

SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Incorporated Nov. 30, 1971 Email: mail@ssmpa.com

Founded Nov. 20. 1970 Website: ssmpa.com

Fall 2017 Newsletter

(September)

SSMPA Community Meetings are free to SSMPA Members and the Public.

Monday, Sep. 18, 2017 7:00pm - 8:30pm Rockpointe Clubhouse: 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311 Click here for map

Fighting for the Future of Our Trees in the Simi Hills

Presenters: John Luker, SSMPA, Al Knight, Anthropologist, Wendi Gladstone, SSMPA See related article below: Shot Hole Borer Threatens SoCal Trees



Monday, Oct. 16, 2017 7:00pm - 8:30pm Location To Be Determined You will receive an email announcement from SSMPA

LA County Trails Master Plan & Chatsworth's Old Mission Trail

Presenters:

Zachary Likins, Park Planner for LA County and Dean Wageman, SSMPA & ETI Corral 54



See related article: SSMPA Is Collaborating with LA County on Trails Planning

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Monday, Nov. 20, 2017 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Location to Be Determined You will receive an email announcement from SSMPA

Environmental Action from the Simi Hills to Capitol Hill Presenter: Jim Hines, Environmental Advocate and Organizer at Sierra Club



Chatsworth Park South Reopens after 91/2 Years!

Chatsworth Park South (City of LA), at the far west end of Devonshire Street, was closed February 14, 2008, because of reported lead contamination on a portion of the acreage. Remediation work (grading, storm

water controls, capping the surface soil, trails improvement, refreshing of park equipment, etc.) began in early April 2016.

On August 31, 2017,

after 3,485 days of closure, Los Angeles Department of



Recreation and Parks along with City Council District 12:

Officially Re-Opened Chatsworth Park South!

SSMPA, who was occasionally a pain-in-the-neck for some City officials during the decade of closure, is delighted to see the park revamped and open again.



left: former SSMPA director Diana Dixon Davis advocates for reopening of Chatsworth Park South in 2012.

right: SSMPA director Bob Dager witnesses the Chatsworth Park South re-opening ceremony August 31, 2017.



See an excellent drone video of the re-opened park by Chatsworth resident Larry Wolff.

https://www.laparks.org/park/chatsworth-park-south

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SSMPA Is Collaborating with LA County on Trails Planning

SSMPA board members, led by **Dean Wageman** and **John Luker**, are actively meeting and hiking with planners of the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation to provide input on the Santa Susana Trails Master Plan. SSMPA is providing assistance in mapping new trails in western LA County. SSMPA also wants to help in coordinating trail signage in the Chatsworth Hills with that of neighboring trails that pass into Ventura County, to maintain a cohesive style and placement that will make trail usage seamless and intuitive.

The next public meeting for the Trails Master Plan Project is scheduled for November 2017.

Hear more: Come to SSMPA's Community Meeting October 16, 2017: LA County Trails Master Plan & Chatsworth's Old Mission Trail

For more information, please visit http://www.santasusanatrailsplan.org/.

Boeing Land Trust for SSFL

Ten years ago, Boeing Company announced their intent to preserve the former **Santa Susana Field Laboratory** site as open space, in order to protect wildlife habitat and the site's rich cultural heritage. On April

24, 2017, Boeing made that commitment legally binding by agreeing to a conservation easement held by North American Land Trust that permanently preserves as open space habitat nearly 2,400 acres Boeing owns at Santa Susana.

"Our vision is that Santa Susana will continue to be a place where mountain lions roam free, cultural artifacts remain undisturbed and oak woodlands have the opportunity to thrive," said Mark Zeller, Boeing's Santa Susana deputy program director. "We remain committed to completing a cleanup that fully protects everyone who will enjoy this vast open space habitat as well as our neighbors in the community."



The conservation easement is a legally enforceable document that, among other restrictions, forever prohibits residential or agricultural development on-site. It permanently binds the property, regardless of who owns the land. North American Land Trust, an established land trust that holds more than 480 conservation easements in 18 states, will monitor and enforce the easement.

"We are thrilled to be able to collaborate with Boeing on the conservation of this incredible property. Santa Susana is a critical link in a regional wildlife corridor essential for the survival of mountain lions and other wideranging species. We will ensure that the property is protected forever, and that its natural and cultural resources are enhanced for the benefit of generations to come," said Stephen Johnson, president of North American Land Trust.

The Santa Susana site sits within a habitat linkage that connects the Los Padres National Forest to the Santa

Monica Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Significant portions of Boeing's acreage at Santa Susana remain undisturbed and are inhabited by mountain lions, red-tailed hawks, bobcats, mule deer and other wildlife.

