



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



The Rancho Trailblazers can always use volunteers. Here is some information on why we exist and when we started. Consider volunteering just a few hours every month.

Who are the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers?

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers is a volunteer organization of outdoor enthusiasts consisting of bikers, equestrians, hikers, and naturalists. We are totally committed to the care and protection of our natural environment for the enjoyment of all. We do this through:

- Maintenance, development, and improvement of our trail system
- Cooperative promotion between all its users
- Exploration of sensitivities through interpretive classes and organized trail activities

When were we formed?

As an organization, the Trail Blazers was formed in late 1992. Our first major activity as a group was to participate in the California Trail Days by clearing and cutting a trail on the Hummingbird Creek property; property which had been recently acquired by The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.

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
sweat shirt \$18



New Members

Tere Trabert
Rick & Deborah Bradd
Sandra Richeson
Christine & Barry Porter
Kerrie Stiles
Robert and Bonnie Bastian
Ann-Marie & Nancy Calderone
Cyndee Zahorik

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at <http://www.rsrpd.org> to see what is happening next!



Our February work party was conducted on the Lower Stagecoach Trail in Corriganville Park. Participants included John Sabol, Janev Veetil and his son Athul Janev, Bart Hibbs, Martin DeGoey and Mike Kuhn. Thanks everyone for the good work.

RSTB CLUB MEETING

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

March 20, 2013

Upcoming Events

March 2nd

Devil Canyon, Browns Canyon Road, Rocky Peak Fire Road, Las Lajas Canyon

9.5 miles one-way - Moderate (1,250' elevation gain/loss) short car shuttle - **8AM**

March 9 - Joughin Ranch to Oat Mountain + optional walkabout

7.5 MRT - Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,800' gain/loss) Optional 6 MRT walkabout - Easy (500' elevation gain/loss) - **8AM**

March 16th - Work Party - **8AM** - Lower Stagecoach

March 20th - Club Meeting Meet – **7PM**

March 23rd - Tierra Rejada Park exploratory hike - 8 MRT - Moderate (1,700' elevation gain/loss) - **8AM**

March 30th - Edison Road, Albertson Motorway, Upper Las Virgenes Trail

9 Mile "lollipop loop" - Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,700' elevation gain/loss) – **8AM**

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.

ECHOES OF THE PAST PART II

The ancestral Chumash Indians were present in California for at least 15,300 years prior to the settlement of coastal California by peoples of European culture. Then they were gone. No full-blooded Chumash remain. However, many families are present who are descendants of the Chumash, along with many other biological strains of the family of man. Yet there are some remnants of the Chumash presence in the form of place names, including names that we might never have thought originated with the Chumash. Remember, nearly all of the people who were on the land during the Spanish/Mexican period of settlement were Chumash Indians. They became the vaqueros and the sheepherders and represented nearly all of the laborers at the missions and the ranchos. Even most of the ranch hands originally employed by the Gilibrands were Chumash Indians. By the 1880s their primary language was Spanish and they had begun to speak English as well – still, many remembered their native tongue. Eventually, knowledge of the Chumash language slipped away altogether as the “old ones” passed away.

Let's start with purely Chumash names:

Simí, Shimiji, Shimiya – This was the name of the village at the western end of the valley. It appears to have been used too for the area from Santa Susana Pass on the east, to just east of Somis on the west. That area was known as “the Simi” and is still listed on U.S. Geological Survey maps as “Simi Valley” and the “Little Simi Valley.” It is the name of our valley, the Spanish/Mexican rancho and the city and the main drain out of the valley (the Arroyo Simi). The name, I believe, refers to cirrus clouds, which are harbingers of storms. The name originates from Indian residents of the Oxnard Plain, who, according to two Chumash Indian informants of John Peabody Harrington, would not start a journey to “the Simi” when those “thread-like wind clouds” were present in the sky over the Tapo extending down to the valley. Prior to about 1,000 A.D. Simi was only seasonally occupied.

