



Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Protect • Preserve • Maintain

ESTABLISHED 1969

FALL 2025

President's Message

Welcome all trail enthusiasts! We've had an exciting and demanding 2025 so far. Sadly, it began with devastating fires in the Los Angeles area which destroyed numerous trails within our state parks and our open spaces. Trails Council crews along with crews from the Sierra Club Task Force and CORBA have been working diligently with state parks restoring fire damaged trails, helping replace signs, and preparing for additional work. We will continue to provide support as we recover from these fires. Our hearts go out to everyone who has lost loved ones, homes, ranches, animals, and memories.

Some exciting news for the Trails Council is that this year California State University Channel Islands has honored us with the Dr. Richard R. Rush Community Partner Award recognizing the work that we have been doing with CSUCI. This includes the Trail Corps program that provides paid internships for up to four students. They learn trail building/design, maintenance, working with agencies, and how to work within nonprofit organizations. To that end, we provided \$4500 in funds to support two of the students. In addition to the Trail Corps, we provided learning opportunities for two students in the nonprofit management course who shadowed us learning aspects of a nonprofit and supporting outreach activities. We're excited to have these opportunities to introduce college students to the outdoors in a creative and welcoming atmosphere and to learn creative, fresh ideas from them!

We will be funding several Eagle Scout projects, some within the fire zones and some in other areas of the parks. These young men design their projects, seek funding, organize the volunteers, and manage the entire project. We're happy to support their efforts as they improve our trail experiences through their projects.

Trail Days 2025 was an immense success. We had the largest number of volunteer signups ever in the history of the event; over 250! It was exciting to see so many people commit to a day or a weekend on the trails, helping to improve them and having a great time enjoying each other's company, delicious food, the thank you gift prizes, the swag, the campfire and the

campfire program! We hope to see you all again in 2026! I'd like to thank all of our sponsors that contributed support for this event: the Trails Council, the Sierra Club Task Force, and CORBA.

Thanks to you, we're able to keep important programs like the Trail Corps, Trail Days, Eagle Scout projects, and year-round trail maintenance going strong. Support from generous businesses like Arc'teryx and The Ranch Malibu, along with the many individuals who believe in the value of our work, makes all the difference. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for helping us care for the trails we all enjoy.



Happy trails to everyone! Check out the rest of our newsletter for exciting information and our upcoming activities, including trail work and our annual dinner on October 23rd. Enjoy your year, enjoy your trails, and go have fun out there!

Barb Thomas
Barb Thomas, President

See you on the trails!

YOU'RE INVITED

Dinner & meeting are free and open to the trails community. RSVP at smmtc.org or 805-885-7224

Calamigos Ranch, 327 Latigo Cyn Rd, located at the intersection of Kanan Rd and Mulholland Hwy.

6:00PM	Social Hour-Visit with NPS, State Parks, MRCA, local officials and representatives from other government & trail organizations
6:30PM	Dinner
7:15PM	Meeting

OCTOBER 23RD 2025 ANNUAL DINNER

Leave No Trace (LNT), take only pictures and leave only footprints. These admirable concepts for visitors to our public wild lands should be familiar to everyone. **Sadly, this is not the case. The popularity of a trail is often revealed by the amount of litter on or off the path.** Even miles from the nearest parking lot, remote stretches of trail too often carry the careless traces of human passage. We salute those of you who take pride in being “stewards of the land”. Let’s work together to bring more people onto our side by showing the value of LNT and how easy it can be to incorporate into our activities.

Here are a few tips:

The FIVE most common litter sightings on trails:

1. **Orange Peels** – take up to 2 years to decompose. A common misconception is

that orange peels, banana peels, apple cores and shells from nuts are ok to leave in outdoor spaces. These items take longer to decompose in the mountains and remain an eyesore for future visitors.

2. **Bottle Caps** – from both plastic and glass bottles – take them home with you.

3. **Aluminum Cans** – take them home with you.

4. **Balloons** – a common form of celebration that ends up tangled in trees and even in wilderness areas. Keep them at home.

5. **Plastic Straws** – often end up in the ocean.

When nature calls in the backcountry, consider packing out your TP with a “mutt mitt” - a plastic bag available at most public places where pets roam.

