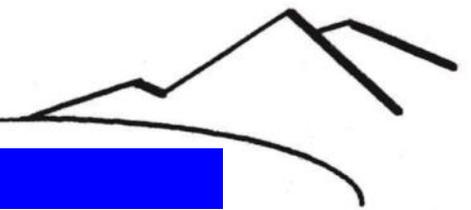


SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



SPRING 2008

Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days, 25-27 April 2008

Volunteers are invited to a day or a full weekend to help improve trails during the 27th annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days on 25-27 April 2008. The rare opportunity of camping under the sycamores and oaks at Danielson Ranch in the heart of Point Mugu State Park is free to volunteers on Friday and Saturday nights. Volunteers may also enjoy a free barbeque dinner on Saturday evening. Trail users have the opportunity to build and restore trails that they and others enjoy.

Held only once a year, Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days is organized by a committee of citizens who love trails. The event is partnered by California State Parks, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, California Native Plant Society, Concerned Off-road Bicyclist Association, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association, Temescal Canyon Association and Conejo Sierra Club.

Experience in trail building is not required, and there are jobs for everyone no matter what their ability. Along with trail work, a special crew will restore native plants. Bring your own lunch, snacks and water. Tools and Saturday evening dinner will be provided.

For more information and for camping reservations, call the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, 818-222-4531. or click on http://www.smmtc.org/TrailDays_2008.pdf



Coming Events

2008

- 27th Annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days – 25-27 April
- BBT Trek – 3-10 May
- BioBlitz – 30-31 May
- National Trails Day – 7 June
- SMMTC Annual Meeting – 23 October

PRESIDENT'S VISION

Some three years ago there was an article in the LA Times about our Santa Monica Mountains and how they divide us and bring us together. The article was by Paul Haddad, and it certainly rang true for me. I will endeavor to give you the condensed gist of Paul's feelings, as they mirror mine and may mirror some of yours.

Once you have a love affair with the local topography it would seem impossible to live anywhere without mountains. Some of you already know that LA is home to the largest urban wilderness in the world. Did you also know that LA is the only city in the world divided in half by a mountain range? The mountains do separate people living on the "other" side, whether it's the valley or town or beach; but they also attract millions who come together to enjoy the extensive variety of outdoor opportunities and activities that the land provides. Not only are there the obvious – hiking, camping, fishing, biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, running, picnicking, bird watching – but the waterfalls, the plants, the trees, the wildlife, the trails – they all offer us abundant visions, sights and sounds that will remain with us forever. In addition, these mountains replenish our souls.

We, who have a lifelong passion for the mountains and a shared appreciation for the bounty of its hills, are hopelessly caught in the love affair.

Sometimes other people say things that cannot be improved upon in expressing our own thoughts and feelings. Paul Haddad has expressed that for me, and I hope he's done it for you. As John Muir once wrote, "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

Perhaps I can speak for most of us by saying that our mutual admiration for the Santa Monica Mountains actually transcends the mountains themselves. We feel so fortunate to have the shared experiences with nature, to have our lives intertwined with such depth of innermost feelings, and to know that life is so good right here in our mountains.

Ruth

Backbone Trek, May 3-10, 2008

Hike the 65-mile long Backbone Trail from La Jolla Campground in Point Mugu State Park to Will Rogers State Historic Park. This is a moderate to strenuous hike with limited participants. Camp along the way for one week. Carry just your lunch in a daypack, while volunteers shuttle your gear to the campsites and prepare your dinners. There is a fee.

For more information: www.smmtc.org or contact Jerry Mitcham at 818-406-1269 or email to backbonetrek2008@roadrunner.com. Organized by Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council and Coastwalk.



Volunteers Invited to Help on National Trails Day, 7 June 2008

Volunteers are invited to build a new trail from Peter Strauss Ranch beginning at 8:30 am on Saturday, 7 June, for the 2008 National Trails Day. Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council is partnering with the Sierra Club Task Force for this year's event.

Volunteers are asked to bring their own lunch or snack and water. Also recommended are hat, sunscreen, long pants and gloves. Trail-working tools will be provided. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. No reservation is necessary. For more information, call 805-498-2475.



Special Day on Santa Cruz Island

Trails Council members and friends are invited to take an Island Packers' ferry to Santa Cruz Island in June for an interesting day of exploration, picnics, relaxing and camaraderie. A guided hike by an interpretive ranger will be offered for those interested. The exact date has not been determined; check the TC website, www.smmtc.org, or call 818-222-4531.

Last year, several TC members and guests took the island excursion and found it very enjoyable. Porpoises were observed alongside during the one-hour boat ride. Some of us explored the trails and some relaxed at Scorpion Beach.

Santa Cruz Island, about 20 miles off the coast, is part of Channel Islands National Park which includes four other islands — Anacapa,

Nearly 30 Miles of State Park Trails Maintained by SMMTC Volunteers

During 2007, Trails Council volunteers worked on 156,300 ft. (29.6 miles) of trails in Angeles District parks, according to state parks maintenance manager Brent Johnson, who added that there are some 150 miles of trails in the Angeles District.

Although Angeles District state parks contains a major part of the Santa Monica Mountains trail network, SMMTC volunteers also work on trail segments held by National Parks, the MRCA and other agencies and have provided many more hours of effort.

