



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



## California Trail Days a Huge Success!



California Trail Days was celebrated on Saturday, April 16. The entire North Ridge Trail was rehabilitated by approximately 300+ volunteers, including some 250 volunteers from 10 wards from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have never had such a large turnout for a work party. Before the work, the trail was very narrow, overgrown with grass, and about to disappear altogether. Now most of the trail is 3-4 feet wide and is nicely defined. Many thanks to the church volunteers and the good work of Colleen Janssen of the park district. It was a good day with beautiful weather. No one was injured, and we had a wonderful group of people.



### RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be at:  
Sycamore Drive Community Center  
1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1  
**7:00PM** – May 18, 2011



### Welcome, New Members!

Susan Mirau  
Ben LaParne  
Peter and Sung Limb  
Janev Veettil, Dilika Puthalath,  
Athul Janev, Anand Janev

### Save the Date!

**National Trails Day Work Party  
Saturday, June 4**

To register and learn more:  
[simitrailblazers.com/activities](http://simitrailblazers.com/activities)

### 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



## Upcoming Events

### May 7th - East Canyon to Mission Point\*

8 MRT – Moderate  
(1,400' elevation gain/loss)

### May 14th - Ray Miller Trail - La Jolla Canyon Loop\*

6.5 MRT – Moderate  
(1,000' elevation gain)

### May 18th - Club Meeting

### May 21st - Work Party - Upper Stagecoach Road

### May 28th - Santa Paula Canyon\*

8.1 MRT - Moderate  
(1,000' elevation gain)

### June 4th – National Trails Day Work Party - Corriganville

More information about these events can be found on Page 5 and on the Activities page at <http://simitrailblazers.com>



## CHUMASH USES OF COFFEEBERRY

The following is summarized from Jan Timbrook, *Chumash Ethnobotany*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (2007), pp. 164-165, with editorial comments from myself.

Coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*) was known to the Chumash Indians and Spanish as "bears medicine." Bears ate the coffeeberry. John Peabody Harrington's Chumash Indian consultants stated that the berries were poisonous to people and that eating them would make one crazy. One consultant stated that it would paralyze the jaw. However, the plant was used for medicine.

The leaves were rubbed on the skin as a remedy for rheumatism. They bathed in water in which the leaves had been boiled to combat the effects of poison oak rash. (There are claims that the Chumash had not always been affected by poison oak. Their sensitivity may have developed as a result of interbreeding with peoples of European descent.) The Chumash boiled the bark to make a laxative tea, and in the 1960s they used the tea to combat stomach gas. An acorn diet is said to have contributed to constipation. However, some have suggested that the high fat content (20.4 percent) of the acorns of the coast live oak should not have resulted in constipation. (The Chumash tended not to favor the acorns of the valley and the scrub oaks, which have a lower fat content, because of taste.)

The Ohlone Indians, who lived in the San Francisco Bay area, decocted the bark for use as a laxative and purgative, made a poison oak remedy from its leaves, and reported also ate the berries raw. Their practices suggest that the uses of the coffeeberry plant was widespread.

The conflicting information as to whether or not coffeberries are poisonous in any way to humans suggests to me that its ingestion should never be tried.

Mike Kuhn  
8-21-08

## BEARS AROUND US

In the 47 years that I have lived in Simi Valley, I can think of only three occasions when a black bear has shown up within the city. The first time was during the late 1970s or early 1980s. That bear first was spotted at the Simi Valley Landfill early in the morning. Later in the day it was spotted by an elderly resident who lived on what is now the northwestern corner of Alamo Street and Jasmine Glen. According to her, the bear appeared to be headed towards Atherwood Elementary School, so she ran it up a deodar cedar in her front yard - with a broom. (The tree was later removed due to the widening of Alamo Street.) Fortunately the bear knew, as all bears know, that it was supposed to flee a white haired grandmother with a broom. The second occasion was in 2003 when bear tracks were observed in Corriganville. Since the bear did not show up in anyone's garbage can, it must have been in transit. One bear that year is known to have spent much of the year in the Simi Hills. The third occasion was when a bear was spotted north of the Indian Hills Ridge tract one morning. Since it was disinclined to leave, it was relocated.

Over the years an occasional bear has shown up in Granada Hills, Thousand Oaks and Camarillo, usually deep into the urban area, and had to be relocated to gentler climes or put down. I believe it was in 1997 that a bear wandered through the lobby of a hotel or motel in Camarillo. It didn't want a room with a view, rather, one with a den! In 2004 in Thousand Oaks, a bear was observed

by police officers entering a residential garage. After evacuating the residents of the home, the bear was found asleep, curled up next to the water heater. Both bears were given a free ride back to the high country.

