



Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Protect • Preserve • Maintain

Fall 2018

New Logo

With the debut of a new logo, the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council (SMMTC) reaffirms its strong commitment to its mission of preserving and maintaining the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area's extensive network of trails.

Created by award-winning graphic designer and SMMTC member Carol Gravelle, the new logo takes the shape of a shield, emphasizing the 49-year-old nonprofit organization's goal of protecting the mountains and their trails. Gravelle, who donated her time to the project of modernizing the logo, explains, "I wanted to make the trail prominent and include a simple scene of our mountains and hills. I also wanted to have a wildlife component," which she accomplished with the silhouette of a soaring hawk against a blazing sunrise.

The previous logo did not feature a tagline with the group's mission, so the board added to the logo

New Logo continued on Page 3

President's Vision

50 YEARS OF WORKING ON TRAILS

In 2019, the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council will be celebrating 50 years of being a major steward in caring for the trails in these mountains. We started in 1969. I envision at least another 100 years of the Trails Council protecting, preserving and maintaining the trails here. Have you completed journeying on your personal bucket list of trails? Many of you may not yet have traveled on all the trails available to you. As John Muir once wrote, "In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." What have you received on a personal level from engaging with trails? How does it compare to the other articles in this newsletter as to what trails give us – pride & satisfaction repairing trails, physical and mental health benefits working outdoors, education by learning about plants, insects & wildlife, and friendship with others along the trails? For the future, the Trails Council intends to continue Improving the trails; to continue collaborating with the various government agencies; to continue working with private property owners to help with trails near them; and to continue engaging more people in Nature, especially more kids. After all, what a great way to teach without lecturing, by guiding people along trails and giving them the history of the area and the names of the flowers and plants. Meandering along a trail people see many different wildflowers and wildlife. Artistic expression follows when they draw what they have seen or engage in describing it. Sharing with others, they learn to describe the flora and fauna in detail, improving their vocabulary and ability to speak. Motivated by really good experiences sets them up to continue their exploration of trails and all that the ancillary aspects of trails bring into our lives. Remember, too, that the kids of today are the stewards of tomorrow for our trails. They need to develop the passion that we have. Take them, and a friend who has kids, along with you on your next trail experience. Try to do it every other month, slowly changing to once a month. Notice the changes in the kids and continue educating them whenever you can. Within the next 50 years they will be in your place - Protecting, Preserving, Maintaining trails in our beautiful mountains. See you on the trail.

Have any of you or your friends been around here since 1969? Were you aware of the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council in those early years? Did you work with us or others on any trails? Please contact us and let us know –we really care.

Upcoming Events

- **Annual Dinner Meeting – October 25**
6pm social, 7pm dinner, 7:45 meeting
Dinner & meeting are free and open to the trails community. RSVP at smmtc.org
OR (818) 222-4531. Agoura Hills/
Calabasas Community Center, 27040
Malibu Hills Rd, Agoura Hills
- 38th Annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days April 26–28 2019
- Backbone Trek May 4–11 2019
- Registration Opens for the Backbone Trek February 1st, 2019

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; no meeting in August.

Don Wallace — Trail Blazer

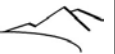


Don & Jeanne At Trail Dedication

Don Wallace has always been a Trails guy. His passion for nature started when he was a young firefighter. From there, it grew; and when he was eventually appointed as a National Park Service Commissioner in 1976, he started to realize that some of his visions could be implemented. Don believes most of the recreation taking place in LA County is by people walking. For 35 years, Don advocated for a safe passage trail in Calabasas under the 101 freeway along the Las Virgenes Creek to give people a connection to the trails and lands north of the freeway. Many felt this to be impossible until April 13, 2018. That day was the dedication of his long, sought-after dream come true.

Shelia Kuehl, Supervisor, 3rd District had the honor of cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the newly built Don Wallace Multi-Use Trail. John Wicker of Parks and Recreations stated that the Don Wallace Trail will provide future connectivity to the Mountain Recreation Conservation Authority Trails (MRCA), Las Virgenes Creek Trails, and the Malibu Creek State Park (MCSP) trails system. Don's vision materialized into his legacy with this 1,500-ft long connector trail built for the public to use and enjoy.

Thank you, Don.

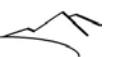


TRAIL WORK AND YOU

You've been preparing for this day for some time – checking the weather, your gear, food, water and route information. Arriving at the trailhead ready to enjoy your time, you notice that the trail looks like it has been worked on recently. Thirty minutes in and you see men and women wielding tools and working on the trail. The brush crowding the path is being cut; overhanging branches are being lopped; and some large rocks are being maneuvered to build a rock wall to shore up the trail alongside the stream. Have you ever wondered what motivates these volunteers to work on a Saturday when they could be traveling on the trails as you have planned to do? The majority of our regular trail crew are actively pursuing their other interests (hiking, geocaching, running, riding) but recognize that if they were not out there doing this work, it would likely not get done.

