



Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Protect • Preserve • Maintain

ESTABLISHED 1969

Spring 2022

It's wonderful that so many people are enjoying nature and getting out into the mountains and on the trails. There is a great deal to see and enjoy – the water flowing through the creeks - the flowering phacelia, canyon sunflower and lupine – the turkey vultures, hawks, white egrets, and blue herons– the occasional deer – the sly coyote stalking his rodent prey – and always magnificent views of the canyons, mountains, cities and the Pacific Ocean.

As you travel the trails, be mindful of speeding bikes coming around blind curves on the trail or down steep hills. E-bikes class 1 are now allowed on trails that are open to regular bikes. Unfortunately, rogue bikers are disrespectful of the laws where they are not allowed, so you could find them on almost any trail; and, in addition, many are going way too fast. There is a 15 mph speed limit. Many are respectful, but many are not. Your safety is your priority!

One of the good outcomes from Covid is that people found comfort and safety on the trails. A huge number of folks are now enjoying getting out into the mountains exploring places they have never been before and enjoying the fresh air and exercise to improve their health. Physical exercise improves your mental and emotional health. Go for a walk with a friend or take a child to see the wonders of nature.

For those who are recent trail users, there are several things you should know. Always carry water, wear a hat, carry a shirt against sunburn,

bring sunglasses, be aware of snakes, wear sneakers or comfortable shoes in the dirt, go with a partner, hide valuables in the trunk of your car or cover with jackets, take along a snack, and have a paper map as GPS does not work everywhere in the mountains. There are maps and trail guides at visitor centers, on your phones, on State Park and NPS websites, and on our website SMMTC.org

While going along on trails that are in good condition, remember that it takes people power to keep trails safe. The Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council routinely repairs and maintains the trails. Everyone works at their own pace, and we supply the tools and the supervision. If you would like to join us on a Saturday, please contact us at 818-222-4531 / mail@smmtc.org.



We have been working on trails for over 50 years, and we look forward to sharing the enjoyment of repairing trails and later going on those we have repaired. See you on the Trails! **-Ruth Gerson**

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Leo Carrillo State Park, February 12, 2022. Pictured (L-R) Bryan Loya, Katie Eikenberry, Jerry Mitcham, Riley Evans, Charles Knowles, Amanda Curtin, Dorian Curtin. Photo: Barry Dydyk



Jerry Mitcham

Trail Corps Events

Point Mugu State Park Trail Sign Survey. This project has three main tasks: Survey all trail signs in the park (approx. 75 signs), develop a data base containing the condition of all signs and prepare sign order forms for needed replacement signs. All Corps members can participate in the first task. The Corps members will team with SMMTC members to drive/hike to all sign locations. Tasks two and three should be performed by one or two members to compile the data base and a separate activity to prepare the order forms. It is expected that these tasks will be spread over several months and carried out in parallel with other events.

Leo Carrillo State Park, this project will remove an old fence and install a new railing. Fill material will be used to fill in the badly entrenched trail.

Invasive Plant Removal: This project will remove various invasive plants species on Round Mountain.

Leo Carrillo State Park, a routine trail maintenance event. Up to 20 student volunteers plus Trail Corps and SMMTC crew leaders. Plenty of tread work, brush removal and time to learn the names of native plants.

Two or three Corps members are needed to help recruit volunteers and organize the March 6 CSUCI ESRM Service day. The specific tasks are to be defined by the participating Corps members. The SMMTC Leader/Advisor will be available to provide materials (e.g. brochures) and advice as needed. Full calendar on web site.

The Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council has entered into a formal agreement with the California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) Center for Community Engagement to join their Service-Learning program. The "actionable" part of this program is the establishment of the "CSUCI Trail Corps".