During April of 1997 John Downey and I observed (and photographed) bear tracks in upper Happy Camp Canyon. In 1998, Jim Riley observed bear tracks in the same area. In 2001, Mark Keppler reported seeing really large bear tracks on the Brown's Canyon trail below the Rocky Peak Trail on several occasions. In spite of a hot summer in 1998, the bears seem to have stayed in the hills and foregone the pleasures of the urban environment. It's possible that the effects of that El Nino year with its 37+ inches of rain had enabled our furry friend to remain in the hills. During the October 2003 brush fire a bear died in Happy Camp Canyon. More recently bear tracks have been reported on the Rock Peak Fire Road and in Las Lajas Canyon (April 2011). There still seem to be several resident bears in the Santa Susana Mountains. It would be interesting indeed if black bears are establishing a more permanent presence in them than hills.

Mike Kuhn  
11-1-04 (Rev. 4-28-11)

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You can request just the email copy or receive an email copy in addition to the print copy by regular mail.



**April 23th 2011 - Sulphur Mountain Road  
Recreation Trail Shuttle**



Seven hikers met at the carpool point near the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road on a slightly chilly morning. Since it was to be a

one-way hike, we took four vehicles to the trail's end via Madera Road, Hwy 23, Hwy 101, Hwy 33, and the paved west end of Sulphur Mountain Road where we parked two of them. Everyone boarded the other two vehicles for a very scenic drive through the Ojai Valley to the eastern trailhead via Hwy 33, Hwy 150, and the paved east end of Sulphur Mountain Road which wound pleasantly uphill through an oak forest. After assembling our hiking gear, we set out along the trail which was paved with asphalt at first. We were treated to sweeping views of the beautiful rolling green terrain between our trail and the ocean as well as barely discernable evidence of the Channel Islands. After passing a couple of large houses, the trail became a dirt road bordered intermittently by black walnut trees. We continued westward with the upper portion of the Sulphur Mountain Ridge immediately to our north and continuous vistas of rolling hills dotted with oak trees, grassland meadows, and valleys to the south and west. Our route was naturally decorated with a wide variety of beautiful wildflowers. We stopped about

halfway along the trail for lunch in a pleasant setting that invited us to linger a while longer, but we resumed our journey, continuing to walk through the beautiful pastoral countryside. The bucolic atmosphere was reinforced as we walked past many free-range cattle that were grazing near the trail. Eventually the trail began providing views of the Ojai Valley and the distant towering mountains to the north and west and of Lake Casitas to the west. The last mile of the trail wound downhill, heavily shaded by oak trees and we eventually reached our shuttle vehicles, having completed a very pleasant 10-mile hike with 400' of elevation gain and 2,200' of gradual elevation loss on a perfect day for hiking. We returned by vehicle to the trailhead, retrieved the other two vehicles, and returned to Simi Valley.



**April 9th 2011 - Towsley Canyon Loop**

Twelve hikers met at the Stearns Street Park-and-Ride lot in Simi Valley on a chilly morning under a clear sky and then carpooled east and then north to the "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon" section of the 4,000-acre Santa Clarita Woodlands Park via Hwy 118, I405, I5, and "The Old Road." Two additional hikers joined us in the free parking lot at the park and we began hiking along a dirt road toward the ranger station and the Sonia Thompson Nature Center. As we crossed a concrete bridge over year-round Towsley Creek, mounds of wood debris gave testament to the power of the water produced by recent rainstorms. Soon we began a counterclockwise hike on the Towsley



View Loop Trail. After carefully negotiating The Narrows section of Towsley Gorge, the trail soon began rising via switchbacks along the eastern slope of the canyon and we were treated to an increasing variety of blooming plants. The north-facing slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains sparkled like emeralds in the distance to the south. The single-track trail was pleasantly shaded and populated with many flowers as we passed through sage scrub, stands of California walnut, bay laurel, and scattered oak trees as we neared the 2,450' high point on the trail from which much of the Santa Clarita Valley could be seen. The area's oil-production history was evidenced by the foamy water in Towsley Creek as well as a sulfurous smell in a few places along the trail. The trail then began dropping into shady Wiley Canyon where the group took a lunch break near another creek. A short distance on, we took the left fork onto the Canyon View Loop Trail which rose back up the mountain before dropping to the Sonia Thompson Nature Center. After enjoying the beauty of the surrounding area we followed the paved road back to our vehicles, having completed a 6.6-mile hike with 1,400' of elevation gain/loss on what turned out to be a gorgeous day.

