

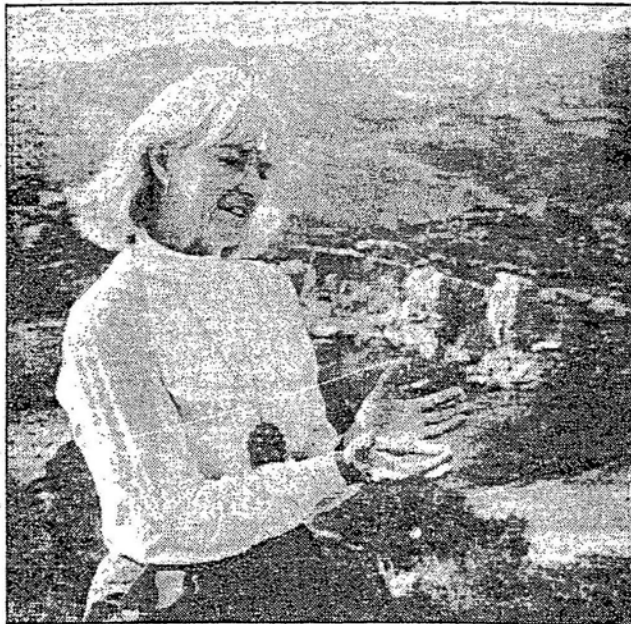
March 2002 Newsletter

From the Archives:

Reflections of Jan Hinkston,
Founder of SSMPA

L.A. Times, August 29, 1989

My first teaching job was at Chatsworth Park Elementary, teaching kindergarten. When I looked at those mountains and those hills, I just fell in love with them. They were just so beautiful, and I said to myself, "Someday, they're going to want to develop those mountains." And they are now, because that's all that's left. It's almost too late, and I'm really worried.



One day in '69, I saw 100 trees cut to the ground on the north side of the Chatsworth Reservoir. More than 100 big oaks, severed, murdered. How can anybody do that to an oak that takes that long to grow?

That made me so angry, and there just happened to be an article in the paper that week about a group called Chatsworth Beautiful. So I went to their meeting and was encouraged to form a committee to work on the Chatsworth Reservoir problem. We were successful in getting them not

General Membership Meeting

Monday, March 18, 2002

Wildflowers + Wildlife!

Betsy Landis, Chapter VP of Education, California Native Plant Society and member of the Chatsworth Nature Preserve Advisory Committee, will speak on local wildflowers and wildlife during her slide show.

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday from September through November and January through May. Program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and generally conclude by 9:00 p.m. at Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South.

Members are invited to General Membership Program meetings and Board of Directors meetings. Board of Directors meetings take place at the Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center on the first Monday of the month. Refreshments are served at program meetings. ▲

to cut down any more oaks and to leave a pond so that the birds would have a place to land that they could recognize from the air.

Then I said, "Now I would like us to try to do something about saving those mountains," and I pointed to the west. So we formed a committee. Then I began to realize that this was a 20-year project.

So we formed our own group, the Santa Susana Mountain Park Assn. We had the first meeting at my house, and there were 12 people. I was elected president; no one else would take the job. I didn't know anything about running an organization. All I had was enthusiasm for what we wanted; I wanted to save the mountains from being developed. I didn't really know that much about them except that I loved them.

We drew up a statement of purpose and that included saving the whole of the Santa Susana Mountains all the way up to the Santa Clara River on the north, and the Simi Hills, all the way down to Simi Peak, on the south. It was an 80-square-mile area that we were interested in preserving for the future. That was in November of 1970.

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Everywhere I went, I learned. I met with the Chatsworth Historical Society and I learned about the old stagecoach trail. And I got really turned on about that. I found out that it was not only gorgeous to look at, but that it had all this history there to boot.

I had to learn about civics, city government, county government, state government, national government - all of these layers of it drove me crazy.

We decided we were going to focus in on saving the stagecoach trail on both sides of the pass. That's almost done now. We have a geological formation in the area that goes back 100 million years, and once they're bulldozed away, they're gone forever. It comes up to the surface at this point. There are not many places in this world where that is the case. This Chico formation is really kind of rare.

I think that we should start appreciating rocks more. Rocks are irreplaceable. That's what makes them special. Walking through there I feel excitement. I also feel as if I am not the first one there. I feel that the Indians have been there. I think the Indians liked the rocks, too, because there's a lot of Indian sites in this special area. Chatsworth has a village site and they destroyed two-thirds of it when they put that 118 Freeway in. They destroyed it without even investigating what was there, and that's a crime.

