

# Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

Volume 30, Issue 28

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Organization  
Incorporated August 31, 1971

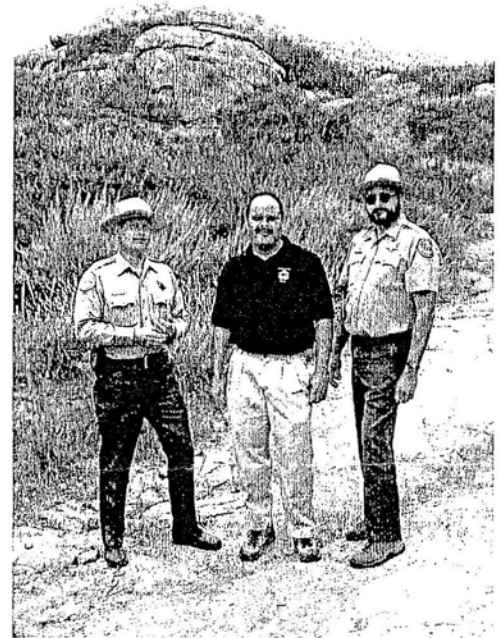
## June 2003 Newsletter

### A Walk in the Park

Plenty of wildflowers were on hand to welcome the visitors as SSMPA and FPSSM (Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains) provided a guided park tour to California legislative and State Park officials on Saturday morning, May 24th.

It was a first for most of these officials to walk the trails and hear about the rich history of the **Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park**. Archeologist Al Knight regaled stories of interest while uncovering the park's past, assisted by hike leader Lee Baum and SSMPA president Jan Miller.

Awareness and appreciation of the park as a valued community resource was the focus and achievement of the tour. Neighboring open lands were pointed out for potential additions to the park. 🌿



State Park Personnel: Ranger Steve Bylin; Southern Division Chief Ted Jackson; Steve White, Acting Superintendent, Topanga Sector.



L to R: Ted Jackson, St. Parks So. Div. Chief; Diana Dixon-Davis, SSMPA Board; Nancy Razanski, FPSSM Board; Sandra Johnson, SSMPA Board; Patty Friedman, Deputy-Supervisor Mike Antonovich; Tony Strickland, Assemblymember, 37th Dist.; Jon Lauritzen, LAUSD Board/FPSSM Board; Christy Weber, Aide-Tony Strickland; Jan Miller, Pres. SSMPA; Susan Gerke, SSMPA News. Ed.; Janet Lazik, FPSSM Board; Pearl Turbush, Pres. FPSSM; Patty Miller, SSMPA Board; & Dianne Kartiala, Aide-Hal Bernson.

Photos by Gretha Davis



Al Knight points out a special feature.

**Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership:** Sandra Johnson, Robert Lisenby, Milt McAuley, Ann Monaco, Mary McMannes, Annelore & John Schillo, Melissa Lovelady, Eleanore & George Rembaum, Judith Rothman, Chandra Trocino, Rhonda Scott, Wendy Brunell and Greg Dubiel.

**New Life Members:** Linda & Andre van der Valk and Bob Jonnson.

## Devil Canyon: Will hikers lose access and parking?

By Judy Garris

The LA County Dept. of Parks & Recreation may be planning an equestrian staging area from Brown's Canyon, which joins Devil Canyon by the 101 Freeway at De Soto Ave. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) proposes two sites. Neither easily accesses Devil Canyon. One proposed site, off Brown's Canyon, is the newly purchased property known locally as the "Quarry", now listed in the Thomas Guide as Gopher Rd. This site would be a great staging site for equestrians but it is definitely not for hikers, walkers, nature lovers and families. The trails from Gopher Rd. ascend immediately to a ridgeline and then north toward the Santa Susana ridgeline and Oat Mountain Motorway. The south trail from Gopher Rd. heads toward the rear of the Deerlake Ranch proposed development. One cannot hike to Devil Canyon from Gopher Rd.

The second proposed site is the Horner property, located where Devil Canyon meets Brown's Canyon. On maps it seems like one would be able to follow the stream into Devil Canyon but due to the narrow sharply twisting streambed and steep canyon sides, it is undeveloped and inaccessible. The present equestrian trail on the northwest side of the one-lane bridge crossing the creek climbs steeply up to another ridge in the proposed Deerlake Ranch and descends just as steeply down into Devil Canyon. This trail would not conform to county guidelines on the descent into Devil Canyon as it is too steep for hikers and future public access may be questionable after development. Devil Canyon is not accessible by foot from the Horner property. There is a canyon in the way and the trails are too steep.

