



# Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

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

## April 2009 Newsletter

Volume 39 Issue 4



### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING April 20, 2009 at 7:15PM

Our guest speaker on April 20th will be Karma Graham. Karma is an District Interpretive Specialist with the California State Parks. She will present a program about the Chumash culture.

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, September through November and January through May at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South. Our program meetings begin at 7:15pm and conclude at 9:00pm.

### Saturday, April 18, 2 pm

National Park Service Visitor Center  
401 W. Hillcrest, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360  
[www.nps.gov/samo](http://www.nps.gov/samo)

OUTDOORS Calendar of Events - March/April/May  
805-370-2301

### Santa Susana Mountain Park Association Lecture: Trails from Past to Present

Join members, Jack Unger, John, Luker and Carla Henry, of the SSMPA to see how missionary trails led to stage-coach trails, to railroads and freeways through the Santa Susana Mountains-Simi Hills-Santa Monica Mountains. The discussion covers the need to preserve trails for humans and wildlife for future enjoyment.

SEND US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS: [chrisbovay@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbovay@gmail.com) This allows us to notify you of last minute news and changes in our meetings. SSMPA is also working on Saving Trees by e-mailing our newsletter rather than mailing - postage increases in May from .42 to .44 first class mail.

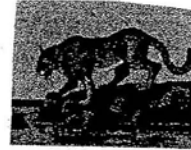
### In Memoriam

Milt McAuley, trail blazer of the Santa Monica Mountains, recently died at age 83. He, with ten other avid hikers, plotted the Backbone Trail, a 60 mile trail through the Santa Monica Mountains. He realized after working on the development of Backbone Trail, there wasn't a reference guide for other hikers to enjoy this trail. In 1980, McAuley wrote his first book, "Hiking Trails of the Santa Monica Mountains." He could not find a publisher that would take the project on so he and his wife borrowed money and set up their own publishing company to run copies. It became a best seller in the Southern California region; later he went on to publish six more guidebooks. His "Wildflowers of the Santa Monica Mountains" with photographs by James P. Kenney, is grouped by flower colors, an amazing reference for beginners to naturalists wanting to locate wildflowers throughout the local area with references to seasons, climate conditions, fire, etc. His guides can be found at the National Park Service in Thousand Oaks, [nps.gov/samo](http://nps.gov/samo), and on the internet booksellers.

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.

## Mountain lion's territory crosses Highway 101

By Jake Finch Ventura County Star See Article for photographs by Phil Crosby  
Wednesday, April 1, 2009



For more than six years, Raymond Sauvajot and his team of wildlife biologists and ecologists have quietly watched the movements of radio-collared mountain lions within eastern Ventura County and adjacent Los Angeles County lands.

They've mapped the big cats roaming throughout the parklands and open spaces only to be stopped at the 101 freeway. Whether from the north or the south, the mountain lions seemed to stay on their side of the road, intimidated by the traffic — until recently.

In late February, a newly collared male cat named P12 crossed the 101 from north to south at the Liberty Canyon underpass and is now making his way toward the Malibu Hills, marking a first in the radio collar program's six years.

It's important to know when the animals widen their range because biologists are concerned about inbreeding. With less than two dozen mountain lions estimated in the Santa Monica Mountains, Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains, the population is extremely sensitive.

"We've been waiting a long time," said Sauvajot, chief of resources management for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. "The fact that we have lions in the Santa Monica Mountains at all means there's been some movement in the past, but we haven't been able to document it before now. It's pretty important from a conservation standpoint."

Up till now, there have been a dozen mountain lions, mostly males, that have been collared. The program currently tracks six — the collars sometimes stop working or something happens to the cats. A GPS unit is housed in the collar and sends regular signals to Sauvajot's team. It's how they knew so quickly that P12, their latest cat being tracked, crossed the freeway.

Sauvajot calls this project a "high profile science that people can understand." It could lead to greater cooperation between agencies to maintain territories and develop wildlife corridors.

"One of the most important goals is for this to matter on the ground, for it to result in conservation actions," he said.

Seth Riley, a wildlife biologist on Sauvajot's team, was especially excited by P12's trek. Riley was the biologist who discovered P12 on Dec. 14 in the Simi Hills.

"I actually checked that trap first thing in the morning. I've checked a lot of lion traps for six years and it was the first time I actually had a lion," Riley said.

The program has cameras set up throughout the Simi Hills, Santa Monica Mountains and Santa Susana Mountains. The cameras detect mountain lions and other wildlife of interest. By monitoring the cameras daily, biologists spot the lions and can set a snare trap. These are not hunting traps designed to disable the animals, but instead are humane traps the biologists check twice daily.

When P12 was caught, Riley and his co-worker Jeff Sikich quickly sedated him with a blow dart, buckled the GPS collar to his neck and catalogued his size and age. Then they released him.

