



Rancho Simi Trailblazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at www.rsrpd.org

~~ Welcome New Members Loralynn Hacock and Brian Dennert ~~

UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/calendar/> for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.

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

July 6, 2019 – Mt. McCoy and the Reagan Library

6 MRT – Easy to Moderate (800' elevation gain/loss)

Hike up to an isolated knoll in a 200-acre open space region at the western end of Simi Valley. At the summit (1,325') there is a white cross, erected in 1941 and a 360-degree view including Sinaloa Lake, Wood Ranch, the Bard Reservoir, the Simi Hills and the Santa Susana Mountains. From there we'll hike over to the west side of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Meet at **8 AM** 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. Bring water and lunch/snacks and camera. Wear boots.

July 13, 2019 – Fish Canyon Narrows from the Templin Hwy Gate*

11 MRT – Moderate (~1,000' elevation gain)

After driving to the parking area at the gated eastern end of Templin Highway in the Sierra Pelona Mountains just north of Castaic Lake, we'll hike nearly three miles eastward on the no-longer-maintained Warm Springs Fish Canyon Truck Trail to the abandoned Cienega Campground that was damaged by flooding in 2002. Then we'll head north on a lovely single-track trail in Fish Canyon through which a pleasant stream flows. We'll have many easy stream crossings in the Narrows as it passes through hundred-foot cliffs with red rock walls reminiscent of the Zion National Park's Virgin River Narrows. We'll turn around at a backpacking campsite where there's a fork in the trail. NOTE: In 2009, Los Angeles Magazine published a list of "the ten best hikes in Los Angeles" and selected this hike as number one. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmQCVzdoNns> for a video of the hike.

Meet at **7 AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

July 17, 2019

Club Meeting 5:30PM Park District: 4201 Guardian Street, Activity Room #2

Everyone is welcome to attend.

July 20, 2019 – Josephine Peak*

8 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (1,900' elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will begin at the trailhead near the junction of Angeles Crest Highway (Hwy 2) and Angeles Forest Hwy (N3) in the Angeles National Forest. We will follow the Josephine Peak Fire Road (2N64) as it rises steadily uphill with ever-improving views of the surrounding mountains, including Hoyt Mountain and Mt. Lukens to the west, Strawberry Peak to the east, and Josephine Peak's rocky slopes immediately to the north. About 2.5 miles into the hike, we'll reach Josephine Saddle where a ridgeline trail from Strawberry Peak to the east joins our route. We'll turn left and continue climbing upward to the end of the fire road at 3.7 miles. A "use" trail (reportedly requiring some class 3 climbing) rises steeply up to the small, rocky summit. We'll return the way we came.

Meet at **7 AM** at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

July 27, 2019 – Nicholas Flat Trail from Leo Carrillo State Park to Nicholas Pond*

7.2 MRT – Moderate to Strenuous (2,200' elevation gain/loss)

Our hike will begin in Leo Carrillo State Park (near the campground). The first 2.5 miles of the hike will be a steady, fairly steep ascent as the Nicholas Flat Trail gains about 1,600'. There will be great views of the Santa Monica Mountains, Point Dume and the ocean as well as views of several of the islands in the Channel Islands National Park (weather permitting). The trail then winds through a large woodland as it crests the mountain and descends to Nicholas Pond. There's a very nice shaded overlook where we'll have lunch while we enjoy the view toward the ocean looking out over San Nicholas Canyon.

Meet at 7 **AM** south of Donut Delite near the northeast corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks and camera. Wear boots.

HIKE REPORTS

June 1, 2019 – Mt. Lukens via Haines Canyon Trail



Ten hikers carpooled to the Haines Canyon Trail trailhead at the upper (east) end of Haines Canyon Avenue in Tujunga on a slightly chilly, cloudy/foggy late spring morning to tackle hiking steadily uphill to the summit of Mt. Lukens, the highest peak (5,078') in the city of Los Angeles.