We have to save our special places. Otherwise, life isn't worth living if we don't have enough diversity of landform, of plant life and animal life. If I didn't think I could see a

deer once in a while, going up there, that would be awful. Seeing one once in a great while just makes me ecstatic. It's an unforgettable experience. Our kids are not going to be able to do it unless we can save as much of the habitat as possible. ♡

Results of Ahmanson Ranch Environmental Study

An environmental study report conducted by an independent consulting firm was released Feb. 19th, and stated that building a suburb of 3,050 homes would substantially affect the endangered red-legged frog and spineflower, *but*, with minor safeguards (fenced-off preserves, an annual population census and weed abatement and a 300-foot buffer zone around frog pools), such problems could be reduced to acceptable levels. A chief objection of project opponents is that the study did not re-examine the effects of increased traffic or deal with the impacts on Las Virgenes Creek.

The report will be a major focus in a series of public hearings, culminating with a vote, likely this fall, by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. *Rally to Save Ahmanson Ranch*, a group that sponsored the Martin Sheen ad ("Are you stuck in traffic right now? If not, you better enjoy this rare moment because it's only going to get worse, thanks to WAMU."), vows to campaign against the Ahmanson project regardless of the county supervisors' decision.

California Drive's Nation's Population Increase

Census Bureau estimates released recently shows California accounted for 20% of the growth in the U.S. last year, growing by 3.4 million people. California now has 34.5 million residents, a little more than 12% of the U.S. population.

Celebrate Earth Month in the Chatsworth Nature Preserve

Sunday, April 7, 2002

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- Welcome and Blessing by the Chumash People, 11:00 a.m.
- Presentations by Environmental Agencies
- Docent tours of Ecology Pond

Sponsored by: The Canada Goose Project; Southwestern Herpetologists Society; Wishtoyo Foundation; Sierra Club; Audubon Society; California Native Plant Society and Santa Susana Mountain Park Association.

The Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power welcomes you to the Chatsworth Nature Preserve, formerly known as the Chatsworth Reservoir. City Councilman Hal Bernson, a supporter of the Nature Preserve, celebrates Earth Month with us in this beautiful place.

Enter through Plummer Gate. Parking along the south side of Valley Circle and Plummer Street. Please bring a blanket to sit on. Information: 818-769-1521

Take only memories, leave only footprints.





IN HONOR OF THE OAK TREE



The **Santa Susana Mountain Park Association** is going to have a very special and grand Open House at our **Visitors Center** on **Sunday, April 28th** at **Chatsworth Park South** from **10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** In celebration of Earth Day, we decided to take the opportunity to also celebrate one of our prized resources in the Valley: **The Oak Tree!**

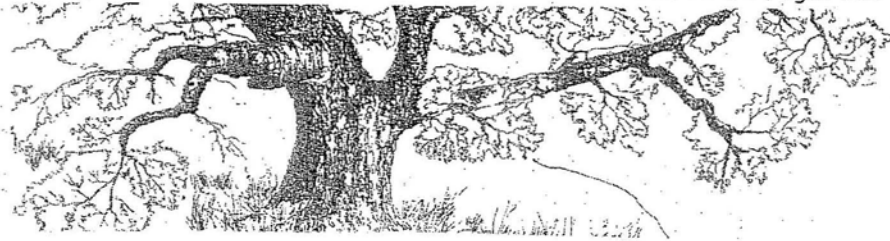
Come see the special oak tree exhibits we've prepared. We'll also be giving a hands-on demonstration of acorn grinding and methods of preparation. You will even have a chance to taste some acorn bread!

The Visitors Center exhibits will be refreshed and interesting. Our famous rock art T-shirts and special books on oak trees will be available for a donation, and there will be some baby oak trees to take home and plant.

At 10:00 that morning, the **Chatsworth Historical Society's Garden Festival** opens at the **Minnie Palmer Acre** in the park. Enjoy the festival, then walk over to the Visitors Center in the Recreation Building, located at the far end of the driveway, next to the parking lot.

Join us for fun and a learning experience for all ages!

Directions: From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Devonshire, drive to the end, then straight into Chatsworth Park South.



SSMPA Executive Board 2001-2002

Judy Garris, President	818-346-7654
Dorian Keyser, Vice President, Program Chair	818-345-3795
Sandra Johnson, Recording Secretary	818-341-0341
Diana Dixon-Davis, Treasurer	818-341-4242
Jim Shirley, Member at Large	818-888-7631
Susan Gerke, Member at Large, News. Editor	818-704-9304
Holly Huff, Member at Large	805-526-0961
Jan Miller, Member at Large	818-702-0854

Consider running for Member-at-Large in our April election! Your participation will be greatly appreciated by your community. You will need to attend Board meetings on the first Monday of each month, and preferably general meetings held on the third Monday of each month. It's important, it's creative, and it's fun! Come join us. Call Judy at (818) 346-7654 or Susan at (818) 704-9304.

