "water of the scrub oak". He indicates that the original *somis* was located near Ojai and the modern Somis is east of Saticoy. Applegate does not specify his source. Disagreement among sources was common among Chumash informants.

Mike Kuhn



Cougar Crest Trail, Big Bear, left to right: Ursula Christie, Doug Marsh, Margarita Marsh, Michele Sumandra.



RSTB Calendar

October 2005



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	2	3 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Don Hunt</i>	4	5 Sisar Canyon See Schedule
6 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	7 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Joe Ferrall</i>	8 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	9	10 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	11	12 Matilija Falls See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Heidi Portoghesi</i>
13 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	14	15 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Jim Keppler</i>	16 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	17 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Randy Klockenteger</i>	18	19 Serrano Cyn See Schedule
20 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	21	22 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	23	24 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Arlene Altshuler</i>	25 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Florence Reichert</i>	26 Malibu Creek See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Isabel Johnson</i>
27 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	28	29 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	30 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Evelyn McClave</i> <i>Mallory Ham</i>			



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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 4pm 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)

NOVEMBER HIKES

November 5th, Sisar Canyon**

Moderate 9 MRT (2000' elevation gain)

Follow a creek up to the California Bay Laurel trees of the White Ledge campsite in the Topatopa Mountains. Bring 2 - 3 qts. of water, water filter (optional), layered clothing, and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite near the corner of Madera and Royal.

November 12th, Matilija Falls**

Moderate 9 MRT (950' elevation gain)

Hike up Matilija Creek, passing two waterfalls, turtle ponds and swimming holes. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

November 19th, Serrano Canyon**

8 MRT - Moderate (700' elevation gain)

Starts on the Sycamore Canyon trail for about 1.5 miles, then to the junction with Serrano Canyon Trail. The Serrano trail takes you east into a densely wooded narrow canyon, with a lovely seasonal stream crisscrossing the trail numerous times, and abundant wildlife. As the trail begins to gain elevation and move north away from the stream, a stunning vista begins to emerge. Gently rolling grasslands set against the steep outlines of Boney Mountain. Simply wonderful! The trail traverses the grassland, passing an abandoned aluminum shack, our suggested turn around point. Meet at 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

November 26th, Malibu Creek State Park**

Moderate 6-8 MRT (600' elevation gain) Hike to the old M*A*S*H site. Countless movies have been filmed in this park. Several options on the way, depending on the desires of the group. We'll see Century Lake and the Rock Pool. Meet at 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

**** 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 ***	
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Ways & Means Chair:	Marty Richards	HM (805) 526-4414	
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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(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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