As our hike began we passed by a debris dam and catch basin near the mouth of Haines Canyon (it contained some water). Soon we reached a fork in the trail; we avoided the left fork and continued northeast, climbing steadily (though not steeply) while taking in the canyon views including a variety of blooming plants. Eventually we reached a section where the trail took a left turn that was somewhat confusing due to bicyclists (some of whom were present) who have developed a downhill series of "jumps" on a lengthy separate "bandit" course parallel to the trail. The trail became a shady single-track path as it made its way eastward out of Haines Canyon to a junction with a somewhat eroded and overgrown dirt road (rising from the Deukmejian Wilderness Park to the south) which we followed mostly northeast via a series of long switchbacks as it led us to the summit of Mt. Lukens. The sun "came out" as we approached the top and quickly warmed the morning. The summit hosts several tall communication towers and it provides wide-ranging views (including lots of mountains) in several directions, though heavy fog reduced our visibility on this day, particularly to the south. There are several routes to the summit, including Stone Canyon Trail which rises steeply from its trailhead in Big Tujunga Canyon immediately to the north. After taking a leisurely rest/lunch break "on top of the world," we returned to our vehicles the way we came thus completing an 11-mile up-and-back hike with just over 3,000' of elevation gain/loss.

June 8, 2019 – Matilija Falls



Eight hikers met at the trailhead at the west end of Matilija Road a few miles northwest of Ojai on a pleasant late-spring morning. The hike began along a road that headed west through the private Matilija Canyon Ranch Wildlife Refuge where we were greeted by a dazzling display of large Matilija poppies as we passed by a cage housing sheep and goats.

The stream crossing at the 0.4-mile mark required care to avoid slipping into the creek which had flowing water whereas our visit in 2016 was easy since there was no water in the creek at that point then. After a little over a mile our route crossed through a lovely private ranch via a dirt road that hikers are restricted to. At about the 2-mile mark our route lost any resemblance to our hike in 2016 (and previous years). The heavy foliage we encountered along the stream in previous visits had almost entirely disappeared. We located a well-defined, if somewhat overgrown, single-track trail that we followed as it climbed steadily up the mountain on the west side of the stream's canyon. We were treated to an overwhelming display of blooming plants, especially Deerweed, as well as Bindweed, Caterpillar Phacelia, Golden Yarrow, Purple, Black and White Sage, Chaparral Yucca, Humboldt Lily, Poodle Dog Bush, Golden Eardrops, Large-Flowered Phacelia, Matilija Poppies and Scarlet Monkey Flower.

June 8, 2019 – Matilija Falls (continued)

After a while the trail began to descend to the creek (the last part of the trail down required special attention as it was very narrow and partially eroded in places). Upon reaching the wide boulder-strewn canyon bottom and agreeing that our hike now bore no resemblance (other than exhibiting mountains, a canyon, and a stream) to our prior visits. The canyon bottom was devoid of foliage and as we looked upstream we saw a series of small cascades in the stream and lots of rocks all around. After inspecting the area we spotted a pink ribbon (one of a series of such markers) across the stream, so we carefully crossed to the other side where there was an obvious trail heading upstream. After taking a rest/snack break we headed upstream along the trail. However, the trail soon began to deteriorate and eventually disappeared entirely, leaving us on a shelf above the stream. Spotting a solitary hiker heading downstream in the canyon bottom, we asked her if she had reached the waterfall. She said that she had but she was equipped with water shoes. Although we were happy to learn that we were headed in the right direction (despite its foreign-to-us look), we decided to turn around at this point since we were not equipped to hike in the water. We returned the way we came, all agreeing that although we didn't make it to the waterfall it was still a beautiful outing. We returned home having completed an 8.5-mile hike with about 1,250' of elevation gain/loss.