**March 10th - 13th 2011 - Joshua Tree National Park**

Visit the News page at <http://simitrailblazers.com/news/> to read the day-by-day trip report and see great photos!



# RSTB Calendar May 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> <b>Rocky Peak Fire Road</b> <b>5 PM</b> See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Julie Szende	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Las Lajas Canyon</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6 PM</b>  See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Hannah Kuhn Robert D. Lisenby	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>East Canyon to Mission Point*</b> <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule
<b>8</b> <b>Rocky Peak Fire Road</b> <b>5 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Las Lajas Canyon</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jim Vandenberg	<b>11</b>   <i>Happy Birthday</i> Fran Atkins	<b>12</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Ray Miller Trail - La Jolla Canyon Loop*</b>  <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule
<b>15</b> <b>Rocky Peak Fire Road</b> <b>5 PM</b>  See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jesse Mansfield	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Las Lajas Canyon</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Mann	<b>18</b> <b>Club Meeting</b> <b>7 PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Lisa Poley	<b>19</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Work Party Upper Stagecoach Road</b> <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule
<b>22</b> <b>Rocky Peak Fire Road</b> <b>5 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Las Lajas Canyon</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>25</b>   <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Cueba	<b>26</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6 PM</b>  See Schedule	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Santa Paula Canyon*</b> <b>8AM</b>  See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Dilika Puthalath
<b>29</b> <b>Rocky Peak Fire Road</b> <b>5 PM</b>  See Schedule  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Phyllis Tewfik	<b>30</b>   <i>Happy Birthday</i> Bonnie Bouley	<b>31</b> <b>Las Lajas Canyon</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>  See 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 from the 118 Fwy. Meet at the north end of the bridge; don't park on the bridge. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 4.8 MRT)

### Tuesday Evening - Las Lajas Canyon

Meet at **6:30 PM** at the Evening Sky Drive trailhead. Take the 118 Fwy to the Yosemite Ave exit; head north past McDonalds and 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 trailhead; park on either side of the street. (Easy-to-moderate depending on distance hiked, 3¼ MRT)

### Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** at Chumash trailhead. Take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 5.2 MRT)

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## MAY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

### May 7th - East Canyon to Mission Point\*

8 MRT – Moderate (1,400' elevation gain/loss)

The trail begins a mile southeast of the entrance to Towsley Canyon on "The Old Road." It follows the East Canyon Motorway southward as it climbs to a Douglas Fir grove at the crest of the Santa Susana Mountains. It then follows the shady Corral Sunshine Motorway southeast to Mission Point with panoramic views to the south. Bring 2-3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

**Meet at 8AM** at the **118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride**.

### May 14th - Ray Miller Trail - La Jolla Canyon Loop\*

6.5 MRT - Moderate. (1,000' elevation gain)

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

### May 18th - Club Meeting

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

### May 21st - Work Party - Upper Stagecoach Road

**Meet at 8AM at the entrance to the Upper Stagecoach Trail on the left side of Lilac Lane**. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, a snack, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail. Wear sturdy boots. Tools will be provided.

Directions: From Simi Valley, exit 118 Fwy at Kuehner and go south, continuing up Santa Susana Pass. Lilac Lane is on the right, just before Rocky Peak Road. From the SF Valley, take 118 to Rocky Peak Road. Go over the freeway and turn right (west) onto Santa Susana Pass. Turn left on Lilac Lane. Park on the left, near the trail head.

### May 28th - Santa Paula Canyon\*

8.1 MRT - Moderate (1,000' elevation gain)

The trail takes you through picturesque St. Thomas Aquinas College, then along the shady banks of Santa Paula Creek, with plentiful swimming holes, capped by a spectacular 25 foot waterfall just past Big Cone Camp. Bring 2 - 3 quarts water, lunch and a pair of shoes/sandals that you don't mind getting wet. Wear boots. For more information about this hike, click here. **Meet at 8AM near Donut Delite** at the corner of Madera and Royal.

### June 4th - National Trails Day: Work Party - Corriganville

Meet at the eastern end of the Corriganville Parking lot at 7:45 AM. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail. Wear sturdy boots. Tools will be provided. Directions: Corriganville is located at the east end of Smith Road off of the south end of Kuehner Drive. As always, you are welcome to work for a shorter time period if you desire. If you would like to join us, please go to <http://simitrailblazers.com> and click on the National Trails Day link at the bottom of the page to sign up!

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\* 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*

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