



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS SUNDAY MORNING HIKE

We will be hiking **Mt. McCoy** Sunday Morning, **April 21st** for California Trail Days. Please see the schedule for more information.

MARCH WORK PARTY

Eight Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Chumash Trail. We again drove up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead. We then broke into 2 teams to work on separate sections of the trail. One team worked on a section of trail with many large rocks. A rock bar was utilized to remove some of the larger rocks and smaller rocks were used to fill the areas between the boulders too large to move. Finally, wheelbarrows of dirt were pored over the top to finish the tread. Further down, the second team continued work on the steep section with round rocks just below the halfway point. Lopping was also done on the lower half of the trail.

We worked from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and met at Chuy's on our way home. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoy, Tom Frye, Mike Kuhn, Louise Pomes, Chuck Portoghesi, and John Sabol.



CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS WORK PARTY

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held in conjunction with CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS on **Saturday, April 20**, again on the **Chumash Trail**. This work party will continue repair of the upper portion of the trail.

Meet at the trailhead at the end of Flanagan Drive in Simi Valley at 8:00 AM. We will work a total of 6 hours, from **8:00 AM to 2:00 PM**. Hope to see you there.

THE SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAINS

The name Santa Susana was given to the pass at the eastern end of Simi Valley early during the period of Spanish exploration. The name has been applied to the mountains at the eastern end of the valley that are dominated by massive sandstone outcropping. These same features are those of the pass area.

Cont. in Col. 3

BACKPACKING TRIP

Our spring backpacking trip is scheduled for **May 3rd - 5th**, at **Bear Creek** in the Sespe. If you would like to go, please let me know before the last week in April.

Arlene Altshuler

RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the
Community Center
Room B-1
1692 Sycamore Drive
At 7:00 PM
On
Wednesday, April 17th.

Cont. from Col. 2

The U.S. Geological Survey lists the area of massive sandstone outcropping north of the pass as the Santa Susana Mountains. The hills west of the Santa Susana Mountains are listed as Oak Ridge and Big Mountain. The hills on the southern side of the valley are listed as the Simi Hills.

The first federal survey of the Simi Valley area was done in 1858. The original map was recorded on tracing linen and is now mounted on one of the interior walls of the Simi Adobe at the Strathearn Historic Park. (Robert E. Harrington relocated the map during the late 1920s - thank you Mr. Harrington!)

On that map the hills south of Simi Valley, what we now refer to as the Simi Hills, are labeled as the "Santa Susana Mountains." Today, however, we call the mountains on the northern side of the valley the Santa Susana Mountains. Did the name Simi Hills develop during the Anglo-American period of settlement or does the present-day application of the name Santa Susana to the hills on the northern side of the valley represent an error?

I suspect that the Spanish/Mexicans had little focus on the name "*Simi*," and that they may have called the mountains which surround Simi Valley the Santa Susana Mountains. The Chumash Indians did not seem to have given names to mountain ranges the way we do, rather, names were given to features. The name "*kasi'wey*" has survived as the Chumash name for Santa Susana Pass. The name is translated as "the pass." This situation, if true, may reflect their more limited global view, which in effect was focused on their more immediate environment. In the absence of a Chumash name for the mountains, the Spanish name remained.

It is all very confusing. Not surprisingly, few people that live here have a firm notion of what to call the mountains that surround the valley. I am not sure that there will ever be a universally accepted convention.

Mike Kuhn

DISASTER AT SEA

Chumash culture was based on the perception that people acquired supernatural power and that that power could be used for either good or for evil. Above all, acquired power must be respected, honored and feared. When the Spanish came on the scene, with horses, firearms, domesticated crops (many of which from the New World), metal, etc., the Chumash perceived that they had undreamed of power. They were to be honored, followed and respected. Yes, feared too. The Chumash placed great confidence in the priests.

Those men were at the head of the universe and were the spokesmen of the universal spirit. The following story illustrates the respect and blind faith placed by the Indians in the Mission fathers. The story reflects the arrogance of at least one priest and the unquestioning faith of the Mission Indians. The story is rivetingly tragic and a commentary on what can happen when two cultures clumsily collide. The story was told to John Peabody Harrington by Fernando Librado ("*Kitsepawit*"), who in turn heard it from Francisco "*Kuliwit*."

Sometime during the second decade of the 19th Century, Father Jose Senan ordered the Chief of the Mission La Purisima Indians, "Timiyaqaut," to take 30 tomols (the Chumash plank canoe) to San Miguel Island and bring all the Indians on the island to the mainland. (Presumably, 30 canoes was the right number to accommodate the number of Indians left on the island.) The Indians started out for the Cojo ranch on the coast. The chief ("wot") told them, "We must obey the priest."

When they reached the coast, they found the greatest storm they had ever seen raging at sea. A Chumash boatman, left to his own judgement, would never have ventured onto the water under those conditions. Nevertheless, they launched their tomols and headed for San Miguel Island. At the order of the Chief, most turned back but nearly all of the boats

Cont. in Col. 2



Gary Cremeans and Martin DeGoey taking a break on the Mt. Pinos hike.