Ta'apu – This was the name of the largest village in this area and the only village with a resident *wot* (chief) at the beginning of the historic period. It is the origin of the names Tapo Canyon, Tapo Canyon Road and Tapo Street (Earlier “Tapo Road”). We do not have any ethnography of the meaning of *Ta'apu*. (Alfred L. Kroeber listed the word as meaning “Yucca,” however, it is clear from the work of Jan Timbrook, *Chumash Ethnobotany* [2007], p. 226, that that explanation is in error. *Somna* – This was the name of a Chumash village west

of “the Simi.” The name means “big *barranca*.” The name is preserved today as Somis – still located in the area of the village of Somna at the big *barranca*. There was a *somis* near Ojai. According to Applegate, that word refers to the “water of the scrub oak.” The place name “Somis” seems to have become associated with what has become the community of Somis by the 1850s.

Kimichaq – This was a Chumash Indian village in Happy Camp Canyon, northwest of Moorpark. The village controlled a major part of the regional trade in fused shale, a stone tool material with a conchoidal fracture from which arrowheads and other stone tools were manufactured. During the early days of the missions, Indians from the village generally were listed by the padres as being from the village of *Quimisa* or *Quimisac*. While we don't know the meaning of the name of the village, it is preserved today in the name of the street at the western end of the valley, which runs from Los Angeles Avenue into Oak Park – Quimisa Road.

Kashiwey – This word means “the pass” and refers to Santa Susana Pass.

Hi'im – This name was given as a place in the Simi by two informants of John Peabody Harrington. One said it means a “mystery” and is located at the eastern end of Simi. The term mystery implies that it was a sacred place, such as a rock art site. The other informant said that it was located in the hills between Simi Valley and the Tierra Rejada Valley. The meaning of the *Ventureño* Chumash word is “storage basket.” This suggests that the actual place may have looked like an inverted storage basket. The large rock on the western side of the southern end of Kuehner Drive or Mt. McCoy or another hill in the vicinity of Mt. McCoy may be possible candidates. Since “storage basket” was also used as a metaphor for the womb and for sacred caves, it may have referred to a rock art site in the Susana Knolls.

Ka'alishaw kashup – This name means “hot earth.” The spot or spots were located in Happy Camp Canyon northeast of central Moorpark. A section of Happy Camp Canyon contains “fused shale” – which was formed by the melting of sedimentary rock while petroleum burned beneath the surface. According to the Strathearns, even during the historic period there was a place in the canyon where the ground was too hot to sit on. *Sholkoho'on* – Applegate (1975) lists this name from the Harrington notes as “a village near Simi” – possibly the village site that was located in Moorpark. No baptisms from the village are listed in the records of the San Fernando Mission. We do not know the meaning of the name. These were some of the places, so what about some of the trails? Here I just want to make a point. Trails used by the

Chumash were usually named for where they were going. The Chumash were a practical people. We do the same thing. Los Angeles Avenue ran from Saticoy to downtown Los Angeles through Simi Valley. The north-south thoroughfare in Thousand Oaks is Moorpark Road. We have Madera Road – which ran to “Rancho Madera,” i.e., Wood Ranch.

In any case, there was a Simi Road between the Conejo Valley and the village of *Simí*. That road ran south along present day Madera Road, through *Cañada Verde* and south along the western boundary of the old Wood Ranch. Until the road over the Norwegian Grade was built, that was the way between the two valleys. That same road, by the same name, is described in an 1834 report to Mexico of the precinct of the Santa Barbara Presidio. It undoubtedly came down to us from the name of the Chumash trail between the Conejo Valley and the village of *Simí*.

The trails to the village of *Ta'apu* ran up the two Tapo Canyons – one north from Simi Valley and the other south from the village of Kamulus (modern day Camulos Ranch). Yes, there are two Tapo Canyons - one on each side of the mountain range - for they marked the trails to the village of *Ta'apu*.

