

# 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](mailto:mail@ssmpa.com)

Founded Nov. 20, 1970

Website: [www.ssmpa.com](http://www.ssmpa.com)

**SPRING – 2nd QUARTER, 2013 Newsletter**

Volume 44.10

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHATSWORTH!  
CELEBRATING 125 YEARS**

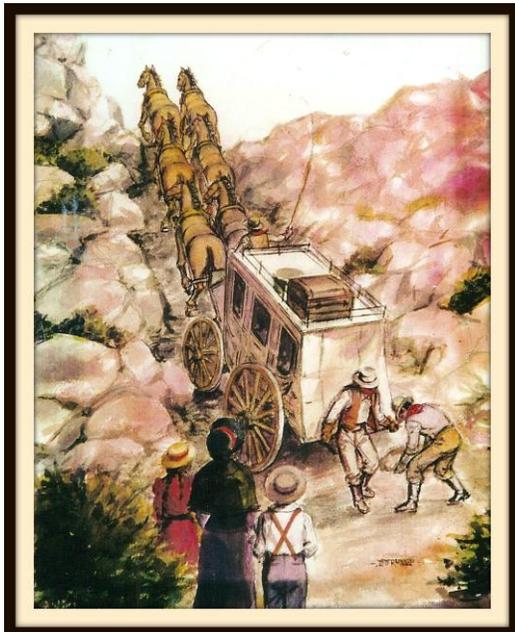


Illustration: Scaling the Devil's Slide – William Razanski

Chatsworth, in the foothills of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills, has a long history as a western town and transportation hub. Early history is the story of Native Americans, a convergence of tribes for ceremonies and trade. Spanish explorers - missionaries in the mid-1700's - learned the Santa Susana Pass route to be more expedient than the El Camino Real coastal route between Ventura and San Fernando Valley-Los Angeles. The pass used by foot and horses became a rugged wagon road. A section of the Santa Susana Pass Wagon Road was funded by the State of California in 1859 to become the Stagecoach Trail with a rugged incline "Devil's Slide" (located in today's Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.) Later, the Santa Susana Pass Road was asphalt paved in 1917 for automobile passage between Ventura and Los Angeles County. Railroad tunnels were built through the Santa Susana Mountains starting in 1893 and completed in 1904. This railroad track/tunnel is still in use by Amtrak and Metrolink.

Chatsworth is rich in scenic beauty with unique rock outcrops as seen in thousands of Western movies and TV films. The city is proud of its western heritage and importance as a transportation corridor.

Chatsworth Park filed as a town with the Los Angeles County Recorder, March 10, 1888.

For further information on Chatsworth History:

Chatsworth Historical Society Founded April 17, 1963

Celebrating 50 Years! [www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net);

**Chatsworth History** by Virginia Watson

**Smoke Signal** newsletter editor, Ann Vincent

Western Film History: Jerry England [www.cowboyup.com](http://www.cowboyup.com)

## **SSMPA COMMUNITY MEETINGS: 7:00 pm**

*(Community Meetings are Free to SSMPA Members and Public.)*

**Rockpointe Clubhouse: 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311**

*(On the south side, one block before entrance to Chatsworth Park South)*

## **Monday, April 15: The Ethnographic Geography of the Western San Fernando Valley**

### **Presenter: Barbara Tejada, District Archaeologist for California State Parks:**

Noted ethnographer, John Peabody Harrington, went out on a series of field trips with his Native American informants, recording the names and stories associated with prominent landmarks in the San Fernando Valley. In these notes he was documenting the cultural landscapes that native people used to inform their everyday lives. Modern development may have obscured these places and changed their meanings but they remain a part of our backyards today.



Tejada's presentation will cover the concept of cultural landscape, take you on a virtual field trip of the places Harrington noted, and tell the stories of the past.

**SSMPA COMMUNITY MEETINGS: 7:00 pm**

**Monday, May 20: Rocket Engine Development and Space Program Achievements at Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL)**

**Presenter: William Vietinghoff, Development Engineer for Atlas Missile and Space Shuttle Main Engine**

Many people in the community know that a range of activities in rocket engine development and space age programs were made possible by the testing activities of



Rocketdyne at the SSFL site. Programs were classified and never made public. That information is now available and will be covered in this talk.

Vietinghoff feels we have a historic landmark on our doorstep, unique in America, that may not be fully appreciated. That landmark, he is afraid, is being erased.

