



## Rancho Simi Trailblazers

*A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation*



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

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### 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.



The RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS are looking for leaders for public hikes! If interested, please contact Michael Kuhn at [mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com](mailto:mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com). Applicants must be evaluated by the board and would be subject to the park district's standard background check.



#### **September 4, 2021 — Chumash Trail to Rocky Peak Fire Road and Back 7AM**

5.4 Mile — Moderate to Strenuous (1,210' of elevation gain/loss)

The Chumash Trail is a 2.7 mile long trail that extends from Flanagan Drive in Simi Valley to the top of the ridges 1.3 miles north of Rocky Peak. It includes sandstone rock formations, caves and beautiful vistas of Simi Valley. This is a moderate to strenuous hike that is used by runners, hikers and bikers. The land is owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District. It is maintained by the Rancho Simi Trailblazers and patrolled by the Volunteer Trail Safety Service.

**DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD:** Take the 118 Freeway to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite and turn right on Flanagan Dr. The trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Drive on the right. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

#### **September 11, 2021 — Corriganville to Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park Lollipop Loop 7AM**

5.5 Mile Loop — Moderate (1,500' of elevation gain/loss)

We'll begin by hiking up toward the "wildlife tunnel" that passes under Hwy 118. Bypassing the tunnel, we'll hike southeast along the section of the Stagecoach Trail in Simi Valley to Lilac Lane which we'll follow to the kiosk at the upper end of the Stagecoach Trail in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Then we'll hike eastward to Five Points and then on to the eastern end of the Spahn Ranch property. We'll then head westward to Santa Susana Pass and Lilac Lane and return to Corriganville via the section of the Stagecoach Trail in Simi Valley.

**DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD:** In Simi Valley, take Highway 118 to the Kuehner Drive exit. Take the exit and drive 1.1 miles south to Smith Road (there's a traffic signal at the road junction). Turn left (east) on Smith Road and drive 0.4 miles to the entrance (on your left) into Corriganville Park. Park in the dirt parking lot (on the left side of the lot). Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

#### **September 15, 2021**

**Club Meeting 7:30PM** Please contact Mike Kuhn

#### **September 18, 2021 — Alamos Canyon Loop 7AM**

5 MRT — Easy (450' of elevation gain/loss)

**DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD:** The Trail Blazers have a special agreement with the Simi Valley Sanitation Department allowing us to use their gated parking lot for the duration of our hike. There are three gated entrances to the facility. Only the middle gate will be open. The address is 600 W Los Angeles Ave. From Simi Valley, take the Madera Rd. exit south. Turn right on W Easy St, which becomes W Los Angeles Ave. Proceed 0.7 miles and you'll see the facility entrance on your left. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots.

## September 25, 2021 – Wildwood Park Loop 7AM

(Mesa Trail, Lizard Rock Trail, Wildwood Canyon Trail, Paradise Falls and Indian Creek Trail)

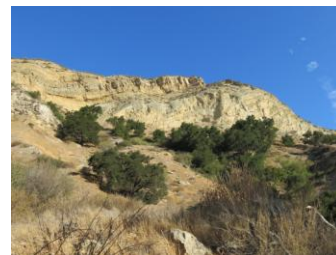
See Rancho Simi Trailblazer website for details and directions to trailhead.

## October Work Party

We are tentatively planning on resuming our monthly trail work parties in October. Stay tuned to our website for more information!

## HIKE REPORTS

### July 31, 2021 – Las Lajas Canyon



15 hikers met at the Las Lajas Canyon trailhead on Evening Sky Drive in Simi Valley early on a pleasant summer morning. We began our hike by descending a short paved section of road into the canyon bottom; from there a wide graded dirt road followed a streambed north through the canyon, crossing the streambed (no water) three times.

