



# 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: [ssmpa.com](http://ssmpa.com)

## AUTUMN 2015 Newsletter

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

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

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

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

[\(map\)](#)



**Monday, September 21 7:00pm**

**Paddling the Chumash Way**

**Presenter: Alan Salazar**

**Alan Salazar** (spirit hawk), Native American consultant/monitor and Chumash-Tataviam **traditional storyteller**, will share his personal experience of reviving the Chumash craftsmanship of the **tomol (plank canoe)**. Alan will describe Chumash journeys between Malibu and the Channel Islands, and recount a harrowing paddling journey in a storm. [Alan Salazar in the news](#)

**Monday, October 19 7:00pm**

**Water, Water, Water, Water**

**Presenter: Tom Nachtrab, SSMPA Board member**

**Come hear Tom spout about water:**

salt and fresh; flood and drought; rising and falling;  
solid, liquid and gas; freezing and melting; evaporating and condensing;  
sublimating and precipitating; as a greenhouse gas; potable and not;  
bottled and piped; polluted and clean; dammed and flowing;  
expensive and cheap; springs and seeps; aquifers and wells;  
treated wastewater and the yuck factor;  
purple pipes; reclamation and de-reclamation;  
agricultural, industrial, urban, and environmental;  
Owens Valley and Chatsworth Reservoir;  
channels and spreading grounds;  
peripheral canals and under-bay tunnels;  
and more...



**Followed by free-flowing open discussion.**



**Nature: How do you relate to it?**



"One group [of people] knows and respects the power of nature, is able to feel its majesty and is aware of our insignificance and smallness before the cosmos.

"The other [group], enamored of the machines that obliterate distance and effort, and that insulate us from the natural world in a technological bubble, is largely dead to the rhythms that sustain life."

~ [Chris Hedges](#), author and journalist

## OAT MOUNTAIN:

### Oil, Fracking, No Fracking, Environment, Health, Soft Oil Prices, Next?

**SSMPA's mission** embraces **protection of the Santa Susana Mountains**. Oat Mountain, the highland prominent above Porter Ranch and Chatsworth, constitutes the eastern end of the Santa Susana range.

**Oat Mountain** has been a center of local controversy for more than a year now, a controversy stimulated by the Termo Company's effort to gain approvals for drilling up to **twelve new oil wells** (it already operates 18) near the mountain's ridge line.

Community opposition to the plan originally centered on possible dangers of the potential use of **fracking** methods at the new wells. (Fracking includes many combinations of aggressive "stimulating" techniques to drive oil out of rock formations, including: high-pressure infusion of water and chemicals to fracture "tight" oil-bearing rock strata; horizontal drilling; and acidization.)

Sufficient community opposition arose that Termo Company agreed to execute a full **Environmental Impact Report** for the proposal. Termo also recently pledged to not do any fracking, and to re-apply for permits if it ever decided to frack in future. Some opponents may have been disappointed to see the crowd-mobilizing anti-fracking issue shoved to the sideline.

More recently opponents are focusing on possible negative public health consequences of even doing any more **conventional drilling** so close to the urban centers of Porter Ranch, Chatsworth, and Granada Hills. Many, **including SSMPA** and some elected officials (Englander, Pavley), are calling on Termo to produce a **health impact report** in addition to the in-progress Environmental Impact Report.



Might this year-long controversy fade away quietly in the near future, as the **environmental and social issues** become overshadowed by a simple **economic factor**: the unbelievably **low price of crude oil** over the past year? It seems possible. Oil prices have **fallen by 60%** to their lowest level in seven years. Will Termo forge ahead with plans to spend millions of dollars in exploratory drilling on Oat Mountain while the price of a barrel of oil continues to hover around 40 dollars a barrel?

