

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

May 2004 Newsletter

General Membership Program Meeting Monday, May 17, 2004:

Patrick Maxon of SWCA, a professional company of biologists, archeologists and planners who specialize in environmental regulatory compliance, paleontology, and natural and cultural resource management, will be our guest speaker.

In the summer of 2001, under Mr. Maxon's direction, an archaeological excavation took place in anticipation of the proposed development of Dayton Canyon Estates, a 150-home subdivision at Roscoe & Valley Circle Blvds. A large number of prehistoric artifacts and rock features, as well as human remains, were discovered at the site during the excavation. Mr. Maxon will present an interesting PowerPoint presentation about the significant findings at the site.

Note: This will be our last general meeting until September 20th (general membership program meetings take place every 3rd Monday of September through November and January through May) and the last newsletter until September as well. We are rounding out our speaker lineup for the fall and next spring, and already have some great programs scheduled to look forward to! Our program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and generally conclude by 9:00 p.m. The venue is the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South. Refreshments are served at program meetings.

SSMPA Board of Directors Update

At the April 19th meeting of SSMPA, the following individuals were voted in by the general membership to serve on the Board of Directors for the remainder of 2004 and until the next election in April of 2005: Jan Miller, President; Dorian Keyser, Vice President; Diane Dixon-Davis, Treasurer; Patty Miller, Recording Secretary; Reid Bogert, Member-at-Large; Judy Garris, Member-at-Large; Susan Gerke, Member-at-Large; Carla Henry, Member-at-Large; Sandra Johnson, Member-at-Large; Teena Takata, Member-at-Large.

The new Board met on May 3rd at the SSMPA Visitor's Center. Discussion was held on the following topics: the proposed Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park visitor's center, park improvements, land acquisition, lobbying efforts, a docent program for the Parks & Rec/SSMPA Visitor's Center, a trail maintenance/planning program and a park exotic plant abatement program (these last two programs to be done under the auspices of the Santa Susana Task Force, headed by Board member Judy Garris). Our Visitor's Center, located in the City Parks & Rec Building at the west end of Chatsworth Park South, will soon be open again the first Sunday of each month from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. and staffed by rotating Board members and other volunteers. Come by and visit!

OPEN LETTER TO SETH RILEY, WILDLIFE ECOLOGIST FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AT THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Dear Seth,

Not often are people who attend our general meetings loathe to leave. Not always do they talk about the program material and remark about it a month after the meeting. And not often do other members say how sorry they are that they missed a meeting!

At our program meeting on March 15th, your revealing wildlife studies and findings helped us understand the impact human populations have on the very environment we rely on. Seeing photos of the animals, the statistics and the charts in the PowerPoint demonstration brought the message home.

I have been sharing information I learned that evening with many people, most recently last weekend at our April 24th Earth Day Clean-Up event and SSMPA information table at the April 25th Chatsworth Historical Society Garden Festival. Especially important to share, I believe, is the fact that using poisonous bait to rid rodents on personal property can and does destroy valuable species of wildlife.

You were a huge hit that evening. The interesting questions kept coming, but we had to let you go.

Please consider presenting again in the future. Your contribution was immense.

Sincerely,

Susan Gerke, SSMPA Program Chair & Newsletter Editor



Dayton Canyon Trees

NAVAJO CHANGING WOMAN
by Carla L. Henry

I came (baby clothed in light)
to place reflections on running waters.
silver beads on spider webs,
turquoise dust on morning lake water,
crystal flakes on whispering pines
to place bulbs buried in earth that burst forth
when sky waters fall.

I became Changing Woman and with my Earth sticks
I scraped my skin to make human beings.



Bringing Back The
Children of Many Colors
Native American Intertribal
POWOW
May 14, 15 and 16, 2004

Castaic Lake Recreation Area
(five miles north of Magic Mountain on Interstate 5 in Los Angeles County)
32132 Castaic Lake Drive, Castaic, California
Exit Interstate 5 at Hasley Canyon, Parker Road or Lake Hughes Road

Gourd Dancing
All Dancers Welcome All Drums Welcome
Teresa Hunt, Northern Cheyenne, Head Woman Dancer
Robert Silent Thunder, Tsalagi Nation, Head Man Dancer
Natalie Deanda, Head Young Girl Dancer
John Little Bear Deanda, Head Young Man Dancer
Alex Villalva, Head Gourd Dancer
Pete Many Horses Mares, Master of Ceremonies
Lee Thunder Bear, Mohawk, Spiritual Advisor
Wild Horse, Host Northern Drum
Hummingbird Singers, Host Southern Drum
Hoop Dance Exhibitions by
Thirza Defoe, Oneida/Ojibwa
Lumhe Micco Sampson, Seneca
Free Swimming and Kayaking Lessons for Kids by
California State University Northridge
Native American Bone Marrow Donor Drive
By American Red Cross
Camping for Dancers/Vendors Fri-Sun.*
Swimming, Fishing, Boating, Hiking/Biking/Horse Trails
School Supply Drive for Reservation Schools
www.Castaiclake.com www.RedbirdsVision.com
Powwow Admission Free
\$8.00 Parking



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*one-time parking fee of \$8.00 covers tent/tipi/r.v. camping for dancers/vendors
This is a family event. No alcohol, drugs or firearms allowed.