Opportunities to Serve

We currently have board openings and we always welcome new trail workers and crew leaders. Skills in areas such as grant writing, event logistics, financial stewardship, or project support are also greatly valued. Whether through leadership or specialized expertise, your involvement can help advance our mission and increase our impact.

Trail Days 2025

The 2025 Trail Days event, which is a collaboration between the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association and the Santa Monica Mountains Task Force of the Sierra Club was a huge success. Over 250 people signed up for the event which was held in Point Mugu State Park. On Saturday we had 240 volunteers and on Sunday we had 114 volunteers.

The Trails Council crews worked on Upper Sycamore Canyon, Blue Canyon, and Toe Stubber, plus two intrepid Trails Council groups hiked many miles up Old Boney and Chamberlain Trail. Crews from CORBA worked on Wood Canyon Vista and Sage Trails and the Sierra Club Task Force worked on the perpetually brushy Coyote Trail.

Volunteers cleared and widened trails, opened existing drains, built new drains, and helped rebuild a stone wall. Many people learn new skills for trail building and how to maintain a trail and developed a great appreciation for the trails that they hike, horseback ride, and mountain bike.

The young kids in Blue Canyon helped widen the trails, cleared brush, and learned about the plants and insects along the trail with State Park naturalist Noe Rishe Khalili. Back at camp they had an opportunity to learn about animals within our region with SAMOFUND/NPS naturalist Miroslava Munguia Ramos.

Hungry volunteers were treated to an outstanding BBQ dinner catered by Dearmore BBQ on Saturday night and fantastic sandwiches from Bodega Park, graciously provided by Arc'terex on Sunday. Volunteers received swag and had an opportunity to select gifts from our wonderful gift table as a thank you for their hard work. Miroslava gave a presentation about the recovery of plants and animals

within the national resource area following the Woolsey fire to a packed and attentive audience at the campfire.

Thank you to all volunteers, all those who helped organize and execute this event, and all Park Service staff both NPS and State Parks who provided much needed support. A very special thank-you to all our amazing crew leaders for assessing the trails, teaching volunteers new techniques, and getting so much work done! A good time was had by all and we accomplished an incredible amount of work on the trails.

Most importantly, as the event coordinator I am so grateful for and want to thank every crew leader that put in time scouting trails, transporting tools, organizing their crews, teaching people how to work on trails and after a long, long week and weekend, helping with all the cleanup. I want to thank my campground coordinators and registration folks who kept us organized and on track. All of you are the very best and the "backbone" of this event. Drum roll please! Here are the totals (including prep time):

263 volunteers plus at least 20 park staff and the Pt. Mugu State Park maintenance crew, 1399 volunteer hours, 3.5 miles of trails maintained.

Amazing!! Thanks to each one of you who put in a hard weekend of work helping to keep our trails open and giving back to our trail community. Congratulations to each of you on the work that you've done; we could not do it without you!

See you in 2026! [April 17-19]

- Barb Thomas



Photo: Denise Pomonik

Trail Days, after a day of trail work, we had dinner and a prize drawing.

Trail Projects

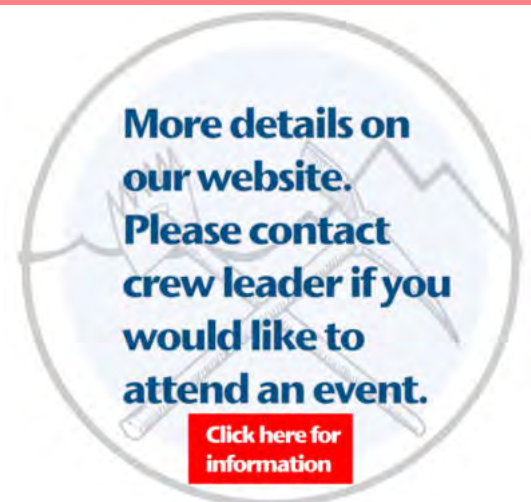


Palisades Fire Trail Work:

