



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Our bank will no longer accept dues or other checks made out to the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers. **ALL CHECKS must be made out to the Rancho Simi Foundation.**

RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS

Sporting the beautiful RSTB logo, these are great shirts! Please call Mike Kuhn if you'd like to order at 805-583-2345.



short sleeve \$12
long sleeve \$14
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RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at:
Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1

Wednesday February 21, 2018
5:30PM

Everyone Welcome to attend!

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

Weekly hikes!!



Has anyone ever told you to take a hike?

Did you know that in Simi Valley you can take many hikes with the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers and explore the beauty of Simi Valley and other beautiful locations? We have so much fun taking photos, talking and just viewing the beautiful scenery like the photo above. We even enjoy going on overnight events. **Please join us** and see for yourself how much fun we have!

Hikes are every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and most Saturdays



January 20, 2018 – Work Party – Tapo Open Space



We want to thank each and everyone who took part in the work party and hope that everyone had a good time.

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

Upcoming Events

February 3rd Cheeseboro Canyon – Palo Comado Canyon Loop

* 10-mile counter-clockwise loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (1,200' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

February 10th New Millenium Trail Loop

* 12.2-mile counter-clockwise loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (over 2,000' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

February 17th Work Party – Mt. McCoy

The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. **8AM**

February 21st Club Board Meeting

The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
Everyone Welcome to attend!
5:30PM

February 24th Happy Camp – Middle Range Fire Road

Loop * 10.5-mile clockwise loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (1,300' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

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

January 6th – Simi Peak from King James Court via China Flat



17 hikers met along Lindero Canyon Road (near King James Court) in Oak Park on a beautiful early-winter morning. Our hike in the Simi Hills began at the up-

per end of King James Court along an old dirt-and-rock road as it rose steadily up the south side of the mountain, providing ever-expanding views to the south.

Upon reaching the apex of the old road, we headed north and descended into lovely China Flat with its oak trees and sprawling meadows. Despite the continuing drought, many of the oak trees displayed bright green leaves. When the trail “leveled out” in China Flat, we followed a single-track trail westward and climbed to Simi Peak (2,403’), the highest point in the Simi Hills (which occupy the area between Simi Valley and Hwy 101 and between Hwy 23 and the San Fernando Valley), where we were rewarded with good visibility in all directions including Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands. We took a leisurely rest-and-snack break atop the peak and enjoyed the panoramic views and pleasant temperature. Eventually we returned to our vehicles the way we came with a couple of minor exceptions including taking the single-track trail near the end of the hike down to the signed trailhead on Lindero Canyon Road as we completed a 6.25-mile hike with around 1,300’ of elevation gain/loss.

January 13th – Devil Canyon to Browns Canyon Road

NOTE: This hike replaced the scheduled “PCT crossing at Soledad Cyn Rd to Vasquez Rocks County Park” due to a High-Wind-Warning for the Agua Dulce area (20-25 mph w/40 mph gusts). A cancelation notice was posted on Meetup.com to inform the folks who were planning to meet us at Vasquez Rocks.

However, a dozen of us showed up at the Stearns Street Park-and-Ride lot where we decided to hike in Devil Canyon instead (later two hikers decided to go on up to Vasquez Rocks and hike there anyway, one of them having hiked the section of the PCT before).

10 hikers met at the Stearns Street carpool point in Simi Valley and decided to hike in Devil Canyon to avoid the very strong winds forecast for the Agua Dulce area where the day’s hike had been originally scheduled and to avoid the strong winds forecast for Simi Valley. We then drove over to the hike’s starting point on Poema Place in Chatsworth on a cool windy winter morning. Our hike began as we descended into the heavily shaded bottom of Devil Canyon where we followed the remnants of the Devil Canyon Motorway upstream as it frequently crisscrossed the sometimes wet creekbed (thanks to Tuesday’s rain). We spotted

lots of chalk dudleya “liveforever” plants as we made our way up to the large dam at the junction with the mouth of Ybarra Canyon. After a brief rest break we continued upstream along the dry (though occasionally muddy) trail which from this point on had been transformed a few of years ago from single-track to a “one-lane” dirt road [the reason for this not being apparent though several short dirt “side roads” and one long one heading north have also been created]. As the canyon widened we passed by grass-covered hillsides dotted with oak trees and spotted two red-tailed hawks riding the thermals. As we reached the upper-canyon cathedral-like oak woodland, the trail reverted to its natural undisturbed state (including lots of fallen oak trees, presumably killed by wildfire and drought). We spotted several head of free-range cattle grazing on a hillside along the way (they watched us warily as we continued up the trail). Upon reaching Brown’s Canyon Road we turned right (east) and hiked a short distance uphill where we took a break and enjoyed views to the south. We then retraced our route back to our vehicles – spotting a slow moving gopher snake along the way – and returned to our vehicles having completed a very pleasant 9.8-mile hike in this unique canyon with about 1,200’ of elevation gain/loss and having successfully avoided the high winds and, as it turned out, remaining cool despite the 80-degree temperature we encountered at the end of our heavily shaded hike.

