



# 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  
sweat shirt \$18



### CHUMASH USES OF WHITE SAGE

[The following information is summarized from Jan Timbrook, *Chumash Ethnobotany*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (2007), pp. 185-186.]

White sage (*Salvia apiana*, *khapshikh* in the three major dialects of Chumash, including *Ventureño*) is the tallest of the native *Salvia* species in the Simi Valley area. It can be seen in abundance along the first several hundred feet of the Long Canyon Trail. Unlike some other California Indians, none of John Peabody Harrington's Chumash consultants indicated that the Chumash gathered and ate the seed of this species.

(Continued on page 3)



### 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**

### RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's RSTB meeting will be at: Sycamore Drive Community Center 1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1 **Wednesday April 18, 2018 5:30PM** *Everyone Welcome to attend!*

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

### Upcoming Events

April 7th Santa Cruz Island \* **6:30AM**

April 14th Malibu Creek State Park \* 9 Mile Loop – Moderate to Strenuous (1,500' elevation gain) **8AM**

April 18th Club Board Meeting The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1 **Everyone Welcome to attend! 5:30PM**

April 21st Work Party – Long Canyon **8AM**

April 28th Towsley Canyon Loop \* 7.5 MRT – Moderate (1670' elevation gain) **8AM**

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

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at [www.rsrpd.org](http://www.rsrpd.org)

## February 17th – Work Party – Mt. McCoy



The Hardcore trail work group showed up today: Mike K, John, Martin, Jamie and Cheri and me. Martin didn't think carrying all the tools was enough, so he added carrying two 2"x14"X8' boards on a wheelbarrow up the hill (with some help from Jamie).

We used the boards to solve a water rut problem on two of the switchbacks going up the hill. Just a ton of hard work by Martin and John on these two projects. Mike K got ahead of us and dug out rocks in the middle of the trail that we would use later in building water run-off solutions. He also started a few water run-offs on some of the worst sections.

Jamie, Cheri and I used dead brush/tree branches to cover up some of the shortcuts that were "unauthorized". These shortcuts were created by people taking shorter routes down the hill, trying to make that downhill trip easier, but in effect, has long-term damaging effects.



When we all caught up with Mike K, he had started leveling a bad turn on one of the switchbacks. Once everyone caught up with us at Mike's spot, we now had all the help that we needed to use some more of the rocks (in addition to some other rocks that we found). Passing the rocks up to Jamie, our cooperative efforts created a very impressive rock wall. This will help to fortify this portion of the trail that was at-risk for erosion.

Cheri had also doubled up again as our Historian running around between trail work to take pictures. Some great work done today and a big thanks to everyone for all the help!

## March 24th – Conejo Mountain

15 hikers assembled at the signed "Powerline Trail"

trailhead on Via Ricardo in Newbury Park on a nice early-spring morning – the sun was out after several days of rain there were some puffy white clouds in the sky, and the temperature was perfect for hiking up a mountain. The trail began gently enough and soon afforded us with views of Old Boney Mountain to the east.



As we reached the Edison Road, we had a brief view of Camarillo and beyond to the west. We followed the Edison Road through a landscape littered with volcanic detritus to a spur road that led up to a pair of power transmission towers at



which point we regrouped and followed a "use" trail which led steeply up the eastern flank of Conejo Mountain. We were in luck since the previous days' rain had softened the dirt on the steepest section of the trail (which improved

traction), but had not made it muddy. Once we summited the eastern portion of the mountain, we could see our destination:

the highest point to the west on the mountain. We followed a "use" trail across the rock-strewn landscape to the "peak" of Conejo Mountain where we enjoyed 360-degree views of both near and distant mountains, and the Pacific Ocean.









We retraced our route to Via Ricardo and returned home having completed a very pleasant 5.3-mile hike with 1,350' of elevation gain/loss on a nice day.