**Economic "laws" could actually forestall a bit of environmental degradation of the Santa Susana Mountains ... but for how long?**

**SSMPA has urged the preparers of the Environmental Impact Report for the Termo North Aliso Field Project to evaluate in depth all predictable recreational, public access, aesthetic/visual, and site security impacts entailed by the federal and county plans for implementation of trails in the Santa Susana Mountains.**

## SSMPA Releases Recommendations for a Sustainable Chatsworth Nature Preserve

Most of the land that lies between Plummer Street and Roscoe Blvd., and between Topanga Canyon and Valley Circle Blvds. was seasonal wetland and oak savannah for centuries. Then, in about 1917, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power acquired over 1,300 acres of the land, built a couple of dams, and transformed the space into "**Chatsworth Reservoir.**"

Use of the area as a functional reservoir for water ended in 1969. The property, still owned by LADWP, has been in a kind of limbo for the last 45 years. In the mid-1990s the Los Angeles City Council approved zoning changes, intended to forestall development of the property, and changed its name from Chatsworth Reservoir to **Chatsworth Nature Preserve.**



For many years a shallow "**Ecology Pond**" has existed on the northern section of the property. The pond often shrank due to evaporation and lack of rain during summer seasons, but DWP usually refilled the pond with water from its public water utility distribution system. The summer of 2015 saw the pond dry up completely, and because of the statewide drought emergency, DWP will not use potable water to refill the ecology pond. DWP is hauling non-potable water to the pond site now, but it evaporates and infiltrates as fast as it is dumped. Many residents are distressed about the loss of a viable pond.  
(photo: R.Hedrick)

SSMPA sees three relatively distinct **unresolved concerns** about the Chatsworth Nature Preserve right now:

1. **Ecology Pond:** DWP suggests that it will remodel the pond through dredging, lining, etc. This concern regards the unknowns involved in if, when, and how the pond will be revitalized in the midst of the drought crisis, and how adequate the result will be.
2. **Protecting the property from future development:** As long as DWP owns the land there may be a possibility that it could be sold for commercial or residential development. Although the site has been "named" a **Nature Preserve**, there may not be adequate protections in place to keep it in the public domain.
3. **Operating a healthy and sustainable nature preserve:** Action is needed to develop and adhere to a long-term plan to restore and maintain a viable nature preserve.

The Chatsworth Nature Preserve, owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), has reached a critical juncture where immediate action must be taken to avoid further, permanent damage to the habitat that the City of Los Angeles has seen fit to preserve.

SSMPA recently issued the following **report** addressing some of our concerns about the future of the Chatsworth Nature Preserve.

[See SSMPA's Recommendations Here](http://ssmpa.com/chatsworth-nature-preserve) <http://ssmpa.com/chatsworth-nature-preserve>

### Upcoming Community Event: Pioneer Day Sunday, October 4, 2015 Chatsworth Historical Society

The Homestead Acre, 10385 Shadow Oak Dr.  
Parking at Chatsworth Train Depot with free shuttle bus. Chili cook-off, vendors, kids' activities, Homestead Cottage and Museum  
[www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net) \* [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) • Phone: 818-882-5614

[DETAILS HERE](http://www.historicalsocieties.net/Pioneer_Day_2015.pdf) [http://www.historicalsocieties.net/Pioneer\\_Day\\_2015.pdf](http://www.historicalsocieties.net/Pioneer_Day_2015.pdf)

**25th Annual Chatsworth Historical Society Pioneer Day**  
Take the Pioneer Challenge  
Sunday, Oct. 4, 2015  
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Bring your children & grandchildren

**Old-time fun for everyone!**

- CHILI COOK-OFF
- Vendors
- Bake Sale
- Washcars
- Blacksmith
- Leather Crafts
- Panning for Gold
- Spinning Wheel Demo
- Veteran Quilt Display
- Design a Quilt Craft
- Book Chippers
- Bee Keeping
- Indian Artifacts
- Telegraph Station
- Chess and
- Games of Yore

**Chatsworth Museum Exhibits**  
Featuring:  
Our Pioneer Heritage along with Chatsworth Pioneer Families  
**Your Minnie's 1911 Cottage**  
Location: Homestead Acre, Chatsworth Park South  
(West end of Sherman St., 10385 Shadow Oak Dr., Chatsworth, CA)

**Information:** 818-882-5614  
[www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net)  
[www.chatsworthhistory.com](http://www.chatsworthhistory.com)