**----- In Remembrance -----**



**Linda Ann Stone**

July 29, 1937 – Jan. 11, 2013

After Warren and Linda Stone bought a home in Twin Lakes, Linda began devoting her life to the community. She served on the Board of Directors for SSMPA and volunteered for the California Traditional Music Society. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In addition, she served on the Board of Directors of the Immigrant Genealogical Society, the Chatsworth Library Association, The Chatsworth Historical Society, Save Chatsworth Inc., the Twin Lakes Property Owners Association and the Chatsworth Coordinating Council. She was an avid knitter and belonged to the Happy Hookers Knitting Group. Linda and her husband, Warren, were active together in these community organizations for more than 32 years. Linda was a treasured friend of the Chatsworth community.

**ADVOCACY:** SSMPA is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization. In order to preserve and protect the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills, we engage in public advocacy to support our mission statement (p.6). Below are updates on some public issues on which SSMPA has recently advocated actions in accord with preservation and protection of our local habitat.

**NPS SSFL – Resolution & Petition**

Just five miles west of Chatsworth lie almost 3,000 stunningly beautiful acres of Simi Hills ridge top. They are mostly open space in a vital, shrinking wildlife habitat corridor. They are the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, also known as “Rocketdyne” or “Boeing.” Some of that land is undergoing major decontamination, expected to be complete within the next four to seven years.

More than 400 acres of that land is owned by the federal government’s National Aeronautics and Space Administration. NASA has declared that it will complete a thorough cleanup of its property, but has no future use for the land. In effect, the NASA property is up for sale to a future owner now.

SSMPA’s position is that the Simi Hills must be protected from commercial development and preserved for the benefit of future generations of people and wildlife. To that end, SSMPA has advanced a resolution calling on the U.S. National Park Service to step forward now to arrange acquisition of the NASA property after the cleanup has been declared complete by the State of California.

On Thursday, March 14, 2013, **Granada Hills South NC** became the third LA Neighborhood Council to pass a resolution to support the **National Park Service’s** eventual acquisition of federally-owned properties at the **Santa Susana Field Lab** site, following the site’s completion of cleanup.

The resolution, based on [SSMPA’s proposal](#), calls for the land to be preserved as open space forever. The **Chatsworth NC** passed their resolution on February 6, 2013, and the **West Hills NC** passed [their resolution](#) on March 13, both also based on SSMPA’s proposal. SSMPA will be requesting several other neighborhood councils and community organizations to approve their own resolutions to the same end.

SSMPA is also circulating a companion petition for **individuals** to sign (150+ signatures to date). The petition states: **“I support prompt action by the National Park Service to arrange acquisition of property in the Santa Susana Field Laboratory and preserve it forever as open space and parkland.”** You can sign the petition yourself [HERE](#)

## CHATSWORTH PARK SOUTH

### Closed for 5 years, but...

The LA City Department of Recreation and Parks has at last submitted a draft cleanup plan for Chatsworth Park South to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

**Public Meeting: Tuesday, April, 2, 2013 at Mason Park, 10500 Mason Avenue, 6:30pm**



It is encouraging to see that, after five years, the city now has a comprehensive plan for cleaning up Chatsworth Park South. Let's hope that the California Department of Toxic Substances Control now carefully reviews the plan, modifies it if necessary, and ultimately approves the plan. And that the City of LA finds the funds needed to perform the work. With a little luck, might we have our park back about a year from now? Let's hope so, as 6+ years of closure is long enough.

## SIMI HILLS

Once a panoramic view of sandstone outcrops, backdrop to thousands of film westerns, the Simi Hills are now a litter-rama of mansions, fences, trailers, water tanks and cell phone towers. With each structure and road built in the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains, habitat destruction threatens a crucial wildlife link connecting the Santa Monica Mountains, Los Padres Forest, Angeles National Forest, and San Gabriel Mountains.

The Chatsworth Formation of ridges, rocks, peaks, and sandstone boulders filled in with chaparral are unique and visually stunning in sunrise or dusk's golden light. Once homes are occupied, anti-coagulant pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals used by homeowners not only kill wildlife, the poisons become part of groundwater used for human's drinking water.

Slopes are unstable with high risks for new building and residents below the new developments. Simi Hills and the Santa Susana Mountain foothills are subject to extreme Santa Ana winds that during seasonal drought fuel wildfires. Both slope stability and fires are enough reason for Ventura County and Los Angeles County planners to halt further building, as well as to save this vital habitat-wildlife corridor.

