



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



COASTAL SAGE SCRUB VS. CHAPARRAL

Coastal sage scrub is a low-growing drought-deciduous shrubby vegetation type found in the southern half of California. In the Simi Valley area, it is most common on the lower, south-facing slopes of the hills. It is sometimes confused with chaparral – indeed, it is sometimes referred to as “soft chaparral”. Coastal sage scrub usually transitions into chaparral with increased elevation or as ridgetops transition into north-facing slopes. These transition zones usually contain species common to both plant associations – an effect that is heightened by a patchwork of transitional environments occasioned by changing exposure and edaphic conditions.

Coastal sage scrub is distinguished by its smell – a pungent aroma that carries long distances and is fueled by a combination of black, purple and white sages and California sagebrush. Chaparral is characterized by shrubby evergreen species, while coast sage scrub is dominated by drought-semi-deciduous species, which lose much of their leaves during the summer and fall months. Coastal sage scrub species are shorter (typically less than five feet tall), with pale, soft leaves and some open ground between plants. Dominant species are the sages (genus *Salvia*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), chaparral yucca (*yucca whipplei ssp. Intermedia*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), lustral sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*). Coastal sage scrub can exist on drier slopes than can the evergreen chaparral shrubs.

Mike Kuhn



Endurance Boot Camp (EBC, <http://EnduranceBootCamp.com>) is the commercial enterprise of Sarita and Randy Shoemaker. EBC's goal is to help motivate people into getting into shape - thereby gaining control of their lives.

Recently, Sarita and Randy donated another \$310 to the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers. Thank you so much for your efforts to shape up our community!!

CLEAN UP AT TIERRA REJADA PARK

On **Saturday, April 7th, 2007, from 9:45am – 3:00pm**, please help with this community-supported clean up of an open space park at the west end of Simi Valley.

The local Kiwanis Clubs are coordinating this project, which will include volunteers from their members, local high school Key Club members, the community, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Help make this area clean and nice for hikers and local wildlife.

Volunteers will meet at the top of Stargaze Avenue, and walk into the park as a group. **Don't be late** or you won't know where to go. *Lunch will be provided.*

For more information, please contact Colleen Janssen at 805-584-4453, or send email to volunteers@rsrpd.us

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
April 18, 2007

*** WANTED ***

Our group needs a few volunteers. If you are interested in either of these positions, please contact Mike Kuhn.

Newsletter Editor

Someone is needed to take over the newsletter. Training is available.

Publicity Chair

We need someone to get publicity out on Trail Blazer events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 7th

Clean up at Tierra Rejada Park
 See column 2 for more information

APRIL 21st

Hummingbird Trail Work Party
 Meet at Hummingbird Trail trailhead. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

JULY 6th – 9th

Onion Valley Backpack Trip
 Trailblazer members only. Please see the web site for more information.

AUGUST 16th – 19th

Dinkey Lakes Backpack Trip
 Trailblazer members only. Please see the web site for more information.

More information on these events can be found at
<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at
markinthepark@sbcglobal.net

MARCH WORK PARTY

Four Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Chumash Trail for the March work party. There was a lot of loose cobble on the trail that made hiking difficult due to a tendency to slip on the round pebbles. So we concentrated on raking the loose stones from the trail in the section 100 yards below the one-mile marker to about 200 yards above.

Many thanks to the following workers:

Al Bandel, Alan Cueba, Mary Kirby, and John Sabol.

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held on Saturday, April 21, on the Hummingbird Trail. Meet on Kuehner Drive just north of the 118 freeway in Simi Valley at 8:00 AM. We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

John Sabol



THEY SAVED THE OAKS

Eucalyptus trees began being imported into California from Australia as early as the 1860s. They were prized as ornamentals and for possible utilitarian uses such as pier pilings and later as railroad ties. The railroads invested heavily in them, in part because they had plenty of land on which to experiment with this new crop. Alas, they didn't make good pilings or ties.

Then, in 1905 something dramatic happened which changed the fortunes of eucalyptus and native oak trees in California forever. The United States Department of Agriculture published a paper in which they predicted that eastern hardwood forests would be exhausted by the early 1920s. Consequently, the American hardwood industry, primarily furniture manufacturers, would be severely impacted. Americans rushed to find a substitute for oak, hickory, maple, etc.

