

# SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



FALL 2006

## BBT to be 2.2 Miles Closer to Completion

Mulholland Highway to the Etz Meloy Motorway, another 2.2 miles of the Backbone Trail, will be completed by mid-December or early January 2007, according to National Park Service engineering supervisor Marcel Gillet. Brush removal is now about 90% complete. Trail builders are now using power tools to make the "pioneer cut" to which culverts and rock work will be added to complete the trail.

The segment under construction will climb nearly 600 feet in elevation with switchbacks to join with the existing Etz Meloy Motorway. Gillet says the switchbacks will thread through valleys and knolls.

Portions of the Etz Meloy segment which generally follow the ridgeline, remain in private ownership and are not open to public use. One other BBT segment, 0.5 miles in upper Zuma-Trancas Cyn., is officially closed.

Manpower at work on the project may be as high as 60 on days when a large group of prison inmates is clearing brush. At other times the number of workers can be as low as 20 including up to six NPS employees. Inmates who work on brushing are developing skills also used when fighting fires. Construction cost of the new trail will total about \$185,000 including labor, equipment leasing and materials.

Great effort is made to hide the cut brush and minimize construction scars in the earth. Gillet says new trails gradually take on added beauty in two or three years as the work zone heals. He likes to hike trails after they are completed to enjoy the scenery and distant sight lines. Without revealing his involvement in its construction, he enjoys meeting other hikers so he can ask how they enjoy the trail.

At the present time, public use of the trail alignment is highly discouraged. Brush cutting has left tripping hazards in the form of protruding stumps and other irregular surfaces. Unauthorized persons would interfere with the work and endanger themselves.



## PRESIDENT'S VISION

As more and more people live in urban areas far removed from trails and wildlife, it is up to us to re-awaken the sense of wonder that lies dormant in many. We each have the power to inspire the next generation in a way that computers and television can never do. A typical educational approach of thinking is that knowledge leads to caring; but an emotional experience and connection can lead to that thirst for knowledge. Certainly, being on trails can be a life-changing experience. Visitors can reflect through an emotional trail experience that can trigger their inborn fascination with the land, the wildlife and plants around them, awakening their sense of awe and wonder and also the realization that wild things are an important part of our lives. Hopefully, those experiences will foster an appreciation, and maybe even a passion, for trails. Our challenges and responsibilities include reaching more people to inform and educate them. That education includes the extrapolation from deep within people of their personal sense of Caring.

Centuries ago rulers established private collections of animals and plants to satisfy their curiosity and to impress their subjects and rivals. That same passion to sustain wildlife and habitat is still within us. Our present scientific resources and specialized equipment have taken us beyond prior boundaries of thinking. Now, there are large, even vast, areas set aside for the public to enjoy and to appreciate the land and the wildlife, to kindle that emotional connection that leads them to a thirst for more knowledge, and for Caring.

Our enrichment programs educate, train other volunteers, meet the community's needs, and increase awareness about trails. We are proud to be an organization that has maintained credibility for 34 years while maintaining trails in the Santa Monica Mountains, caring for the land and the people.

*Portions of the above by permission of Karen Sausman, president/CEO, The Living Desert, Palm Desert, CA*

### Coming Events

SMMTC Annual Meeting — 26 October 2006


(See page 3)

Trail Maintenance Crew Training - 18 November 2006

(See page 2)

## **Name Undecided for Former Soka Property**

A draft historic study of the Soka University property is being conducted by National Park Service for the partner agencies who co-manage the site (Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, California Department of Parks and Recreation and NPS). This study will set sideboards for planners to assure the protection of cultural resources, before any changes are proposed on the main campus. A facility Condition Assessment is also well underway. Public scoping meetings will be held after the agencies have information on the current condition of the buildings and which resources are most important for preservation. Soka University will continue to lease back the core campus property from the MRCA through December 2007.



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## **TMP Planning Slowed**

Progress on the SMMNRA Interagency Trail Management Plan (TMP) has slowed because of lack of funds. The TMP Planning Team continues to define the preferred alternative and other alternatives for the joint TMP EIS/EIR, but at a slower pace than they would like. The draft TMP EIS/EIR will be released for public review in early to mid-2007 if additional funding is received.

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

When finalized, the TMP will provide a 20-year vision for new trail construction, use designation, backcountry camps, trailheads, signage, and trail management policies.

Trail inventory maps published by NPS in PDF format may be viewed at [www.nps.gov/samo/trails/roster.htm](http://www.nps.gov/samo/trails/roster.htm)



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## **Scourge of the Mud Snails**

Biologists have recently discovered New Zealand Mud Snails in the Malibu Creek watershed. A single snail can result in a colony of more than 40 million snails in just one year. The snails are no larger than one-eighth inch.