Cont. from Col. 1

and crew were lost. Two tomols made it back to the coast. One boat was lost, but the crew survived. Another crew managed to land their tomol on the mainland. The chief and his tomol made it to San Miguel Island, to return later to the mainland. All of the others perished in the sea. Tomols usually traveled with a three man crew. One can but imagine that the loss of so many mission Indians at one time, with so many widows and fatherless children, must have put a great strain on the social and economic fabric of the community.

WHY ARE SOME EXOTIC WEEDS SO SUCCESSFUL?

Some exotic weeds are unbelievably successful in new environments. Diffuse knapweed, a thistle-like plant with a purple flower, grows in solid stands in Montana and other western states, yet it is difficult to find in its native range in the foothills of the Caucasus of the Republic of Georgia. Knapweed is not eaten by cattle and ranchers and government agencies battled it with herbicides. Botanists have frequently attributed this success to being free of natural insect predators and pathogens.

In an article in the October 20, 2000, issue of *Science* (pp. 521-523), researchers report that when knapweed is grown with new world grasses, the biomass of those

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grasses is reduced by 85 percent. When grown with grasses from their native environment, the biomass of those grasses is reduced by a more modest amount, while the biomass of the knapweed is also reduced. What the authors of the article found was that the knapweed appears to be exuding from its roots a powerful chemical that allows the knapweed to dramatically out compete its new world neighbors.

Botanists have traditionally looked for insect pests from back home to control exotic pests. The discovery of the plants own chemical warfare would seem to explain the modest success enjoyed by the introduction of new insects and other controls. This research seems to suggest that the chemical or chemicals produced by the knapweed which seem to work so well in the new world, have resulted in adaptive evolution among its long time Eurasian neighbors.

These contrasting interactive strategies between plants from different biogeographical regions have, according to the authors, some implications for ecology. First, it suggests that the plants in plant communities, such as coastal sage scrub, may be adapted to each other as well as adapted to climate, aspect, etc. Second, it conflicts with the generally held view that plant competition is not species specific. Third, it suggests that the interaction among plant species may drive natural selection in communities. Fourth, it implies that natural biological communities evolve in some way as functionally organized units. And fifth, it suggests that invasive exotic plants may use competitive mechanisms that are not present in the communities that are invaded - thus having a profound disruptive effect among long associated native species. This or similar mechanisms may account for the spectacular success in our own state of exotics species like the Mediterranean grasses, i.e., red and ripgut brome, foxtail barley, wild and slender oats, and soft chess, black and Mediterranean mus-

TAPO STREET VERSUS TAPO CANYON ROAD

The presence in Simi Valley of a Tapo Street and a Tapo Canyon Road a mere one half mile apart has long caused some confusion, especially among visitors to the valley. Street names, unlike some things, are not accidents of nature, especially when historic roots are involved. So, just how did this repeat of the name "Tapo" come to be?

This story begins sometime during the prehistoric period with the first settlers of the valley - the Chumash Indians. The best watered place in the Simi Valley area is the lower half of Tapo Canyon. Beginning where the Gillibrand Quarry office is, at the former site of a cienega, i.e., a small lake, water surfaced in the canyon in order to spill over a nearly vertical bedrock barrier. Further downstream the canyon is underlain by clayey strata, which results in year round stream flow. As a result, the primary Chumash settlement was established near what is now Tapo Canyon Park.

That village was called "*Ta'apu*" after the local yucca plant (*Yucca whipplei* ssp. *intermedia*). The yucca was very important to the Chumash in that they could get food from the plant any day of the year, in addition to providing dried seed that stored well and leaves that provided fiber.

Ta'apu was the largest village in the area and the only village with a resident chief ("*wor*") at the beginning of the historic period. In a sense, all roads led to "*Ta'apu*." The trails to the north and to the south were the "*Ta'apu* Trails." They have come down to us in the form of the names Tapo Canyon. Indeed, the canyon on the northern side of the Santa Susana Mountains which leads south from the *Tataviam* (*Alliklik*) village of *Camulos* is also named Tapo Canyon. A trail ran from *Ta'apu* to the southwest to the Chumash village of *Simi'* or *Shimiji*. Another probably ran to the

Cont. in Col. 2

Cont. from Col. 1

west to Happy Camp Canyon and the village of *Quimisas*. The Dominguez Trail ran to the east to the head of Brown's Canyon and the San Fernando Valley beyond. *Ta'apu* was the geopolitical capitol of the area.

Still another trail must have run down Tapo Canyon and then to the southeast and eventually over the Santa Susana Pass. The trail is not noted on the 1858 federal survey. If it indeed existed, it must have crossed the north-south line, which later became Tapo Street, in the general area of present day intersection with Alamo Street.