The trail to the village of *Kimichaq* (*Quimisa* to the Spanish) from Simi Valley was the *Kimichaq* Trail. During the Spanish/Mexican period, it became the Quimisa Road (from that same 1834 report) even though it then simply ran west out of Simi Valley along the Arroyo Simi. Today there is a short little road between West Los Angeles Avenue and Oak Park, which is located north of the railroad near the Ventura County animal control facility. Somehow the name Quimisa hung on.

Lower Happy Camp Canyon was called *Cañada de Somis* during the Mexican period. It was the trail from the village of *Kimichaq* to the village of *Somna*.

The name Castaic comes down to us from the name of the Chumash Indian village of *Kashtiq*, which was located near Lebec next to Castac Lake. (When first referenced by Spanish visitors, the village was described as being next to an alkali flat.) The name Castaic is displaced because the name of the trail to the village was named for the village to which the trail led. That trail started down in the Castaic area.

Then there are the Spanish language names on the land. What has become apparent is that many, if not most, of the Spanish names that have come down to us are probably of Chumash origin. Some of those names have now been translated into English. Some examples are:

Tierra Rejada (*Tierra Rajada*) – means

February 2nd - Griffith Park: Mt. Hollywood Trail from Ferndell Park

11 hikers gathered at the carpool point in Simi Valley on a cool overcast morning and then headed to Ferndell Park (600') near the southwest corner of Griffith Park. The hike began serendipitously on the Mt. Hollywood Trail (rather than the Observatory Trail) and soon began climbing northward to Western Canyon Drive near the Griffith Park Observatory (1,131') in a mile or so. The hike continued northward through the Berlin Forest, then crossed the Mt. Hollywood Drive tunnel and followed another dirt fire road as it wound its way uphill to the Mount Hollywood overlook (1,625'), the highest point in Griffith Park. It afforded a surprisingly clear 360-degree view of the surrounding area: the Los Angeles basin, the San Fernando Valley, and the San Gabriel Mountains. We then embarked on the westerly portion of the hike, heading north and then west (passing near Mt. Bell and Mt. Chapel) via a combination of dirt fire road and steep narrow single-track trail to the top of Mt. Lee (1,680'), just above the famous Hollywood sign. Shortly before reaching Mt. Lee we encountered the aftermath of a helicopter rescue. We returned to the Griffith Park Observatory a different way via the Mulholland Trail and paved Mt. Hollywood Drive; we then followed the Lower Observatory Trail back down to Ferndell Park. Happy, but a bit weary, we headed home having completed an 11-mile figure-8 loop hike with 2,014' of elevation gain/loss.

February 10th - Johnson Motorway to Rocky Peak



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

The rain the night before had not only created crisp clear air; it had left rarely-seen snow on the slopes of Oat Mountain as well as patches of snow and ice on the slopes of the Rocky Peak ridge. 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 built their 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. 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 both Simi Valley and the San Fernando Valley. Upon reaching the short trail leading eastward to Rocky Peak, we made our way over to the peak where we enjoyed panoramic views of the surrounding area, including snow atop distant peaks in the San Gabriel Mountains. We retraced our route downhill back to our vehicles and returned home having completed a terrific 9.5-mile hike with about 1,800' of total elevation gain.

February 12th - Whiteface Mountain Exploratory Hike



16 hikers (including several new-to-the-group hikers) met in the parking lot at Big Sky Park on a pleasantly cool morning, determined to scale Whiteface Mountain just north of the Big Sky housing development in Simi Valley. Once ready, we walked up to the nearby trailhead on the south side of the large water tank and began climbing

the ridge to the northwest of the softball fields. The trail quickly led upward to a narrow, but level, path (with drop-offs on both sides) leading northeast to the main trail heading north. The possibility of a serious fall kept our attention riveted to the trail. We then climbed steeply until the trail

leveled off again and then dropped into a hidden bowl as it approached the final lengthy ascent. This final section presented some steep Class 2 stretches that required careful maneuvering. Eventually we found ourselves atop Whiteface Mountain with panoramic views of the city and the surrounding mountainous terrain. We hiked to the east for better views of the Tapo Canyon area and then embarked on the exploratory part of the hike. We followed fire roads through the picturesque countryside which was green as a result of winter rains, enjoying distant views of the Simi Hills and the Santa Monica Mountains. We headed home with a sense of accomplishment, having completed a 10-mile hike with 1,900' of elevation gain.