January 20th – Work Party: Tapo Open Space

Our first trail work of the New Year: Tapo Open space/Chivo Canyon trail. We were joined by eleven Boy Scouts and their three chaperones along with four Trailblazers. We headed back through Chivo Canyon, to the Tapo Open space turnoff, and after almost a mile of hiking reached the Southeastern part of the loop, the location we would be working on today.

After our safety meeting, we quickly handed out the assignments and the Scouts went to work. Very good seeing these youngsters discussing together and finding solutions for some of the work they were doing. We had three working on a small landslide, clearing it off the trail and then smoothing it all out.

After clearing a quarter mile of trail fairly fast, we headed off for the next section. In this section, we had two groups working on a set of two water runoffs. These run offs are experimental water disruption techniques that we learned of while on a recent trip to Wisconsin (while working with their trail group). They really do get a lot of rain throughout the year and have worked out some very nice (we hope) solutions for water-cutting ruts into the middle of trails. The Scouts dug drain ditches 18” across and 8” deep at a 30-45 degree angle, draining into the creek alongside the trail. These ditches were then filled with rocks to break up the force of the water and then drain down and away from the trail.

The group really put forth a great effort today as evidenced by all of the “thanks for all the trail work!” kudos from the many hikers that we encountered.

From the Trailblazers: a big thanks to all the Boy Scouts for their work today!



RSTB Calendar FEBRUARY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Caroline Carroll	2	3 Cheeseboro Canyon – Palo Comado Cyn Loop 8AM See Schedule
4 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM	5 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Mona Steffen	6 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	7	8 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> John Atwood	9	10 New Millenium Loop Trail Loop 8AM See Schedule
11 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	12 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Joey Simon	13 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	14 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Doug Marsh	15 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	16	17 Work Party – Mt. McCoy 8AM See Schedule
18 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	19 Presidents Day	20 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Mary Ann Campbell	21 Club Board Meeting The Everyone Welcome to attend! 5:30PM	22 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	23	24 Happy Camp – Middle Range Fire Road Loop 8AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Connie Ankrom
25 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> David Seifert	26 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Janice Haynes	27 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	28			

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)



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How did you find out about the RSTB? _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:

Rancho Simi Foundation and mail it to **RSTB, P.O. Box 1231, Simi Valley, CA 93062**

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

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GRIZZLIES OF VENTURA COUNTY

At the time of Spanish contact, only the grizzly bear existed in the Coast Ranges from Napa and Sonoma counties south. No black bears existed in that territory, including in what is now Ventura County. What happened to the grizzly bears of Ventura County? Certainly there is enough wild country in northern Ventura County that the California grizzly should have survived there, if nowhere else. Why did the grizzly become extinct in Ventura County and still survive elsewhere in the lower 48 states? Why did it survive, indeed, thrive while the Indians and Spanish were here, but not under the domain of late-19th and early-20th century man? The answer is simple, sad and tragic.

The adult male California grizzly bear weighed between 600 and 1100 pounds (a few reports of 1500 pound male outside of captivity do occur) and remained the ecological dominant throughout prehistory. The arrival of the American Indian resulted in competition for food resources, such as fish, acorns, bulbs and tubers, berries and carrion, but also provided a new food resource for the grizzly. The Indians simply could not do much about the grizzlies. The grizzly had its way wherever it was. However, they are creatures of dense chaparral and oak woodlands. They would root for bulbs and tubers and dig for ground squirrels and other rodents in grasslands. There, they were visitors. The common practice among Indian groups throughout much of California, outside of the desert regions, of annually setting fires and purposefully burning off as much natural vegetation as possible may have had its roots, at least in part, with a healthy wish to keep the California grizzly as far away as possible. Open grasslands did not favor the grizzly, which preferred dense chaparral. When present in open country, they were easily observed and there were fewer surprise encounters.

