



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



JANUARY WORK PARTY

During the week of 10 January, Mike Kuhn worked on the lower portion of the Chumash Trail repairing rain damage, but couldn't attend the work party. On Friday the 14th, I spent three hours digging a drainage channel across the trail at the lower trailhead. Water flow from the hillside always floods a low point about 50 yards above the lower trailhead. The soil there is heavy clay and the flooded area turns into a quagmire. The stuff is so sticky and taffy-like that when digging, the mud will not release from the shovel and has to be pushed off with the toe of your boot. When hikers attempt to cross the area, huge gobs of clay stick to their boots. With the drainage channel dug, the area should dry out in a couple of days.

On Saturday January 15, a work party was held on the Chumash Trail. Seven Trail Blazers headed up the trail to work on areas damaged by the recent storms. We planned to concentrate work on three areas where small canyons cause heavy water flow across the trail. Due to several factors, water was not draining across the trail but running along it and causing erosion. Before we could attempt any tread repair we had to fix the drainage problems.

The first task was to repair a large eroded area on a sharp turn at about the 1 3/4 mile mark. Large boulders were used to shore up a collapsing trail edge. Next a concave channel was constructed to allow the water to drain directly across the trail. Another trench was dug to prevent water from a point a little further uphill from running downhill to join the main flow. The trail section in between was then repaired by removing large rocks and filling in eroded areas.

We then continued another tenth of a mile up the trail to a second section of heavy damage. At this point heavy water flow was blocked by large rocks at the trail edge and instead ran down the trail, completely destroying a previously constructed trail ramp. We used a rock bar to remove the large boulders blocking water flow at two adjacent drainage areas. Two more concave channels were constructed to allow the water to drain directly across the trail. Although I didn't think we would have the time and equipment to repair the ramp, the crew did a great job and the ramp was rebuilt. Several people also worked on tread repair at smaller eroded spots.

We worked from 8:00 am till 12:30 pm and hopefully solved the major drainage problems.

Many thanks to the following workers who did a great job:

Arlene Altshuler, Bill Cespedes, Alan Cueba, Martin DeGoey, Louise Pomes, Mark Scheele and John Sabol.

John Sabol



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
February 16, 2005

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.



JERUSALEM CRICKETS

A good Trail Blazer often encounters this rather large insect while constructing trails. If you find them, please, gently rebury them in loose soil where they won't get crushed. They are not venomous or otherwise harmful to human beings, so leave them alone. To one Indian tribe, they were known as *woh-tzi-neh* (old bald headed man). To the Spanish/Mexicans, they were known as *nino de la tierra* (child of the earth). We often call them "potato bugs." While not poisonous, they can bite. Because their mouth parts are so large, that bite can hurt. So, be careful. They are usually found in moist loose soil where they can tunnel underground.

Mike Kuhn



Photo taken by W.P. Armstrong 2004
<http://waynesword.palomar.edu/redmite.htm>

PICTURES FROM THE DECEMBER HOLIDAY POT LUCK



Left to Right: Tracy Frank, Mark Gilmore, Arlene Altshuler, Gene Whittle, and Michele Sumandra.



John Sabol and Marty Richards



Left to Right: Jean Whittle, Isabel Johnson, Ursula Christie, Judi Sevcik, Liz Williams, and Doug Temple.

HAS THE MOUNTAIN LION POPULATION INCREASED IN CALIFORNIA?

Between 1907 and 1963 in California, mountain lions were a “bounty species” - that is a reward was paid to anyone who could prove that they had killed a mountain lion. During that period, between 200 and 450 mountain lions were killed each year in this state. During that 57-year period, bounty records indicate that 12,461 mountain lions were taken. It is reasonable to conclude that this predation had a negative impact on the lion population in most areas of the state.

