



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



NOVEMBER 27 WORK PARTY

Our November trail work party was done on the top of the Chumash Trail. The trail was rehabilitated down to the bottom of the ramp below Flat Rock Pass. We drove to the top of the trail. The day was sunny and beautiful with ideal temperatures for working. The many hikers, runners and mountain bikers went out of their way to thank us. Participants included Chuck Portoghesi, Martin DeGoey, Mike Kuhn and John Sabol. Thanks to all!

Mike Kuhn



Chumash Work Party, left to right: Chuck Portoghesi, Martin DeGoey, and Mike Kuhn. John Sabol took the picture.

SCRUB OAK



Scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*) is the smallest of our native oak trees in the Simi Valley area. This shrub or small tree has thick leathery leaves with spiny margins. It has stout rigid branches and is usually found on north facing slopes in the chaparral vegetation association. It provides shelter and food, in the form of acorns, to animals. Scrub oaks sprout quickly after a fire, and the soft new growth is browsed by deer.

There is a substantial stand of scrub oaks along the Chumash Trail just beyond the first rock outcroppings next to the trail.



**Autumn Hilton
Ellswoth Owen**



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 15th

starting at **6:30pm**, at
Al and Marty Richards' home

on
**2086 Elmdale Avenue
in Simi Valley**

Directions:

Elmdale is about one half mile west of Sycamore Drive, south of Cochran Street, and one block east of Justin Avenue, just past the dip.

Please call Marty at (805) 526-4414 to discuss what you should bring. We look forward to seeing everyone.

Our thanks go out to Al and Marty for again opening their home to us.

HIKING PHOBIAS

We all have encountered people who are afraid to hike in the hills, because they are afraid of snakes, ticks, insects, bears, mountain lions, poison oak, drowning (Around here that's a laugh!), getting lost, being attacked by other people, falling off a cliff, being hit by falling rocks, being struck by lightning, being caught in a storm or having to spend the night out alone. (Come to think of it, I'm having second thoughts about having anymore outdoor experiences.)

The reality, of course, is that getting out in the hills is one of the safest forms of recreation you can have. I've been lugging around many pounds of first aid and other types of emergency equipment for years. With one exception, I have yet to treat anything more serious than blisters, skin scrapes, and heat exhaustion. I haven't even come across any really serious biking accidents, at least the off-road type, yet. Oh yes, I did come across a mountain biker once with a broken collar bone - he refused first aid.

The most dangerous part of going hiking in the hills is still getting there. Once you're out of the city and parked and as long as you stay on the trail, you're pretty safe. Yet few of us think twice before going to work, to the market, or getting into our cars to go anywhere. Am I preaching to the pulpit?

Mike Kuhn



THE SIMI ROAD

During the Mexican period there was a road connecting Simi with the Conejo valley. That road ran through the “Verde” – now part of the Wood Ranch development – west of what is now Wood Ranch Parkway, over a pass in the Simi Hills, and down into the old Lang Ranch in what is now the City of Thousand Oaks. The road is shown on the U.S.G.S. 7 ½ minute topographic quadrangle along the western boundary of the old Wood Ranch. At the pass it apparently swung westerly and down a draw towards the eastern end of Avenida de los Arboles and the northern end of Westlake Boulevard. It certainly was an Indian trail. (That deviation to the west took it by a Chumash site.) During the Spanish/Mexican and early Anglo-American periods there were no public roads. There were only “use” roads. While there are reports of that road being used during the late 19th Century, it never was taken as a public road. Instead, Madera Road was eventually extended to connect with Olsen Road – thus providing the first relatively direct public road connection between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks.

During the early 1970s, both the cities of Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley included an arterial street connection through the pass. On the Thousand Oaks side, it involved connections with Westlake Boulevard, Avenida de los Arboles and Sunset Hills Boulevard. Such a connection would have provided another direct route between our cities. At present, if the freeway bridge over Olsen Road were to collapse, say during an earthquake, the only remaining route between our cities would be via Norwegian Grade – a slow, narrow, and twisting road with a small traffic volume capacity. However, during the late 1970s or early 1980s the good citizens of North Ranch in Thousand Oaks filed suit to prevent any connection of Westlake Boulevard with First Street. The rhetoric at the time was to the effect that they did not want the high volume of traffic that would result on Westlake Boulevard, with a distinct subagenda; they didn’t want people from Simi Valley going through their high class neighborhood. The judge made a basic land use planning decision by deleting the road connection from the Thousand Oak’s General Plan.

