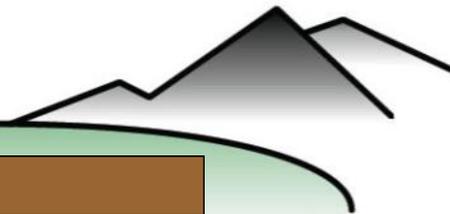


# SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



SPRING 2015

## Trails Council has New Leadership

Early this year the Trails Council elected new officers. Howard Cohen is the new president replacing Ruth Gerson. Barb Thomas is the new Vice President, replacing Jeanne Wallace. Both Ruth and Jeanne will remain on the Board.

Barb has been on the Board of Directors of the SMMTC since 2005. She is also a trail crew leader, participating in trail work and outreach events. Barb has been active in trail maintenance in various parts of the country since the 1980's. She is a past board member of the Old Dominion Rides, Inc. and her local homeowners association, and she is currently a member of the American Endurance Ride Council International committee.

Barb's vision for the Trails Council is increased membership and active membership participation in Trail Council activities. There are many opportunities including trail work and crew leader positions; public and membership outreach; helping with big events like Trail Days, the Backbone Trek, and the Annual Dinner Meeting; and fundraising. It's an exciting time for the SMMTC with an increase in the number of volunteers working the trails and having a keen interest in the work of the Trails Council.

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## Coming Events

2015

- 34th Annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days – April 24-26
- Backbone Trek – May 2-9
- Annual Dinner Meeting – October 22  
*(Dinner & meeting are free and open to the trails community.)*

### Trails Council Board Meetings

Board Meetings are open to the public and held at Diamond X Ranch, 26412 Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, CA 91302, on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. There are three exceptions: Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday and no meeting in August.

## PRESIDENT'S VISION

Ruth Gerson, past president

Ruth Gerson, president of the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council for the past 17 years, is a Life member, and has been on the Board for over 40 years, previously serving as secretary and treasurer. Ruth has decided that it is time for computer savvy members to take the Trails Council into the future and has stepped down from the presidency but will remain on the Board. She will continue as one of the liaisons between the Trails Council and the land agencies. Her history with the Trails Council goes back to 1970. For more than 25 years Ruth and her husband, Grant, hosted the Annual Trails Council dinner at their home.

She will resume attending Board meetings when her health recovers. Ruth is very happy that the Board of Directors is on the right path toward the missions and goals of the organization. She feels that it is in good hands and looks forward to working with the entire trails community.

## NEW PRESIDENT'S VISION

Howard Cohen, president

Howard Cohen has participated in performing trail work with SMMTC for several years and became a board member in 2007. He has been a resident of the Conejo Valley since 1989 and currently lives in Newbury Park where he runs, hikes, backpacks, rock climbs and bikes the trails across the Santa Monica Mountains.

Howard brings a passion for the outdoors whether it be in the local mountains or across the globe. Howard will be applying his Information Technology and Program Management professional skills to bring new technology and refined administrative processes to promote the Trail Council's mission. These plans include partnering with multiple trail users and non-profit organizations who share a common vision to protect shared open spaces and maintain trails.

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Barb's scientific career has included cancer research, virology, and toxicology. She is currently a medical writer/editor. She enjoys hiking, trail riding on Lonley, her Haflinger horse, and is getting her young dog, Artie ready for agility training.



## Sharon Simmonds receives the 2014 Hank Grateful Award

Over the past twelve years, Sharon has averaged over 200 volunteer hours each year working on our trails. She is such a dedicated volunteer even when she after injuries or needed replacement parts, she is back with the Trail Crew as soon as she is able.

The word to describe the quality of her work - immaculate! The crew kids her about bringing a broom and dustpan to make her work look "just right." At the same time she encourages other crew members to work up to her level of quality. Sharon's on-the-trail personality helps keep our younger volunteers focused and in good cheer.

She communicates very well with the crew and volunteers, plus serves as a great example. Near the end of the work day when many volunteers have thoughts of finding some shade and sitting down, she is still working. Each year Sharon together with her husband Norm contribute over 450 volunteer hours - an amazing contribution of time and effort. Thank You, Sharon.



Volunteers work on Fossil Trail to repair damage from December storm.