Burt Elliott, coordinator for SMMTC trail work parties, reports that SMMTC crews have almost completed work on the Nicholas Flat trails, a project that has been going on intermittently for the past two years. One day was spent on the Malibu Springs connection to Nicholas Flat. Other major, multi-day projects include maintenance on the BBT Chamberlain section. Work was also performed on the Fossil Trail, Old Boney Trail, La Jolla Valley Trails, and Hidden Pond Trail, all in Point Mugu SP. In Circle X Ranch the Canyon View Trail was worked end to end, as well as the Tri-Peaks trails. Many of these trails have not had serious maintenance for many years. Other work has been done on trails in Topanga SP, Malibu Creek SP, and Conejo Open Space. Of special interest is improvement of the Helipad Trail at the MASH site that recently received mention in the news.

Trail work includes

- Lopping and trimming of vegetation
 - Repairing water diversions and drainage
 - Improvement of trail treads
 - Repairing trail signage.
- 

Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara. Isolation over thousands of years has created unique wildlife, plants, and archeological resources found nowhere else on Earth. SMMTC has performed trail maintenance for several years on Santa Cruz Island.

During May, all those interested in joining the Trails Council excursion are encouraged to check the TC website, www.smmtc.org, or call 818-222-4531 for the date and other information on this event.





Trail volunteers Jerry Mitcham and Al Bandel rest for a moment while working Cavern Point Trail on Santa Cruz Island. This two-mile loop offers magnificent coastal vistas with the possibility of viewing whales.

Santa Cruz Island Trails Get Help From SMMTC

In addition to extensive trail maintenance work in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Trails Council continues to assist Channel Islands National Park in maintaining trails on Santa Cruz Island, reports volunteer Jerry Mitcham.

In February, a three-person crew spent two long work days replacing steps and rebuilding switchbacks on the popular Cavern Point Trail at Scorpion Canyon. In March, a four-person crew spent three days in the Prisoners Harbor area rehabilitating the Del Norte Trail. Two years ago this trail was in such bad condition, it was closed. After the recent work it is now open and in very good condition.

In spring 2008, three additional Santa Cruz projects are expected to bring the island trail system to top condition prior to the busy summer season, when thousands of visitors will use the trails each month.



Many SMM Events Listed in *Outdoors*

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council recommends *Outdoors*, the quarterly publication of the Santa Monica Mountains Fund, available online at <http://www.nps.gov/samo/planyourvisit/upload/spring08.pdf>

Sample events of interest to trail users:

26th Annual Great Rendezvous Hikes, April 20, 2008

Celebrate John Muir's Birthday by joining one of five Sierra Club hikes which converge at Trippet Ranch in Topanga State Park for a birthday party from noon to 1pm. Help decorate and consume the famous Great Rendezvous John Muir/Sierra Birthday Cake. Bring water and lunch. Info: 310-559-3126

Santa Monica Mountains Native Plant Fair, May 31, 2008 at Paramount Ranch

Enjoy the wonder and beauty of native plants, at home and in the park.

Tuesday Evening Hikes, June until mid-August

Meet at 6pm in Temescal Gateway parking lot to carpool to trailhead. Wear hiking boots/sturdy shoes; bring water. 2.5 hours Temescal Canyon Association, www.temcanyon.org



Trail Inventory Maps Available

The SMMNRA Interagency Trail Management Plan (TMP) is currently on hold but trail inventory maps published by NPS in PDF format may be viewed at www.nps.gov/samo/trails/roster.htm.



Longer Than Our Backbone Trail

The Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains will be nearly 70 miles long when completed, but that hardly compares with the really long trails listed here.

Pacific Crest Trail — 2638 miles
Mexico to Canada (100% complete)

Appalachian Trail — 2164 miles
Maine to Georgia (100% complete)

Continental Divide Trail — 2800 miles
Mexico to Canada (70% complete)

California Coastal Trail — 1200 miles
Mexico to Oregon (over 50% complete)

Sources:

www.n2backpacking.com

www.californiacoastaltrail.info/



BioBlitz: 24-Hour Species Inventory Scheduled

National Geographic Society in cooperation with SMMNRA park agencies will conduct BioBlitz, an intensive 24-hour census from noon 30 May to noon 31 May 2008 of all living creatures, plant and animal, in the Santa Monica Mountains. This is the second of ten such events to be conducted, one per year, by NGS. Headquarters for the Santa Monica Mountains BioBlitz will be Paramount Ranch. The first BioBlitz took place in 2007 at Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC.

Scientist-led teams of volunteers will disperse throughout the 150,000-acre Santa Monica Mountains to begin a nature inventory, observing and recording as many plant and animal species as possible in 24 hours. Teams will wade in creeks to find amphibians and aquatic insects, sweep nets through fields to count butterflies, search the chaparral for hidden wildflowers, explore tidepools for marine invertebrates, and catch bats with nets at night. In addition to the inventory, there will be biodiversity presentations, structured field exercises for kids and classes, demonstrations of field technology, and exhibits ranging from global biodiversity to local nature photography.

The Santa Monica Mountains BioBlitz is a wonderful opportunity to learn about nature in the Santa Monica Mountains, to meet and see how scientists learn about plants and animals in the field, and to enjoy outstanding activities and entertainment.

For more information or to join an inventory team:

www.nationalgeographic.com/bioblitz



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PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2008

Dues are on a calendar year basis. Payments in October and later are credited to the following year. Please make your check payable to SMMTC and mail it to P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376. *Thank you for your continued support.*

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* Life membership may be paid in three annual payments of \$150, \$100 and \$100
SMMTC is a tax exempt, non-profit organization under IRS code 501 (c) (3)

**Bikers, please don't startle
hikers or horses.**

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