Boeing, NASA and the Department of Energy have conducted decades of environmental investigations in preparation for the final cleanup of the Santa Susana site. Boeing has also addressed the contamination in soil, groundwater and storm water with interim cleanups, furthering progress toward restoration and preservation of this unique and valuable ecosystem.

Record Crowds at the Annual Chatsworth Nature Preserve Earth Day Open House

From a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power News Release:

To provide the public with a rare opportunity to experience the natural beauty of the Chatsworth Nature Preserve and Ecology Pond up close, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the **Santa Susana Mountain Park Association** hosted the Annual Chatsworth Nature Preserve Earth Day Open House on Sunday, April 2, 2017.

With nearly 2,000 community members present throughout the day, the event featured a number of highlights, including a special Chumash and Tataviam Native American Tribal Blessing performed by tribe member Alan Salazar, live animal exhibits, information booths from environmental and community groups, and two-mile guided walking tours around the Chatsworth Pond.

Because the property is closed to the public to preserve habitat on the site, the Annual Open House provides a once-a-year opportunity for the public to view wildlife habitat, plants and trees around the Chatsworth Nature Preserve, which were especially vibrant this year thanks to adequate rainfall.

Tour guides provided the public with historical background of the area, as well as facts about the animal and plant life in the preserve. One species of oak tree located on the site is more than 100 years old and serves as the backbone of the Chatsworth Nature Preserve's ecosystem. These mature oaks provide sapling oaks with moisture, nourishment and protection from the sun while also serving as critical habitat for birds, insects, plants and animals indigenous to the area. Along the hike, visitors were also treated to an animal footprint exhibit depicting the tracks of many of the animals that frequent the Chatsworth Ecology Pond.

LADWP Chief Operating Officer Marty Adams, who served as the Master of Ceremonies for the event, said "Chatsworth is the only nature preserve in the City of Los Angeles and the community places a high value on its success. That's why LADWP works so hard to be good stewards of the property, to ensure that this unique and valuable space can continue to flourish for years to come."

Speakers also included Chatsworth Nature Preserve Coalition Member Carla Bollinger and Santa Susana Mountain Park Association President Tom Nachtrab.

"We're grateful for LADWP's support because events like this help people experience the beauty of the Chatsworth Nature Preserve and gain a greater understanding of the importance of preserving green spaces and wildlife habitat," said Sharon Shingai, Event Organizer and Director-At-Large with the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association.

The LADWP-owned property originally served as the site of a reservoir put into service in 1919 and fed by the San Fernando Reservoir. Because the reservoir dam was built without mechanical compaction of the soil it was deemed seismically vulnerable and removed from service in 1972. In 1997 the Los Angeles City Council renamed the Chatsworth Reservoir as the Chatsworth Nature Preserve, effectively establishing the City's first and only nature preserve to date.

To view photos of the event, visit http://photos-chatsworth-nature-preserve-open-house/#3.

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Western Spadefoot Toads (spea hammondi) Found in Chatsworth Nature Preserve

On April 1, 2017, a very jubilant group of field herpers from the Southwestern Herpetologists Society found three young western spadefoot toads (spea hammondi) in the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. With the recent winter rains, they found thousands of western toads and various tree frogs. This was the first sighting of western spadefoot toads since April, 2011 when Junior Herper **Dylan Sprout** found the first spadefoot seen in the northern San Fernando Valley in over twenty years. "Toadie" resides in the Living Vertebrates Department at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles.

The spadefoot toad gets its name from the spade-like hind feet that help them burrow into the ground where they spend most of their time in a dormant state.



When there is sufficient rain to cause vernal pools, they surface to mate, lay eggs, and complete the metamorphosis within as little as two weeks.

Letting the Ecology Pond dry up last year helped eliminate many invasive species like the crayfish, the bullfrogs, and the red-earred slider turtles. Over forty red-earred sliders and three common snapping turtles were removed from the Ecology Pond last year and rehomed. Non-native species do not have the adaptations to survive the drought. Native species can burrow down to find moisture and estivate - go into a dormant state until the rains come.

Seeing the spadefoot toads making a comeback is very exciting. Little is known about why they choose certain vernal ponds over others to reproduce. And to see them the short time they are above ground is amazingly delightful!

~Sharon Shingai

Shot Hole Borer Threatens SoCal Trees

SSMPA Board Members **Wendi Gladstone and John Luker** have spent the past few months coordinating with **Rosi Dagit**, Senior Conservation Biologist, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica

Mountains, to monitor the health of oak trees at the Santa Susana Field Lab, and Chatsworth, looking for signs of the shot hole borer. They have set up monitoring stations to determine the existence of this beetle, and the program will run through September. The good news is, so far, no shot hole borers have been found.