## Trails Heavily Damaged by December Storm

On the night of December 12, 2014, a short but extremely intense rainstorm swept through the park and surrounding communities. The resulting damage was immediate and severe. Damage to roads and trails in the park and surrounding areas was so extensive the park was closed for over a month and Pacific Coast Highway, which provides the primary western access to the park was closed for two months.

Once again, in response to a call for assistance from State Parks officials, the SMMTC trail crew sprang into action. This task was not a few days duration, but several weeks. Since almost every trail in the park sustained some level of damage the task was enormous. Trail crew members joined park personnel in hiking every trail in the park, taking photos and making detailed notes on the damage. The assessment revealed that the upper elevations of trails sustained relatively minor damage. At lower elevations and particularly at the mouth of the canyons and large drainages the damage was more extensive. At the upper elevations the damage consisted mainly of "trenching" of the tread and silted up drains. At the lower elevations the "trenching" was more severe. The mouth of canyons and drainages had large alluvial deposits of silt and debris, in some cases, completely obliterating the trail. Once the assessment was complete, Angeles District Trails Coordinator, Dale Skinner prepared a priority list of work to be done.

In response to this imposing work list, the SMMTC trail crew modified it's already busy schedule. All volunteer trail events for the months of January and February were changed to focus on the prioritized work list provided by Dale Skinner. In addition, an extra work day per week was scheduled. Most of our trail crew "regulars," attended all of these workdays. The regulars were aug-

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## Save the Date!!

The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Santa Monica Mountains Trail  
Days April 24 – 26, 2015!

**Backbone Trail Trek**  
**14th year**  
**May 2-9, 2015**

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mented by numerous volunteers from the local community. In addition to the community volunteers, several local organizations responded with volunteers from their staffs. They were; US Navy, Point Mugu (especially VAW-113), veterans organization Team Red, White & Blue, Toms Shoes, The North Face, CORBA, Conejo Valley Trail Runners and Coyote Cohorts. This resulted in over 200 volunteer days and over 1,200 volunteer hours.

List of trails worked on during this period:

- Hidden Pond Trail: 3.3 miles
- Wood Canyon Vista Trail: 2.0 miles
- Chumash Trail: 0.7 Miles
- Mugu Peak Trail (partial): 0.6 miles

- La Jolla Pond Trail:0.2 miles
- La Jolla Canyon Trail (partial): 0.6 miles
- Blue Canyon Trail: 0.8 Miles
- Old Boney Trail (partial): 04 miles
- Fossil Trail (Partial): 0.4 miles
- Serrano Canyon Trail (partial): 0.6 miles

All major tasks on the priority list have been completed. Now the trail crew continues working on outstanding minor damage within its normal trail maintenance schedule. Volunteers interested in participating in the continuing maintenance may consult our online schedule for details.

View photos of the trails and the work results at: <http://www.smmtc.org/albums/Storm%20Damage/Restoration%20Work/index.html>



### Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days

The 34<sup>nd</sup> annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days will be on April 24-26 at Danielson Ranch in Pt. Mugu State Park. Come to have fun, meet other trail enthusiasts and contribute your effort to repair trails. Key hosts for this event are the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, the Sierra Club and the Concerned Off Road Bicyclist Association, in conjunction with State Parks and the National Park Service.

In previous years, volunteers have repaired up to five trail miles during the weekend. At the end of the day on Saturday, State Parks, National Park Service and the Trails Council will provide a delicious free BBQ dinner for volunteers. Please RSVP by April 21.

This event could never happen without many hands working very hard to organize and carry it out. We are grateful to those who are generous with their time and are thankful for the many companies and individuals who will donate raffle items and money to support the event and make it fun. Please visit our website, [www.SMMTC.org](http://www.SMMTC.org) for a list of those folks who contributed in 2014 and some of the ones so far in 2015 and please support our raffle donors.

**Directions:** Ventura Freeway to Wendy in Newbury Park. Turn south to Potrero Road, left at Reino, left at first driveway (NPS service road). Cars will be escorted in and out of the park at the times listed below:

- Arrive:** Fri. - 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm
- Sat. - 7:30 am, 4:30 pm
- Sun. - 7:30 am
- Depart:** Sat. - 4:00 pm, 9:00 pm
- Sun. - 8:00 am, 2:30 pm

**Bring** your lunch, beverages, snacks, water and insect repellent. Tools are provided, but you may bring a pick, shovel, Pulaski, McLeod, pruning saw or long-handled loppers. (Please, no light-weight tools or chain saws.)