The bounty program ended in 1963, however, mountain lions remained unprotected in any way until 1969, when they were classified as “game animals.” Between 1969 and 1972 at least 118 cats were taken. In 1972 a legislative moratorium on the hunting of mountain lions was passed. Then in 1990 a state-wide initiative was passed which prohibited the killing of mountain lions except under a predation permit (a permit issued because of a cat killing livestock, pets, etc.) or immediate threat to personal safety. Between 1972 and 1999 inclusively, 1,401 mountain lions were killed under depredation permits, with 1994 and 1995 representing the peak years (121 and 117 respectively). During 1999 114 cats were killed under permit.

The end of bounty and sports hunting seems to have resulted in a rather sizable increase in the mountain lion population state wide. With this increase in population, mountain lions have pushed into areas not previously populated and into areas formerly populated. However, data suggest that the lion population increased in California until 1995, then declined slightly after that. Currently, it is estimated that between 4,000 and 6,000 of the big cats reside in California. It may simply be that a natural balance with habitat/food supplies has been reached following the end of their status as bounty/game animals.

Sightings of mountain lions have increased over the years. This seems to have occurred because there are more people in the state, outdoor activities such as camping, hiking and mountain biking, as well as the ever increasing ownership and use of four wheel drive vehicles, and urban development is pushing further and further into big cat habitat.

Fortunately for us, mountain lions don’t seem to look on man as a prey animal.

[Source of data: *Outdoor California* (May/June 2000)]

Mike Kuhn



Mountain Lion track found January 29th, in Latigo Canyon

QUIMISAC

At the time of Spanish contact with the Chumash Indians in the Simi (a territory that included both the Little Simi and Simi valleys) there were three Indian villages. They were *Ta'apu*, *Simi'* and *Quimisac*. *Quimisac* was located in what is now Happy Camp Canyon west of Moorpark College. The village is said to have controlled much of the "fused shale" trade in the region. Fused shale is formed by the burning of petroleum underground in the geological formation in which the petroleum occurs. In this area, it is called the Modelo Formation. Elsewhere, it is generally referred to as the Monterey Formation. Depending on how hot the material gets, i.e., the degree of fusion, colors may vary from yellow, orange, red or black. The black form is glassy, similar to obsidian. Fused shale was an important stone tool material for the Chumash and other Indian of the region.

Prior to 1,000 years ago, the fused shale from Grimes Canyon is said to have been the primary source in the area. Larger pieces of fused shale were available from the Grimes Canyon source than from Happy Camp Canyon. Points for atlatl darts required larger pieces of raw material than did the more diminutive arrowheads. With the diffusion of the bow and arrow into this area about 1,000 years ago, Happy Camp Canyon seems to have become a more important source of fused shale. The small pieces of fused shale that could be found there were adequate for the manufacture of arrowheads.

About half of the baptism listings which cite *Quimisac* (or other spellings) occurred at the San Buenaventura Mission and about half at the San Fernando Mission. Based upon the number of baptisms from the village recorded at the two missions, *Quimisac* seems to have been about the same size as the village of *Simi'*. *Quimisac* apparently ceased to exist by the end of the first decade of the 19th Century. The various spellings of the name of the village, as reflected in the baptismal records of the San Fernando Mission, are *Quimisac*, *Quimisa*, and *Quimissac*. The Spanish language does not include words that end in a hard "c" sound, so *Quimisa* is the form most often found in the records. John Peabody Harrington, the noted linguist and anthropologist, listed the name as *kimichaq* (The mission priest cannot be counted on to have had good linguistic ears.).

The Chumash trail from *Simi'* to *Quimisac* was called the *Quimisac* trail. Later, the trail/road from the headquarters of El Rancho Simi at the western end of Simi Valley to the west along the Arroyo Simi was called the Quimisa Road (Spanish report on the precinct of the presidio of Santa Barbara – 1834). However, according to City Historian Patricia Havens, during the early Anglo-American period of settlement no road existed along the arroyo west of Simi Valley. The land had been subdivided into individual ranches and fences had been erected. Nonetheless, the short little public road between Los Avenue and Oak Park, west of the County Animal Control Facility, still carries the name "Quimisa Drive" – truly an echo of the past.