The steep canyon walls and lots of green-leaved oak trees soon provided shade during our mildly uphill 3.5-mile trek up the canyon. When we reached the locked gate at the south side of the Poe Ranch, we took a short break before retracing our route to the trailhead where we started (Brian Dennert joined us for most of the hike back). Despite the ongoing drought, there were quite a few datura (Jimson weed) plants and tree tobacco with blossoms and the eastern wall of the canyon grew greener the farther up the canyon we hiked. We encountered lots of hikers and bicyclists (particularly on the return part of our hike) who were also outdoors enjoying nature. We finished having hiked 7 miles round-trip with about 650' of elevation gain/loss on a very nice morning for hiking.

### August 7, 2021 – Sage Ranch Loop



After successfully navigating Black Canyon Road [which was unexpectedly closed for road repair just after our 7 AM starting time], 13 hikers arrived at the lower parking lot in Sage Ranch Park in the Simi Hills on a pleasant summer morning. The 625-acre park is located just north of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) (aka Rocketdyne/Boeing) at an elevation of 2,000'. It is chock-full of world-class sandstone rock formations and has lots of picnic tables shaded by large oak trees in a picnic/camping area.

Shortly after we began our counterclockwise loop hike, we were rewarded with sweeping views of Simi Valley and the mountains to the north as we followed several "use" trails as we headed westward. Not long after we returned to the loop trail/dirt road, we reached a "use" trail and climbed up on Sandstone Ridge (aka Sugarloaf), a long, steep rock formation rising alongside the trail on the west side of the park; it afforded us with excellent views of the once-bustling SSFL (most of the structures have been removed from the property as the cleanup effort continues).

We resumed our hike southward and then eastward on the loop trail until we reached the "detour" section of trail and a "temporary" fence blocking a section of the original loop trail. The temporary blockage has been caused by a planned (but not started as far as we could tell) cleanup of the former trap and skeet range in the park. We eagerly turned onto the "detour" trail which led us northward through the center of the ranch, thus providing us with views of a previously unseen section of the park. Part way along the "detour" section we decided to pass by a "use" trail that leads a short distance eastward up to an overlook down into an otherwise hidden canyon with interesting rock formations and heavy foliage. We completed our relatively short, but quite scenic, stroll around and through the park having hiked about 3.5 miles with 750' of elevation gain/loss. As expected, the landscape was "bone dry" due to the ongoing drought.

## August 14, 2021 – Porter Ranch Loop



13 hikers met at 7:00 AM at the Canyon Trail trailhead just below Porter Ridge Park at the east “end” of Sesnon Blvd at the north end of Reseda Blvd in Porter Ranch on a pleasant summer morning (which grew warmer as the hike progressed). We began our clockwise-loop hike by dropping down into Aliso Canyon; we then followed the wide dirt trail southward toward (nearly all the way to) Rinaldi Street and Aliso Canyon Park. The Aliso Canyon Trail was nearly level and was dotted with large oak trees and lots of blooming sunflowers so it was a pleasant stroll through the canyon.

We then followed a well-defined connector trail that led somewhat steeply upward to Eddleston Park at Reseda Blvd. Crossing to the west side of Reseda Blvd, we hiked northward a short distance on a short trail to the eastern trailhead for the Palisades Trail which we followed westward. The wide well-maintained Palisades Trail provided excellent views of the surrounding area mainly to the south. There was stark evidence of a recent wildfire as we passed a formerly beautiful grove of pine trees which is now a stand of burned-and-blackened skeletons. The trail then rose fairly steeply just before dropping down to Tampa Avenue.

We crossed to the west side of Tampa Avenue and soon dropped down to the Limekiln Canyon Trail which led us to Sesnon Blvd (near the entrance to the Southern California Gas Company’s Aliso Canyon underground natural gas storage facility, infamous for its 2015-2016 months-long methane leak). After crossing Sesnon Blvd to the northeast, we followed the Sesnon Trail (which forms the border of a housing development to its south) eastward to **Ormskirk** Avenue and then walked a couple of blocks to Porter Ridge Park where on a clear day one can see the upper parts of several of the highest skyscrapers in downtown Los Angeles through the Cahuenga Pass. We then returned to our nearby vehicles having completed a 5.7-mile hike with about 850’ of elevation gain/loss. Blooming plants included sunflowers, datura (Jimson weed) cliff asters and tree tobacco.