June 15, 2019 – Switzer Falls to Bear Canyon



Seven hikers carpoled to the trailhead at the Switzer Picnic Area, about 10 miles up Highway 2 from its intersection with the 210 Freeway. Switzer Camp was founded in 1884 by a Pasadena carpenter named Perry Switzer. The camp was an arroyo rock village and one of many privately owned attractions that dotted the front range of the San Gabriel mountains hosting outdoor enthusiasts who hiked from one lodge to the next. All that remains of Switzer Camp today are the chapel arches and the overgrown foundation of the lodge.

It was a cool morning, as we hiked down the Gabrieleno Trail following the Arroyo Seco stream bed, dividing the beautiful riparian canyon. We already had several stream crossings under our belt, as we climbed up out of the canyon and into the bright sunshine, before stopping to rest at the intersection of the Gabrieleno Trail and Bear Canyon Trail. Next, we headed southwest, into the well-shaded Bear Canyon, where we came a junction that gave us access to Switzer Falls. We took a short spur up a box canyon that terminated at the Falls. The Falls were flowing well this year, since the drought ended this past winter. After enjoying the beauty of this 50' waterfall with its well-established plunge-pool, we began the gradual uphill climb to Bear Canyon Trail Camp. Stream crossings were never-ending, but finally we reached the end of the trail. Bear Canyon Camp is pleasant destination and the perfect place to rest and eat lunch. We returned the way we came, traversing the stream 31 times in total, after hiking 10 miles, with 1,600' of total elevations gain and loss. We enjoyed a good many wildflowers on the hike, including Humboldt Lilies, Speckled Clarkia, Indian Paintbrush, California Everlasting, Meadow Nemophila, Chinese Houses, Dudlia, Black Sage, Tree Poppy, Caterpillar Phacelia, Virgin's Bower, Golden Yarrow, Yerba Santa and a few others we have yet to identify. Everyone agreed that this was a very special hike.

June 22, 2019 – Hondo Canyon to Topanga Lookout



Nine hikers arrived on a cool overcast morning at the trailhead located 0.4 mile northwest of "downtown" Topanga along Old Topanga Canyon Road where the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area's "Backbone Trail" crosses the road. As we began our hike up the steep north-facing mountain slope, we traversed our only wet stream crossing and soon passed through meadows filled with dry yellow grasses and dotted with oak trees and interesting rock formations.

Next we reached a wonderful pink gorge on the right (west) side of the trail where a small waterfall is sometimes visible (but not today). As we continued upward through chaparral, there were glimpses of the pink-colored sedimentary rock formations/cliffs (the Sespe Formation) that form the west side of the canyon. We then entered a dense forest comprised mostly of oak and bay laurel trees; the trail was also lined with ferns, moss-covered rocks and lots of poison oak as well as a variety of blooming plants.

After negotiating a long series of heavily shaded switchbacks through the forest, we neared Saddle Peak Road. However, we headed west on the Fossil Ridge Trail that paralleled/overlooked the road; it was also adorned with a variety of blooming plants, particularly phacelia. Upon reaching the old Topanga Tower Motorway, we left the Backbone Trail and headed north to the end of the road where there was once a fire lookout tower. After a lunch/rest break we retraced our steps and returned home having completed a 10.7-mile hike with 2,350' of elevation gain/loss on a very pleasant day for hiking.

A DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE

One of the great pleasures of hiking anywhere in relatively wild mountains is encountering the unexpected: the changes of the seasons on frequently followed trails; unexpected appearances of wildflowers encountered only once or twice every few years; the surprise and delight of a beautiful sunset; and interesting encounters with wildlife - events often shared with others. I once approached a hiker on the lower portion of the Rocky Peak Fire Road just after sunset. He pointed to the rocky ridge to the northwest - only a few hundred feet away. There, silhouetted against the amber-colored skyline stood transfixed a coyote in full profile. It was a Kodak moment! Of course, neither of us had a camera. Even if we had, that moment could not have lasted but a few seconds, then the coyote was gone. No word was spoken between us, but surely neither he nor I will ever forget what we saw. On another occasion on the same trail, I and another Trail Blazer moved to the shoulder of the fire road while watching a foraging cottontail rabbit. Suddenly, a few yards ahead of us, burst a bobcat, which instantly seized the bunny by the head and trotted off with its meal.