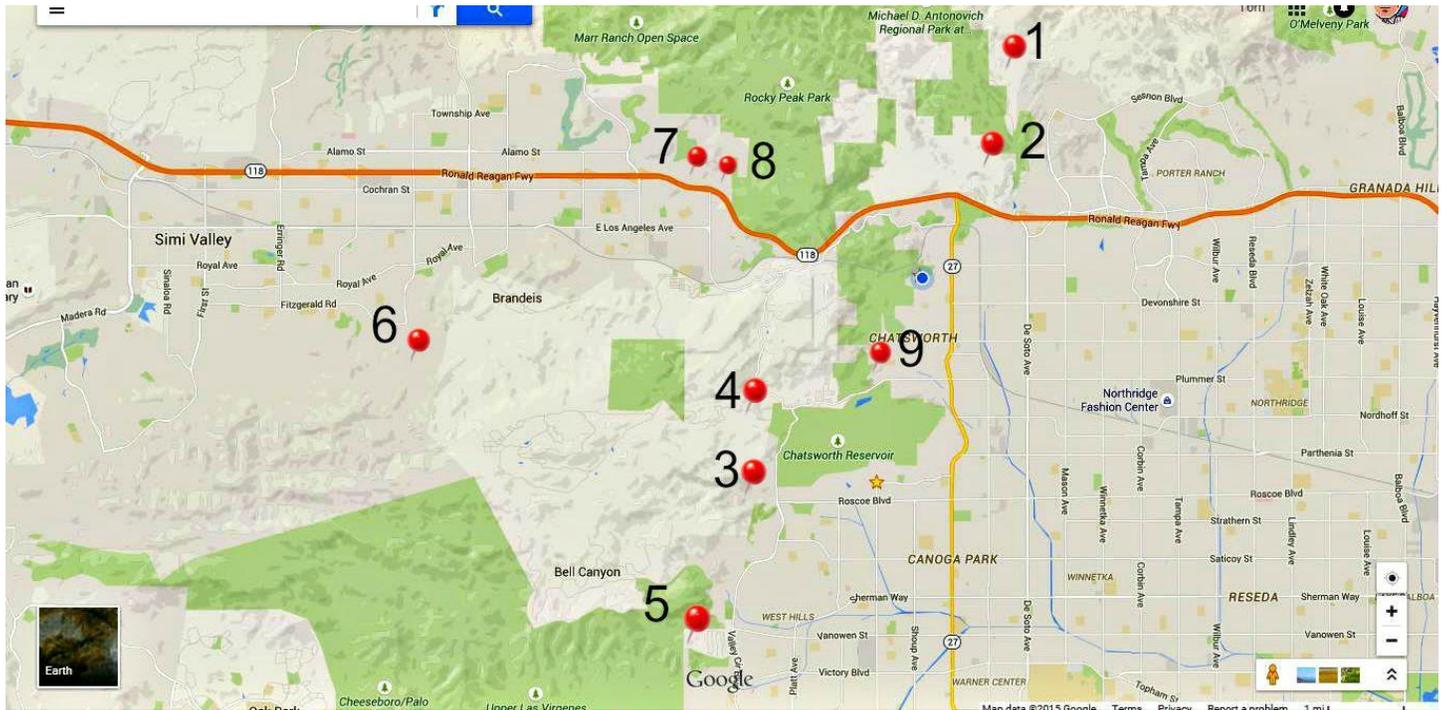
**Directions:** Adams St. (over the hill, under it)  
(Free for kids under 12)

Park your car at the Chatsworth Train Depot (10338 116 Depot Plaza Road) and use our free shuttle service, every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Residential Development Goes “Boom”: Scrambling Up Our Hills

The good news, for some, is that the local "real estate market" is hot again. The current, high market prices for residential real estate mean that developers all around the San Fernando and Simi Valleys are racing to ramp up their plans to build new housing subdivisions.

