



Rancho Simi Trailblazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



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

~~~ Welcome New Members Norma Perez and Shayla, Skyler and Taylor Harper ~~~

!!! Hiker Alert: See Chumash Hike Schedule Change !!!

### UPCOMING EVENTS Hiker Alert: See Chumash Hike Schedule Change~~~

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.



The RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS are looking for leaders for public hikes! If interested, please contact Michael Kuhn at [mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com](mailto:mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com). Applicants must be evaluated by the board and would be subject to the park district's standard background check.



#### **February 1, 2020 – Temescal Canyon\***

9.3 MRT – Moderate (2,000' elevation gain/loss)

The hike begins in the lower parking lot near Sunset Blvd. It follows Temescal Creek along the bottom of Temescal Canyon and then enters Topanga State Park, passing a small waterfall as the trail rises to provide a 360-degree view of the city, the coastline and the surrounding mountains. Completing a loop, the hike descends back into Temescal Canyon via the Temescal Ridge Trail. The hike then follows the fairly new Rivas Canyon Trail as it ascends eastward from the conference grounds, climbing a ridge and then zigzagging downward into shady Rivas Canyon, and finally entering Will Rogers State Historic Park near the old Ranch House. We'll then return via Rivas Canyon to lovely Temescal Gateway Park.

Meet at **8 AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

#### **February 8, 2020 – Solstice Canyon - Sostomo Trail\*\***

6.8 MRT – Moderate (1,650' of elevation gain/loss) Click [here](#) to see the weather forecast near the trailhead.

Our hike begins with a partially shaded walk along the one-mile dirt road in the bottom of Solstice Canyon leading toward Tropical Terrace and the nearby waterfalls. Just before reaching them we'll hike the Sostomo Trail as it climbs steadily up the mountainside to the west to a junction with the Deer Valley Loop Trail. We'll then hike the loop trail in a clockwise direction to an overlook of the Pacific Ocean and then return to the canyon bottom and visit well-shaded Tropical Terrace including the ruins of the Roberts house along Solstice Creek with its nearby waterfalls. After a rest/lunch break we'll retrace our route along the Solstice Canyon Trail to the parking lot.

Meet at **8 AM** in the parking lot, to the south of Donut Delite, located on the north east corner of the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch/snack and sunscreen. Wear boots.

#### **February 15, 2020 – Work Party on Mt. McCoy Trail**

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. We will work from **8 AM to Noon**. As always, you are welcome to work for a shorter time period if you desire. Hope to see you there.

#### **February 19, 2020**

Club Meeting 5:30PM Park District: 4201 Guardian Street, Activity Room #2 - Everyone is welcome to attend.

#### **February 22, 2020 – Danielson Ranch\* No Dogs Allowed**



6.3 mile loop – Moderate (1,300' of elevation gain/loss)

Our hike in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) will begin by following the Wendy Trail in Newbury Park to the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center at Rancho Sierra Vista.

**February 22, 2020 – Danielson Ranch\* No Dogs Allowed 🚫 continued**

Then we'll drop into Big Sycamore Canyon and take the Fossil Trail uphill to the Old Boney Trail which we'll follow to the abandoned Danielson Road which will lead us to the Danielson Memorial and the remains of a cabin. As we complete our loop hike we'll stop at a waterfall along the way.

Meet at **8 AM** in the parking lot, to the south of Donut Delite, located on the north east corner of the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch/snack and sunscreen. Wear boots.

**February 29, 2020 – Happy Camp Canyon\*No Dogs Allowed 🚫**

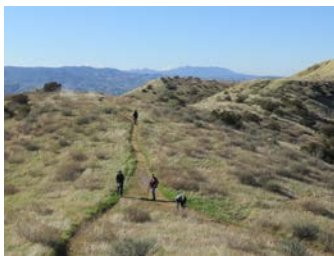
8 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (~750' elevation gain/loss)

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, "a lush riparian oak woodland with an intermittent stream." We'll then follow an old ranch road eastward as it rises gradually in the canyon bottom between Oak Ridge and Big Mountain. When we reach a pleasant oak grove with a picnic table and hitching rails we'll take a rest-and-snack break after which we'll return the way we came to the parking lot.

Meet at **8 AM** in the parking lot, to the south of Donut Delite, located on the north east corner of the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch/snack and sunscreen. Wear boots.

**HIKE REPORTS**

**December 28, 2019 – Chivo Canyon Loop**



18 hikers met on a chilly early-winter morning in Simi Valley near the mouth of Chivo Canyon in the Marr Ranch Open Space in northeast Simi Valley. After we "dropped" into Chivo Canyon, we hiked northward along the old Chivo Canyon (dirt) Road, passing a large oil seep along the way. At 0.7 mile we turned left (west) and entered a side canyon where we followed a loop trail as it climbed westward toward an overlook of Tapo Canyon that is now off-limits.