They tracked his earlier movements in the Santa Susana hills around Rocketdyne. Now, P12 seems to be heading toward the beach.

"We never see these animals," Riley said, "but we do get to learn a whole lot about where they go and when they're active. And we can find their kills."

The excitement generated by P12's crossing and the program's success in monitoring these animals has helped enlist the cooperation of other agencies to develop tunnels and passes for them.

There are partnerships among conservancies and state and federal wildlife agencies to share information and work together; county planning departments in Ventura and Los Angeles are looking at ways to include wildlife corridors in their overall planning efforts when new development arises, and Cal Trans is working to safely divert wildlife from roadways, Sauvajot said. One example is the recently finished work along Highway 23 where fencing was used to funnel wildlife away from the freeway and into safer culverts.

Paul Edelman, deputy director of natural resources and planning with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, said these efforts have been in the works for many years, but the information offered from the collar program and other research helps engage greater support with the governmental agencies that make decisions.

The city of Agoura Hills recently approved a development along Highway 101 that includes many improvements the builder will make for area wildlife.

"It would include removing fencing, creating areas with good cover, upgrading to block lighting — all kinds of micro-enhancements that will turn a leftover alleyway of dirt into a state-of-the-art corridor for animals," Edelman said.

The project is on hold because of the current economic conditions, Edelman said, but the permits will stay with the project when the developer is ready to start.

In the long-term, Sauvajot said P12's activities will help develop a broader network of corridor and other conservation efforts.

"Ultimately, that's what the science is about. It's not how (the mountain lions) eat and breed and live. It's about how that information is relevant to their conservation, to make these parks functional for the wildlife that live there."

**Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership: Merrily Lovell, Hal & Marleen Lovett, Carla Woll, Moonyeen Powers, Windy Brunell, Carla Henry, Kira Fuchs, Barbara Lilley, Cecelia Heppes, Arthur Langton, Beverly Cervini, Gregory Jensen, Jerry & Kimberly Sodek, Jerry Coscia. New Members: Thomas Eisenhauser, Ira and Shira Harrison, Barry Seybert. PLEASE NOTE: WHEN SENDING YOUR RENEWAL, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IF YOU HAVE ONE.**

SSMPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION INFORMATION

SSMPA members, currently paid as of March, 2009, can vote for the candidates on the ballot, or you can write in the names of the candidates of your choice. Members can either mail their ballots or bring them to the General Membership meeting on Monday, April 20, 2009.

Instructions: Detach this page from the rest of the newsletter. If you are an individual member, indicate your votes in one of the ballots below. If you have a family membership, indicate your votes in both ballots. Mail this ballot page to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831 so it is received at the P.O. Box by April 20, 2009 - OR bring it to the April meeting (see front page of this newsletter for details of meeting).

BALLOT - SSMPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

The Elections Committee of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association has considered and approved the following candidates for the 2009 SSMPA Board of Directors. Please vote for ONE candidate for each of the following offices by circling the printed name or by writing in the name of a candidate of your choice.

- PRESIDENT: JACK UNGER OR
VICE PRESIDENT: JOHN LUKER OR
RECORDING SECRETARY: TEENA TAKATA OR
TREASURER: DIANA DIXON-DAVIS OR
BACKUP SECRETARY: CARLA HENRY OR
MEMBER AT LARGE/NEWSLETTER EDITOR: CHRIS BEAUVAIS OR
MEMBER AT LARGE: REID BOGERT OR
MEMBER AT LARGE: WARREN STONE OR
MEMBER AT LARGE: JUDY GARRIS OR
MEMBER AT LARGE: JAN MILLER OR

Honorary Member: Janice Hinkston

BALLOT - SSMPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

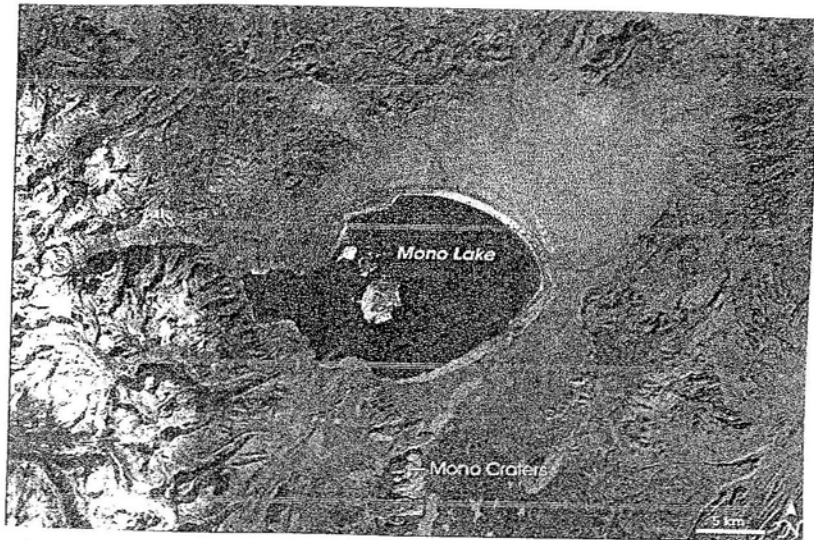
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- PRESIDENT: JACK UNGER OR
VICE PRESIDENT: JOHN LUKER OR
RECORDING SECRETARY: TEENA TAKATA OR
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Honorary Member: Janice Hinkston



[earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/imagerecords](http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/imagerecords)



Every spring, male sage grouse gather to strut their stuff in riveting mating rituals. Punctuating their displays with swishing, hooting, and popping sounds, males bob their heads, fan their tail feathers, raise their wings, and expand and contract distinctive yellow air sacs to compete for females' favor. But sage grouse "leks," or mating grounds, are becoming less and less lively as habitat dwindles and numbers decline — especially in the Mono Basin area, where an isolated, genetically distinct population is holding on by a thread.

Due to livestock grazing, development, off-road vehicles, and other threats, the greater sage grouse is disappearing from regions across the West; the Mono Basin area is one of the most crucial. The loss of this already isolated population would create a gap in the range of the species as a whole, covering 14 counties across two states and spanning thousands of square miles. It would ruin the integrity of unique Mono Basin ecosystems and rob the world of a genetically distinct, irreplaceable sage grouse population.

Despite the sage grouse's danger, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service denied a 2005 petition filed by the Center and allies to recognize the Mono Basin area sage grouse as a distinct population and federally grant it threatened or endangered status. While acknowledging the population's uniqueness, in 2006 the Service failed to acknowledge significant evidence of its risk for extinction. Finally, two years after the petition was submitted and six months after we and our allies filed a lawsuit, the Service agreed to withdrawing its 2006 pronouncement. In April 2008, the agency announced it would consider the bird for Endangered Species Act listing. The Center will work to ensure that the agency's ultimate finding keeps the Mono Basin area sage grouse from dying out.

# Activities Schedule

Rancho Simi Trailblazers

**UPCOMING HIKES**  
Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen.  
**RAIN CANCELS**

## Regularly Scheduled Hikes

(Hikes are canceled if it rains. There are no hikes on holidays.)

### Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet at 4 PM at the Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Road on the Santa Susana Pass.

(Meet at 5 PM during daylight savings time.) (Strenuous - 4.8 MRT)

### Tuesday Evening - Long Canyon

Meet at 6:30 PM in the Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Parkway. (Easy to Moderate - 3.0 MRT)

### Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at 6 PM at Chumash trailhead. Directions: Take the 118 Freeway to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite and turn right on Flanagan Dr. The trail head is at the end of Flanagan Drive. (Moderate to Strenuous - 5.2 MRT)



HERE IS AN E-MAIL WITH TERRIFIC GRAPHICS THAT DETAILS HIKES  
Website: Communityhikingclub.org  
Zulliebear@aol.com  
ATTN: Dianne



## April Activities

### April 18th Towsley Canyon Loop Trail\*

6.5 MRT - Moderate (1670' elevation gain)

Incredible show of wildflowers; spectacular geological formations, rugged mountain views, tar pits, canyon narrows, frothy streambeds and more. Meet at 8 AM at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots. For more information about this hike, [Go to www.simitrailblazers.com](http://www.simitrailblazers.com)

## May Activities

May 9th

### Sisar Canyon to White Ledge\*

Moderate 9 MRT (2000' elevation gain)

Follow a creek up to the California Bay Laurel trees of the White Ledge campsite in the Topatopa Mountains. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, layered clothing, and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite near the corner of Madera and Royal. [Go to www.simitrailblazers.com](http://www.simitrailblazers.com) for more information about this hike.

May 9th

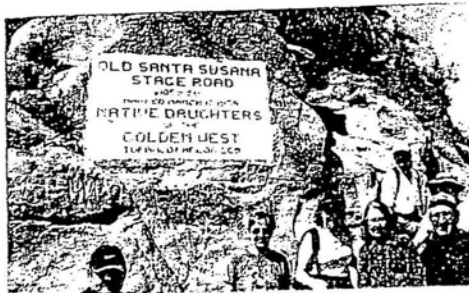
### Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Street Fair

The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District will have a booth at the annual Street Fair, scheduled for Saturday, May 9, on Cochran Street between Galena and Sequoia. This event, hosted by the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, draws crowds of 15,000+ to visit more than 300 vendor booths. The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers organization will have trail brochures, maps, and newsletters at the park district booth, along with a member to answer questions for fair visitors. Stop by and see us between 9:00 am-5:00 pm.