As you may know, the Rim of the Valley (ROV) trail system has been primarily designed by and for equestrians. Strong and experienced hikers will hike up to the top ridgelines of the ROV but more hikers use the lower trail turnaround before reaching the ridgelines. Devil Canyon is the only trail north of the 118 suitable for easy hikes. Families with young children can negotiate the lovely stream crossings. It is ideal for natural science studies. School children can take field trips there. And it is shady.

Two developments are in the planning process by Devil Canyon: (1) Deerlake Ranch and (2) condos on land zoned for 8 residences on the Devil Canyon trailhead. A trail is planned into Devil Canyon across the condo land from the adjoining property of Deerlake Ranch. A planning trail map from Deerlake Ranch indicates a steep three switchback trail onto the "church" property which will be too steep for hikers. There are no plans for trail access parking in the plans of either development. Bottom line: we need this easy access.

What to do? Write letters to: (1) Supervisor Mike Antonovich, 5th Supervisorial District, 21949 Plummer St., Chatsworth 91311, (2) LA County Park and Rec Planning, 433 South Vermont Ave., LA 90020, and (3) Councilperson Greig Smith, 12th District, 18917 Nordhoff St., Northridge 91324. Express your concerns and request a second hearing, asking to be notified.



### IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, June 26th, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Simi Valley City Hall, Community Room - 2929 Tapo Canyon Road, Simi Valley

**SUBJECT: CALTRANS PROPOSAL TO ADD WESTERN ON/OFF RAMP TO ROCKY PEAK OVERPASS TO 118 FREEWAY.**



This on/off ramp would have a negative impact on the wildlife corridor, perhaps a fatal blow. Here is why this project is not needed:

1. No future development in the area is currently being planned.
2. Emergency vehicles use Santa Susana Pass, not the freeway.
3. The project would add traffic to Rocky Peak Rd. & Santa Susana Pass.
4. Deer attempting to cross from Simi Hills to and from Santa Susana Mtns. are deterred due to lights and traffic, or cross at great risk. (A deer killed by a vehicle was found on the 118 eastern on-ramp in Nov. 2002. A mountain lion was found by a nearby resident on the Santa Susana Pass Rd., apparently also killed by a vehicle.)
5. Although another wildlife crossing exists at the tunnel in Corriganville Park, deer do not use it because predators use it. Another corridor further west under the 118 has been slated as a cloverleaf intersection. An environmental impact report is pending.



**PLEASE COME TO THE HEARING - AND - PLEASE WRITE LETTERS (REQUESTING "NO PROJECT!") TO THESE VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Keith Millhous, Chairperson  
950 County Square Drive, #207  
Ventura, CA 93003

Supervisor Linda Parks  
2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., #3  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Supervisor Kathy Long  
800 So. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009

CONTACT COUNTRY OPEN SPACE ASSOCIATION: (805) 231-0489 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

# Felis Concolor



No animal in California's recent history has generated more controversy or been the subject of more conflicting stories than this majestic, secretive animal. The mountain lion is the largest North American member of the cat family and is the largest pure carnivore in California. Adult males may grow to almost eight feet in length and can weigh as much as 200 pounds. Adult females are usually much smaller, and normally weigh between 75 and 100 pounds. These cats are distinguished by their tawny color and very long tails. Adults have no spots but usually have black-tipped ears and tail. An adult male may have a home range spanning 100 square miles and an adult female 20-60 square miles with population densities averaging three lion per 100 square miles in desert areas to seven to ten lions per 100 square miles in the western Sierras and northwestern part of California.

Life in the wild is not easy for the mountain lion. From a typical litter of three kittens, two will survive the first year and one will survive to breeding age. Adults may live 12 years in the wild and up to 25 years in captivity. Deer provide the lion's primary food source.

As with all California native wildlife, managing the mountain lion is the responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Game. Much of the present controversy surrounding the mountain lion involves the question of whether the mountain lion population in California is increasing and whether this is leading to increased contact with the human population in California. The Department has undertaken studies in recent years and produced statistics which indicate an increase in lion-human interaction but cannot state that the population is, in fact, increasing.