We enjoyed the green surroundings and occasional blooming plants; before long we removed our heavy outer clothing as the morning began warming thanks to the clear sunny sky. As we completed the loop, we passed through a pleasant oak woodland that has largely survived wildfires.

Returning to Chivo Canyon we continued north to the beginning/end of the abandoned Marr Ranch Road and followed the "Buckhorn Trail" portion of it to the top of the ridge on the east side of Chivo Canyon where we had a sweeping nearly 360-degree view of the entire area including the snow-capped peaks of the Topa Topa Mountains to the northwest. We then continued south along the ridge on the Marr Ranch Road until we reached "Four Points," where most of us continued south on the Cliff Trail along the cliffs overlooking Chivo Canyon until the trail (an old road) dropped steeply to Cottonwood Drive. We returned a short distance to our vehicles having completed a very pleasant 6.8-mile hike with a total gain/loss of about 1,500'. Those who didn't continue along the Cliff Trail, "dropped" back down into Chivo Canyon at Four Points and then returned along the canyon bottom.

**January 4, 2020 – The Hummingbird Trail and Rocky Peak**



18 hikers assembled at the on-street parking area at the north end of Kuehner Drive at the trailhead (1,175') for the Hummingbird Trail (just outside the gate into Hummingbird Ranch) on what promised to be a nice day for hiking. The morning was a bit chilly as we started our hike, but we quickly warmed up as we began our 2.4-mile eastward climb to the Rocky Peak Fire Road. The trail passed through (and on) a variety of imposing rock formations along the way including very large boulders and giant slabs of sandstone rock, many with small "caves."

As we gained elevation the views of the area expanded and were enhanced by the clear sky (thanks to recent strong winds). The trail continues to be damaged by bicycle riders who (without permission) create "bandit trails" that cut steeply through the pleasant original switchback trail; the "bandit trails" make it nearly impossible to discern the original trail at many intersections.

### January 4, 2020 – The Hummingbird Trail and Rocky Peak - continued

When the group reached the fire road (2,100'), two of the hikers decided to return to the trailhead and did so. The other hikers continued on by following the well-maintained fire road northward along with a variety of bikers, runners and other hikers while enjoying the sweeping views of eastern Simi Valley, the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills. After reaching the customary viewpoint (2,624') near Rocky Peak (2,715'), there were panoramic views in all directions, including snow-capped peaks in both the Topatopa Mountains and the San Gabriel Mountains, the San Fernando Valley and the hazy outline of Santa Cruz Island. After taking a short break, we retraced our route and reached the trailhead having completed an 8.4-mile hike with about 2,200' of elevation gain/loss on a beautiful morning for hiking.

### January 11, 2020 – Johnson Motorway to Rocky Peak\*



12 hikers met at the trailhead on Iverson Road just outside the gated southern entrance to Indian Springs Estates in Chatsworth on a chilly winter morning. After following the easement through the upscale gated community, we reached the beginning of the unpaved Johnson Motorway (once a toll road).

The trail (an old dirt and sandstone roadbed) rose westward until it met a short "driveway" leading north to the ruins of the ranch house that was built by Ann and Neils Johnson who were the first English-speaking homesteaders in the San Fernando Valley; they had built their primary home in "Chatsworth Park" in the 1870's. Leaving the ruins, we followed the Johnson Motorway as it passed through a landscape of dramatic rock formations, climbing steadily, but not steeply, toward the Rocky Peak Fire Road. We soon warmed up thanks to the direct sunlight and our body's generation of heat as we hiked uphill. After 3.5 miles we reached the fire road where we took a short break. We then headed southward along the Rocky Peak Fire Road enjoying views of interesting rock formations and Simi Valley to the west. A short spur trail led us to an overlook of the San Fernando Valley near Rocky Peak. We soon retraced our route downhill back to our vehicles and returned home having completed a pleasant 9-mile hike with about 1,900' of total elevation gain/loss.

### January 17, 2020 – "After the Holidays" Party



Ursula Christie again welcomed us into her beautifully decorated home for our annual potluck holiday party. The participants quickly took advantage of the rare opportunity to spend non-hiking time with "old" friends as small conversational groups formed and re-formed to trade news of each other's recent activities and discuss plans for future activities. Soon the various culinary delights could no longer be ignored so we sat down together and began sampling the plentiful – and mostly healthy – delicacies including rarely seen dragon fruit. As usual, everyone looked even better than usual (hiking gear) in their holiday dress. After finishing our sit-down dinner (during which it was hard not to overeat!), we continued hobnobbing before taking our leave with holiday well wishes and promises to see one another soon. Not surprisingly, we had been unable to devour all of the food that the guests had brought so there were some delightful "leftovers" to take home. We are all grateful for this wonderful opportunity to spend time with good friends, especially Ursula, who is truly one-of-a-kind.