As background, the shot hole borer is an invasive boring beetle, originating from Southeast Asia, that drills into tree trunks and branches, bringing with it a pathogenic fungus along with other fungi that are conducive to establishing and nurturing shot hole borer colonies. It is dark brown or black and very small - measuring 0.05 and 0.1 inches. The holes the insects bore measure



approximately 0.85 mm inches in diameter (about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen). Pregnant females bore into the tree bark and create galleries in which they can lay eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the larvae eat the fungus - gaining the nutrients they need to enter adulthood in about a month. Mature siblings mate with each other inside these galleries and then leave their host tree to affect others in the area. This activity attacks the tree's vascular tissue and disrupts water and nutrient flow. The fungus that is produced is also harmful to the tree.

Shot hole borers have attacked more than 300 species of native, exotic and agricultural trees in Southern California and have been found in a number of environments - from urban landscapes to commercial groves, and now native riparian habitats. Thirsty trees are especially vulnerable to attack, so the long drought in Southern California has allowed this invasive species to thrive. This insect has eclectic taste and may infect many plant species, including Coast Live Oak and Sycamores. At this time there is no predator locally that eats this invasive insect. Scientists have been to South East Asia to study the beetle and search out a remedy.

Hear more: Come to SSMPA's Community Meeting September 18, 2017: <u>Fighting for the Future of Our</u> <u>Trees in the Simi Hills</u>

~Wendi Gladstone and Vanessa Watters

Update on Old Mission Trail Monument

SSMPA Board members Dean and Darlene Wageman continue to head the drive to have The Old Mission Trail registered as a Chatsworth Cultural Landmark.

This trail once traversed the entire length of the San

Fernando Valley, from the San Fernando Mission to Chatsworth and beyond. Dean and Darlene would like to see the communities of Chatsworth, Porter Ranch, and Granada Hills unite to ensure that the Old Mission Trail and other such trails are preserved and maintained for equestrian and pedestrian use.

Toll Brothers is planning a housing development near Rinaldi and Mason that will run adjacent to portions of the trail, To date, they have committed to trail signage that will hopefully be compatible with the recommended trail markers, given the historical significance of the trail.

Two SSMPA Board Members Honored for Their Volunteer Service

SSMPA Directors **Warren Stone** and **Vanessa Watters** were honored this year with a <u>Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council</u> "**Service to the Community**" award.

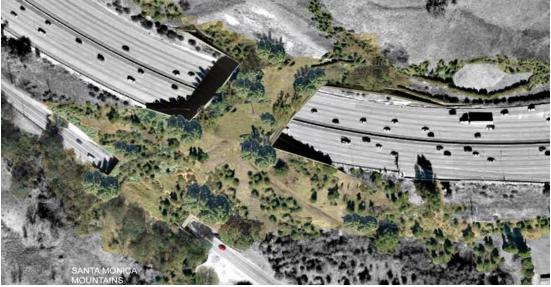


Warren served for many years on the boards of both SSMPA and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains. His volunteer achievements over time have contributed to the establishment of Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park and Chatsworth Trails Park.

Vanessa has been a volunteer director of SSMPA for six years, including a stint as board secretary. Earlier she spearheaded funding from the City of L.A. for Save Chatsworth's restoration of Chatsworth Trails Park. Vanessa is now a chief editor of SSMPA's quarterly newsletter.

Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing

Plans continue to construct the largest wildlife overpass in the world. Spanning 10 lanes of the 101 Freeway, the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing will be approximately 165 feet wide and 200 feet long. The project aims to connect severely isolated wildlife populations within the Santa Monica Mountains to those in the



nearby Santa Susana Mountains. Without such a connection, there is a significant risk that the local mountain lion population will become extinct.

The design will include tunnels to accommodate more reclusive wildlife, a corridor of riparian vegetation, and sound walls to dampen the noise and headlights of the freeway. According to **Clark Stevens**, the architect and habitat restorationist behind the design of the overpass, a wildlife crossing is more successful when you provide multiple ways for wildlife to utilize it.

For more information and to check for updates, go to Clark Stevens' website, <u>http://www.clarkstevens.com/wildlife-overpass-1</u>

Deerlake Ranch Development

Taking advantage of the absence of rain and wind through the summer, Foremost Communities is actively progressing through the first phase of the Deerlake Ranch Project, with completion of the Canoga and Poema bridges expected by the end of 2017.