The Trail Corps is a group of five students who will be working with the Trails Council for the next several months. Trail Corps members will work with Trails Council mentors to construct, repair, maintain, and restore the public trail system throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent areas. Corps members will also work to educate CSUCI students about the work of the Trails Council, increase awareness of trails and recruit on-campus volunteers to participate in the Trails Council's volunteer projects. Trail Corps members will be joining our trail crew on our regular outings as part of their learning experience. In addition, they will participate in several special events, to broaden their experience and provide opportunities to complete all the objectives of the program. Corps members will work a maximum of 75 hours, spread over the academic year. Jerry Mitcham is the SMMTC Manager for this program. For additional information on the program and to read more about the Trail Corps members - [Click on this link.](#)

New Rules Permit Class 1 E-Bikes On Trails Already Open To Bikes

There is an explosion of E-bikes on our trails and roads. Although they give older people and physically challenged people the opportunity for increased access to the lands, most of the riders now are thrilled with the speed and that they allow riders to go everywhere, especially up hills that used to be difficult for bikes. Remember that there are some E-bike riders who never follow the rules, so everyone must be more alert going around curves and up hills because your safety is your main priority.

Class 1 E-bikes have pedal assist and function like a traditional bike. Class 2 E-Bikes (throttles) and Class 3 E-bikes (higher speeds) are not allowed on any trails by any agencies.

Agency	Rules	Where Can E-bikes Be Ridden?
NPS	Class 1 Permitted	Temporarily be allowed on trails and roads already designated for traditional bicycles.
State Parks	Class 1 Permitted	Temporarily be allowed on trails and roads already designated for traditional bicycles.
COSCA	Class 1 Permitted	Allowed on trails and roads already designated for traditional bicycles.
Simi Valley Recreation	Class 1 Permitted	Allowed on trails and roads already designated for traditional bicycles.
MRCA: Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Rancho Simi, and Conejo Recreation & Parks	Under Review, Currently Not Permitted	

All agencies stress the need for safe, shared use of trails. If the e-bike riders can adhere to that, all will be fine; but if too many accidents and problems are caused, allowing e-bikes on various agency trails could be changed. Those people who have E-bikes need to be very responsible riders especially around hikers and horses. This is a one year trial for both State Parks and NPS.

For more detailed information - [check our website](#) or the websites of NPS, State Parks and MRCA.

-Contributed by Mike Epler & Ruth Gerson



Overview of the 3-Class System for E-bikes

	Characteristics		Regulations
Class 1 E-bike	Provides Assistance:	Only when pedaling	Generally treated like a standard bicycle.
	Top Assisted Speed:	20 mph	
Class 2 E-bike	Provides Assistance:	When pedaling or by throttle	Generally treated like a standard bicycle. May be restricted from shared use paths or trails.
	Top Assisted Speed:	20 mph	
Class 3 E-bike	Provides Assistance:	Only when pedaling	More likely to be restricted from shared use paths or trails. May require use of a helmet, have minimum age requirements, or be subject to other regulation.
	Top Assisted Speed:	28 mph	

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAIL DAYS

A fun weekend for individuals, families, and groups to help build and restore local trails

Our 39th year!



Friday-Sunday
April 22-24
Point Mugu State Park

www.smmtc.org/traildays

REGISTER ONLINE OR CALL BARB AT (805) 509-3426 BY APRIL 18



Volunteers can enjoy...

- Free camping on Friday and Saturday at Danielson Ranch.
- Hot drinks and bagels for breakfast.
- Complimentary Saturday night BBQ for volunteers.
- Thank you gift raffles after work on Saturday and Sunday.

Directions: Ventura Freeway (101) to Wendy Dr. offramp in Newbury Park – South to Potrero Rd – Turn right – at Reino turn left and continue to the park entrance service road, the first driveway on the left. Enter the service road and drive to the first intersection. Wait there and an escort car will meet you.

Please note the vehicle arrival and departure times. Cars may only drive to the campground at specified times. Please pick one of the arrival times listed below and wait for the escort. We are not permitted to drive into the interior of the park except for entering and leaving for Trail Days. **At all other times the entry gate will be locked.**

Arrive	Friday – 5:00pm & 7:00pm
Arrive	Saturday – 7:30am & 4:30pm
Arrive	Sunday – 7:30am (non-campers)
Depart	Saturday – 4:00pm & 9:00pm
Depart	Sunday – 8:00am & 2:30pm

Facilities at Campground: Drinking water. Restroom facilities. Picnic tables. Large central outdoor eating area with fireplace. Saturday night's barbecue will be provided free of charge to those who volunteer. Bring your appetizer and additional beverages.