### January 18, 2020 – Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail

The January Trail Blazers trail work party was held on the upper portion of the Lower Stagecoach Trail. Five workers met at the eastern end of the Corriganville Parking lot at 8:00 AM. After a short tool safety talk and work description, we carpooled from the parking lot to the upper trailhead on Santa Susana Pass Road.

Work consisted of filling in ruts from erosion in the trail center and building water bars to divert water off the trail. We worked from 8:00 AM to Noon. Working down trail until almost reaching the second creek crossing, we managed to fill eroded sections on about one third of the trail length. A large bag of trash was also collected and carried out.



Many thanks to Johnny Contreras of Boy Scout troop 622, his father David Contreras, Martin Goey, new Trailblazers member Norma Perez and John Sabol.

## THE LAST REFUGIUM AND ECHOES OF THE PAST - Part I

### INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows that the first visitors and residents of Simi Valley were Chumash Indians. Indeed, some of our place names have Chumash origins. These include "Simi" and "Tapo." Some Chumash names come down to us as Spanish translations, and others as English translations of the Spanish forms, which may have been translations from the Chumash. Most of the Chumash died of diseases brought in by the Spanish. Others were assimilated into the Spanish/Mexican culture and intermarried - effectively becoming "Mexicans." For most, their Chumash Indian heritage was quickly forgotten and lost. The Chumash passed away as the snow to the noontide sun. The following is a tale from Simi Valley which hints of a trail from the past to the early 1980s.

### THE LAST REFUGIUM

Bud O. L. Taylor came to Ventura County in 1866 when he was six years old. After spending time in Ventura, his family moved to Nevada. In 1874 he moved to Simi Valley, where he worked as a teamster, grain rancher and cattleman. One day, during the late-1870s, while looking for cattle in the far reaches of Meier Canyon, he came upon a small cluster of Chumash huts. They were not occupied at the time. The newspaper account, the text of which was provided to me by City Historian Pat Havens, does not record where in Meier Canyon his discovery was made. However, based upon physical evidence, I am certain that I stumbled upon the site. Way back in a remote section of the canyon is a place where there is nearly always water. A nice flat area is present near the water. It is possible that the site represented a well-hidden refugium for Indians, who wished to avoid capture into the mission system or who had escaped from the mission system and who wanted to continue to pursue their traditional way of life. During the mission and rancho periods such a remote area was unlikely to have been visited. Rancho Simi was primarily a sheep and cattle operation. There is little graze for sheep or cattle deep in the steep-walled canyon, which is covered by chaparral. Sheep were accompanied by a shepherd. They were not allowed to free range.

Notes, referring to this event, have been discovered in the archives of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History from the files of Dr. Charles Rozaire, Curator of Archaeology. They were not identified as to source, but a good guess is that the research was done by Richard Van Valkenbergh in the early 1930s. At that time he and his staff interviewed the listed informants, one of whom was Bud Taylor. Taylor remembered a band of about 35 Indians that lived in "Spring Canyon" on what is now the Brandeis-Bardin campus of the American Jewish University. He stated that they were living in brush houses (elsewhere in the notes he describes them as "grass-covered" houses) and in rock shelters (elsewhere described as two large caves) as late as 1878. One of those caves was probably one that is in another branch of Meier Canyon. He also reported that in the fall they would come down to the margins of the valley floor to gather acorns. While the various notes are somewhat confusing, they imply that they left the canyon for Ventura in 1879. However, they returned in the fall of each year to Simi to gather acorns.

When I found what I now am certain is Spring Canyon, and downstream from the suspected site of the grass-covered houses, I was greeted by an old hand painted sign about 20 feet up on the west wall of the canyon. The sign read: "Lost Canyon - discovered by Bud Taylor." I doubt that the sign could have been more than 20-30 years old. I asked Johnny Varble, the ranch manager and descendant of several pioneer families, about the sign. He said that he had no recollection of seeing it and had no memory of the story of Bud Taylor's discovery. (In his youth, he had known Bud Taylor.) Was the story of his discovery, so many years after most of the Indians were gone or self-identified as Mexican Americans, passed down within a pioneer family and somehow been commemorated? The sign itself may have been silent testimony of a day more than 140 years ago when a local rancher made a tantalizing discovery that bore witness to the last days of a group's hold on their old way of life. *To be continued in March.*

Mike Kuhn

### REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

*(Red Flag Warnings and Rain cancels the hike – No hikes on holidays)*

#### Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

During Daylight Savings Time meet at **5PM** and during Standard Time meet at **4PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead on the northern side of the Rocky Peak exit from the 118 Freeway. 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

During Daylight Savings Time meet at **6PM** in the parking lot, located to the south of Donut Delite, near the NE corner of Madera and Royal. There is no hike during Standard Time.