- **Gizmo Peak Trail** – Worked with the Sierra Club Task Force (SCTF) and CORBA to restore the trail, contributing 33 volunteers and 192 hours over three Saturdays.
- **Garapito Trail** – Worked with the SCTF and CORBA to restore the trail, with 41 volunteers contributing 234 hours over four Saturdays.
- **Santa Ynez Canyon Trail** – Worked with the SCTF to restore the trail, with 38 volunteers contributing 246 hours over three Saturdays. A highlight of this project was observing the fire-following wildflowers along the trail.
- **Other Projects:**
 - Barry Dydyk and Jerry Mitcham assisted an Eagle Scout candidate on his **Eagle Scout project**. The task: constructing a set of steps on the Scenic Trail descending into Sycamore Creek near the Sycamore Canyon Campground. The Trails Council authorized \$3,000 for materials, which included redwood lumber and several feet of steel rebar. The project was completed in September 2025.
 - Restoration work is planned for the **steps leading to the summit of Sandstone Peak**. Two volunteer events are scheduled in November to complete this project.

Upcoming Events

Start Date	Trail
2025-10-04	Malibu Springs
2025-10-11	Malibu Springs
2025-10-18	Chamberlain Rock Trail
2025-10-25	Upper Solstice
2025-11-01	Upper Solstice
2025-11-08	Chamberlain Rock
2025-11-12	Sandstone Peak Steps
2025-11-15	Topanga School
2025-11-19	Sandstone Peak Steps



Donation - CSUCI Foundation

In June 2025, the Trails Council donated over four thousand dollars to the California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) Foundation for the express purpose of funding four student interns for the CSUCI Trail Corps.

The Trails Council entered into a formal agreement with the CSUCI Center for Community Engagement in 2021 and joined their Service-Learning program. Under this program, the CSUCI Trail Corps was established. The Trail Corps is a group of two to five student interns who work alongside our trail crew throughout the year.

More than a dozen students have participated in trail work events alongside our crew. These students have contributed more than 1,000 hours!

On May first of this year, at the CSUCI annual Celebration of Service Luncheon, **the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council (SMMTC) was presented with the Richard R. Rush Community Partner award.** The Dr. Richard R. Rush Award recognizes a community organization that is significantly involved with CSU Channel Islands. This recognition honors organizations and individuals who contribute to student learning and support student engagement with the community in a curricular or co-curricular setting.

The Trails Council has worked with CSU Channel Islands for several years to create and maintain trail systems at the university and nearby areas. The Trails Council crew have participated in several campus service learning events instrumental in

restoration work with Satwiwa, a sacred place to the Chumash people. They have also recently begun improving the trails at CI Park, which will enhance access to the community for hiking, running, biking, wildlife viewing, teaching, research, habitat restoration, and more.

-Jerry Mitcham

Update: Our donation is being put to good use. Four students have been recruited for the 2025/2026 Trail Corps program!

Mentorship Leadership Stewardship

In Partnership with  Channel Islands



For the 24/25 season, TrailCorp members worked at 23 of our events and contributed more than 300 hours of trail work.

Ken Low Retires From NPS After 33 Years!

We're celebrating 33 years of invaluable help from NPS Ranger Ken Low who retired this spring. Ranger Ken trained, mentored, and led a generation of park service employees and volunteers who continue his work to support the Santa Monica Mountains.

Ken began his lifelong love of parks rock climbing at Pinnacles National Monument, helping to start the Friends of Pinnacles and working with Park Rangers.

After moving south, he joined NPS in the Santa Monica Mountains and began training hundreds of volunteers in visitor contact skills. Whether stationed at Paramount Ranch or working throughout the park, a friendly demeanor and expert advice made lasting impressions on visitors and co-workers alike. His colleagues fondly recall how "I don't know, let's ask Ken" became a familiar refrain whenever challenging questions arose.



“Ken’s welcoming attitude toward all park users – whether equestrian, hiker, mountain biker or trail runner – exemplified the best of the National Park Service.”