In addition to Canoga Avenue, they are grading Poema Place, and the dirt is being conveyed across Devil's Canyon to the north side of the project. By using the conveyor belt, Foremost has avoided thousands of dump truck trips, which is a real boon for the community due to the amount of dust, noise and traffic those trucks would have stirred up in Twin Lakes. The Canoga Bridge is expected to reach completion in September 2017. The Poema Bridge will be completed in December of 2017. Project grading will continue until next summer, and home building is expected to commence August 1, 2018. Twin Lakes residents should expect continuing road closures on Canoga Avenue, due to the bridge completion project.



Deerlake's annual weed abatement has been completed for Los Angeles County Fire. The fencing that has been placed along Poema is rock fall fencing, designed to prevent debris from rolling into the roadway.

Foremost continues to be responsive to the needs of the Twin Lakes community, taking care of problems as they arise. They have kept up the practice of bringing in food trucks for periodic neighborhood get-togethers. Living in a construction zone is not easy for an existing community, but Foremost is succeeding in its effort to alleviate the inconveniences.

~Warren Stone and Vanessa Watters

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Abused Land in Chatsworth

It's not a park. It's private property. But still, is there any excuse for this abuse of the land? And it's immediately adjacent to, and encroaching upon, a public park, Chatsworth Park North.

The City Department of Building and Safety charged the owner with the following violations in April 2016:

Grading was performed without first obtaining a permit.

Open storage of inoperable vehicles.

Rubbish, garbage, trash and debris on the premises.

Open storage within the required yards.

Orders to comply have been issued and our local Building and Safety inspector is monitoring. But it will be a long process to try to repair all the damage to the land.

Click on photos below to see a gallery of photos of the property.



NOW: Land Abuse in Chatsworth Moves into City Park

Chatsworth Park North is under assault from illegal digging and grading by the same private property owner.

The abused property at 22255 Chatsworth Street has a long list of open complaints for illegal dumping and grading and storage of unused vehicles, but there continues to be little response from or action by the City of Los Angeles.

The grading now encroaches upon Chatsworth Park North, which is a public park. The private party has cut and filled for several dozen yards into the park and has removed vegetation.



City Council District 12 held a citizen volunteer cleanup event

at Chatsworth Park North on August 26, 2017, at which time Councilmember Mitch Englander and LAPD Captain Lium got an up-close introduction to the destructive trespass onto City property.

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If you are disturbed by this overreach, you may call Inspector Robert Sunseri at the Los Angeles City Department of Building and Safety at (213) 473-3231 or Council District 12 at (818) 882-1212.

2nd Chance: Did you miss SSMPA's very popular Community Meeting in April 2017?

Native Wildflowers and Plants of Chatsworth

Presenters: Ann Vincent, Dottie Acker - Santa Susana Volunteers Photography: Teena Takata, Ann Vincent, John Luker

Ann and Dottie commented on dozens of local plants and flowers, with vibrant photos taken by Teena, Ann, and John in our local hills.

There was extraordinary precipitation in early 2017 and the resulting spring flora were varied and abundant.

See presentation here



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27th Annual Chatsworth Historical Society Take the Pioneer Sunday, Oct. 1, 2017 Challenge 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring your children & grandchildren **Old-time** fun for everyone! - Chores and **Games of Yore** - Vendors Chatsworth Museum Exhibits - Bake Sale Featuring **Chatsworth Pioneer Families** - Woodcarvers and the - Blacksmith History of Rocketdyne - Leather Crafts Tour Minnie's 1911 Cottage - Panning for Gold - Spinning Wheel Demo Location: Homestead Acre, - Veteran Quilt Display **Chatsworth Park South** (West end of Devonshire St.) - Design a Quilt Craft 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA - Rock Chippers Information: (818) 882-5614 - Bee Keeping chatsworthhistory@gmail.com - Telegraph Station www.chatsworthhistory.com **Butter Churning Donation:** Adults: \$5, and more! Children: \$1 (Free for kids under 5) Park your car at the Chatsworth Train Depot (10038 Old Depot Plaza Road) and use our free shuttle service, every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

INVITE YOU TO COME PLAY AND SHOP WITH YOUR WEST HILLS NEIGHBORS AT THE 9th Annual Acts & Crafts Fall Fest Saturday, Oct. 28, 2017 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Shadow Ranch Recreation Center 22633 Vanowen St., West Hills, CA 91307 Arts & crafts vendors • informational booths

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL AND CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS

Arts & cratts vendors • informational booths petting zoo • inflatables • stage entertainment carnival games for the kids • food trucks!

