



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Organization

Website: www.ssmipa.com

Incorporated August 31, 1971

Email: mail@ssmpa.com

APRIL and MAY, 2011

Newsletter

Volume 41.4-5

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

Community Meeting April 18, 2011 7:15 PM

(Community Meetings are Free to the Public)

Rockpointe Clubhouse: 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth CA 91311

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

Herpetofauna of the Santa Monica Mountains

Presenter: Aaron Wells, Southwestern Herpetologists Society

Aaron will discuss amphibians and reptiles, birds and mammals, the interaction of all wildlife and plants in the natural world. He represents the Southwestern Herpetologists Society – Los Angeles Chapter. He will bring his guests: California King Snake, California Mountain Kingsnake, Western Skink, and Alligator.

For a sneak preview, visit the Southern Herpetologists Society website: <www.swhs.org>.

Community Meeting: May 16, 2011: 7:15 pm

Saving the Santa Clara River

Presenter: Ieene Anderson, Biologist and Public Lands Desert Director

Representative of the Center for Biological Diversity

"From the Desert to the Sea, to all of Southern California, here is the News" was the signature opening line of the late Jerry Dunphy's news broadcast. This is also the description of the Santa Clara River, a 116 mile river flowing from Northern Los Angeles County, San Gabriel Mountains-Angeles National Forest, crossing under California State Route 14, under Interstate 5, on the north side of the Santa Susana Mountains and down to the Ventura coast. Santa Clara River is a significant riparian and aquatic habitat, the second largest river in Southern California. This crucial river and watershed is threatened by the Newhall Ranch Development, a planned community of 21,000 homes. The development will concrete line 20 miles of tributary streams, cause desecration of Native American burial sites and sacred places, and the destruction of a quarter of the endangered spine flower habitat. Anderson will discuss what the Coalition of environmental and Native American groups are doing to stop the destruction of the Santa Clara River and Watershed by this development. For further information see website: <www.biologicaldiversity.org>

Chatsworth Historical Society Garden Festival

Sunday, May 1, 2011 11 a.m – 4 p.m.

The Homestead Acre, 10385 Shadow Oak Dr., Chatsworth, CA 91311

(Chatsworth Park South: West end of Devonshire)

\$5.00 adults admission-donation; \$1.00 children; under 5 free

Information: <www.historicalsocieties.com / newsflash> 818-882-5614

Family Fun: Tea Room (call for reservations), Blooming Rose Gardens, Garden Clubs, Live Plant Sale, Bake Sale, Arts & Crafts, White Elephant Sale, Hot Dogs & Sodas, Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum: Featuring Chatsworth Pioneer Families, Tours of Minnie's Cottage, Special Event: Polynesian Dance Revue at 2 p.m. Park at Chatsworth Train Station – Shuttle Bus provided.

SFV Audubon Society – Chatsworth Nature Preserve Bird Walk led by Art Langton

March 13

Art led Audubon members on a bird walk through the Chatsworth Nature Preserve (CNP) sharing the importance of this open space with grasses, trees, including the Valley Oak (the largest oak) and Coast Live Oaks, ecology pond and seasonal ponds. The CNP is one of the few places in Greater L.A. with grassland for Meadowlarks to survive. You will hear the distinct song of the Meadowlark before seeing the brilliant yellow breast with black V. Mark Osokow set up his scope for a clear view of a Meadowlark in a Valley Oak. They feed on the ground eating insects, grain and weed seeds. Other notable birds seen, Killdeer with their 2 black neck bands, Say's Phoebe, American Robin, Hummingbirds, Mocking Bird, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Red Tail Hawks, Cassin's Kingbird, and Little Brown Birds (LBB's): Rufus and Lark Sparrows and others. Art's deep voice accompanied with a grimace as he called out, "Starling on a wire"! Starlings, introduced from Europe to North America, are aggressive, competing with native birds for nesting cavities. In and around the seasonal ponds and ecology pond aquatic and marsh friends, majestic Great Blue Heron, Cormorants, Cinnamon Teal Ducks and Mallards and the striking Red-winged Blackbirds were lollygagging in the clear sunlit day. SSMIPA Board Members participating in the CNP bird walk, John Luker, Teena Takata, Elizabeth Harris and Carla Bollinger. The need to preserve and protect the CNP for survival of birds, amphibians and reptiles, and wildlife in the Greater Los Angeles region is shared by Audubon, Southwestern Herpetologists Society (touring the CNP with Audubon) and SSMIPA members.