Still remaining at that time was the planned connection of First Street with Sunset Hills Boulevard. Then, in the early 1990s the same arguments were used by residents of the Sunset Hills area. They convinced the Thousand Oaks City Council to delete that arterial connection. Eventually, the City of Thousand Oaks approved a subdivision, which has since been built, which effectively precludes any future road connection. The extension of First Street (now called Long Canyon Road) has been constructed as far as its intersection with Wood Ranch Parkway but will go no further. If you ever wonder why there is so much traffic on Madera Road, the lack of the First Street connection through to Westlake Boulevard and the other arterial streets is one of the answers. Perhaps it’s for the best, but I find it worrisome.

Mike Kuhn

WHEN MOUNTAIN LIONS PREDATE ON DOMESTIC ANIMALS

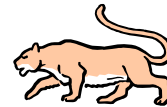
Mountain lions live off the land. They would prefer a steady diet of deer, but they take what they can get in the habitat that they occupy.

In the years since mountain lions have become protected species, they are thought to have been responsible for the dramatic decline in big horned sheep populations in the Sierra Nevada and elsewhere in the state. Not surprisingly, they do sometimes take domestic animals, and some make a habit of it. When they do make a habit of it, a take permit is issued. The big cat then has about an even chance of surviving the permit holder.

The types of domesticated animals killed by mountain lions, by percentage of permits issued, for the period between 1985 and 1998 were: sheep - 50.5%; goats - 20.1%; cattle - 12.7%; pets - 8.5%; equine - 5.6%; and birds - 2.7%.

Sheep in mountain lion country don’t seem to do so well. In a conversation with John Varble, the ranch manager of the Brandeis-Bardin Institute for more than two decades, he indicated that the ranch had never lost a horse or cow to a mountain lion. Mountain lion predation on pets around Simi Valley does seem to occur.

Mike Kuhn



FIGHTING SUDDEN OAK DEATH WITH FIRE

Sudden oak death (SOD) is caused by the water mold *Phytophthora ramorum*, which also attacks many species other than oak trees. The organism first began killing oak trees over wide areas, primarily in northern California, about a decade ago. Whether the organism is endemic to this area or has simply become a new problem is not known. It is one of a number of organisms that have invaded American forests and that have changed the very character of those forests. So far it has not become a problem in Southern California – perhaps because of our greater aridity.

As reported in the August 20 issue of *Science* (page 1101), a study by two University of California ecologists have found that the organism is virtually unknown in areas that have experienced wildfires since 1950. They speculate “that plants mechanisms for defense against pathogens become weaker in older, unburned stands. Trees need to invest more in competition with neighbors as stands age, and production of some defensive chemicals declines in older plants ...” Controlled burns just might be an ecological defense against the spread of SOD in some cases.

Mike Kuhn

THE MANILA TRADE

Joao Rodriques Cabrillo's voyage of 1542 was a dud as far as the Spanish were concerned. There was no Northwest Passage to be found and Alta California did not produce any cities of gold or silver. Alta California was quickly forgotten. Even Francis Drake's entry into the waters of Alta California did not raise any particular interest per se other than that it became apparent that English privateers could wreak havoc with Spanish shipping. Drake's presence in California waters went unnoticed. However, interest in Alta California was again raised to the forefront due to the emerging Manila trade.

The Spanish had disparately sought a way to tap the rich trade with the orient. However, the Arabs and the Portuguese effectively blocked access to the orient via the Cape of Good Hope. In 1565 Miquel Lopez de Legaspi conquered the Philippine Islands which opened access to oriental markets via New Spain. The trade between the Philippines and the orient was already well established, and for the Spanish it was immediate and immensely profitable. Also in 1565 Andres de Urdaneta established the great circle route that followed the wind and currents north from Manila past Japan and the Aleutian Island to Cape Mendocino to Acapulco on the western coast of New Spain. All sorts of luxury goods from China and other places made their way to New Spain. The silk shawls, so prized in 18th and 19th century Alta California, were of Chinese manufacture. Spanish galleons returned to Manila using the trade winds just north of the equator.

After the long voyage from Manila to the coast of northern California, the sailors on Spanish galleons suffered horribly from dysentery, scurvy, starvation and thirst. What the Spanish disparately needed was a sheltered harbor with a Spanish settlement that could reprovision the galleons. That harbor could also provide a warship escort on the continued voyage to Acapulco. The Spanish galleons were the obsolete battleships of Spain that had been converted to trading vessels. The English privateers were smaller but faster and had longer ranging guns. So the Spanish galleons were easy prey to the English freebooters (pirates) – as the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English in 1588 would so soundly demonstrate.