Traveling along your favorite trail is much nicer when the tread does not trip you or the vegetation does not reach out and grab you. Trail work provides rewards beyond the sweat equity afforded to each person. Over time, you learn how to properly lop branches, to fortify the tread's downslope edge with buried rocks, and, when needed, to create the perfect out slope so that water flows off the trail instead of down it. This specialized knowledge of trail work changes the way you see the trail. "Trail eyes" is a term coined for those who have done trail work and instinctively note the locations of drains, swales, out sloped tread and so on as they travel along the trail. We believe that being active on the trails includes working on them as well as recreating on them. Would you be able to give up one Saturday a year to work on a path you regularly use so that that trail would remain in good condition? If so, find an event on our calendar that works for you and come join us for a trail changing experience! [SMTC Trail Work Calendar]

George Sherman



Trail Maintenance Statistics

From September 1, 2017 through July 24, 2018 a total of 728 volunteers performed 4,322.00 hours of trail maintenance in the Santa Monica Mountains and nearby areas. State Parks and NPS budgets are not near enough to maintain the hundreds of trails we have.

Agency	Events	Vol #	Hours	Feet	Miles
CINP	2	7	152.5	23,230	4.4
COSCA	6	47	206.5	7,766	1.47
NPS	17	165	897	40,598	7.69
State Parks	52	509	3,066.00	91,777	17.38
Totals	77	728	4,322.00	163,371	30.94

CINP - Channel Islands National Park
 COSCA - Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency
 NPS - National Park Service
 State Parks - California State Parks



Trail Etiquette: The RIGHT Right of Way

Signs are guidelines for safety. Personal awareness is the most effective means of being safe. Since hikers are the slowest trail user, they are often passed by bikers and equestrians.

Mountain bikes are very maneuverable, and the parkland agencies all have signs to that effect – bikers yield to hikers and equestrians on the trail. However, because the mountain bikers are often moving considerably faster than hikers and horses that are walking, it is often easier for the hikers and riders to yield the right of way. In any event, bikers should always announce their presence by calling out “bike” especially when coming from behind. Without some voice notice, horses, riders and hikers cannot hear the silent bike coming up behind them. Bells are not always heard. For the safety of all trail users, it is the responsibility of the bikers to announce their presence.

Horses are the largest and least predictable trail users. No matter how well trained horses are, the fact remains that they have a brain and their DNA for survival may kick in without listening to the rider. In that event, the instinct to flee from their perceived danger of a biker may take over. When meeting horses on multi-use trails, it is best for hikers and bikers to stop on the downhill side and not make abrupt movements that can startle a horse as they pass. Speaking to the riders lets the horse know that the biker is a human, which horses trust. It is also important not to hide behind bushes in many instances and surprise horses; some riders may stop for people to pet the horses as children especially enjoy that experience.

Everyone should understand the safety triangle that is posted throughout the parklands.



New Logo Continued

“Protect, Preserve, Maintain”, to better reflect SMMTC’s role in working together with government agencies that oversee public lands, such as the National Park Service, California State Parks and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy / MRCA to keep trails open and accessible.

SMMTC President Ruth Gerson comments, “We have adopted a new logo, and, in keeping with our mission for trails, our tagline reminds you that we support trails by protecting, preserving and maintaining them.” Gerson is pleased that the logo redesign works well both in print and on screen.

“Whether you meander or hurry along the trail, keep in mind the picture of that trail going farther and farther away from where you started, maybe around a bend or towards the distant mountains,” she says, adding, “It will eventually lead you down the path of adventure. Enjoy the trails!”

Anne Russell



FYI

Legal Campfires in legal campgrounds have never caused a fire in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Save the Date!! Annual Dinner Meeting October 25, 2018

6PM Social Hour—Visit with NPS, State Parks, MRCA, local officials and representatives from other government and trail organizations

7PM Dinner

7:45PM Meeting

Please RSVP at smttc.org or (818) 222-4531
 Agoura Hills/Calabasas Community Center,
 27040 Malibu Hills Rd, Agoura Hills

Like us on Facebook!

[Facebook.com/TrailWorkSMMTC/](https://www.facebook.com/TrailWorkSMMTC/)



Insects And Plants Along The Trail

Do you consider yourself a tourist or a native on trails in the Santa Monica Mountains – a tourist being someone with limited familiarity and a native being very familiar with the area? Whether you come from a



distance or live locally, whether you hike new or old trails, short or long ones, solo or with others, everyone enjoys different kinds of experiences. Given the vast amount of beauty our mountains hold, here's a challenge and a compromise to improve the trail experience. This is an image with three distinct objects – the Ornate Checkered Beetle, the Chimney Bee and a Bush Mallow flower. The beetle helps regulate the size of native bee populations (ground dwelling) both as a parasite and a predator. Females leave a single egg on a flower with the goal of attaching to the leg of a bee and having the bee bring it back to the nest. The larva finds its way to a cell where it eats food intended for the developing bees. At some point, it chews through the cell walls and consumes a few bee larvae. Once ready to fly, the beetle becomes an herbivore (eating pollen) before finally becoming a predator to bees in the Megachilidae family. In this image, the

beautiful Chimney Bee dropped in on this flower right next to the beetle. This brief interaction could lead to future generations of beetles, or it could be a shared moment between two strangers.