Pedro Fages (1769) reports that Chumash Indians raised bear cubs in their villages until they were big enough to eat. Some Chumash Indi-

ans groups occasionally killed grizzly bears. During the spring of 2005 I participated in an archaeological excavation of what gave every evidence of being a Chumash seasonal camp where a grizzly bear claw was found that exhibited evidence that it had been used as a pendant. I have seen a historic report that indicated that a Chumash Indian who killed a grizzly bear was allowed to wear a bear claw as a pendant as a mark of honor.

The Spanish/Mexican period of settlement saw few firearms among the general population. Those firearms that were present were single-shot musket loaders, which were not very powerful. However, the Californios did their best to control the bear population by use of *riatas* by horse-mounted vaqueros. Bull and bear fights were staged. Grizzly bear populations had to be controlled because the presence of horses, cattle, sheep and other livestock in corrals and on the open range provided a ubiquitous new food resource for the great bears. While cattle and sheep were prominent elements in the economy of the region, the value of livestock was much less than at later times. The California goldrush brought an end to the more relaxed earlier attitudes towards the predation on livestock by the grizzly. Livestock was valuable and predation by grizzly bears could no longer be dismissed. Firearms were more common. The killing of livestock by a grizzly in the northern half of the county, would often result in the mounting of a hunting expedition to rid the country of the varmint. With time, grazing activities pushed further and further into the high country right to the top of Mt. Pinos. No habitat was left exclusively to the grizzly.

George Outland, in *Mines, Murders & Grizzlies* (1969), page 137, reprints an excerpt from the *Ventura Democrat* (January 20, 1887) by the editor John McGonigle which reads as follows:

"Very seldom during late years, a formidable grizzly or a terrible mountain lion, once the scourge of livestock and a menace to man himself,

is seen, but these ferocious beasts . . . are rapidly disappearing before the deadly rifle fire and the deadlier strychnine of the frontiersman. Soon they will have become extinct, and the sooner the better, though it must be conceded they are interesting as articles of romance."

In the end, it came down to chemical warfare. You didn't have to encounter the grizzly to kill it. Death came in a box. And then there were none.

Mike Kuhn
7-17-06 (revised 7-25-07)

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 was an EMT and 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 reasonably 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
11-15-04



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



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKE (Rain cancels – 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) **(We Meet at 5PM during daylight saving time.)**

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.)

FEBRUARY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

February 3rd Cheeseboro Canyon – Palo Comado Canyon Loop

10-mile counterclockwise loop - Moderate-to-strenuous (1,200' elevation gain/loss). We'll follow the Cheeseboro Canyon Trail north from the trailhead (1,010') as it gradually rises to Shepherd's Flat (1,535'), passing the Ranch Center Connector Road junction and Sulphur Springs along the way. We'll enjoy sweeping mountain vistas, oak woodlands, and interesting rock formations during the hike. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2-to-3 quart of water, lunch, and sunscreen. Wear boots.

February 10th New Millenium Trail Loop

12.2-mile counterclockwise loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (over 2,000' elevation gain/loss) We'll start (and end) our hike on the Bark Park Trail (775') in the Santa Monica Mountains near Calabasas. As Robert Stone notes, the loop trail "follows chaparral-covered ridges, forested canyons, riparian waterways, rolling grasslands, oak woodlands, and scenic overlooks [1,300']" as it rises and falls along its route." Meet at 8AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2-to-3 quarts of water, lunch, and sunscreen. Wear boots.

February 17th Work Party – Mt. McCoy


Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will be removing rocks, doing some lopping to increase trail clearance, and some trail trimming. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended. Meet at western end of Washburn Street at the trailhead.

February 21st Club Meeting Everyone Welcome to attend!

Meet at **5:30PM** - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

February 24th Happy Camp – Middle Range Fire Road Loop

Meeting time is **8AM**. 10.5-mile clockwise loop – Moderate-to-strenuous (1,300' elevation gain/loss) Our hike will begin at the trailhead in the dirt parking lot at the east end of Broadway Road in Moorpark. We'll follow a well-maintained trail beside the Rustic Canyon golf course one mile to the entrance to Happy Camp Canyon. At 4.8 miles we'll reach a pleasant oak grove with picnic tables and hitching rails where we'll take a rest-and-snack break. Resuming our hike we'll climb up the steep gets-your-heart-pumping connector road to the Middle Range Fire Road. Once there we'll head west along the ridge, enjoying spectacular views of the surrounding area as we complete the loop portion of the hike and then return to the parking lot. Meet near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2-to-3 quarts of water, lunch, and sunscreen. Wear boots.

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 <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/index.php/calendar/>