



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.

December 1, 2018

Piedra Blanca to Twin Forks Camp*

7 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (1,000' elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will begin at the east end of Rose Valley Road (6N31) in the Los Padres National Forest north of Ojai, CA. We'll be hiking upstream along Piedra Blanca Creek on the Gene Marshall National Recreation Trail (22W03). Shortly after starting the hike we'll cross Sespe Creek and then pass through the magnificent Piedra Blanca (white rock) Formations. We'll then continue on to Twin Forks Camp (our turnaround point) where large conifers provide shade along the creek. After a leisurely lunch break we'll return the way we came. **Meet at 8 AM** south of Donut Delite near the northeast corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

December 8, 2018

Echo Mountain Via the Sam Merrill Trail*

6.0 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (~1,400' elevation gain/loss)

Our route will follow the Sam Merrill Trail as it climbs steadily up the eastern slope of Los Flores Canyon via a series of switchbacks. When we reach the old rail bed of the Mount Lowe Railway we'll hike east over to the White City ruins with their nearby Coulter pine trees and oak trees (providing shade). There are mountain and city views from White City, a resort which drew more than 3 million visitors via an incline railway from 1896 to 1936 (when it was destroyed by fire). After exploring the ruins, enjoying the views, and resting, we'll return the way we came. **Meet at 8 AM** at the 118 and Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring camera, water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.

December 14, 2018

Trailblazer Holiday Potluck Party - 6:30 to 9:00PM **NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION**

Ursula Christie's home: 576 Pinecliff Place, Simi Valley

Ursula has once again offered to host the holiday get together at her home. Please join us for the food, festivities and camaraderie. Bring a dish or dessert to share.

December 15, 2018

Work Party – Lower Stagecoach Trail - Upper Section 8:00AM to Noon

The December Trail Blazers trail work party will be held Saturday December 15 on the Lower Stagecoach Trail. Meet at the eastern end of the Corriganville Parking lot at **8:00 AM**. We will carpool from the parking lot to the upper trailhead on Santa Susana Pass Road.

Corriganville is located at the east end of Smith Road off of the south end of Kuehner Drive. 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.

December 19, 2018

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

Everyone is welcome to attend.

December 22, 2018

Big Sky Loop

4.5 MRT - Easy to Moderate (~815' elevation gain/loss)

This hike follows a trail that loops around the Big Sky housing development north of Highway 118. It climbs up an eastern ridge in the foothills of the Santa Susana Mountains then heads north along the ridge providing views of mountains in all directions including nearby Whiteface Mountain. The return portion of the loop winds along the oak-lined stream that runs through the development. **Meet at 8 AM at the trailhead.** Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

Directions to the trailhead: Take Hwy 118 to the Erringer Road exit. Head north 0.2 mile on Erringer Road (passing Alamo Street) to Big Sky Place (just before the entrance to the Big Sky housing development). Turn right on Big Sky Place, park on the left (west) side of the street close to its junction with Erringer Road.

December 29, 2018

The Hummingbird Trail and Rocky Peak

4.6 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (1,000' elevation gain) or 8 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (1750' elevation gain) *You have the option of hiking only the Hummingbird Trail, or continuing on to Rocky Peak.*

The Hummingbird Trail passes through (and on) a variety of imposing rock formations along the way up to the Rocky Peak Fire Road including very large boulders and giant slabs of sandstone rock, many with small “caves.” Once we reach the fire road we’ll follow it uphill northward to the Rocky Peak spur trail while enjoying sweeping views of eastern Simi Valley, the Santa Susana Mountains, and the Simi Hills (including the Boeing/Rocketdyne facility). We’ll visit the San Fernando Valley Overlook (very near Rocky Peak) and optionally the actual Rocky Peak. Bring 2 – 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots. **IMPORTANT:** We’ll meet at the Stearns Street carpool point because there are fewer than ten parking spots at the Hummingbird trailhead and it’s unlikely that there will be enough parking spots available (if any) at 8:00 AM on a Saturday morning. Further instructions will be available at the carpool point.