Activities: Saturday night raffle and campfire program, Sunday raffle.

Camping Information: Coleman stoves and backpack stoves are ok to use on top of the picnic tables. Lanterns are also ok. **NO ground fires or enclosed fire pits.** Bring a flashlight. Saturday barbecue will be served around 5:30 or 6:00 pm.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination required for entry and participation, for everyone aged 12 and older.

What Trails Will We Be Working?

More volunteers = more trails worked.

Upper Sycamore

Winter rains re-modeled the streambed. Teams will repair stream crossings and rebuild the trail where it was removed.

Coyote Trail

Work with the Sierra Club Task Force to repair and improve this iconic hiking trail.

Blue Canyon

Winter rains damaged several segments of the trail. Teams will repair stream crossings and rebuild other damaged sections of the trail.

Guadaluca Trail

Work with CORBA on the Guadaluca Trail and other trails popular with bicyclists.

Is one of your favorite Point Mugu State Park trails listed? Come on out and work with us on it!

Hidden Pond Trail

Plenty of tread repair work to be done on this perennial favorite.

Trail Maintenance Report - November to March 2022

- Our work during this time period was highlighted by our collaboration with CORBA on the Guadaluca Trail and with the Sierra Club Task Force on the Bent Arrow Trail. By combining forces and marshaling a larger group of volunteers we were able to tackle these two larger projects. Long overdue work on the Guadaluca Trail was made possible by our truck driving crew leaders - Jerry, John and Dave and Jason Finlay of State Parks.
- Jon Sheldon led the efforts to inventory every single trail sign in Point Mugu State Park. This data will be used to order new signs on nearly every trail.
- These efforts below amounted to more than **1400 volunteer hours**.

Trail	Events	Hours	Vol#	Work Accomplished
Guadaluca Trail	6	510	86	Repaired tread and installed dozens of drains. This effort was coordinated with CORBA.
Bent Arrow Trail	6	430	72	Repaired slide damage with Sierra Club Task Force & State Parks. Installed a retaining wall where the trail was lost.
Trail Sign Survey Point Mugu State Park	7	94	19	Surveyed the trails signs in Point Mugu State Park. Recommendations will be made to State Parks for replacement/new signs.
Willow Creek Trail Leo Carrillo State Park	3	165	28	Tread work, brush clearance, cleaning and installing drains. Additional rock work was done where the trail had narrowed due to erosion.
Upper Sycamore	3	232	39	Tread work, brush clearance, cleaning and installing drains and correcting extensive erosion problems. Improved section to waterfall by removing rocks.



Bent Arrow Trail, Winter 2022

Photo: Dave Edwards

Native Plants in the Santa Monica Mountains



Coastal live oak - *Quercus agrifolia* is an evergreen (always has leaves) oak, the most commonly observed oak in our local mountains and namesake of the “oak woodlands” community. Without too much trouble you will find it in canyons, near creeks and in the shaded area of nearly every kind of plant community. This native tree has adapted to a coastal climate and can be found within 60 miles of the coast up to 5,000 feet. Battle-scarred oaks have inspired artists, philosophers and casual viewers alike for generations. Today, their existence is threatened by a warming climate, drought, fire, disease and urbanization.

These majestic trees can live three centuries, reach heights of 30 to 75 feet, form crowns that can extend 130 feet across and can be 9 to 12 feet in girth - creating a distinct and charismatic profile in the Santa Monica Mountains. Limbs grow in unpredictable directions- sometimes

growing downwards, even to the point that they touch the ground. Underground, a tap root is sent down to procure water and the tree. Eventually, horizontal root branches take over the task of procuring water.