Dusky-footed Woodrat

In rocky areas, woodrats make their nests in small caves or hollows in rocks. The entrances to these hollows are marked by small piles of debris, including pieces of wood, urine and feces. These piles are known as middens. If they are out of the weather, protected from rainfall, the concentrated urine apparently acts to preserve the wood and plant material. This debris may be carbon-14 dated to determine its age. It turns out that these fragments of wood may be thousands of years old, from species that no longer grow in the area. This accidental bit of preservation has enabled scientists to reconstruct patterns of vegetation and climatic change dating back to the Ice Age.



Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy...

-- John Muir

EAGLES NEST UPDATE. Project Location: 9861 Andora Avenue, Chatsworth

The Feb. 21 hearing on appeals from the decision of the Advisory Agency in approving Tentative Tract (TT) No. 50632, FEIR No. 91-0308 (ZC)(SUB), to permit 19 single-family lots plus one Open Space lot was postponed until April 18th so the applicant can file for a zone change and the Area Planning Commission can concurrently consider both Tract Map Appeals and Zone Change and also can review the off-site main access environmental assessment contained in the FEIR No. 86-0066 (ZC)(SUB).

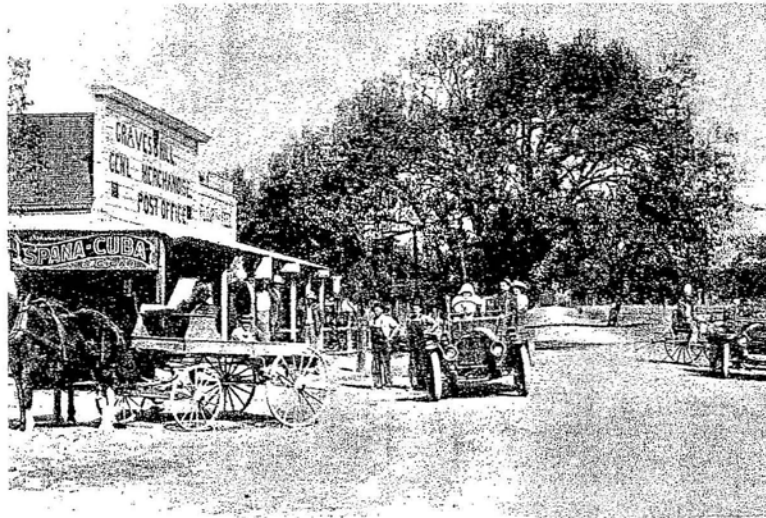
Interested persons can call Jose Carlos Romero, City Planning Associate at (213) 978-1454 to receive the new hearing time and other information when it becomes available.

DEER LAKE RANCH UPDATE. Project Location: North of 118 Freeway between Topanga & Canoga Ave.

On January 23, Hal Bernson and the Chatsworth community were of one mind in front of the Los Angeles County Planning Commission. The Commission met to hear Presidio Chatsworth Partners, a San Francisco-based real estate developer, propose its intention to put 484 new homes on small lots right in the middle of Chatsworth horse country. Bernson's Chief Deputy Grieg Smith said, "We want to echo ECHO*," referring to the concerns ECHO's president had voiced a few minutes earlier. In an effort to see justice done, the commission gave the developer a long list of questions to be answered.) The County Planning Commission hearing for Project # 99-239(5) was continued to April 10 at the following location: Room 150, Hall of Records, 320 Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Opponents to this project are contending it does not mesh with the existing rural nature of Chatsworth. It will further endanger a sensitive ecological area, it adds significant traffic to a neighborhood road system that is already failing, it generates more students for local schools already at capacity, and it creates additional public safety concerns for a community that has too few existing services.

On Saturday, April 6th, community residents will saddle up for an ECHO Target Ride on the Deer Lake Highlands development site. Riders will meet on Canoga Avenue under the 118 freeway at 8:30 a.m.

**(ECHO: Chatsworth Equine Cultural Heritage Organization)*



Early Days in Old Chatsworth

FIELD ECOLOGY WEEKEND

The Topanga Canyon Docents' 20th Annual Field Ecology Weekend is scheduled for April 13-14, 2002, at Malibu Creek State Park. The 2-day event will feature overnight camping, hands-on workshops, demonstrations, field trips and fun for the whole family.

Tentatively scheduled for Sat. a.m. are lectures/field walks on the subjects of mammal tracking, spring wildflowers and weather. Saturday afternoon will feature a Native American crafts demo and another event yet to be scheduled. Story-telling, trail lore and audience participation activities will make up the evening program, plus an appearance by a "mystery speaker" On Sunday, scheduled are a bird walk, a wildflower walk, an update on recent park development, and the afternoon program will include a geology presentation and a fresh water ecology walk.