HIKE REPORTS

October 27 – Work Party – Wild Animal Corridor – Cache In Trash Out Event



Our 10th annual Wildlife Corridor work party was very special indeed. Just two months before the event, our Work Party chair Mike Howard, lost his life in a freak accident in the Colorado River rapids. Mike died a hero, saving his beloved wife Cheri. Our work party was dedicated to Mike’s memory. Cheri was with us and shared some very heartfelt inspiring words.

We finished the Corridor cleanup in just over an hour, painting over the graffiti and collecting 6 large bags of garbage. After heading back down the trail and arriving at our cars, we all shared fond memories of Mike, telling great stories of what he meant to us. We all miss you, Mike!

November 3 – Horn Canyon



Prologue: 12 hikers carpooled toward the Sisar Canyon trailhead on Sisar Road just north of the Summit Community on Hwy 150 between Santa Paula and Ojai in the Los Padres National Forest on a cool autumn morning. However, after driving a short distance on Sisar Road we encountered a locked gate that prevented us from driving to the trailhead for Forest Service Road 4N15. We decided to substitute the “Horn Canyon to Pines Trail Camp” hike for our planned hike.

The 12 hikers then carpooled to the Horn Canyon trailhead adjacent to the Thacher School a few miles east of downtown Ojai. As our hike began, the trail rose gradually upward to the north along a dirt road. The route soon became a shady trail that followed a pleasant creek (with flowing water in it) as it continued up toward the Nordhoff Ridge. After an easy stream crossing in a beautiful shaded riparian setting, the trail

began to rise inexorably via narrow switchbacks toward our destination and we were rewarded for enduring the increasing heat of the day with great views of the Ojai Valley and onward to the ocean and Santa Cruz Island plus a view of a small slice of Lake Casitas. Eventually most of us reached the Pines Trail Camp which has been decimated by wildfire and is now quite barren; it appears that none of the pine trees survived (there was no shade). We returned the way we came and reached our vehicles having completed a sometimes demanding 5.5-mile hike with over 1,800’ of elevation gain/loss.

November 10 – Simi Peak Hike Cancelled due to Woolsey Fire

November 17 –China Flat Trail Work Party Cancelled due to Woolsey Fire

Rancho Simi Trail Blazer 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.

THE WINTER SOLSTICE

The winter solstice is an astronomical event that occurs once a year in the orbit of the Earth around the Sun in the Northern Hemisphere. The winter solstice represents the shortest daylight period and the longest period of darkness of the year. Prehistorically around the world, for most middle and high latitude societies, the winter solstice played a part in religious beliefs. Christmas is celebrated on December 25, because that date was chosen in an effort to displace the pagan religions of northern Europe. They have passed, but we are left with the Christmas tree, yuletides, and other vestiges of the past. (Yulemen wore rabbit costumes and ran around communities in hedonistic revelries during winter solstice celebrations. The Easter bunny is a vestige of the yuleman.)

THE WINTER SOLSTICE continued

As the winter solstice drew near, the daylight period was getting shorter and shorter; food was getting more and more scarce; and the world was getting colder and colder. For the Chumash, the winter solstice ceremony was the most important event of the year. If the ceremony was not performed, the world would be plunged into darkness, and the creatures of the night would rule the earth. The ceremony marked the birth of a new child - the Sun - the chief deity of the Chumash. Many such ceremonial sites have been identified around Simi Valley. They include devices, associated with the rising sun, which enabled the Chumash to predict when the solstice would occur so that the right people could be gathered together for the performance of the right ceremony at sunrise. It was not necessary to predict the solstice precisely. It was necessary to perform the appropriate ceremony. It generally was a public event.