Please assist in halting the spread of these invasive creatures to other drainages. Staying out of the water is the best avoidance technique. Mountain bikers should carry their bikes across

## **2006/07 Trail Maintenance Scheduled**

Liz Baumann and Pete Warden hosted the 2006 scheduling meeting for trail maintenance at their Simi Valley home on August 5, 2006. In attendance were many of the SMMTC trail maintenance crew leaders and park agency representatives. Because of weather during the last two years and the shortage of park agency funding, there are many trails needing maintenance. As a result, much of the discussion revolved around setting priorities.

In response to guidance from the SMMTC Board of Directors, council members are reaching out to other community organizations, soliciting support for fall trail maintenance. It is hoped that this will result in increased numbers of volunteers.

By the end of the evening, a draft schedule was completed. Everyone departed full of enthusiasm for the upcoming maintenance season. The final schedule has now been printed and distributed and is also available on the SMMTC web site ([www.smmtc.org](http://www.smmtc.org))




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## **SMMTC Board Emphasizes Training**

Prompted by Jerry Mitcham's report on the success of the recent First Aid/CPR training, the SMMTC board directed that training be included in future trail maintenance schedules. The instruction will refresh and update knowledge and skills of current crew leaders and will help develop less experienced crew members to become leaders.


A training committee consisting of Jerry Mitcham, George Sherman, Frank Padilla, Jr., Burt Elliott and Liz Baumann will define crew member training requirements, arrange for training providers and ensure training is included in the trail maintenance schedules.

Training will cover such topics as first aid, safety, trail maintenance techniques, and other relevant subjects. Frank Padilla, Jr., retired trails maintenance supervisor for the State Parks Angeles District will conduct a beginning crew member workshop on November 18, 2006 (see trail maintenance schedule for details). This workshop is intended for new volunteers, addressing topics such as safety, proper tool use, trail maintenance techniques, etc.



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wet drainages, Hikers should avoid stepping in the water by hopping on rocks or logs. Equestrians should use bridges if available or minimize horses' contact with water.





Participants in First Aid/CPR Training were, from the left, Greg Jones (Conejo Open Space Conservancy Agency ranger, the course instructor),

Linda Palmer, Jerry Mitcham, Norm Simmonds, Casey Gonzales, Al Bandal, Virginia Grue, Barry Dydyk, Pete Warden, Liz Baumann.

### **Crew Leaders Complete First Aid/CPR Training**

SMMTC trail maintenance crew leaders recently completed first aid/CPR training. Greg Jones, Conejo Open Space Conservancy Agency (COSCA) ranger, conducted the training on July 15<sup>th</sup> at COSCA ranger headquarters in Thousand Oaks. Nine crew leaders attended and met the requirements for American Red Cross certification.

This training reflects the SMMTC policy of continuing knowledge and skills development for its crew leaders. Even though our trail crews have an excellent safety record, they work in environments

where accidents are always a possibility. This training ensures they are prepared to deal with personal injuries or other health issues on the trail.

Following a standard American Red Cross course outline, the training included the following topics: Recognizing emergencies, Self Protection, Prioritizing Care, Rescue Breathing, Cardiac Emergencies including adult CPR, Sudden illnesses, Wounds, Injuries, and Heat/cold related Emergencies. Written exam and demonstration of proficiency completed certification.



### **TRAIL NEWS: Topanga State Park**

The lower Topanga addition, purchased in 2002 is gradually being restored to natural conditions although it is not ready for recreational use. Thirty-seven abandoned structures have been demolished, but 20 remain to be removed. A proposed trail to a vantage point near Topanga Canyon Blvd. and Pacific Coast Highway has not been constructed and may be eliminated because of potential hazards to trail users.



### **ParkLink Connects Calabasas**

ParkLINK connection to Metro 161 buses in the 101 corridor began in July 2006 at Agoura and Las Virgenes roads.

MRCA and NPS planners are discussing the possibility of a charter program that would make the buses available to support park purposes within the Santa Monica Mountains. Inquiries about the program should be submitted to Amy.lenthbridge@mrca.ca.gov.

The service operates on weekends and some holidays. In honor of American veterans ParkLINK will be free November 10, 11 and 12. An extra day of

operation will be the Friday after Thanksgiving to accommodate families with visitors over the weekend. No service on Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day. For schedule and other information, call 888-734-2323 or click on [www.nps.gov/samo/shuttle/](http://www.nps.gov/samo/shuttle/)



## **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.

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2007.** 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.*

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](http://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](http://www.smmtc.org)

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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