The weekend's events will be based in the park's Group Campground area, which has barbecue pits, showers, sinks, toilets and a grand view of the meadow and hills beyond. You may tent-camp or sleep in your vehicle. Cost of the workshop is \$25/adult and \$15/child (aged 6-14). Children under 6 are free.

Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. For more info on registration, call (310) 450-7025 or the Topanga Canyon Docents Hotline: (310) 535-9400.



MARCH HIKES

Hikers: wear lugsoles & hat; bring water, sunscreen and snack or lunch. Serious rain cancels.

Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy/Mtns. Rec & Conservation Authority (310) 589-3200

Sat. 3/16: Happy Camp Canyon: Hike 9:15 am to 3:45 pm. See panoramic view of Simi Valley, Moorpark and Channel Islands. 8 miles RT, 1300' gain. Bring lunch, binoculars and 2-3 qts. of water. Call (805) 529-4828 for more information and directions. (see ceres.ca.gov/smmc/levent.htm)

Sierra Club Hikes

Sun. 3/17: Whitney Canyon: Easy 4 mi, 1000' gain through oak-filled canyon with year round stream. Meet 9 am at end of San Fernando Rd. in Newhall (take 14 Fwy N, exit San Fernando Rd., turn R to end). Ldrs: Henry Schultz (661) 284-5613, Ray Lorme (661) 296-0246.

Thur. 3/28: Towsley Canyon: Moderately paced 5.5 mi, 1000' gain (optional 8 mi, 1300' gain) hike with great vistas, a chilly narrows, diverse plant life and tar seeps. Meet at 8:30 am at Ed Davis Park, 24255 The Old Road, Newhall (from I-5 exit Calgrove, turn right under freeway, follow Old Road 1/2 mi south to park entrance, turn right and follow dirt road 1/2 mi to nature center and parking lot). Ldrs: Ramona Dunn (818) 783-8318, Bob Galletly (818) 885-1920.

Sun. 3/17: Stagecoach Trail Hike: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9:00 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stagecoach Trail. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Park to the 2nd parking lot by the Rec. Bldg. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850.

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Hikes

Every Thursday - Chumash Trail: Moderate paced 5 mi, approximately 1000' gain. Meet at 6 pm at trailhead. Directions: take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit, north on Yosemite, right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead: end of Flanagan Dr.

Every Sunday - Rocky Peak Trail: Strenuous, 5 mi, approximately 1000' gain. Meet at 4 pm at trailhead. Directions: take 118 Fwy to Rocky Peak exit. Trailhead is north of fwy.

For more information on hikes contact the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at (805) 584-4400.

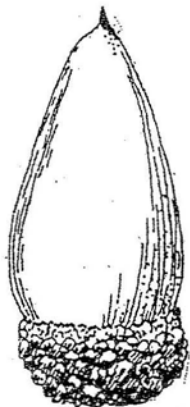
Thank you for renewing your membership to SSMPA: Leon & Shirley Brown, Amanda Welbourn, Mary Edwards (North Valley Coalition), Ed Embree & Midge Downer. Welcome new members: Murphy Family, Andrew Westall & Tom Siebert, and new *life* member, Elain B. Gordon.

A big thanks to Terrie Brady, who maintained our data base and processed our mailing labels for many months and has now moved on to other things. Our appreciation goes to Reid Bogert, who has taken on this task with diligent enthusiasm.



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN / RENEW / REJOIN S.S.M.P.A. (Please 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 contributions to help ensure our futures. Please make checks 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)
 Business or Organization (\$25.00) Life Member (\$100.00)

Name: _____ Phone: _____
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 Special Interest/Expertise: _____

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. To find out how you can volunteer for SSMPA, call Judy Garris, President, at 818-346-7654.

 **Mark your calendar**  

SSMPA BOARD MEETINGS

@ Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center:

Monday, April 1, 2002, 7:30 p.m.

Monday, May 6, 2002, 7:30 p.m.

SSMPA PROGRAM MEETINGS

@ Rockpointe Clubhouse:

Monday, March 18, 2002, 7:15 p.m.

Monday, April 15, 2002, 7:15 p.m.

About this newsletter: If you have comments or would like to submit an article for publication in this newsletter, write to SSMPA, Attn: Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

Susan Gerke, Editor

Please note the renewal date on your label and send in your dues if you wish to continue your SSMPA membership and receive the newsletter. If you are current with your dues, kindly disregard this notice. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help meet our production and mailing expenses.



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