FOOD DRIVE FOR THE HOMELESS & THOSE IN DANGER OF BECOMING HOMELESS

You will be helping the CSUN homeless students' food pantry, our local food pantries and homeless services organizations. Help WHNC help others by donating tear-open bags of non-perishable food (tuna fish, nuts, chicken) and canned goods, fast food certificates, socks (white preferably), underwear, toothbrushes and toothpaste, flip-flops, feminine hygiene products, deodorant, reusable water bottles, backpacks, band aids and clean, untorn clothing, blankets and jackets of all kinds.

DROP OFF YOUR DONATIONS AT THE WHNC BOOTH.



Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park

Come join us for a family-friendly day of discovery in <u>YOUR</u> local state historic park.

SANTA SUSANA TRAILS DAY

Saturday November 11, 2017 Guided hikes starting at 8, 9 & 10 AM

Difficulty level: Varies by hike Andora Trail Head 9955 Andora Ave.

Chatsworth, CA

Grab your sunscreen, your hiking boots, a hat, H2O and let's go !



Learn about Chumash History | Railroad History | Herpetology | Stagecoach History | Rock Quarry Remember: this park is primitive - no toiliets, plan accordingly. Wielbehaved dogs <u>onteash</u> are welcome

Like us on Facebook: <u>www.facebook.com/SantaSusanaPass</u> Questions? Email: <u>santasusanafriends@gmail.com</u> Phone; 818-784-4849

Sponsored by The Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains "In partnership with California State Parks we protect and enhance the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park."

For information on all hikes in SSPSHP and to support

programming in this State Park, please visit

FPSSM.org ease support Your Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park

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HIKES

Information on local hikes is available via the following links:

Welcome Walks: Interpretive hikes in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park (SSPSHP): Facebook: Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains & fpssm.org

SSPSHP Volunteer Hikes: Contact: Jennifer Dandurand, park interpretive specialist, Los Encinos SHP: 818.784.4849; jdandurand@parks.ca.gov

SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, and

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers: www.simitrailblazers.com

Sierra Club: www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfvg/ Meetings, hikes

SFV Audubon: www.sfvaudubon.org Meetings and Bird Walks for families

Hiking and Event Updates: ssmpa.com

AMO



SSMPA Mission

regional open space.

Join Our Board of Directors? We have eleven Directors on our board. Our by-laws allow for up to fifteen Directors.

> Do you support conservation? **Open space? Parks and parkland?**

If you want to learn more about the possibility of joining our board, please drop a message at mail@ssmpa.com No obligation. Confidential.

One Cat's Advice

We gratefully accept your new membership, renewals, donations all year round!

If a mountain lion can cross the 101 and the 118, the least we all can do is become members of SSMPA.



Please click **HERE** to start or renew your membership by credit card

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or fill in the membership form below and mail it to us.

Your membership (new and renewal) and donations help SSMPA efforts and continued success in providing free community meetings; advocacy for open space/nature preserves; keeping or reopening local parks; acquiring easement land parcels to protect native plants and habitat, wildlife corridors and park space; environmental educational opportunities; preservation of Chatsworth's and the surrounding area's historical, cultural, and archaeological sites.

If you do want to not receive your newsletter via e-mail and must receive it by snail mail, please send an additional \$10.00. If you have moved, please be sure to let us know your new address.

SSMPA MEMBERSHIP GIVES YOU A VOICE IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

THANK YOU for your recent New Memberships: Matt Booth and Peggy Wu And THANK ALL OF YOU loyal members who have recently renewed your SSMPA Membership

Sign up for a LIFE MEMBERSHIP and/or a DONATION OF \$50.00 and receive a FREE "Cotton Blend Cool" <u>T-shirt</u> with a Chumash-inspired design. Let us know your size when you mail in your check,

or send an email to mail@ssmpa.com if you pay online.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TODAY OR NEW MEMBERS ...

Membership dues:

() 20.00 for individuals

() \$25.00 for a family

() \$30.00 for a business or organization

() \$150.00 for Individual Life Membership

() \$200.00 for a Family Life Membership

Make your check payable to SSMPA and mail to:

SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

Please be sure to provide us the following information:

Names_____E-mail_____

Address:_____

Phone:_____

Special interests or skills you have and if you would like to volunteer for any activities:

Note: If you must receive your newsletter via snail-mail, please send an additional \$10.00. Thank you for your support!

IMPORTANT: Please send today your e-mail address, or changes to your e-mail address, to: <u>mail@ssmpa.com</u> Your e-mail address is used exclusively for SSMPA newsletter and community announcements.



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Use your debit / credit card or Paypal

Click here to download our Spring 2017 newsletter

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Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA) P. O. Box 4831

Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

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Mail label here

2017/ 2018 SSMPA Board of Directors

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