NOTE: **Ormskirk** (see above) is a [market town](#) in [West Lancashire](#), England, 13 miles north of [Liverpool](#); it was famous for its baking of gingerbread.

### A LONG TAIL

There are mountain lions in our hills. They are rarely seen. Nearly all avid hikers and mountain bike enthusiasts have never seen one in the wild. Yet, those of us who spend a lot of time hiking, if we pay attention, often see their tracks. There are mountain lions in our hills.

In 2016, we read in the Los Angeles Times that mountain lion P-39 is assumed to have been hit and killed by a motor vehicle while trying to cross the 118 Freeway east of the Rocky Peak Interchange. Her GPS collar was found mangled in the center divider of the freeway, however, no carcass was found. A picture of two of her three cubs appeared widely in the press during the summer of 2016. If she is dead, she would have left her orphaned cubs to survive on their own - a doubtful proposition. Life is never easy in the wild.

On December 15, 2015, I encountered a couple going down the Chumash Trail. They explained excitedly that they had been in the Rocky Peak highlands at the southern-most rock outcropping on the eastern end just a few days before. They sat on the edge of the rock dangling their legs over the edge - just enjoying the ambiance on a nice day. They were startled by a loud snarling noise below them. They both felt it was mountain lion vocalization. In a panic, they retreated from the area. In describing this event they seemed to relive that panic. Their words came fast and were jumbled those days later. They admitted that they did not see the source of the sound. However, I assumed they were correct that it was a mountain lion. After all, there are mountain lions in our hills.

On December 18, 2015, I led a hike up the Rocky Peak Trail. One of our hikers, Mark Scheele, out-paced the rest of us. At about the 0.75 mile point we were overtaken by a Simi Valley Police officer on a motorcycle. He explained that he was responding to an emergency and that there were supposedly two incapacitated individuals about 2 1/2 miles up the trail from the bottom. Within another minute we observed a bright yellow Suburban making its way up the unmaintained fire road. It was either a police or a fire vehicle - it never overtook us - instead it waited below. Then we saw a bright yellow County of Ventura helicopter heading up towards the uplands. At about the 0.85 mile mark we encountered the police officer on the motorcycle coming down the fire road. He explained that he was escorting the “victims” down to that SUV after which they would be driven back to their car.

## A LONG TAIL (continued)

I then talked briefly with the victims. I asked them what had happened. They both talked rapidly at once. They were hard to understand. Words were being left out. They were reliving the panic of the moment. They indicated that they had hiked up to the top of the highlands - at which point a perhaps half grown mountain lion ran up between them and snarled. Instinctively they looked up and around and saw a large mountain lion a ways away on a large boulder - also snarling. This they thought was not good! They ended up turning and running down the fire road - panicked and thoroughly shaken. I was struck by their reaction being exactly like that of the couple I had run into three days before. I think that is likely that they had run into the same mountain lions as the other couple. There are mountain lions in our hills - and it is not good to get between an adolescent and its mother.

There was another woman on the trail. She had two small dogs on leashes. She encountered the victims on the way up that final lift to the highlands. They told her what they had experienced. She turned around and outpaced the victims down the hill (probably because the victims were delayed when they encountered the motorcycle officer, who would of gotten on his radio to let everyone else know that all was well, send home the helicopter, and tell the SUV crew to wait for the victims). No physical contact between the victims and the mountain lions had occurred, no injuries, but there are definitely mountain lions in our hills.

Now back to Mark Scheele. Mark encountered the woman with two dogs. She related what she knew and urged him to turn around. She seemed astounded that he continued forward up the fire road. Mark, being a man's man, says he walked ahead until he was sure the woman was out of sight and then turned around. (Show no fear or concern to the "weaker sex" until it is safe to make your retreat!) We all had a good chuckle with Mark about that.

Once the police officer and victims continued down trail, I decided that we would all turn around - an eventful evening. There are definitely mountain lions in our hills!