# RSTB Calendar APRIL



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b>  <b>HAPPY EASTER DAY</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jesse Wolfe	<b>2</b>     <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jesse Wolfe	<b>3</b> Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>4</b>      	<b>5</b> Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>6</b>      	<b>7</b> Santa Cruz Island *  <b>6:30AM</b> See Schedule
<b>8</b> Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b>  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Louise Pomes	<b>9</b>      	<b>10</b> Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Allison Cameron	<b>11</b>      	<b>12</b> Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>13</b>      	<b>14</b> Malibu Creek State Park *  <b>8AM</b> See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Clifford Cameron
<b>15</b> Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b> See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> John Sabol	<b>16</b>      	<b>17</b> Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>18</b> Club Board Meeting The <b>Everyone Welcome to attend! 5:30PM</b>	<b>19</b> Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>20</b>      	<b>21</b> Work Party – Long Canyon <b>8AM</b> See Schedule
<b>22</b> Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b> See Schedule	<b>23</b>      	<b>24</b> Mt. McCoy Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>25</b>      	<b>26</b> Chumash Trail <b>6PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Gary Cremeans	<b>27</b>      	<b>28</b> Towsley Canyon Loop * <b>8AM</b> See Schedule
<b>29</b> Rocky Peak Fire Road <b>5PM</b> See Schedule	<b>30</b>      					

**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](http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_redflagwarning.php) (Scroll down to map)



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**P.O. Box 1231**  
**Simi Valley, CA 93062**

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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.

Mail Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Email address \_\_\_\_\_

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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(Continued from page 1)

However, they did peel and eat the young tender growing stem tips. One informant said that a deer hunter would place the leaves in his mouth so that deer could not detect his presence. Another informant indicated that acorn granaries were lined with white sage leaves – perhaps thinking that the strong aromatic qualities would repel insects and other pests. Another informant indicated that placing leave on top of one’s head would cure a headache. Another suggested that adding pounded leaves to water and drinking it would induce vomiting. The Chumash thought that vomiting would purge the body and lead to improved health.

Present-day Chumash use white sage for purification purposes at ceremonies and general gatherings. In the spring, the growing ends of stems are collected and dried. Small bundles of stems with leaves are bound with yarn. When needed, the tips are set on fire. The flames are extinguished. The bundle tips continues to smolder. Participants bath themselves in the smoke to promote spiritual balance and harmony. The bundle is then extinguished so that it can be reused. Sage bundles are often used as offerings and gifts. It should be noted that there is no mention of this practice by any of Harrington’s consultants, so it may be a post-1900 invention.

Mike Kuhn  
8-24-08

## CHUMASH USES OF WILD GOURDS

[summarized from Jan Timbrook, *Chumash Ethnobotany, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (2007), p. 63*]

Wild gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima*, *Ventureño* Chumash *mo’okh*) was used in several ways by the Chumash. They sliced and scraped the roots to use as soap. It was very strong and cleaned effectively but was very irritating. If the cloths cleaned were not thoroughly rinsed, wearers could break out in sores and swelling of the neck. Some used the gourds like lye in washing. Gourds were used as soap less commonly than other plants.

The plant was also used as a medicine. Crushed tendrils were put in water and drank as a strong, bitter purgative, or boiled and pounded roots were drank for the same purpose. This use, of course, exploited a toxic effect of the plant. The plant was also used in association with another plant as a treatment for rheumatism. An instance of nosebleed, “caused

by sorcery,” was said to have been treated successfully by having the victim snuff a strained mixture of raw gourd and water up the nose.

The Chumash made drinking cups and dippers out of gourds. However, it is possible that this practice may have begun during the Spanish/Mission period, after the introduction and use of bottle gourds by the Spanish.

Gourd rattles were used by bear shaman. The shaman hollowed out two gourds that were worn on each end of a cord that was hung around the shaman’s neck. As the bear shaman ran, the gourds made sound like that of a snorting bear with each step.

## ITINERANT SHEEP AND SHEEPHERDERS

In the days prior to about 1990 sheep and shepherders would arrive in Simi Valley each Spring and early Summer. The sheep were usually turned lose in the foothills where the land was not used for cattle. The owners of the sheep paid a modest price for the privilege of letting their stock graze the ruderal grasslands down to the ground – some revenue for the landowners. Then the sheep and their herders were gone - off to the high desert country I suppose. I remember sheep on the old Runkle, the Getty (Big Sky) and the Douglas ranches, to name a few.

One of the last flocks to graze the valley was turned lose on the Douglas Ranch. The sheep raised so much dust that it drifted over the east end of the valley and created a problem for residents there. At the time, the ranch was owned by the Casden Company. When contacted, their representative indicated that he knew nothing about any sheep and indicated that no one had permission to run sheep there. That incident occurred sometime in the 1980s.