Coast live oaks are capable of producing several hundred pounds of acorns per year and are the largest of the California native oaks - nearly two inches in length. This availability, hard work and some human ingenuity meant that acorns were a major food source for the indigenous peoples of California. For more than 5,000 years the Chumash harvested acorns and dried them in the sun. Once dried, acorns were pounded into a flour and then prepared for consumption by a process called leaching, which removes the bitter, tannic acids. Once properly leached, the acorn flour was mixed with more water and heated into a soup or mush. Our website has the complete article. [Read more?](#) - **George Sherman**

Want to know more about native plants? We have resources on our website for you to learn more about the plants that provide, food, shelter and cover for insects, animals and birds. Need help identifying a plant you saw? Send an email with an image of a plant to mail@smmtc.org and we will do our best to help identify what you found.

SMMTC Native Plant Web Links

[Plant Gallery - Images & Descriptions](#)

[Plant of the Month Archives](#)

[NPS Wildflowers Finder](#)

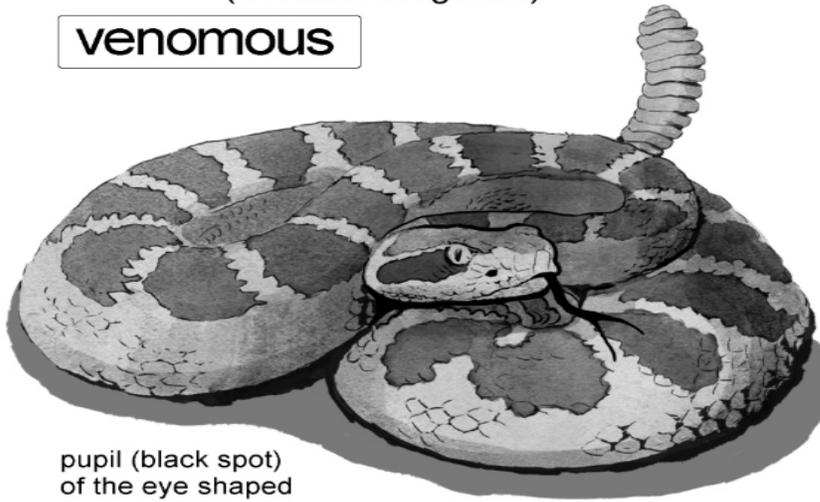
www.smmflowers.org

Snakes in the Santa Monica Mountains

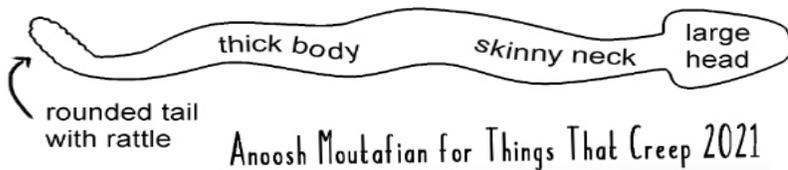
Northern Pacific Rattlesnake

(*Crotalus oreganus*)

venomous



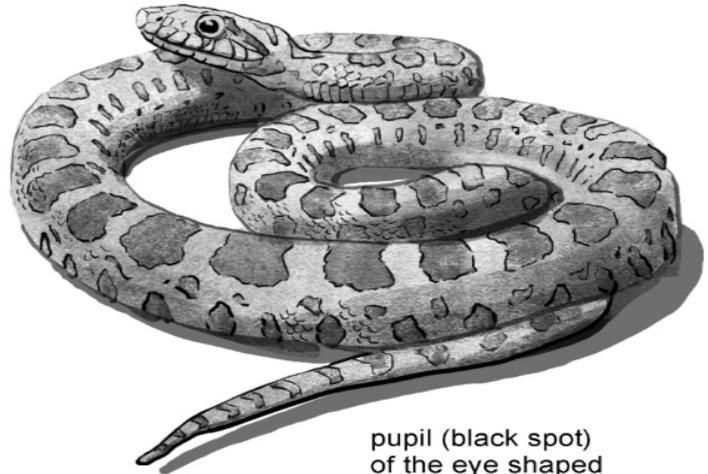
pupil (black spot) of the eye shaped like an ellipse ●