Supporting Trail Events and Public Safety

His support for trail racing events was extraordinary – clearing trails in advance with his crews, organizing NPS monitors at aid stations and on the course - rescuing runners in distress. **As one runner noted, "Ken, you are literally a life saver."**

For trail race organizers, Ken was both mentor and guardian angel. He taught newcomers to the field how to "cross their T's and dot their i's," ensuring events met the highest safety standards. His dedication was unmatched – he would personally check trail conditions on foot, drive his truck to inspect wear and tear, and provide hands-on support for every event in his jurisdiction. As one longtime collaborator reflected: "Ken was a massive reason I have had such amazing success with my trail running events. I cried when he retired as I know he was and is such a special man. He will be missed more than I could ever put into words!"

Ken leaves behind a stronger, more connected trails community, safer and better-managed events, and a wealth of knowledge that will continue to benefit the park and its visitors for years to come. He continues to work with those he mentored and pursue his woodworking, fishing, and rock-climbing hobbies with his spouse and NPS colleague, Amy.

Topanga State Park Signs Project

By Jason Finlay, California State Parks

State Park trail staff has been installing the new signage provided by SMMTC along the dirt Mulholland corridor in Topanga SP. Replacing these worn and unreadable signs has been on my to do list for the last three years and I greatly appreciate the assistance to finally get this done. I'm sure the public will be equally appreciative of the upgrade!

Thanks again to Jon Sheldon for putting the time and effort into working out the details to keep all the new way-finding conventions on these signs consistent and accurate and also to navigate the layout and production process with the sign shop.

Thanks as well to Barbara Thomas and the board for approving the purchase and their continued support of CA State Parks.

I'm looking forward to the day we can install new signs to celebrate the reopening of Temescal Canyon, Rogers Road and Bent Arrow trails and grateful to have the support of all our volunteer trail partners to make it happen.



Qty	Description
2	3 x 3 Decal - "White Double Arrow" (on Brown Bknd), Wht/Brn, EG
1	36 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "TOPANGA STATE PARK #1" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with ANTI-GRAFFITI OVERLAMINATE)
1	36 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "FIRE ROAD # 30" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with ANTI-GRAFFITI OVERLAMINATE)
1	36 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "TOPANGA STATE PARK #2" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with ANTI-GRAFFITI OVERLAMINATE)
1	36 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "TRAILER CANYON TRAILHEAD" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with ANTI-GRAFFITI OVERLAMINATE)
1	36 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "TOPANGA STATE PARK #3" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with ANTI-GRAFFITI OVERLAMINATE)
1	TBD x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "NATOMA TRAIL" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with .5" HOLES DRILLED 1.5" FROM TOP/BOTTOM ON-CENTER)
1	3.5 x 19 x .080 Alum Sign "NATOMA TRAIL" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG
1	3.5 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "NATOMA RIDGE TRAIL" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG
1	3.5 x 19 x .080 Alum Sign "GIZMO TRAIL to FARMERS RIDGE TRAIL" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG
1	3.5 x 19 x .080 Alum Sign "GIZMO TRAIL to MULHOLLAND DRIVE" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG
1	3.5 x TBD x .080 Alum Sign "TO MULHOLLAND GATEWAY PARK" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Brn/Wht, EG (with ANTI-GRAFFITI OVERLAMINATE)
4	18 x 24 x .080 Alum Sign "CLASS 1 E-BIKES ONLY" w/ CA STATE PARKS LOGO - Blk/Red/Grn/Wht, EG (with .5" HOLES DRILLED 1" FROM TOP/BOTTOM ON-CENTER)
~\$1,400	

Individual Membership

☐ Annual - \$35 ☐ Family - \$60

☐ Lifetime - \$360 Can also be paid over 3 consecutive years @ \$120 per year

Business Membership

☐ Supporter - \$100

☐ Patron - \$250

☐ Benefactor - \$500

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____



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.

[Make a Donation?](#)

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

**Thank you for
your continued
support!**

Board of Directors

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George Sherman, Vice President

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Robert Bittner

Don Brusselars

Vanessa Ting

Denise Pomonik

Vacant

Ruth Gerson, President Emerita

Upcoming Events

Annual Dinner Meeting — October 23rd 2025

41st Annual Trail Days — April 17th to April 19th 2026

Backbone Trek — TBD

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. There are 4 exceptions: No meeting in August; April meet on the 2nd Thursday; Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday.

Generous Supporter:

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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

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Our newsletter is published twice a year, in spring and fall.