The flower is a Bush Mallow that commonly blooms in the summer. Chimney Bees have an interesting relationship with the Bush Mallow. They gather pollen and bring it back to their nests to provide for their broods; along the way, pollen is moved from one Bush Mallow flower to another, conceivably pollinating the next generation of flowers. The end result is each life form depending on the other for survival of their species. A fantastic amount of information about insects and plants along the trail can be learned by taking some time. With each name you learn, it becomes easier to learn another. You are practically an expert when you can make 30 identifications – provided you share them with your fellow travelers! George Sherman

E Bikes In The Parks

Electronic bikes are not allowed in the backcountry at California State Parks. Local officials at CSP have posted an order prohibiting E-bicycles or e-bikes on the trails, thereby closing all trails in the Angeles District to electric bikes. This includes multi-use trails in Malibu Creek State Park, Topanga State Park, Will Rogers State Historic Park, and Point Mugu State Park. District Superintendents Order No. 915-17-002.

The bikes will continue to be allowed in developed areas of the park, including day-use spots and campgrounds; but past the yellow gates, they are banned. Electronic bikes are treated as motor vehicles and are subject to the same laws. District Superintendent Craig Sap said the e-bikes not only could impact other trail users, but the move also aligns State Parks with partner agencies in the Santa Monica Mountains, including Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and the National Park Service.

Roads and trails appearing on the Angeles National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map are a safe alternative www.fs.usda.gov; and for more local riding, check out peopleforbikes.org or mtbproject.com for information on where to legally ride.

A few legal e-bikes favorites are; Triunfo Open Space Loop with approx. 9.2 miles, 35% Singletrack, 6% Ave Grade, 36% Max Grade, Elevation 1445' Ascent, 1442' Descent. 1439' High and 898' Low.

Los Robles has approx. 10.8 miles, 70% Singletrack, 6% Ave Grade, 29% Max Grade, Elevation 1613' Ascent, -1609' Descent, 1540' High and 722' Low.

Dos Vientos tour has approx. 12.2 miles, 80% Singletrack, 4% Ave Grade, 24% Max Grade, Elevation 1261' Ascent, -1261' Descent, 1158' High and 718' Low.

Superintendent Craig Sap




Comings and Goings on the Board

THANKS FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE

Michelle Kemmer: Thank you for your many years of service as treasurer for the Trails Council. It was most appreciated that you kept the financial records, filed the government paperwork, and kept our books balanced. We understand that on top of a regular job taking the time to do non-profit financial records is always more work than it seems at first; nevertheless, you tackled it and kept us right side up. Many thanks and we wish you well.

Debbie DiMascio: We are most appreciative that you were able to serve on our board of directors. Your volunteer work at the Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch as well as patrolling the trails for the land agencies helped us stay informed about the various agencies and their trails system. We wish you well in your move to a new community.

Welcome Jeffery Davidson: We are happy to introduce our newest member to the board. Jeff is an avid equestrian trail rider who has been volunteering for over 23 years in the Mounted Volunteer Patrol, a group under the auspices of National Park Service, State Parks & Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Jeff has won multiple awards for his photography of animals, nature and wildlife. His other interests include hiking, skiing, cooking, and computers! 

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

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Dues are on a rolling 12-month basis. Membership dues are effective the first of the month following receipt; membership will be effective for 12 months. 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://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
Life membership may be paid in three consecutive annual payments of \$120.

Business Memberships

Supporter — \$100

Patron — \$250

Benefactor — \$500

Donation \$ _____

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President Ruth Gerson	Secretary Georgia Farinella
Vice President Barb Thomas	Treasurer Sheryl Phelps

Directors

Don Brusselars	Susie Niebergall
Steve Clark	Charlotte Pattison
Jeffery Davidson	Anne Russell
John Kross	Lylene Sheets
Jerry Mitcham	George Sherman

CONTACTS

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Mail	P.O. Box 345 Agoura Hills CA 91376
Phone	818-222-4531
E-Mail	mail@smmtc.org
Web	www.smmtc.org

Ruth Gerson, President

E-mail: ruthgerson@aol.com

Sheryl Phelps, Newsletter Editor

E-mail: intoriding@yahoo.com

The Trails Council newsletter is published twice a year, in the Spring and Fall.