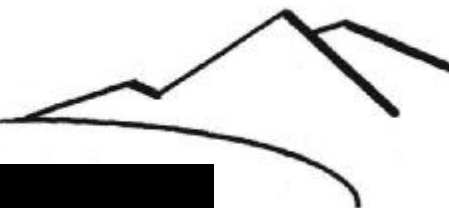


THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF DARRELL READMOND

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



SPRING 2006

DARRELL READMOND (1932-2005)

Darrell Readmond had the foresight in the 1950's to envision the Backbone Trail along the Santa Monica Mountains. He and friends checked topographic maps, rode various areas, and figured where the trail could go. It didn't happen right away, and others had the same vision later; but now, 50 years hence, it is finally a reality. Darrell dedicated his entire adult life to the protection of trails, protection from development and protection for status as national and historic trails.

Born in 1932, he passed away in December of 2005 from an inoperable brain tumor. Just before that time, he was honored with a four-mile trail dedicated in his name by LA County Supervisor Antonovich. The trail is in Vasquez Rocks Park, a County park in Agua Dulce. The trail will connect to the Pacific Crest Trail when it is completed and will be part of a loop trail within the park. Darrell's trail advocacy was extensive, and he was well known throughout the trail community. He was always in attendance at public meetings held by the land agencies. He was a founder of ETI Corral 63 (Equestrian Trails Inc.) and also of the Acton-Agua Dulce Trails Council. As the National Trails Coordinator for ETI, he embodied their mission - dedicated to the Acquisition and Preservation of Trails.

Darrell always loved horses and especially enjoyed packing into the mountains with friends. In addition to following rodeos, coaching baseball, and being an Angel's fan, Darrell made music. He often played his guitar and sang cowboy songs around the campfire or in the living room with friends.

How do we remember him? By working as he did to save the trails we now have and to acquire more. Do your part to continue his trail legacy, to ensure your trail enjoyment, and for those that follow us along the trails in future years.

Coming Events

SMM Trail Days — 28-30 April (25th Year Celebration)
Information: Linda Palmer, 818-222-4531
(See page 3)

State Parks Trails Conference (Agoura Hills) —
5-7 May 2006 (See page 2)

Backbone Trek — 6-13 May 2006, Contact: Annie
Salerno, 818-705-9192, anniesalerno@yahoo.com

National Trails Day — 3 June (See page 2)

SMMTC Annual Meeting — 26 October 2006
(See page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TRAILS OF THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

The trails we use today — some are from yesteryears and some are new. The historic ones have been around since the area first was civilized, such as Indian trails and stagecoach trails. Some trails are from when ranches covered the area and herds of cattle and horses roamed the land, when cowboys rode fence lines to keep them repaired, and when cattle had their favorite paths to water or to hide. Others are wildlife trails. Wildlife still make new trails that they prefer over people's trails; and some of us continue to utilize animal trails for our benefit.

Some of the ranch roads are overgrown and narrower and some are fire roads for emergency equipment to better access areas. Some of the old trails seem lost because they were not used enough and have been overgrown; but if you look hard, you can still see where they are, and they can be revitalized with some brushing and maintenance.

So why do we use trails? Why not just go cross-country? Why not cut the switchbacks and take the shortest route? There are so many people now that if everyone went cross-country on their own and cut the switchbacks, the land would suffer from scarring and erosion. And when the land suffers, the people and animals suffer, too.

Let's be mindful of how trails serve to enhance the land and our experiences on it. Trails leave a history of the users and the care they gave to them. Trails give us a scenic perspective, a connection, a place, an enjoyment, a relief, a physical and emotional rejuvenating. Remember to use trails for your benefit and to help keep them for the future so others may reap the benefits that you now enjoy.

TRAIL NEWS

Last segment of BBT under construction

Etz Maloy, the only major unfinished section of the Backbone Trail, may be completed, weather permitting, by mid-December, according to NPS engineering supervisor Marcel Gillet. Construction of this trail section was started in February and brush removal is now about 3/4 complete. Next, [See Trail News, Page 2]

Trail News [from Page 1]

power tools will make a "pioneer cut" to which culverts and rock work will be added to obtain a completed trail. Public dedication will follow.

At the present time, public use of the trail alignment is highly discouraged. The first-phase brush cutting has left many trip hazards in the form of protruding stumps and other irregular surfaces. Unauthorized persons would interfere with the work and endanger themselves.

A deteriorated house on NPS property adjacent to the BBT on Mulholland Highway will be removed during 2006. In 2 to 5 years the area of the former house and surrounding yard will be built into a parking lot with restrooms and drinking water.

Topanga State Park

A parking lot, restroom and two trailheads are being constructed north of Pacific Coast Highway and west of Topanga Canyon Blvd in Topanga State Park's lower section which was purchased in 2002, according to Bill Verdery, Superintendent of Will Rogers and Topanga parks. One trail will climb to a coastal view and the other will lead to a point in Topanga Creek known as the snakepit. Completion is expected in mid 2006.


Dam Removals to Benefit Trout

Four Arizona crossings (shallow fords) and three dams have been removed from Solstice Creek to permit steelhead trout to migrate upstream. Historically, the trout had been in the stream but were eradicated by the structures which were installed many years ago.

NPS Park Biologist Gary Busted hopes that in a few years, if there are good rains and stream flow, trout will once again spawn naturally in Solstice Creek. The trout will be allowed to return from natural sources rather than from restocking.