Life is Renewing the Land

Have you noticed how our chaparral is returning since the fire? The land is renewing itself. Many wildflowers are growing stimulated by ash in the soil and the clear space made available by the fire. Erosion increases after fire and the streambeds have filled with silt. This movement of soil has temporarily changed the balance of microorganisms that live on the edges of the streams. These fungi, insects and bacteria filter out water pollutants, feed other larger insects who supply our birds and animals up the food chain. Nature will heal herself- in time. Rocks and stream debris will gather in pockets of stable soil and tiny creatures will burrow new holes in the fresh layers. Small reptiles and birds will come to feed upon them once again.

Since the fire, wild cucumber has quickly spread its roots to create large interwoven mats to hold the soil in place on the hillsides. Seeds will take root, wildflowers will sprout. The ceanothus, oak trees and other re-sprouters have sent up new green shoots and poison oak has spread over the ground quickly to tempt and nourish the deer and to protect the soil from inquisitive human trampers. The green appears sharply against the black earth. Soon there will be few signs of the fire storm that raged through the chaparral.

Judy Garriss

Watershed Protection

The State Water Board has approved a watershed grant for study and protection of the western portion of the Los Angeles watershed for Proposition 50 funding pending final approval in June. This study will seek to protect the ground water recharge in the LA River basin around the western half of San Fernando Valley. The Brown's Canyon watershed, including Devil Canyon, Ybarra Canyon and Mormon, is one of the largest contributors to the LA River from the north slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills. Other tributaries locally include Aliso, Bull, Box and Bell Creeks. Western tributaries from the Santa Monica Mountains to the LA River are also included.

Although much privately-owned land has recently become publicly held, the upper headwaters and tributaries need watershed and wildlife population studies in order to create strong legislature and future planning. We need to protect our ground water resources not only for our wildlife but also for ourselves as our current outside water sources diminish and population expands. Recent studies show that plumes of chemicals can travel many miles in the water table. Currently there is limited protection for our watersheds.

Judy Garriss

Flora of the Santa Susana Mountains and Trading Trees for Garbage

Sunshine Canyon is at the extreme eastern end of the Santa Susana Mountains. The vegetation is a blend of transverse range coastal sage scrub and transverse range lower chaparral communities. The coastal sage scrub community includes black sage, California buckwheat, California sagebrush, coyote brush, mixed sage, purple sage, and white sage. The lower chaparral includes bigpod ceanothus, hollyleaf redberry, chamise, chaparral whitethorn, hairy leaf ceanothus, hoary leaf ceanothus, scrub oak, and wedge leaf ceanothus. Riparian forests and woodlands are found in local streams and include arroyo willow, California sycamore, coast live oak, canyon oak and fremont cottonwood. The coastal sage scrub transitions to chaparrals and woodlands depending upon soil type, slope exposure, and summer fog.

On Wednesday, April 7th, I attended the hearing before the LA City Board of Public Works at City Hall regarding the granting of approval of a permit to remove 940 oak trees (850 coast live oaks and 90 canyon oaks) from Sunshine Canyon to make room for the growing landfill operated by Allied Waste Industries, formerly Browning-Ferris Industries. Under the current law, only trees with a trunk diameter of 8 inches or more need to be mitigated.

Homemakers, scientists, representatives of organizations and environmental activists all testified before the Board on behalf of the trees. At the end of the public testimony period, the Board approved the staff members' recommendation to adopt the tree mitigation plan, one of the last hurdles in the process to expand the landfill.

Under the protection of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty, removal and relocation of the trees cannot take place between March 1st through August 31st, or until the fledglings have left their nests.

On the drive back home, I had an opportunity to view a portion of the beautiful open space that is to become the expanded landfill. Seeing it even from a car window caused me to later ponder on what I throw away that is so important to bury that life-giving trees have to be removed. I started taking a good look at things I purchase and resolved to only buy things with minimum or no packaging and to frequently ask myself, "Does this item really need to go to a landfill?" Recycling takes on a new meaning when the reality sinks in that healthy, air-cleaning trees will be sacrificed to make room for garbage.

Susan Gerke



Coast live oak

[QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA]

Devil Canyon Hike, May 2, 2004

We had a fun hike in Devil Canyon on one of the hottest days of the year. We barely noticed the heat once we went down the hill from the future Topanga Condo project site into the canyon. The winter firestorms charred the upper slopes above Devil Canyon, but the steep walls of the canyon protected

much of the riparian area. The burned upland plants can no longer hold the soil in place and the streambed had become deeply silted. Young cattails sprouted at almost every stream crossing and two types of Juncus edged the wet areas. The Humboldt lilies, once confined to the hillside across from our little oak woodland picnic spot, were now budding in new areas along the trail. A Blue-Eyed Mary quietly declared itself among the shadows of the canyon, and Large-Flowered Phacelia proved its fire-follower reputation. Elegant Clarkia tried to make a good display although not in full dress. Occasional Indian Pinks peered up at us while Indian Paintbrush glared from here and there. Besides the usual Deerweed, Eucrypta, Blue Dicks and Wallflowers, a single Yellow Monkey Flower bloomed brightly. From fire blackened soil, Blue Larkspur speckled a thick stand of Yellow Mariposa Lilies. The weatherman said it was 102° in Chatsworth on this day, but a steady cool breeze air-conditioned the canyon, and we enjoyed a pleasant walk among the oaks looking for fire-followers. Devil Canyon is a favorite summer hiking trail and, as usual, I see more hikers than equestrians along the stream trail.