(Moderate - 3.07 MRT - 600' elevation gain)

#### Thursday Evening - Chumash Trail

During Daylight Savings Time 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.



## RSTB Calendar February 2020



| Sun                                               | Mon                                       | Tue                                                                          | Wed                                         | Thu                                                                                 | Fri                                                       | Sat                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   |                                           |                                                                              |                                             |                                                                                     |                                                           | 1<br>Temescal Canyon*<br>8AM<br>See Upcoming Events<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Caroline Carroll              |
| 2<br>Rocky Peak Fire<br>Road 4PM<br>See Schedule  | 3                                         | 4<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time<br><br>Rosa Park's Day                  | 5<br><br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Mona Steffen | 6<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time                                                | 7                                                         | 8<br>Solstice Canyon -<br>Sostomo Trail<br>8AM<br>See Upcoming Events<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>John Atwood |
| 9<br>Rocky Peak Fire<br>Road 4PM<br>See Schedule  | 10                                        | 11<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time                                        | 12                                          | 13<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time                                               | 14<br>Valentine's Day<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Doug Marsh | 15<br>Work Party - Mt.<br>McCoy Trail<br>8AM<br>See Upcoming Events<br>Susan B. Anthony's<br>Birthday      |
| 16<br>Rocky Peak Fire<br>Road 4PM<br>See Schedule | 17<br>Presidents'<br>Day                  | 18<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time                                        | 19<br>Club Meeting<br>5:30PM                | 20<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Mary Ann<br>Campbell | 21                                                        | 22<br>Danielson Ranch*<br>8AM<br>See Upcoming Events                                                       |
| 23<br>Rocky Peak Fire<br>Road 4PM<br>See Schedule | 24<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Connie Ankrom | 25<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>David Seifert | 26                                          | 27<br>No hike during<br>Standard Time                                               | 28                                                        | 29<br>Happy Camp Canyon*<br>8AM<br>See Upcoming Events                                                     |

**SANTA ANA WILDFIRE THREAT INDEX** - Provides a 6 day forecast of Santa Ana Winds Wildfire Threats on a color coded map  
<https://fsapps.nwcg.gov/psp/sawti/>

**CALIFORNIA FIRE WEATHER MAP** - Provides actual Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches  
<https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/communications/red-flag-warnings-fire-weather-watches/> (Scroll down to map)

\* 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/>



-----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**

| <b>Rancho Simi Trailblazers</b><br><i>A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation</i> |                         |                   |                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Executive Chair:                                                                   | Mike Kuhn               | HM (805) 583-2345 | <a href="mailto:mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com">mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com</a>           |
| Treasurer:                                                                         | To Be Announced         |                   |                                                                                              |
| Park District Liaison:                                                             | Nikki Collier           | WK (805) 584-4453 | <a href="mailto:volunteers@rsrpd.us">volunteers@rsrpd.us</a>                                 |
| Work Parties Chair:                                                                | Cheri Lanier            |                   | <a href="mailto:cheri.lanier@simitrailblazers.com">cheri.lanier@simitrailblazers.com</a>     |
| Hiking Chair:                                                                      | Mark Gilmore            | HM (805) 990-1460 | <a href="mailto:markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com">markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com</a>   |
| Vice Hiking Chair:                                                                 | Les Wilson              | HM (805) 522-2642 | <a href="mailto:les.wilson@simitrailblazers.com">les.wilson@simitrailblazers.com</a>         |
| Website:                                                                           | Mark Gilmore            | HM (805) 990-1460 | <a href="mailto:markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com">markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com</a>   |
| Ways & Means Chair:                                                                | Marty Richards          | HM (805) 526-4414 | <a href="mailto:marty.richards@simitrailblazers.com">marty.richards@simitrailblazers.com</a> |
| Membership Chair:                                                                  | Louise Pomes            |                   | <a href="mailto:louise.pomes@simitrailblazers.com">louise.pomes@simitrailblazers.com</a>     |
| Publicity Chair:                                                                   | <b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b> |                   | <b>Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345</b>                                                    |
| Newsletter Editor:                                                                 | Louise Pomes            |                   | <a href="mailto:louise.pomes@simitrailblazers.com">louise.pomes@simitrailblazers.com</a>     |