## STAGECOACH TRAIL

STAGECOACH TRAIL - 9:00AM. INTERPRETATIVE HIKE INTO HISTORY OF SANTA SUSANA PASS STATE HISTORIC PARK. MEET AT 9:00AM FOR A 2 1/2 MI (400' GAIN) LOOP UP THE STAGECOACH TRAIL. Corrections: change Trail head (meeting place) to park entrance on Larwin Ave. about 200 feet south of DEVONSHIRE on right. Park on Street. LEADER: LEE BAUM (818-341-1850/SIERRA CLUB-SANTA SUSANA MTNS TASK FORCE OUTING). STAGECOACH TRAIL HIKES WILL BE ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, STARTING OCTOBER.



## 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 ((\$10.00)   
  Individual (\$15.00)   
  Family (\$20.00)  
 Life Member (\$150.00)   
  Business / Organization (\$30.00)

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 Special Interest / Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association



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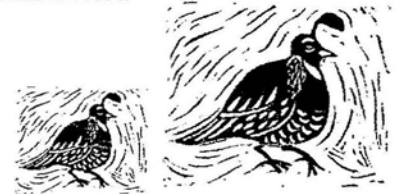
Quail are among the most beautiful and beneficial of all birds. Their feeding habits render a service to man as they consume mostly insects and weed seeds. The quail's topknot looks like a single feather, but it is actually a cluster of six overlapping plumes.

The tiny chicks are most appealing and seem to be irresistible to humans. After hatching, they leave the nest as soon as the down dries on their bodies. They keep close together near their parents. Their protection is the capacity to squat close to the ground and remain motionless, blending with their surroundings and becoming almost invisible. The parent bird will try to decoy danger away from the chicks, but will not abandon them, so upon discovery of a covey of chicks it is important that they be left alone.

Quail build their nests on the ground in fields, hedgerows and other low areas. Many a nest has been lost to plows, mowers or careless walkers, to say nothing of marauding cats. Never chase or pick up young birds or animals because you think they are too young to be out of the nest. Many young wild creatures leave the nest very early. The parents usually won't approach their young while you are near, so stand well back and wait quietly and patiently for the parents to return and care for their young. If a person, finding a young bird on the ground, decides to replace it in a nearby nest, he or she might put it in the wrong one. If the nest belongs to another species, the parent birds may kill the intruding fledgling.

An interesting fact: multiple California Quail broods may mix after hatching and are attended by all of the parents of those broods. Adults that engage in communal brooding live longer than adults that do not.

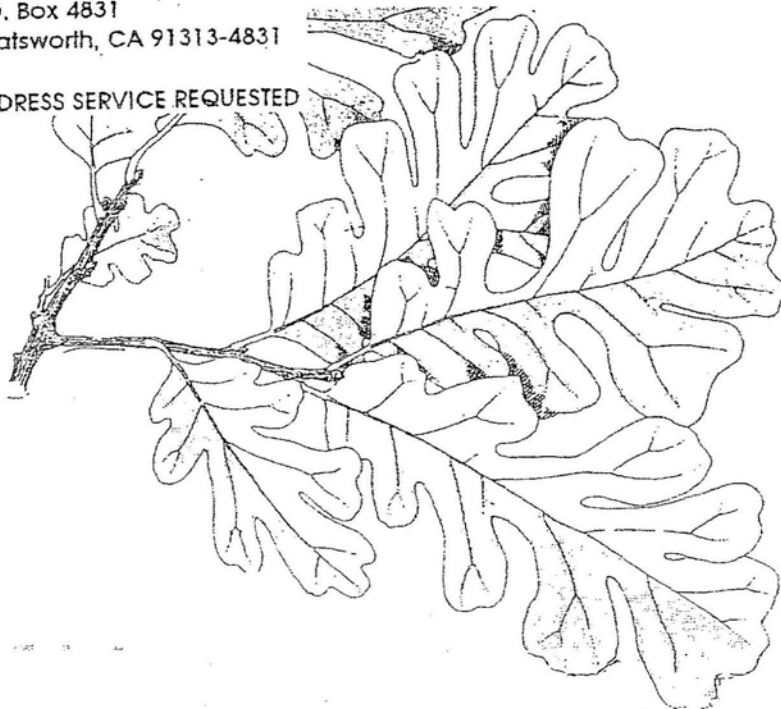
Submitted by our own Susan Gerke



SSMPA NOW HAS BEAUTIFUL BLACK T-SHIRTS. NATURAL FIBER, RED AND WHITE CUMASH DESIGN. VARIOUS SIZES. PRICES: UP TO XL - \$20.00 XXL - \$22.00

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &  
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