(continued from page two)

"cracked earth." The Chumash name for the valley was *ka'altish'eutsh'eu kashup*. It too means "cracked earth." The clayey soils of the Tierra Rejada Valley develop deep wide cracks during the summer as the ground dries out.

Alamos Canyon (*Cañada de los Alamos*) - "Alamos" refers to Sycamore trees. Several valleys around Simi carry the names of trees. These may have a Chumash origin, however, there is no direct evidence to support this. Bus Canyon on the Bridle Path Homeowners' Association open space preserve was called *Cañada Aliso*. *Aliso* means sycamore. There is Sycamore Canyon on the Wood Ranch. There was *Cañada de los Alisos*, later Big Sycamore Canyon, which is now called Meier (a misspelling of the name "Maier.") Canyon. There is Oak Canyon, a tributary of Long Canyon. Brea Canyon (*Cañada de la Brea*) - Located due north of the historic village of Simi. "Brea" is a heavy petroleum that seeps out of the ground. There are major seeps in Brea Canyon. The village of Simi controlled some of the *brea* trade with other Indian villages. Brea was used for many purposes by the Chumash.

The Hummingbird's Nest Ranch (*El Nido de la Chupa Rosa*) - The Spanish translates as "the nest of the sucking bird" and reflects the Mexican name for hummingbirds. The name clearly is of Chumash origin, because references to the "nest of a bird" referred to a sacred place. Birds could fly to the spirit world. Hummingbirds were frequently used as "dream helpers" by Chumash individuals. It made them swift and courageous. Other examples of this includes the "nest of the eagle" (*kaspāt kaslo'w*), located on a "mountain west of San Fernando Valley" (Applegate, 1975), and the blue herons nest in the Ojai.

Even "Burro Flat" probably comes to us from the Chumash. The place had the Spanish name of *Putrero del Burro*. (A proper spelling would be *Potrero*.) This phrase refers to "the pasture of the burro." It appears that the reference is to a shaman's cave with an equine image that is located on Burro Flat. The reference to "the pasture of the burro" represents the same oblique reference to a sacred place as "nest of a bird."

As I have noted here, some names either directly or indirectly from the Chumash have changed and are in danger of being forgotten. Big Sycamore Canyon - now Meier Canyon - is one of those. Another is *Cuchillo de Huarace* (properly *Huarache*), which is now called "Whiteface." The name means "sandal escarpment" and seems to imply that if you are going to go over the trail, which crosses a saddle just east of Whiteface, you better wear sandals. (The Chumash only wore sandals when they were going to go on a long trip or over rough ground.) The name seems to have changed to Whiteface sometime during the early 1940s.

There are a number of other place names that have come down to us from the Chumash. However, those mentioned here are the main place names that are still more or less with us. A review of these names gives us a sense of the geography of the Chumash and how they viewed their environment.

Mike Kuhn
7-4-06 (revised 2-26-13)



RSTB Calendar March



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | 1 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Roger Steffen | 2 Devil Canyon 8AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Martin DeGoev |
| 3 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule | 4 | 5 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule | 6 | 7 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule | 8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Colleen Janssen Bonnie Bastian | 9 Joughin Ranch to Oat Mountain + optional walkabout 8AM See Schedule |
| 10 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM  See Schedule | 11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Pat Peters | 12 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule | 13 | 14 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule | 15 | 16 Work Party - Lower Stagecoach 8AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Athul Janev |
| 17 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> David Ritzinger | 18 | 19 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Robert Bastian | 20 Club Meeting 7PM See Schedule <i>Everyone Welcome to attend!</i> | 21 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule | 22 | 23 Tierra Rejada Park exploratory hike 8AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Collette Bertrand Judy Cohen |
| 24 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule | | 26 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule | 27 | 28 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule | 29 | 30 Edison Road, Upper Las Virgenes Trail 8AM See Schedule |
| 31 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule |  |  |  |  |  |  |



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 HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **5 PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. 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 **6 PM** in the parking lot, to the south of Donut Delite, located on the north east side of the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road. (Moderate - 3.0 MRT - 675' elevation gain)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** 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 end of Flanagan Drive. (Moderate to Strenuous - 5.4 MRT - 1,210' total elevation gain.)