Field notes: Carla Bollinger

Upcoming Election of 2011/2012 SSMIPA Board of Directors – April Community Meeting

At the April Community Meeting, please bring your ballots, as provided in the March, 2011 newsletter, to vote for the board positions. The SSMIPA by-laws state all members paid up or life members as of 14 days prior to the election meeting may vote. Each family is entitled to two votes and each individual member is entitled to one vote.

Skunk Musing

Loudon Wainwright III, Grammy winner, folk singer, song-writer with a satirical twist, had a hit in the early 1970's, "Dead Skunk (in the Middle of the Road.)" I flashed back to this song when driving through Lake Manor and saw a dead skunk on the side of the road. Yes, he stank, but his black fur, bushy tail and vivid white stripe shone in the setting sun. Skunks are a part of this world and have a purpose ...

Farmers appreciate this critter for cleaning out rodents, insects and other pests. Skunks are part of the weasel family and California has two species ... Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) and Spotted Skunk (*Spilogale gracilis*). They are nocturnal and like to den in ready-made burrows already dug out by other wildlife critters, ground squirrels, fox, coyotes, or in hollow logs and culverts.

Skunks feed on rodents, insects, grub, snakes, frogs, mushrooms, berries and fruit. And, they've adapted to suburban life feeding on pet food, bird food, and garbage. They love eggs so ground-nesting birds are a target. But in nature, there is a balance, and the Great Horned Owl is skunks' primary enemy.

Prevention to skunk home invasion is handled by keeping shrubbery cut back, stacking firewood tightly, and using tightly fitted garbage can lids. Remove pet food dishes by nightfall. Mesh-screen should be installed around porch and deck openings, house foundation openings, tool sheds, wherever a small critter can get inside. If a skunk does get under your home, deck, etc., use floodlights facing outward to guide the skunk away.

Should your dog or cat get skunk sprayed or their bedding, use this home remedy for eliminating the odious odor:

1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide

¼ cup baking soda

1 teaspoon liquid soap

NOTE: Rinse your pet or items thoroughly.

Do not store this formula but dilute the mixture with water and pour down the drain.

Activites ... Hikes

Refer to SSMPA website for updates: <www.ssmpa.com>
Welcome Walks**

Organized and led by SSMPA in the SSPSHP

Date: Saturday, April 9th Time: 9:30am
Starting/Ending Locations: Larwin entrance
Distance: approx. 3 miles Intensity: easy to moderate
Duration: 2 1/2 hours Hike Leader: Dale
Theme: Welcome hike

Date: Sunday, April 17th Time: 9:00am
Starting/Ending locations: Larwin entrance
Distance: 3 1/2 miles Intensity: moderate
Duration: 3 1/2 hours Hike Leader: Leland
Theme: History and plants

Date: Saturday, April 23rd Time: 9:30am
Starting/Ending Locations: Larwin entrance
Distance: approx. 3 miles Intensity: moderate
Duration: approx 3 hours Leader: Peter
Theme: Plants and nature

Date: Saturday, May 14th Time: 9:30am
Starting/Ending Locations: Larwin
Leader: Teena

Graffiti abatement in April are:

Saturday, April 2
and
Saturday, April 16
9:30am
Meet at Larwin

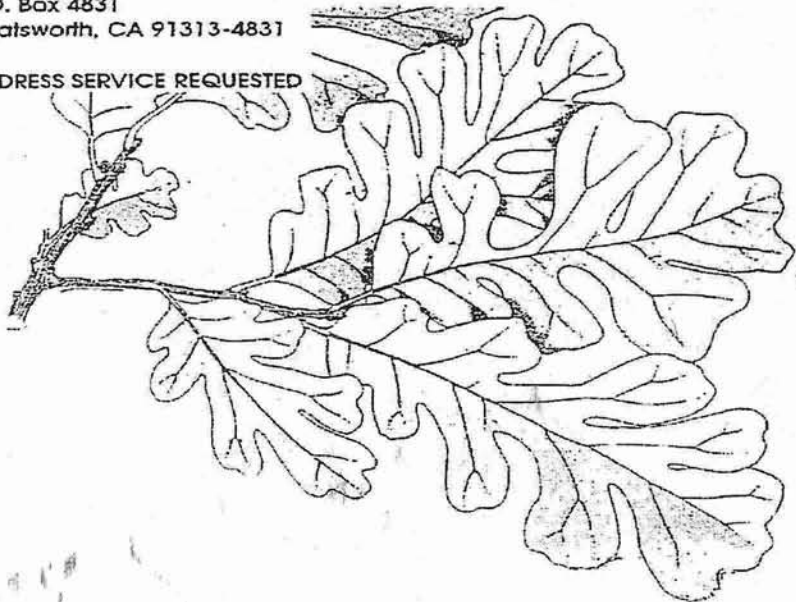
Because of schedule conflicts, we will NOT be having graffiti abatement on the usual fourth Saturday of the month. Please feel free to continue to use this email address (jdandurand@parks.ca.gov), but please be aware of the second email address <SantaSusana@parks.ca.gov> which is easier to remember, so you can give that one out at will. I'll also be using that email address on fliers and signs and such.

**Some of these hikes may be more strenuous than others. If you would like more details about the hike difficulty level, themes, or destination, please let me know. Questions? Call or email! Jennifer Dandurand
park interpretive specialist | volunteer coordinator los encinos shp | santa susana pass shp
t: 818.784.4849 | f: 818.784.0621 | e: <jdandurand@parks.ca.gov>
schedule: w: 1:30-5:30; th, sa: 9-5:30; su: 1-5:30 [off: m, tu, f]

Stagecoach Trail

Meet 9:00 AM on the third Sunday of each month from November through June. No hiking in the summer-early fall due to hot weather. Interpretative hike into history of Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Hike is a 3 to 4-1/2 mile loop (400' gain) up the historic Stagecoach Trail. Directions: From Topanga Cyn. Blvd., turn West on Devonshire St. then South on Larwin Avenue. Go about 200 feet and park under the power lines.
Leader: Lee Baum (818-341-1850).

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



SSMPA Mission: Our mission is to serve as stewards of the Santa Susana Pass State Historical Park (SSPSHP) and surrounding areas and to continue to preserve and protect habitats for plants and animals native to the location, unique geological formations, and sites of ethnological, archaeological, and historic interest. 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

SSMPA Board of Directors

Jack Unger - President
John Luker - Vice President
Diana Dixon-Davis, Treasurer
Teena Takata - Secretary
Chris Beauvais, Member-at-Large
Carla Bollinger, Member-at-Large
Reid Bogert, Member-at-Large
Robert Dager, Member-at-Large
Dr. Elizabeth Harris, Member-at-Large
Warren Stone, Member-at-Large

Janice Hinkston's Memorial

I worried that Jan's Memorial might be "rained out" on Friday, March 25th. It is a testimony to Jan's "force of nature" that the rain subsided and her Simi Hills-Santa Susana Mountains sun-glistened through the robust clouds. We gathered, family, friends and passionate followers of her vision, to celebrate her life, her legend, in carving out an area to be protected forever, the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Many thanks to the Chatsworth Historical Society for hosting Jan's Memorial. Jan's daughter, Julie Zimmer (with her husband and two sons) came from Wisconsin with her mom's story and photo collection video. Many gave testimony to Jan's accomplishments, Julie, Nancy Razanski, Julie's friend Stephanie, Linda Stone, Steve Saxton (nephew), Mark Zimmer, Dan Priest, California State Parks, Al Knight, Glenn Bailey, Diana Davis-Dixon, Carla Bollinger, Loretta Ditlow (retired H.S. Teacher and Jan's supporter), Dr. Barbara Pampalone, and a man named Ted, a mailman Jan once roped in to go hiking and support her efforts to create a park. His story about Jan was short and powerful: He said he told Jan he was a mailman and he wanted to go home and rest his feet. Jan said, "No, you want to climb the hills." Past and present SSMPA Board Members attended Jan's Memorial including Pearl Turbish. Warren Stone has a CD of the Memorial-Tribute and Glenn Bailey has taken photos which will be shared.