As you may have guessed, *Ta'apu* eventually became "Tapo" during the historic period. While the village of *Ta'apu* ceased to exist after about 1812 (the date of the last raid by San Fernando Mission for neophytes), Tapo persisted as a sheep herder camp and as the site of the "Tapo Adobe" sometime during the 1820s or 1830s. From 1858 on, the Tapo Adobe became the headquarters of El Rancho Simi under the De la Guerra family. As a result of the prominence of Tapo, even into the period of American settlement, the ownership of "the Tapo" was retained by Thomas Bard when most of the rest of Simi Valley was offered for sale in the late 1880s.

The 1858 federal survey established the township and range system of land division in much of Simi Valley and resulted in the layout of what eventually became the arterial street system. Tapo Street follows the boundary between Range 17 and 18 West. However, the road from Tapo persisted even when the arrival of the railroad resulted in the establishment of the steam engine watering point where the railroad, which followed Los Angeles Avenue, crossed that township boundary. The road north from the railroad station assumed the name of the road that it encountered - that is Tapo Road, which eventually became Tapo

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Cont. from Col. 2

Street. At that point, the land was becoming settled by farm families, with most property lines in the valley based on the township and range system (after all, those lines were surveyed, with the monuments available to local surveyors). The northwest-southeast portion of Tapo Road, which ran from approximately the intersection with Alamo Street to the mouth of Tapo Canyon, persisted for awhile, but eventually succumbed to the pressures of land stewardship. Present day Tapo Street north of Alamo Street was known as Marr Road until the Belwood Tract was subdivided in the late 1950s.

The mouth of Tapo Canyon was aligned with the first north-south quarter section line west of Tapo Street, so it was natural that a road developed as far south as present day Cochran Street. A drill tract from the railroad extended north to the Tapo Citrus Packing Plant but was abandoned and replaced during the late 1980s by the extension of Tapo Canyon Road south from Cochran Street to present day Guardian Avenue.

Regional transportation planners envisaged Tapo Canyon Road being extended north to State Route 126 and south to U. S. Route 101, so an interchange with the 118 Freeway was built at Tapo Canyon Road rather than at Tapo Street. Those road connects no longer are on regional plans.

So, now you have it. That is why there is a Tapo Street and a Tapo Canyon Road in Simi Valley. It stems from historic inertia with the name of the largest Indian





April

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	5	6 King James Ct. to Chesebro Cyn See Schedule
7 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Louise Pomes</i>	9	10	11 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	12	13 Las Virgenes Trail See Schedule
14 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	15 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>John Sabol</i>	16	17 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	18 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Karin Russell</i>	19	20 CA Trail Days Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule
21 Mt. McCoy 9am Hike See Schedule	22	23	24	25 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	26 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gary Cremeans</i>	27 Cloud Burst Summit See Schedule
28 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	29	30				



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- April 4 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- April 6 King James Court to Chesebro Cyn**
Moderate - strenuous 10 MRT shuttle from the China Flat trailhead near King James Court, down the Palo Comado Connector to Chesebro, past Sheep Corral, Shepard Flat, and Sulfur Springs. 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 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, wear boots.
- April 7 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- April 11 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- April 13 Las Virgenes Trail**
Easy - moderate 4.8 MRT hike with 500' elevation gain/lose. Good views of 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. Wear boots, bring hat, snack, and water.
- April 14 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- April 18 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- April 20 California Trail Days—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 – 2pm. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- April 21 Mt. McCoy Hike**
Easy to moderate 2 1/2 MRT hike. Short but scenic hike. **Meet 9am at KMart parking lot** on corner of Los Angeles and Madera, to car pool to the trail head. Bring 1 – 2 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, wear boots.
- April 25 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- April 27 Cloud Burst Summit to Buckhorn Campground**
Moderate - strenuous 5+ mile shuttle with 1300' elevation gain/loss through Cooper Canyon in the San Gabriel Mountains, with a possible detour to Cooper Canyon Falls. Expect to return late afternoon (1 1/2 hr drive one way). 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. water and snack. Wear boots.
- April 28 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm 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.

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345, WK (805)583-6776
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
SECRETARY:	KRISTA SMITH	HM (805) 404-2352
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
WORK PARTIES CHAIR:	JOHN SABOL	HM (805) 583-2541
WORK PARTIES VICE CHAIR:	BOB ALTIERI	HM (805) 526-6749
HIKING CHAIR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735
WAYS & MEANS CHAIR:	MARTY RICHARDS	HM (805) 526-4414
WAYS & MEANS VICE CHAIR:	CONNIE ANKROM	HM (805) 526-2747
COMMUNICATION / PUB.CHAIR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735

-----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(s) _____ Birth Mo. ____ Day ____

Address _____

Email Address _____ Phone wk/hm _____

How did you find out about the RSTB _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year Sept.-2001/Sept.-2002 to:
“Rancho Simi Foundation” mail it to **“RSTB, P.O. Box 630399, Simi Valley, Ca 93063-0399**
 Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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