Pacific Gopher Snake

(*Pituophis catenifer*)

harmless



pupil (black spot) of the eye shaped like a circle ●

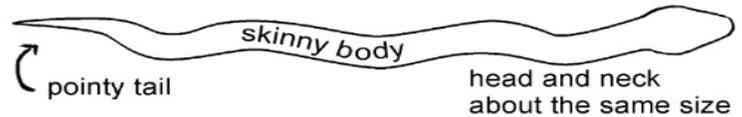


Illustration by Anoosh Moutafian (anooshbooks.com) in association with Things That Creep (ThingsThatCreep.org)

Local wildlife officials reminded us that rattlesnake season is upon us, presenting potential danger for hikers, bikers and equestrians. The most common snakes that trail users are likely to encounter in the Santa Monica Mountains are the Southern Pacific Rattlesnake, the Gopher Snake and the California Striped Racer.

Of those three, **the Southern Pacific Rattlesnake is the only one that is venomous.** Rattlesnakes are not aggressive toward humans unless threatened or frightened. They eat mice and rodents and are wary of larger animals. If they sense you, they will usually try to get away. If you see one on the trail, give them space to safely escape on their own. Rattlesnakes prefer the comfort of an open trail to warm themselves since they can't regulate their own temperature. People hiking with pets are advised to keep them on a leash so they won't try to investigate a rattlesnake. If the snake doesn't move off the trail, wait it out or turn back. Don't step over it or go around it; and **DON'T** attempt to move the snake off of the trail with a stick! That may agitate it to strike and that's how most people get bitten.

Gopher snakes are inherently harmless reptiles, unless you happen to be a mouse or frog. Despite their sometimes-lengthy size, these snakes do end up as meals themselves. When in danger, the gopher snake will rattle its tail against the ground in

an attempt to fool predators. To distinguish between gopher snakes and rattlesnakes, look closely at the tail and at the head. Gopher snakes do not have rattles on their tails and are also slimmer and longer than most rattlesnakes. While it can be beneficial to tell the difference, you should always leave snakes alone. Gopher snakes are territorial and will remain in the same area for years. This is beneficial to the people who live nearby, as the gopher snake will find and eat rodents.

The California Striped Racer is considered non-venomous, nevertheless, they are vicious and tend to strike and bite if they feel threatened. Extremely fast, capable of speeds up to 10 mph, and great climbers. You are likely to see them moving rapidly across the ground or with their head and forward part of their body raised off the ground. They are long, usually 30-48 inches but can reach 5 ft., slender, fast-moving, diurnal snakes inhabiting chaparral, scrubland, open woodlands and rocky hillsides. Their diet consists of lizards, frogs, birds, salamanders, rodents, large insects, and even other snakes. Preferring to live alone underground or under cover when inactive. Eggs are laid most of the time in abandoned rodent holes. Chances of seeing one of these snakes in the Santa Monica Mountains are good, but only for a split second!

-Ruth Gerson

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Membership By Snail Mail

Dues are on a rolling 12-month basis. Membership dues are effective the first of the month following receipt of funds; membership will be effective for 12 months. Please make your check payable to SMMTC and mail it to P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376. Memberships can also be purchased on our website using Paypal.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
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Individual Membership

- Annual - \$35 Family - \$60
 Lifetime - \$360 Can also be paid over 3 consecutive years @\$120

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- Supporter - \$100
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Upcoming Events

39th Annual Trail Days — April 22nd to April 24th

Backbone Trek — May 7th - May 14th

Annual Dinner Meeting — October 27^h

Board Meetings (Currently held via Zoom)

Board Meetings are open to the public and are on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. They are held at Diamond X Ranch, 26412 Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, CA 91302. There are 4 exceptions: No meeting in August; April meet on the 3rd Thursday; Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday.

OUR STORY

Since 1969, the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council has been the only organization devoted to representing all trail user groups in the Santa Monica Mountains.

We are a volunteer nonprofit organization, dedicated to establishing, preserving and maintaining the public trail system throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent areas through education, advocacy and partnership with public and private sectors.

We coordinate with various government agencies to enhance and preserve the trail system. We assist in negotiations with property owners regarding trail alignments. We promote public awareness and build, monitor and maintain trails.

CONTACT US

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

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