Promoters quickly settled on the eucalyptus, which was rumored to be used successfully in Australia for furniture. Eucalyptus trees of many species were imported along with their seeds and were sold to investors. Tens of thousands of acres of eucalyptus trees were planted, especially the faster growing species, i.e., blue, red, and sugar gums. As economic ventures, the whole thing was a bust. The eucalyptus trees that were being used in Australia in the furniture industry were 400 year old specimens with well aged heart wood. The furniture was not very satisfactory by American hardwood industry standard. Eucalyptus of all species tended to warp and to crack. A little judicious investigation would have determined that - but then the promoters were only interested in selling trees.

While all this was going on, people in California continued to heat and cook with wood. By the 1920s wood cutters around towns like Fresno had to travel 20-30 miles away from the City centers to find oak trees to harvest to satisfy the demand for fuel wood. Before long, native oak trees in much of settled California would be gone and only a memory. Then came the eucalyptus frenzy and many farmers planted eucalyptus on part of their land. In the end, those plantings made good firewood and were quickly replaced by the rapid growth of stump sprouts. Eucalyptus trees could be had close in to urban areas and every farm had a wood lot.

As it turned out, the Department of Agriculture was wrong. The hardwood supply in the east did grow thin; prices did go up. Because of increased prices, we have yet to run out of hardwoods.

Oak trees continued to be cut to clear the land for crops and for grazing purposes. Frequent fires and livestock generally get seedling oaks. But, the advent of the eucalyptus fiasco slowed the great oak tree slaughter and helped preserve those monarchs of the west.

Eucalyptus trees, both blue and red gums, were widely used as windbreaks in California, primarily on the margins of citrus groves. In the Central Valley of California there are massive plantings of eucalyptus trees on soils that aren't even very good for grazing lands. The trees are being grown for paper pulp.

By the way, the oldest eucalyptus tree in the City - the one with the largest trunk - is located on the Hummingbird's Nest Ranch. It was probably planted by Charles Emerson Hoar during the 1870s or 1880s.

Mike Kuhn



MATILIJA

The name Matilija comes down to us from the name of a Chumash village in the Ojai Valley. Applegate (1975) renders the name as *mat'ilha* and suggests that it means "division" in the Ojai dialect of Ventureño Chumash. Gudde (1969) suggests that since the Matilija poppy was valued by the Chumash for medicinal purposes, the name may refer to the poppy. (This latter explanation seems plausible but speculative at best - especially coming from a non-anthropologist.)

The mission archives include a reference to *Arroyo de Matilija* and a *Rancheria de Matilija* on a *diseño de El Rincón* (1927). It was mentioned by Taylor as *Matiliha* (1861) and as a Spanish spelling in 1863, also as *Matiliha*. When the railroad was extended to Nordhoff (now Ojai) from Ventura in 1898, the station was given the name Matilija. Now it is applied to the name of the canyon, watershed and creek as in "the Matilija". There are also Matilija Hot Springs.

Mike Kuhn

DEATH VALLEY CAMPING/HIKING TRIP



John Sabol at the west entrance to Death Valley National Park



Ursula Christie and Michele Sumandra taking a break



Roadrunner in camp



Shasha Tan, Cliff Cameron, Betty Cameron, Margarita Marsh, and Doug Marsh at Zabriskie Point.



Ubehebe Crater



Carol Tucker and Betty Cameron in Red Wall Canyon

SIMI'S FOUR TOWNS

Another excerpt from R.E. Harrington's *Early Days of Simi Valley* (1961), pages 26-27:

"One of the questions most often asked about the Simi Valley is why there are four small business centers instead of one good sized business center. If all small centers were put together we could have one good sized town...."

"...Simi is the oldest center, in fact one of the oldest towns in the county. The Simi Valley shows on an old map made in 1858 and 59 but did not develop very rapidly until about 1888 when the Mutual Benefit Colony came into the valley. No doubt the location of the town was determined by the location of artesian water found there in abundance.

The second town, that of Santa Susana, started at the time the railroad was built through the valley, about 1904. Its location was determined by the fact that on the land which was more level there, trains could be started easier. Besides, those owning land near Simi tried to charge the railroad a good price for land for a depot, while land at Santa Susana was given to them.