Around the same time, someone shot and killed a shepherd in the Tierra Rejada Valley. The murder, as I recall, was never solved. Shortly afterward, a shepherd in Sand Canyon was encountered purportedly carrying a Thompson submachine gun. I am sure that the herder felt very alone and vulnerable. I wonder if the coyotes stayed away?

Mike Kuhn  
12-24-04

## HISTORIC INERTIA AND HISTORIC FRICTION

What will Simi Valley look like in 100 years? Certainly, somewhat different.

There will be bigger trees. However, the City will look surprisingly familiar because most of the present property lines will still be there. As the City’s residential areas were laid out, “local streets” were generally created with 36 feet of pavement on 56 foot rights of way - that included curbs, gutter, parkways and sidewalks. That was enough room for cars to be parked on both sides of the streets with automobiles moving in two directions at 25-35 miles per hour. “Collector streets,” with higher traffic volumes, have 40 feet of pavement. Arterial streets are wider, and there are some variations on these standard “street plates.” Then, too, most of the developable land on the valley floor has already been developed.

So, the automobile is well accommodated. But, what will we have or need in another 100 years? Whatever it is, we will pretty much have what we have now. That is “historic inertia.” If you look at many European cities that are 500 or more years old, most of the inner city streets are little more than alleyways. That is “historic friction.” They’re stuck with what they have just as we will be 100 years from now.

Our zoning ordinance has a standard of a 20-foot rear yard in residential areas. Some variations are allowed - but infrequently. We want back yards. We say it’s so the kids have a protected environment in which to play, we want our barbecues and room for a pool and that patio cover - a little private outdoor space. However, the origin of the 20 foot minimum rear yard requirement in zoning codes was so that there could be a respectable olfactory separation between the home and the outhouse. The outhouses are gone, but we have found other uses for back yards.

Mike Kuhn  
11-15-04





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## REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKE (Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

### Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **5PM** 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 4PM during standard 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.)

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## APRIL HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

### April 7th Santa Cruz Island \*

Boat to/from the island (Scorpion Anchorage); various day-hiking choices on the island. We'll take a 20-mile Island Packers boat trip from Ventura Harbor across the Santa Barbara Channel to the Scorpion Anchorage near the eastern end of Santa Cruz Island (the largest of the eight Channel Islands off the coast of southern California). The boat will arrive on the island about **9:00AM** and we'll depart from the island at **4:30PM** - **NOTE:** Participants must arrive at the Island Packers facility in Ventura Harbor by **7:00AM** on the departure date (we should arrive back at Ventura Harbor around **5:30PM**). We're limiting the size of our group to no more than 19 persons. To make your reservations, please RSVP at: <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/index.php/rsvpmaker/santa-cruz-island-2018-04-07/>

### April 14th Malibu Creek State Park \*

9 Mile Loop – Moderate to Strenuous (1,500' elevation gain) Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Our hike will start (and end) in Malibu Creek State Park at the point at which the Grasslands Trail crosses Mulholland Highway (just west of Las Virgenes Road). We'll follow the North Grasslands Trail and the Liberty Canyon Trail as we head north through the Liberty Canyon Natural Preserve. Then we'll head south as we hike up a north-south ridge on the Phantom Trail which provides panoramic views of Malibu Creek State Park and the surrounding mountains. After we descend from the ridge we'll cross Mulholland Highway and hike the Cistern Trail, the Lookout Trail, and Crags Road to the Rock Pool where we'll take a lunch/rest break. Then we'll cross Malibu Creek and pass by the Visitor Center to hike the Chaparral Trail to Mott Road where we'll visit the Mott Adobe Ruins before completing our loop hike along Crags Road and the Grasslands Trail.

### April 18th Club Meeting - **Everyone Welcome to attend!**

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

### April 21st Work Party – Long Canyon


Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will do trail grooming and widening, and cutting back some brush from the trail head to the trail crossing of Sunrise Trail. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended. **Directions:** From State Route 118 either go south on First Street to end of Long Canyon Road or south on Madera Road to south end of Wood Ranch Parkway. Trailhead parking lot is southwest of intersection of Wood Ranch Parkway and Long Canyon Road.

### April 28th Towsley Canyon Loop \*

7.5 MRT – Moderate (1670' elevation gain)

Meet at **8AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots. Incredible show of wildflowers, spectacular geological formations, rugged mountain views, tar pits, canyon narrows, frothy streambeds and more. Meet at **8AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

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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/>