Enjoy it while you can. If the Topanga Condo project gets its final approval, we may temporarily lose the access until the Deerlake developer builds a connecting trail. This developer plans a multi-use trail beginning near Topanga and ascending a little higher than the current driveway access. The Topanga Condo developer plans to connect the Deerlake multi-use trail to the trail into Devil Canyon north of the condo property.

Planting oak trees is part of the mitigation process under the Oak Tree Permit Ordinance. According to oak tree biologist Rosi Dagit and other oak specialists, young oaks grow best when planted under the canopy of other trees. We want to encourage both project developers to plant fast-growing trees to provide protective shade to the young oaks and temporary shade for the trail users until the planted oaks become large enough to shade the trail.

Judy Garris



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

invites you to JOIN / RENEW (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 contribution lend your support. Make your check 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)
- Life Member (\$100.00)
- Business / Organization (\$25.00)

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Street Address: _____ E-mail: _____
 City / State / Zip: _____
 Special Interest / Expertise: _____

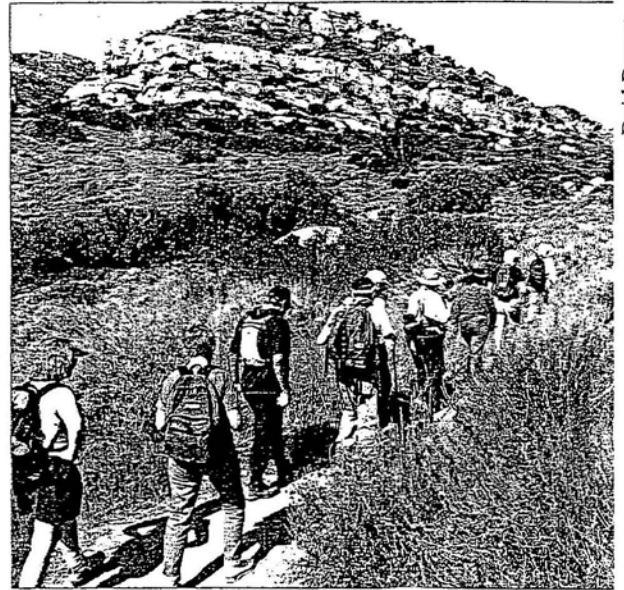
May Hikes

SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAINS TASK FORCE HIKE:

Sun., 5/16, 9 am - Stagecoach Trail: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Hike up the Devil's Slide and learn the colorful history of the park. Moderate 4 mi, 700' gain loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Cyn Blvd., turn W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, lugsoles, bring water & snack. Ldr: Lee Baum. (818) 341-1850. Assts: Judy Garris, Bob Galletly.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY, WILDERNESS ADVENTURES HIKE:

Thurs., 5/20, 8 am - Fossil Hill via Chumash Trail and Beyond (optional) into Rolling Country: Moderately paced 9 mi (optional 11 mi), 1200' gain hike in Santa Susana Mtns. Meet at trailhead (from 118 Fwy in Simi Valley, exit Yosemite Ave, N 1/2 mi to Flanagan Dr, 3/4 mi to end, park. Bring 2 qts water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Ldr: Bob Galletly. (818) 885-1920. Assts: Vera Salomons, Ramona Dunn.



Reid Bogert

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park Hikers



To read the by-laws of SSMPA, please go to its internet group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SSMPA/>) where you will also find many documents and resources relevant to the issues of concern to SSMPA and its members. If you have any questions regarding the website, please feel free to call Reid Bogert at (323) 661-4686.

Thank you for renewing your membership: John & Annelore Schillo; Ants & Virve Leps; Jim & Liz Carlin; Dorian & Dalia Keyser; Greg Dubiel; Leland Gassert. **Welcome New Members!** Mary Page; Agnes Talley. **New Life Members:** Shields Family. **We appreciate your generous donation:** Robert Pavlik (in memory of Charles Pavlik); Liliano Haro.

Subscribers & Members: We appreciate you! Please note the renewal date on your label. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help SSMPA meet the costs of producing this newsletter. Susan Gerke, Editor



GRAY FOX
(*Procyon cinereocargenteus*)

Coyote
(*Canis latrans*)



Mule Deer
(*Odocoileus hemionus*)

Babcat
(*Felis rufus*)



Ground Squirrel
(*Spermophilus beecheyi*)



Opossum
(*Didelphis virginiana*)

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
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