Some of the plans that were put "on hold" by developers waiting for a return of high prices were approved years ago. Construction has started on many such developments (Sterling at West Hills in Dayton Canyon, for example). Developers are pushing other plans through the permitting process as quickly as possible (Hidden Creeks Estates near Brown's and Mormon Canyon, for example).



This development boom is not necessarily good news for conservationists, SSMPA included. Developing more housing by "infilling" in the Valleys is one thing. Carving and flattening our local foothills, mountains, and open space with residential developments of high-priced "luxury residence estates" is a radically different thing.

**SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, and regional open space.**

See a sampling of some of the currently active subdivision development [HERE](http://ssmpa.com/resources/1%20Scrambling%20Up%20the%20Hills%20w%20DocDev.pdf)  
<http://ssmpa.com/resources/1%20Scrambling%20Up%20the%20Hills%20w%20DocDev.pdf>

### Speaking of the Hidden Creeks Estates Development

Paul Edelman, Deputy Director of Natural Resources and Planning of the **Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy** will speak on the Proposed Hidden Creeks Estates

at the monthly meeting of the [San Fernando Valley Sierra Club](#)  
Tuesday, October 20, 2015, 7:00pm

Reseda Park Recreation Hall, 18411 Victory Blvd. (Cross Street-Reseda Blvd near child's play area)  
There are parking lots & street parking. If the Rec Hall parking lot is full, there is ample parking at the One Generation lot, directly east at 18255 Victory Boulevard. For more information call (818) 348-8884

## Notes on Future of Santa Susana Field Lab:

Following are some of the organizations that recently called on the President of the U.S. to establish the SSFL site as a protected [National Monument](#):

- Los Angeles-Ventura Cultural Research Alliance
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Tribal Council
- SFV Audubon Society
- SSFL Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- SSMPA
- West Hills Neighborhood Council



Two years ago these organizations all called on the [National Park Service](#) to take over the NASA property at SSFL:

- Canoga Park Neighborhood Council (NC)
- Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council
- Chatsworth NC
- Granada Hills North NC
- Granada Hills South NC
- Equestrian Trails Inc. - Corral 54
- Lake Balboa NC
- Porter Ranch NC
- Reseda NC
- SSMPA
- Valley Alliance of NCs (VANC)
- Ventura County Archaeological Society
- West Hills NC
- Winnetka NC

### HIKES

**Welcome Walks:** Interpretive hikes in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park (SSPSHP):

Facebook: [Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains](#) and [www.fpsm.org](http://www.fpsm.org)

**SSPSHP Volunteer Hikes:** Contact: Jennifer Dandurand, park interpretive specialist, Los Encinos SHP: 818.784.4849; [jdandurand@parks.ca.gov](mailto:jdandurand@parks.ca.gov)

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

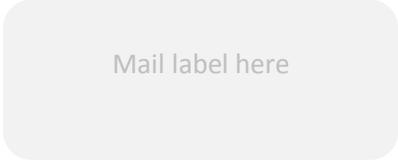
**Sierra Club:** [www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfv/](http://www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfv/) Meetings, hikes

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

**Hiking and Event Updates:** [ssmpa.com](http://ssmpa.com)



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA)  
P. O. Box 4831  
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**Come Aboard! Be an SSMPA Member**

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



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 Life Membership: **Karen Osterheldt**  
**THANK YOU** for your recent New Memberships: **Jim & Susan Ulmer, Tony Rusen family**

**YOU CAN NOW USE YOUR CREDIT CARD OR PAYPAL ACCOUNT: Go to our website: [ssmpa.com/membership](http://ssmpa.com/membership)**

Sign up for a LIFE MEMBERSHIP and/or a DONATION of \$50.00 and receive a FREE Chumash designed [T-Shirt](http://ssmpa.com/membership) (image on [ssmpa.com/membership](http://ssmpa.com/membership) )

Let us know your size when you mail in your check, or send an email to [mail@ssmpa.com](mailto:mail@ssmpa.com) if you pay online.

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL OR NEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY**  
( ) \$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

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**Be sure to fill in the following information ....**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Special interests or skills \_\_\_\_\_

*Your e-mail address is used exclusively for SSMPA newsletter and community announcements.*