King of the Mountain isn't a child's game; it's destruction of an ecosystem and nature's unique vista by the powerfully privileged. City/county planners write about conservation, habitat resources, protecting watersheds in their long-term plans. Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) are determined, but the erosion of protecting open space and wildlife areas gets lost as one development after another is approved. Oak permits to destroy Southern California "protected" oak trees are negotiated, instead of five oaks, only two will be chopped up in the euphemism of being "conservative". It's time to stop allowing new construction before the Simi Hills and Santa Susana foothills are destroyed forever.

The United States Forest Service recently announced an amendment plan to reclassify certain NFS lands as "Wilderness" to protect them in perpetuity. We need to stop urban sprawl by having Simi Hills-Santa Susana Mountains given the Wilderness classification. Wilderness areas allow fishing, hunting, hiking and horseback riding. We urge you to submit your comments via email (deadline is May 16) to this e-address: [Socal\\_nf\\_imp\\_amendment@fs.fed.us](mailto:Socal_nf_imp_amendment@fs.fed.us) - Carla Bollinger

## CHATSWORTH NATURE PRESERVE

The Chatsworth Nature Preserve (CNP) is a major city of Los Angeles open space preserve, approximately 1325 acres, teeming with wildlife, flying, crawling, and walking. More than 200 species of birds are on site, amphibians and reptiles, small critters to larger animals including occasional visits by mule deer and cougars. Former Los Angeles City Councilman, Hal Bernson, other community leaders and environmental organizations, worked together to create the "Chatsworth Nature Preserve" protecting this open space/wildlife habitat under City Ordinance #169723, with limited uses to a Nature Preserve and related scientific studies and education. The CNP has an Ecology Pond, seasonal wetlands and vernal pools, grasslands, oak woodlands and savanna, and riparian areas, and cultural and archaeological assets. There have been recorded findings of endangered species: Western Spadefoot, Tri-Color Blackbird, plants such as Dudleya, Santa Susana Tarweed, and raptors with special status.

In 2012 the Ecology Pond, or as DWP refers to it, Detention Basin #2, needed refilling. The pond was refilled on several occasions after it almost dried up. This caused damage to the fringing marsh vegetation. Turtles, red sliders, Tricolored Blackbirds have left the pond area, and it is unknown with the loss of habitat if these animals will return. There is a need to clean out the sediment in the Ecology Pond to one day restore to a healthy condition and reduce the need to refill the pond with piped in water. We are hoping for restoration of the pond and continued protection as a nature preserve.

[www.savechatsworthpreserve.org](http://www.savechatsworthpreserve.org) - Carla Bollinger

## APRIL and MAY EVENTS

**April 7, Sunday:** Earth Day Celebration – Chatsworth Nature Preserve – Family Fun and it's free! 10 am – 3 pm  
In the morning, come enjoy the Ceremonial Elder Mati Waiya, Chumash Blessing and cultural performances by the Wishtoyo Foundation and Azteca Xochipilli. Docent-led hikes around the ecology pond throughout the day. Various conservation groups/organizations, Southwestern Herpetologists Society, SSMPA, SFV Audubon, Chatsworth Neighborhood Council and others will have exhibits.

**April 14, Sunday:** California Wildlife Center, CWC: 26026 Piuma Rd., Calabasas, Noon to 4:00pm.; Refer to Website for further information: [www.cawildlife.org](http://www.cawildlife.org)

**April 25, Thursday:** CSUN Earth Day, Time: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**April 26, Friday:** Sierra Canyon School, N.E. Corner of Variel and Rinalidi. Time 1 – 7 pm.  
Lower School Fair, Celebrating Chatsworth's 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Food vendors and a country band performing.

**April 28, Sunday:** GARDEN FESTIVAL & TEA: Homestead Acre/Chatsworth Park South. Time: 11:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Enjoy a High Tea, White Elephant Booth, Yummy Bake Sale, Veterans Quilt Display, Garden Clubs and Organization/Vendor Booths. Contributions appreciated: [www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net) or e-mail: [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or call: 818-882-5614 for regular museum hours.