In 1587 Pedro de Unamuno sailed a galleon out of Manila with instructions to locate a suitable harbor along the coast of what later became known as Alta California. He landed at Moro Bay and explored inland a few miles but was driven back to the sea by hostile Indians. Some eight years later, Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno set sail from Manila in another galleon with the same assignment. He landed at Drake's Bay, north of San Francisco. After being plummeted by a southeast gale for several days, his ship broke up on the beach. He and 70 crew members set sail for Acapulco in an overloaded launch. Against all odds, they made it to port – arriving with the first detailed survey of the coast between 41 degrees North Latitude and 30 degrees North Latitude. He managed to miss San Francisco Bay and failed to identify a suitable harbor.

Then in 1602 Sebastian Vizcaino sailed north from New Spain in search of the illusive "good harbor". He was promised command of a galleon if he was successful. Perhaps for this reason, he returned with tails of "...a noble harbor...", which he named after the viceroy who had authorized the voyage – Conde de Monterey. Vizcaino explored the California coast as far north as Cape Mendocino and left us with most of the Spanish place names we have for coastal prominences. He too missed San Francisco Bay. Viceroy Monterey was succeeded by Viceroy Marques de Montesclaros, who thought little of Vizcaino and his bay. He pointed out that by the time galleons got as far as Monterey Bay, they enjoyed favorable winds that would carry them quickly south to New Spain. Nonetheless, the merits of the "good harbor" grew with the telling. While Spain's position in Europe weakened, little interest in either Baja or Alta California was evidenced. Still, if needed, the "good harbor" was still in their mind's eye.

The Spanish court was embroiled in war over monarchical succession and then was debilitated by the Seven Years War. For the remainder of the 17th Century, Spain expressed little interest in either Baja or Alta California. Still the Indians were ravaged by one or more European diseases, which were carried overland by person to person contact from New Spain. The population of the most heavily populated coastal southern California may have been reduced by as much as 40 percent. More was yet to come when, during the late-18th Century, the Spanish decided to settle the coastal regions of California in response to the Russian presence in the Pacific Northwest and pressure from the English presence.

Mike Kuhn



PUBLIC OPEN SPACE LAND IN THE SIMI VALLEY AREA

Not too many years ago there were no public natural open space areas in the Simi Valley area. When I got telephone calls from people asking where they could go hike around Simi Valley, I sent them to the City of Thousand Oaks.

Things change. There is a nation-wide trend to the acquisition of public open space and the development of multipurpose recreation trails. In Simi Valley, there is the Chumash Natural Park (51.8 acres), other open space within the Indian Hills development (75 acres), Challenger Park (139.78 acres), Corriganville Park (over 200 acres), Marr Ranch (approximately 2,800 acres), the Runkle Ranch (formerly owned by Bob Hope - 4,369 acres), the Mt. McCoy uplands (approximately 200 acres), and Canyon View open space in Wood Ranch (400 acres). It seems that we're not doing too badly.

Mike Kuhn



RSTB Calendar December 2004



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	3	4 Lang Ranch 8am hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Linda Travis</i>
5 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	6	7 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	8	9 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	10 <i>Happy Birthday Christy Eselin Robert Galletly</i>	11 Devil's Canyon 8am hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Sharon Gochoe Rae Knapp</i>
12 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	13 <i>Happy Birthday Gary Valle Bill Cespedes</i>	14 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	15 Holiday Potluck See Page 1	16 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	17	18 Hummingbird Trail 8am Work Party See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	20	21 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Tom Travis</i>	22	23 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	24	25 Christmas No Hike
26 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	27	28 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	29	30 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	31	



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Hiking Schedule



- December 2 Thursday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 4 Lang Ranch Exploratory Hike**
Strenuous, approx. 6 - 10 MRT hike on a trail in the Lang Ranch area. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 qts. of water and a snack, wear boots.
- December 5 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- December 7 Tuesday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 9 Thursday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 11 Devil's Canyon**
Relatively easy 4.6 MRT hike through a pretty area north of Topanga Canyon. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 1 - 2 qts. of water and a snack, wear boots.
- December 12 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- December 14 Tuesday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 16 Thursday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 18 Hummingbird Creek Work Party**
Help maintain one of Simi Valley's more scenic trails. Directions - 118 Fwy to Kuehner exit. Meet north of freeway on Kuehner. We will be working from 8am - noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- December 19 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- December 21 Tuesday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 23 Thursday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 25 Christmas - No Hike**
- December 26 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- December 28 Tuesday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**
- December 30 Thursday Evening Hike**
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 MRT)**

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://rstb.topcities.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

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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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