Part of the problem stems from the fact that the human population has grown significantly in recent years. Many of these people are settling in the outskirts of urbanized areas and are visiting undeveloped and wilderness areas in greater numbers than ever before. With such a significant human population growth it is hard to say if there are more lions for people to see or more people to see mountain lions.

The documented statistical data does show that there are more mountain lion sightings today than previously. Unfortunately, a few of these interactions have resulted in human injury or death.

A Department study of documented interactions in California shows twelve injury incidents since 1890 with seven of those incidents occurring since 1992. Some of these incidents involved people jogging or bicycling in undeveloped areas. The Department has a detailed procedure for dealing with potential problem mountain lions which is spelled out in Chapter 10 of the Fish and Game code for California. These procedures provide for the taking (or killing) of a problem lion which is perceived to be an imminent threat to public health or safety. The law also provides for a person who owns livestock to request a permit to kill a mountain lion which has damaged or destroyed livestock. These procedures have been in effect since the passage of Proposition 117 which terminated hunting of the mountain lion in California.

Proposition 117 became law in June of 1990. Between January 1991 and December 1994, 932 depredation permits were issued for mountain lions and 338 mountain lions were actually killed under this process. Legal procedures do exist today for dealing with the mountain lion.

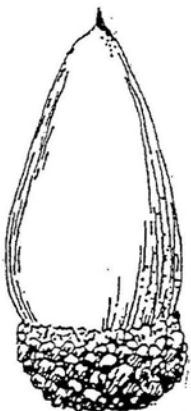
The Department of Fish and Game also emphasizes public education as a means of improving safety and recommends the following:

- ♦ Do not hike alone. Go in groups with adults supervising children.
- ♦ Keep your children with you at all times.
- ♦ Do not approach a mountain lion and be especially careful not to force a mountain lion into a cornered position.
- ♦ Do not run from a mountain lion. Stand and face the animal.
- ♦ Make eye contact. Make yourself look large. Without turning from the lion, pick up your small children. Do not crouch or bend over. If necessary, throw rocks or sticks at the lion and talk loudly in a firm voice.
- ♦ If attacked, the Department recommends fighting back as hard as possible. Protect your head and neck as much as possible.

It is very important for members of the public to educate themselves and their children regarding the outdoors and the animals which make their home there. We all have a right to be here and peaceful coexistence with wildlife is certainly achievable. The more knowledgeable you are the more you will enjoy the beauty of nature that surrounds you and the more you will be able to share that with your children. ☞

## SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN / RENEW / REJOIN S.S.M.P.A. (Please circle one.)



Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contributions to help ensure our futures. Please make checks payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

- Senior or Student (\$5.00)   
  Individual (\$10.00)   
  Family (\$15.00)  
 Business or Organization (\$25.00)   
  Life Member (\$100.00)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Interest/Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National Forest, to the Santa Monica Mountains; as habitats for plants and animals native to the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills; as locales of unique geologic formations; as sites of ethnological, archaeological and historical interests; to provide passive recreational opportunities and environmental education opportunities; and, to support the acquisition of new public parks, open space and conservation easements, the expansion of existing parks, participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs, and support said programs. To find out how you can participate, contact Jan Miller at (818) 702-0854.

## **Monday, June 16, 2003    SSMPA GENERAL MEETING**

This will be our last general meeting until September. The purpose of this joint meeting of SSMPA and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains (FPSSM) will be to discuss and take action steps regarding the Caltrans project of the on/off ramp on the 118 freeway at Rocky Peak Rd. Please read the notice in this newsletter of the Public Hearing on June 26th in Simi Valley. If you have not received your newsletter in time, or are not able to attend the June 16th SSMPA general meeting, please take the time to write your "no project" letters as explained inside, and attend the public hearing if possible.

*SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday from September through November and January through May. Program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and conclude by 9:00 p.m. Location: Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire St., Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before Chatsworth Park South.*

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!**

*Please note the renewal date on your label and send in your dues if you wish to continue your SSMPA membership and receive the newsletter. If you are current with your dues, kindly disregard this notice. Life Members, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help meet production costs.*



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