**Suggested:** Trail Training Video and weekly trail maintenance schedule on <http://www.smmtc.org>

**Wear:** Gloves, hat, long pants, protective clothing, sunscreen, and work boots or sturdy shoes.

**Camping:** Bring your gear! Free camping Friday and/or Saturday nights for Trail Days workers at Danielson Ranch. Advance camping registration appreciated by April 23.

**Patches:** Trail Days patches will be available. \$3 each.

**Information:** Rain (unless torrential) does not cancel. Register on line at <http://www.smmtc.org>. For additional information, contact Barb Thomas at 805-492-0460 or 805-509-3426.



### Trail Maintenance Report

From September 1, 2014, through March 4, 2015, a total of 485 volunteers performed 2,795 hours of trail maintenance in the Santa Monica Mountains and nearby areas.



Agency	Volunteers	Labor Hours	Distance	
			feet	miles
COSCA	16	67.0	5,800	1.10
MRCA	19	78.0	4,000	0.76
NPS	61	286.5	11,168	2.12
NPS CI	4	106.0	19,800	3.75
SMMTC	18	113.5	0	0.00
State Parks	367	2,144.0	52,513	9.95
<b>Totals</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>2,795.0</b>	<b>93,281</b>	<b>17.68</b>

## Trail User Groups Restore Wood Canyon Vista Trail in Pt Mugu State Park

In May, 2013, the Springs Fire swept through Point Mugu State Park and destroyed most of the vegetation, the roots of which are critical for holding soil in place during our heavy Southern California rainstorms. The winter of 2013-14 was one of the driest on record, but heavy rain in December 2014 caused widespread mudslides throughout the burned area. The park was closed for weeks as crews cleared debris and filled in ruts. The Trails Council crew worked every Saturday and most Wednesdays throughout February.

On Feb 21st, twelve volunteers from the Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association (CORBA), and about three dozen hikers and members of the Conejo Valley Trail Runners and the Coyote Cohorts, plus several U.S. Navy personnel, worked on the 1.8-mile Wood Canyon Vista Trail. Crew leaders from the Trails Council and CORBA led the volunteers, showing them how to safely and effectively use hand tools.

Most of the trail runners ran approximately 7 miles to their work area from distant parking. Others carpooled to the bottom of the trail in as few cars as possible.

There were three tasks: repairing ruts, creating and repairing drains and leveling the tread where mud had flowed across it.

Around were carpets of green and fields of wildflowers – lupines, California poppies, wild hyacinths (blue dicks), shooting stars and more. Flowers are part of the spring display in the Santa Monica Mountains, but only rarely so many. Previous work on this trail was after the Springs Fire when the ground was barren and charred.

A great volunteer group contributed another successful trail restoration project!

View CORBA's collection of photos for this project at [http://corbamtb.com/programs/TrailCrewGalleries/2015-02-21SycmoreBackbone/\\_Page.shtml](http://corbamtb.com/programs/TrailCrewGalleries/2015-02-21SycmoreBackbone/_Page.shtml).



## WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU?

A paper copy of this newsletter *OR* an electronic copy?

Please let us know by emailing to [mail@smmtc.org](mailto:mail@smmtc.org)

## PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2015

Payments in October and later are credited to the following year. Dues are on a calendar year basis. Please make your check payable to SMMTC and mail it to PO Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376 or you may use your credit card with PayPal, <http://www.smmtc.org/membership>  
*Thank you for your continued support.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check to have newsletter sent by e-mail

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Individual Memberships

Annual Membership — \$35

Life Membership — \$360\*

Business Memberships

Supporter — \$100

Patron — \$250

Benefactor — \$500

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Life membership may be paid in three annual payments of \$120.

SMMTC is a tax exempt, non-profit organization under IRS code 501(c)(3).

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## CONTACTS

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Mail: P.O. Box 345

Agoura Hills, CA 91376

Phone: 818-222-4531

E-mail: [mail@smmtc.org](mailto:mail@smmtc.org)

Internet: <http://www.smmtc.org>

Howard Cohen, President

[howard@gravityh.com](mailto:howard@gravityh.com) — 805-732-9137

Ed Stauss, Newsletter Editor

[edstauss@yahoo.com](mailto:edstauss@yahoo.com) — 818-883-7843

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