Mike Kuhn

REEXAMINING FIRE SUPPRESSION IMPACTS ON BRUSHLAND FIRE REGIMES

A recent article, by the above title, in *Science Magazine* (June 11, 1999, pp. 1829-1832) reexamined the fire history in chaparral and coastal sage scrublands in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. It is widely held that the reason that southland brush fires are increasingly destructive is that modern fire suppression has resulted in an increase in frequency, intensity and aerial coverage of wildfires. Therefore, it has been held, that controlled burns to rotate through older stands of brush, i.e., brushland management, should be pursued to decrease the destructive nature of brushland fires. The results of the examination of the California Statewide Fire History Database shows that since 1910 fire frequency and area burned have not declined and fire intensity has not increased.

The number of small to medium sized fires has increased. However, those fires dominate when fires are easily suppressed, and they result in little property damage. Large fires, such as the 1961 Bel Aire and the 1993 Green Meadow fires, which burn more than 10,000 acres at a time, are not dependent upon old stand vegetation. Driven by Santa Ana Winds, they burn unimpeded through all classes of vegetation and are usually stopped only when they reach dense urban environments or the ocean. September remained the peak fire month throughout the Twentieth Century.

Before the Twentieth Century, fires generally were started intentionally by Indians at a time not favorable for large scale destructive fires or by lightning during the late-summer. Those lightning-started fires usually continued into the Santa Ana Wind season, when they occasionally became very destructive. Humans directly affect fire regimes by starting fires and by suppressing them. In southern and south-central California there is no evidence that fire suppression has altered the natural stand-replacing fire regime in the manner suggested by others. This is in sharp contrast to our experience in coniferous forests throughout most of the western United States, where the stand-thinning fire regime, i.e., controlled burns, has proven to be favorable when compared to fire exclusion, which results in catastrophic and very destructive fires. The increased frequency of small fires in brushlands would normally result in conversion to non-native grasslands. Our success in fire suppression since 1950 has largely offset that impact.

All of this comes as welcome news to resource managers, who have had to weigh the legal implications associated with controlled burning. The study suggests that controlled burns in brushland probably are not needed if we are trying to limit economic losses. (Improved range conditions, where more grass is the goal, may be a different matter.) Some have suggested that a return to fire breaks may be in order, although they have not proven to be particularly affective in wind-driven fires.

Mike Kuhn



RSTB Calendar

February 2005



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Caroline Carroll</i>	2	3 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Sue Eselin</i>	4	5 Hummingbird Trail See Schedule
6 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Phil Pratt</i>	7	8 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	9	10 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	11	12 Mishe Mokwa See Schedule
13 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Chuck Portoghesi</i>	14 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Jim Lightfoot</i> <i>Doug Marsh</i>	15 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	16 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	17 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	18	19 Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule
20 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Mary Ann Campbell</i>	21	22 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Lorraine Ferrall</i>	23	24 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Connie Ankrom</i>	25 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>David Seifert</i>	26 Lang Ranch See Schedule
27 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	28					



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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Hiking Schedule



- | | | |
|----------|----|---|
| February | 1 | 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) |
| February | 3 | 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) |
| February | 5 | Hummingbird Trail (optionally to Rocky Peak)
Strenuous 4.6 – 8 MRT hike with beautiful scenery. Directions - 118 Fwy to Kuehner exit. Meet 8am north of freeway on Kuehner. Bring 2 – 3 qts. of water and a snack, wear boots. |
| February | 6 | Sunday Evening Hike
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT) |
| February | 8 | 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) |
| February | 10 | 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) |
| February | 12 | Mishe Mokwa Trail to Sandstone Peak
Moderate 7 MRT hike with 1500' elevation gain/loss. See a wide variety of vegetation, spectacular rock formations, and the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. 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 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots. |
| February | 13 | Sunday Evening Hike
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT) |
| February | 15 | 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) |
| February | 17 | 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) |
| February | 19 | Chumash Trail Work Party
Help maintain one of the most traversed trails in Simi Valley. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan. 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. |
| February | 20 | Sunday Evening Hike
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT) |
| February | 22 | 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) |
| February | 24 | 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) |
| February | 26 | 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. |
| February | 27 | Sunday Evening Hike
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (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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Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:

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