## HIKES

**Welcome Walks:** Foundation for the Preservation of Santa Susana Mountains: [www.fpssm.org](http://www.fpssm.org) and Facebook:  
Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park Interpretative hike leaders:

Dale Chaloukian, Marc Davidson, Elizabeth Harris, John Luker, Teena Takata, and Peter Ullrich

**SSPSHP Volunteer Hikes:** Contact: Jennifer Dandurand, park interpretive specialist, volunteer coordinator, Los Encinos SHP; 818.784.4849; e-mail: [jdandurand@parks.ca.gov](mailto:jdandurand@parks.ca.gov) Schedule: W: 1:30-5:30; th, sa: 9-5:30; su: 1-5:30

**Rancho Simi Trail Blazers:** [www.simitrailblazers.com](http://www.simitrailblazers.com) : activities/index.html

**SFV Audubon:** [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org) Meetings and Bird Walks for Families

**Sierra Club:** [www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfv/](http://www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfv/) Meetings, Hikes, Local Environmental Issues

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## MONKEY FLOWERS



### Santa Susana Bush Monkey Flower

*Diplacus rutilus*

A perennial with tubular at the base velvet red flowers found growing in rock outcroppings, under oak woodlands, serpentine cliffs, and near seasonal springs in decomposed granite in the Simi Hills-Santa Susana Mountains.

### Sticky Monkey Flower

*Mimulus Aurantiacus*

Another monkey flower variety found in the area has yellow to light orange flowers with deep-green sticky leaves, fuzzy underneath. The Monkey Flowers bloom in spring from March to June. In the Santa Susana foothills and Simi Hills a rare integrating form of Monkey Flower grows with variegated yellow to red flowers. Monkey Flowers attract bees and hummingbirds. Native Americans used the plant's foliage as a soothing poultice for minor burns and skin irritations. The plants are also edible.

Article and art: Carla Bollinger

# Last Spring Community Meeting is May 20, 2013 Rocket History ... see Page 2



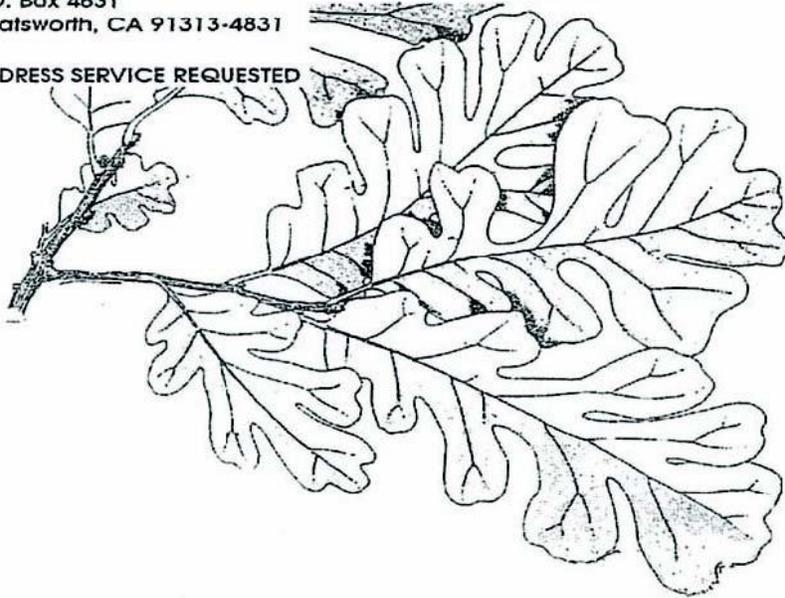
View from Iverson Ranch of Chatsworth Train Tracks

photo by Henry Bollinger

*Enjoy your summer and come see us at our  
September 16, 2013 Community Meeting*

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &  
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains  
P.O. Box 4831  
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**SSMPA Mission:** Our mission is to preserve and protect habitats for plants and animals native to our area, preserve unique geological formations, and sites of ethnological, archaeological, and historic interest, particularly in the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains. We also seek to provide passive recreational and environmental education opportunities, support the acquisition of new public parks, and open space and conservation easements, expand existing natural parks, and to participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs.

#### **IS YOUR 2012/2013 MEMBERSHIP DUE?**

With your membership renewal and/or donations, you help in providing SSMPA continued success from providing free community meetings, advocacy for open space/nature preserves, keeping local parks open and funded, acquiring land parcels to protect wildlife corridors and park space for humans, preserving Chatsworth and surrounding area's local history, cultural and archaeological sites.

**SSMPA membership is a voice in your community.**

**Thank you for your special contributions in Winter 2013:  
Barbara Pampalone and Maureen Gerwig**

**Donation made in memory of Linda Stone: Norman and Marilyn Deatherage  
And thank you to all new members and renewals!**

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

#### **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 fill in the following information:**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Special interests or skills you have and if you would like

to volunteer for any activities: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT: Please send today your e-mail address or changes to your e-mail address to board member, Robert "Bob" Dager: bobdager@att.net. Your e-mail address is exclusively used for the SSMPA newsletter and community announcements. Note: If you must receive your newsletter via snail-mail, please send an additional \$10.00.**

*Thank you for your support!*