On Saturday, November 10, 2012, a group of seven Trail Blazers were enjoying a hike along Sulphur Mountain Road southeast of the Ojai Valley. While the group was pretty much together, those in front rounded a bend in the dirt road and observed one or more hundred feet ahead three animals. Two were resting on their backsides and the third animal, which was at first thought to either be a coyote or a domestic dog, was approaching the two unidentified animals. Very quickly the animals became aware of the hikers and fled. The third animal was quickly recognized to indeed be a coyote and the other two animals, fled straight down the road with their long tails flying. I heard Carol Tucker exclaim, "Those are mountain lions!" Those people who witnessed this event said that the cats seemed to be the same size, which suggests that they were siblings, recently driven off by their mother. I have several times been on hikes on which one or more of our group have encountered a mountain lion. On this occasion my thoughts were of disappointment. I had again missed out.

We continued walking down the road. In less than a minute, a mountain biker appeared peddling up the steep road. When he stopped, he explained that the two cats had just run right past him on the road. Each passed within two to three feet of him. My thoughts were of the alarm he must have felt when he looked up and saw two mountain lions running straight towards him. He will certainly never forget that moment. I asked him if he saw which way they went. He said that they continued down the road.

We continued walking, with the faint hope of seeing the cats. Soon at least one of them was observed by all of us, to our left, running at top speed over grassland and low shrubs. For me it was a streak of movement through and over the vegetation with its tail straight out behind. I could not even be sure that it wasn't two cats running in tandem. Others said they saw only one cat. Ah, I did get to see it - however fleeting!

These cats had a normal reaction to encounters with a group of hikers - run away! That is comforting. We know that they are out there. Hikers are, no doubt, frequently observed by unseen mountain lions. Sometimes those observations are up close. All we can do is be alert. It is still best not to hike alone.

Mike Kuhn

REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Red Flag Warnings and Rain cancels the hike – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

During Daylight Savings Time meet at **5PM** and during Standard Time meet at **4PM** 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).

Tuesday Evening - Mt. McCoy Trail

During Daylight Savings Time meet at **6PM** in the parking lot, located to the south of Donut Delite, near the NE corner of Madera and Royal. There is no hike during Standard Time.

(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.)

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice.

Please see <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/calendar/> for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.

	<div>RSTB Calendar</div> <div>July 2019</div>					
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	3	4 Independence Day No Hike	5	6 Mt. McCoy and the Reagan Library 8AM See Upcoming Events Happy Birthday Keith Farrar
7 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	8	9 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	10	11 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	12 Happy Birthday Donna Wolfe	13 Fish Canyon Narrows from the Templin Hwy Gate* 7AM See Upcoming Events
14 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule Happy Birthday Mike Kuhn	15	16 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	17 Club Meeting 5:30PM	18 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	19	20 Josephine Peak* 7AM See Upcoming Events
21 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule National Ice Cream Day	22	23 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	24	25 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	26 Happy Birthday Balaji Keshava	27 Nicholas Flat Trail* 7AM See Upcoming Events Happy Birthday Randy Sundeen Barbara Westrum
28 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5PM See Schedule	29	30 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	31			
<div>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/</div> <div>CALIFORNIA FIRE WEATHER MAP - Provides actual Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_redflagwarning.php (Scroll down to map)</div>						

* 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.

Full descriptions of these hikes and activities are available at <https://www.simitrailblazers.com/calendar/>



_____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 _____ Birth Month _____ Day _____

Address _____

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

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

Newsletters are distributed by email only. Contact the Membership Chair if you require a copy by US mail.

Email address _____

How did you find out about the RSTB? _____

**Please make out tax deductible member donation check for the year to:
Rancho Simi Foundation** and mail it to **RSTB, P.O. Box 1231, Simi Valley, CA 93062**

Rancho Simi Trailblazers			
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