Restoration of the creek in Solstice Canyon was funded by Caltrans, the city of Malibu, National Park Service and many other sources.

At press time, the project was nearly completed except for installation of a bridge necessary to provide access to the Keller House, a residence for park employees. No public trails use the bridge. All heavy equipment will be removed after the bridge is set in place.

Solstice Canyon is open to trail users during construction and no closures are expected. 


Trail Management Plan in Review

National Park Service, California State Parks, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy are moving forward with the draft Interagency Trail Management Plan (TMP) for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, according to Melanie Beck, NPS Outdoor Recreation Planner.

The TMP, once finalized, will provide a 20-year vision for new trail construction, use designation, backcountry camps, trailheads, signage, and trail management policies. After working for many years compiling a digital trail inventory, the three agencies held public scoping meetings in September, 2005, to gather input on draft trail maps for the TMP. The agencies are now using the public's comments in conjunction with the trail inventory to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/EIR) for the TMP. The next point of public input will be to review the draft TMP EIS/EIR. The document should be available for public review in early 2007.


Trail inventory maps published by NPS in PDF format may be viewed at www.nps.gov/samo/trails/roster.htm 

2006 Trails Conference Slated for Agoura

The 21st annual California Trails and Greenways Conference, conducted by California State Parks, will take place at the Renaissance Hotel in Agoura Hills on 5-7 May 2006. The conference objectives are to discuss trail advocacy, planning, funding and construction, easing of user conflicts, volunteer management, natural and cultural resource management and other trail related issues. In addition to conference sessions, events will occur on the trails, such as an equestrian trail ride and actual trail maintenance. 

National Trails Day, 3 June 2006

Volunteers are invited to help maintain and improve a four-mile section of the Backbone Trail between Piuma Road and Saddle Peak during National Trails Day on Saturday, 3 June 2006. The lead agency, National Park Service, has partnered with California State Parks to organize the annual trails day.

NPS Volunteer Manager Mike Malone says volunteers should park in the upper lot at Malibu Creek State Park just off of Las Virgenes Road. The entrance fee will be waived for National Trails Day volunteers. Beginning at 8:30 am, an NPS van will ferry volunteers to work sites. Malone suggests volunteers bring their own lunch or snack food and water. Also recommended are hat, sunscreen and gloves. Trail-working tools will be provided. Children under 18 are not permitted unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. No reservation is necessary. For any questions, call 805-370-2317. 

Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days

Volunteers are invited to an interesting day or a full weekend while helping to improve trails during the 25th annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days on 28-30 April 2006. The rare opportunity of camping under the sycamores and oaks at Danielson 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 the 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 and is partnered by California State Parks, Sierra Club, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, California Native Plant Society, Concerned Off-road Bicyclist Association, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association and Temescal Canyon Association.

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 lunches, 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.



ANNUAL MEETING

The Trails Council Annual Meeting will be held on

October 26, 2006

at the home of hosts Ruth and Grant Gerson, providing an opportunity to meet people who share an interest in trails. Members and trail enthusiasts are invited to bring their spouse and friends.

The social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 and meeting at 7:45.

Please RSVP by Monday, 23 October, to facilitate meal planning. Call Ruth at 818-991-1236 and leave your name, telephone number and how many are in your group. The Gerson's home, Wolf Creek Ranch, is at 3450 Cornell Road, Agoura.

Planning the new King Gillette Ranch

Three park agencies – Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, State Parks and National Parks – are scoping the 588-acre park area purchased in April 2005 from Soka University to define the King Gillette Ranch Comprehensive Use and Management Plan.

Among items to be decided is the name for the new parkland which doesn't yet have an official title. An appropriate name may be suggested as the agencies pursue listing in the national register for which preliminary determination of eligibility is underway.

Of the 588 acres, State Parks received 102 acres in fee title, the Santa Monica National Recreation Area (National Parks) received 80 acres in fee title, and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority owns the remaining approximately 406 acres. The land title was divided according to the funding contribution that each agency made and the configuration of the legal parcels and their appraised value.

NPS took title to parcels around Diamond X Ranch, already NPS property, to consolidate their holdings. State parks took title to southern parcels closer to Malibu Creek State Park. The Conservancy took title (through MRCA) to the larger parcels, including those with real property improvements. Patchwork aside, the agencies have agreed to manage the properties as a collective whole for the protection of natural and historical resources and public use and enjoyment.

As the process continues, public meetings will begin sometime soon and run until mid-summer although none have yet been scheduled.

Soka University continues to operate under the terms of a leaseback which expires at the end of 2007. Hikers may use trails in the wilderness portions of the property by entering the gate on Mulholland Highway a short distance east of Las Virgenes Road and requesting permission at the guardhouse.



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



PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2006. Dues are on a calendar year basis, January through December. 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.*

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____ Check to have newsletter sent by e-mail

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Dues schedule for 2006:

Individual Memberships

- Annual Membership \$35
- Life Membership \$350*

Business Memberships

- Supporter \$100
- Patron \$250
- Benefactor \$500
- Donation \$_____

* 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)



The ParkLink shuttle operates weekends and holidays all year. Amenities include bike racks, cooler and stroller space and wheelchair lifts. For schedule and other information, call 888-734-2323 or click on www.nps.gov/samo/shuttle/index.htm

Trails Council on the Web

This paper won't self-update, but our website will. Please check

www.smmtc.org

for the latest news and information on the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council.

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