Mike Kuhn

## REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

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

### **On Hiatus - Need Hike Leader - 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 the 118 Freeway. 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 - 4.95 MRT - 1,325' 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)

### **On Hiatus - Need Hike Leader - Thursday Evening - Chumash Trail**

During Daylight Savings Time 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.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <h2 style="text-align: center;">RSTB Calendar<br/>September 2021</h2> |                                              |     |                                                            |                                          |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Mon                                                                   | Tue                                          | Wed | Thu                                                        | Fri                                      | Sat                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                       |                                              | 1   | 2                                                          | 3<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Joseph Farrar | 4<br>Chumash Trail to<br>Rocky Peak Fire Road<br>7AM<br>See Upcoming Events         |
| 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 6<br>Labor Day                                                        | 7<br>Mt. McCoy<br>Trail 6PM<br>See Schedule  | 8   | 9                                                          | 10                                       | 11<br>Corriganville to<br>Susanna Pass Loop<br>7AM<br>See Upcoming Events           |
| 12<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Debbie DeGoey                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 13                                                                    | 14<br>Mt. McCoy<br>Trail 6PM<br>See Schedule | 15  | 16<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Joshua Wolfe                   | 17                                       | 18<br>Alamos Canyon Loop<br>7AM<br>See Upcoming Events                              |
| 19                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 20<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Erica Wolfe                               | 21<br>Mt. McCoy<br>Trail 6PM<br>See Schedule | 22  | 23<br><br>Happy Birthday<br>Michele Sumandra<br>Les Wilson | 24                                       | 25<br>Wildwood Canyon<br>Loop<br>7AM<br>See Upcoming Events<br>And Website          |
| 26                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 27                                                                    | 28<br>Mt. McCoy<br>Trail 6PM<br>See Schedule | 29  | 30                                                         |                                          |                                                                                     |
| <p><b>SANTA ANA WILDFIRE THREAT INDEX</b> - Provides a 6 day forecast of Santa Ana Winds Wildfire Threats on a color coded map<br/> <a href="https://fsapps.nwgc.gov/psp/sawti/">https://fsapps.nwgc.gov/psp/sawti/</a></p> <p><b>CALIFORNIA FIRE WEATHER MAP</b> - Provides actual Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches<br/> <a href="https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/communications/red-flag-warnings-fire-weather-watches/">https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/communications/red-flag-warnings-fire-weather-watches/</a> (Scroll down to map)</p> |                                                                       |                                              |     |                                                            |                                          |                                                                                     |

\* 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/>



## **Rancho Simi Trailblazers**

*A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation*

|                        |                         |                   |                                                                                              |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Executive Chair:       | Mike Kuhn               | HM (805) 583-2345 | <a href="mailto:mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com">mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com</a>           |
| Treasurer:             | To Be Announced         |                   |                                                                                              |
| Park District Liaison: | Nikki Collier           | WK (805) 584-4453 | <a href="mailto:volunteers@rsrpd.us">volunteers@rsrpd.us</a>                                 |
| Work Parties Chair:    | Martin DeGoey           | HM (805)583-3034  | <a href="mailto:martin.degoey@simitrailblazers.com">martin.degoey@simitrailblazers.com</a>   |
| Hiking Chair:          | Mark Gilmore            | HM (805) 990-1460 | <a href="mailto:markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com">markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com</a>   |
| Vice Hiking Chair:     | Les Wilson              | HM (805) 522-2642 | <a href="mailto:les.wilson@simitrailblazers.com">les.wilson@simitrailblazers.com</a>         |
| Website:               | Mark Gilmore            | HM (805) 990-1460 | <a href="mailto:markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com">markinthepark@simitrailblazers.com</a>   |
| Ways & Means Chair:    | Marty Richards          | HM (805) 526-4414 | <a href="mailto:marty.richards@simitrailblazers.com">marty.richards@simitrailblazers.com</a> |
| Membership Chair:      | Louise Pomes            |                   | <a href="mailto:louise.pomes@simitrailblazers.com">louise.pomes@simitrailblazers.com</a>     |
| Publicity Chair:       | <b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b> |                   | <b>Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345</b>                                                    |
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