MARCH HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

March 2nd

Devil Canyon, Browns Canyon Road, Rocky Peak Fire Road, Las Lajas Canyon

9.5 miles one-way - Moderate (1,250' elevation gain/loss) short car shuttle

Meet at the trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

Directions to trailhead: Take the 118 to the Yosemite Ave exit. Head north 1/3 mile (passing McDonald's) to the stop sign at Alamo Street. Continue 0.85 mile north on Yosemite Ave to the stop sign at Evening Sky Drive. Turn right (east) and drive 0.5 mile to the signed trailhead. Park on either side of the street. [View website for more information](#)

March 9th

Joughin Ranch to Oat Mountain + optional walkabout

7.5 MRT - Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,800' gain/loss) Optional 6 MRT walkabout - Easy (500' elevation gain/loss)

NOTE: There will be an option for an easy "walkabout" atop Oat Mountain of up to an additional six miles round-trip with an additional 500' of elevation gain/loss before descending to the parking lot. Meet at the trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots. **Directions to trailhead:** Take Hwy 118 to the De Soto Avenue exit in Chatsworth. Drive. Stop at the lower section of the parking lot and pay the **\$3.00 parking fee** at the "iron ranger" next to the road. [View website for more information](#)

March 16th

Work Party - Lower Stagecoach

Meet at the eastern end of the Corriganville parking lot at **8 AM**. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail. Wear sturdy boots. Tools will be provided. As always, you are welcome to work for a shorter time period if you desire.

March 20th

Club Meeting

7 PM - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

March 23rd

Tierra Rejada Park exploratory hike

8 MRT - Moderate (1,700' elevation gain/loss)

Meet at the trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots.

Directions to trailhead: Take Hwy 118 to the Madera Road exit in Simi Valley. Drive south on Madera Road 0.9 mile to its intersection with Tierra Rejada Road (at a traffic light). Turn right (west) onto Tierra Rejada Road and drive 0.6 mile to its intersection with Stargaze Place. [View website for more information](#)

March 30th

Edison Road, Albertson Motorway, Upper Las Virgenes Trail

9 Mile "lollipop loop" - Moderate-to-Strenuous (1,700' elevation gain/loss)

Meet at the trailhead at **8 AM**. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots. **Directions to trailhead:** Take Hwy 118 to the Tapo Canyon Road exit in Simi Valley. [View website for more information and for more detailed directions](#)

* 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.** <http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Executive Chair: | Mike Kuhn | HM (805) 583-2345 | hannahmike@me.com |
| Treasurer: | Craig Malin | | |
| Park District Liaison: | Colleen Janssen | WK (805) 584-4453 | volunteers@rsrpd.us |
| Work Parties Chair: | VOLUNTEER NEEDED | | Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345 |
| Hiking Chair: | Mark Gilmore | HM (805) 529-5581 | markinthepark@sbcglobal.net |
| Vice Hiking Chair: | Les Wilson | HM (805) 522-2642 | les.wilson@roadrunner.com |
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| Publicity Chair: | VOLUNTEER NEEDED | | Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345 |
| Newsletter Editor: | Linda Mann | | linda.martins.mann@simitrailblazers.com |

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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 _____ Birth Month _____ Day _____

Family memberships: Please list names and birthdays of additional family members (Month & Day Only)

Phone (provide up to two numbers): work/home/cell _____

How do you want to receive the Newsletter? Check all that apply.

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