The third town in the Valley, known as Santa Susana Knolls came into being about 1915. At first it was called Mortimer Park after a man named Mortimer, who first subdivided it. Originally land there was sold cheap, for week-end cabin sites, but now it is a permanent center with stores, restaurants, gas stations and a large fire station...."

"The fourth town was started about 1924 when the Simi Valley High School and the elementary school and the Methodist Church were started midway between Simi and Santa Susana. Soon stores and homes grew up around these buildings making the fourth center. It has always been called the Community Center."

Mike Kuhn

THOUSAND OAKS

No big mystery here. There are a lot of oak trees in the City of Thousand Oaks; certainly many thousands. When in the late-1970s, or possibly the early 1980s, a new main post office was built in Thousand Oaks, a whole bunch of native oak trees were cut down. I remember kidding someone that the name of the city should be changes to nine hundred and some oaks.

What is of interest with the name of the city is how we use words. Up until fairly recently, when you referred to a geographic feature with the term one thousand, it simply meant that there were too many of something to count. It didn't mean that there were really a thousand, it simply meant that there were a whole bunch. In Madera County is Thousand Island Lake, in Shasta County is Thousand Lakes Primitive Area, in Riverside County is Thousand Palms, in San Diego County is Thousand Palms Canyon, and in Shasta County is Thousand Springs. I doubt that the count is correct for any of these places.

Mike Kuhn



RSTB Calendar

April 2007



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----|--|---|---|-----|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Mike McCrary | 4 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Anne Guibor | 5 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule | 6 | 7 Towsley Canyon See Schedule |
| 8 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Louise Pomes | 9 | 10 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Allison Cameron | 11 | 12 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Glenida Billiot | 13 | 14 Eagle Springs Loop See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Cliff Cameron |
| 15 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> John Sabol | 16 | 17 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 18 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 | 19 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule | 20 | 21 Hummingbird Trail Work Party See Schedule |
| 22 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Barbara Hoff | 23 | 24 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 25 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Cody Frank Shasha Tan | 26 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Gary Cremeans | 27 | 28 Ray Miller Trail See Schedule |
| 29 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule | 30 | | | | | |



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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Long Canyon

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, 3.0 MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

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, 5.2 MRT)

APRIL HIKES

April 7th - Towsley Canyon Loop Trail**

6.5 MRT - Moderte (1670' elevation gain)

Spectacular geological formations, rugged mountain views, tar pits, canyon narrows, frothy streambeds and more. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

April 14th - Topanga Canyon State Park - Eagle Springs Loop**

6.3 MRT - Moderate (1000' elevation gain)

This loop begins in Topanga Canyon State Park. The highlight of the hike is a huge and impressive sandstone crag called Eagle Rock. We'll take a short side trip to Cathedral Rock and then return via the Musch Ranch Trail. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

April 21st - Work Party - Hummingbird Trail

Meet at Hummingbird Trail trailhead. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

April 28th - Ray Miller - La Jolla Loop**

6.5 MRT - Moderate. (1000' elevation gain)

We will start and finish at the Ray Miller Trailhead. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water, a snack and bug juice. Wear Boots.

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

 No dogs allowed on trail(s).

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.

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Executive Chair: | Mike Kuhn | HM (805) 583-2345 | hannahmike@roadrunner.com |
| Treasurer: | Peter Ely | HM (805) 523-1409 | |
| Park District Liaison: | Colleen Janssen | WK (805) 584-4453 | volunteers@rsrpd.us |
| Work Parties Chair: | | *** OPEN *** | |
| Hiking Chair: | Mark Gilmore | HM (805) 529-5581 | markinthepark@sbcglobal.net |
| Vice Hiking Chair: | John Sabol | HM (805) 583-2541 | jtsabol@sbcglobal.net |
| Website: | Mark Gilmore | HM (805) 529-5581 | markinthepark@sbcglobal.net |
| Ways & Means Chair: | Marty Richards | HM (805) 526-4414 | |
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| Newsletter Editor: | Arlene Altshuler | HM (805) 581-9735 | arlene.altshuler@mindbox.com |

-----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 to:

“Rancho Simi Foundation” mail it to “RSTB, P.O. Box 630445, Simi Valley, Ca 93063-0399

Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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