Mike Kuhn

TOYON, CHRISTMAS BERRY

(adapted from Jan Timbrook, *Chumash Ethnobotany*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History [2007] pp. 91-94)

The *Ventureño* Chumash name for the toyon plant was *awe*. The word toyon is from the Spanish, who adopted it from the *Oholone* Indian (San Francisco Bay area) name, *tottcon*, for the plant. It is now often referred to as Christmas berry because its red berries are ripe and very showy around late-December. Its fruit was eaten and its wood was used for a great many purposes.

The Indians of the Santa Barbara Mission would collect the berries in cloth bags. The Indians said the raw berries would tend to stick in your throat. As they harvest the berries they would taste them for sweetness. Most commonly, they would toast them in a steatite *olla* over hot coals, stirring them frequently. This did not take very long - only until they were hot. Some Indians would spread them in the sun until they turned black - then mashed them. They were allowed to stand - sometime for days - until they were "ready." This softening process was needed because the Indians' teeth were worn down to their gum lines by their late-teen years, due to their diets, which contain much grit from sand. Some of John P. Harrington's informants said the softening would take three to ten days. By then the fruit would also be more sweet. The Indians never boiled the berries, although some other California Indians did.

The wood of the *toyon* is hard and was used for a great many purposes. Some were used for arrows and for arrow foreshafts. They were also used for fishhooks, harpoons and bone-pointed fish spears, basketry awls, matting and thatching needles, digging sticks with fire-hardened points, reamers, wedges and hide scrapers. They also used the wood to make bowls, pestles, drinking cups, wooden shaft-straighteners, handles, walking sticks, war clubs, and cradle frames, among other things. The Chumash used the wood to make bows and rabbit sticks (for throwing or clubbing). Toyon wood was used for various ceremonial purposes. The hills and arroyos were their hardware stores.

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

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.

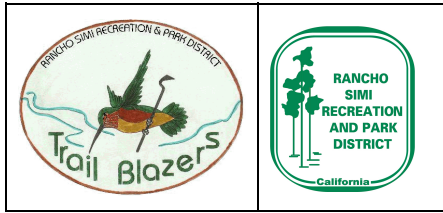
Please see <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/calendar/> for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.

	<div>RSTB Calendar</div> <div>December 2018</div>						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						<div>1</div> <div>Piedra Blanca to Twin Forks* 8AM</div> <div>See Upcoming Events</div>	
<div>2</div> <div>Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Hannukah first day</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>5</div>	<div>6</div> <div>Chumash Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>7</div>	<div>8</div> <div>Echo Mtn via Sam Merrill Trail* 8AM</div> <div>See Upcoming Events</div>	
<div>9</div> <div>Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>10</div> <div>Hannukah last day</div> <div>Happy Birthday Robert Galletly</div>	<div>11</div> <div>Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div> <div>Happy Birthday Pat Burgess</div>	<div>12</div> <div>Happy Birthday Daisy Wang</div>	<div>13</div> <div>Chumash Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div> <div>Happy Birthday Bill Cespedes</div>	<div>14</div> <div>Holiday Potluck 6:30PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>15</div> <div>Lower Stagecoach Work Party 8AM</div> <div>See Upcoming Events</div>	
<div>16</div> <div>Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>17</div>	<div>18</div> <div>Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div> <div>Happy Birthday Chris Quinn</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Club Meeting 5:30PM</div>	<div>20</div> <div>Chumash Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div> <div>Happy Birthday Stephanie Farrar</div>	<div>21</div>	<div>22</div> <div>Big Sky Loop 8AM</div> <div>See Upcoming Events</div>	
<div>23</div> <div>Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>24</div>	<div>25</div> <div>Christmas No Hike</div>	<div>26</div> <div>Kwanza first day</div>	<div>27</div> <div>Chumash Trail 6PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div> <div>Hummingbird and Rocky Peak 8AM</div> <div>See Upcoming Events</div>	
<div>30</div> <div>Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM</div> <div>See Schedule</div>	<div>31</div> <div>New Years Eve</div>						
<div>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/</div> <div>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)</div>							

* 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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Park District Liaison:	Jeannie Liss	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
Work Parties Chair:	VOLUNTEER NEEDED		Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345
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