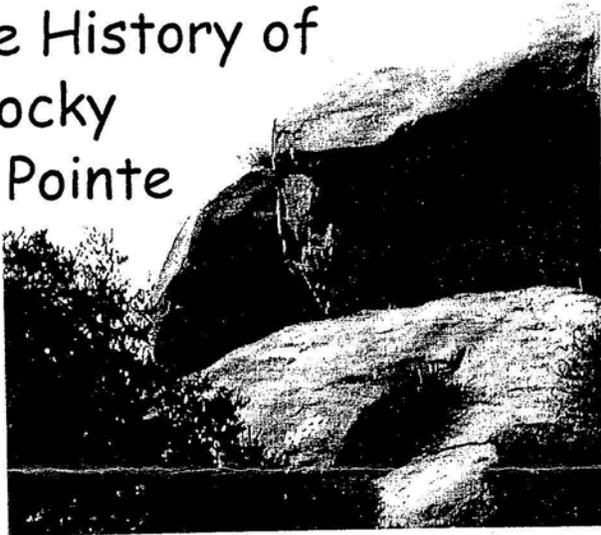


## February 2002 Newsletter

### The History of Rocky Pointe



For almost two decades the Knoll's Homeowners Association, along with members of the community, have fought to stop the development of Rocky Pointe, located at Kuehner Rd. and Smith Rd. in Simi Valley. The long, hard fight has at last paid off.

The property was first slated to be an industrial park with three two-story office buildings. That was fought and denied. The most recent proposed development was for a 26-unit single-family housing tract.

Rocky Pointe features an oak woodland, vernal pool, a historic Chumash site, the nesting location of many swifts and swallows, the endangered Santa Susana tarweed plant and, of course, Ventura County Historical Landmark #160 Knolls Rock, known to the Ventureno Chumash as Hi'im (storage basket).

Many years ago at a planning commission meeting for this property, the word was, "If you don't want to see this property developed, you should buy it." That seemed impossible at the time. When Sybil Scotford of Country Open Space Association (C.O.S.A.) heard about the proposed housing tract, she focused on saving the property. Her dream was to see it become a nature preserve. Scotford recruited Holly Huff, and together they started their crusade to save the property.

Scotford and Huff recruited support from many sources, including The Historical Society, the City of Simi Valley, the County, State and local representatives, the

Park District, the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy and California Native Plant Society, to help make this dream a reality. With hard work, persistence and complete dedication, the dream became a reality. The sale price of the 13-acre site will be about \$950,000 and will be met through a combination of grants and other resources provided by the Conservancy and the Park District.

The Conservancy pledged to donate half of the price of the property as long as Scotford and Huff came up with the other half. With \$178,000 from a federal grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and \$300,000 from a sale of surplus property owned by the Park District, they succeeded in raising their half, and therefore the remaining money has been secured from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

This land will now be under the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreational Park District. This has been an amazing feat by two very dedicated people: Sybil Scotford and Holly Huff. Now the oaks will remain standing, the rocks left untouched, the swifts and swallows will nest as they have for centuries, the Chumash site will remain intact, and the vernal pool will be there for the wildlife in the spring. ✨

#### **General Membership Meeting Monday, February 18, 2002**

Barbara Coffman will present us with a vintage collection of historic slides. This slide show was compiled over the years by Jan Hinkston, founder of SSMPA, and features the history of transportation across the Valley and the part the Santa Susana Pass played in the development of the Valley. Barbara is a nature interpreter and historian and has led many hikes up Stagecoach Trail in her long history with SSMPA.

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday from September through November and January through May. Program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and generally conclude by 9:00 p.m. at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South.

Members are invited to General Membership Program meetings and Board of Directors meetings. Board of Directors meetings take place at the Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments are served at program meetings. ▲

On June 14, 1999, concerned citizens attended and gave comments at a public hearing held to review the proposed development project of 19 single family estate homes in the wildlife corridor between the Chatsworth Nature Preserve and the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park, referred to as "Eagles Nest". The following two testimonies, full of eloquence\*, are printed here [with the permission of the speakers] to show how valuable we locals deem our unique environment.

\*From Webster's Dictionary: *Eloquence*: 1. speech or writing that is vivid, forceful, fluent, graceful, and persuasive.

BEVERLY ADAIR: Good afternoon. My name is Beverly Adair. I live within view of the so-called Eagles Nest property, and I moved there because of those rocks, and because of the open space, and because of the quiet and the privacy.

This is an unusual area. It is one of the few remaining in the nation, and to just act as though it is just another place to build a house is not addressing the uniqueness of this area.

Golden Eagle

It is hard to believe now, but 100 years ago the last Indian tribes were crushed and put on reservations. And then the Indian lands were opened up for settlement, and there was a great land rush by people who were land hungry and land poor and who then went in at the invitation of the government and took 160 acres apiece on which to build their farms. Now at that time this land was covered with forests, and game and wildlife were abundant. And, of course, as the settlers went in, they had to cut down the trees to build their farms, and the wildlife was absolutely decimated. Many, many species were destroyed. And now what has happened to our land? It is now malls and parking lots from sea to shining sea, and we have not improved the land because we have had very poor planning and the allowance of people to do anything that they chose to, regardless of its effect on others. We have noise pollution and visual pollution, billboards and oil derricks and shacks for fast foods and things like that. But this country was once so beautiful that the artists of last century were just enthralled with it. They celebrated the beauty of this land. And there is very little of that beauty left now. One of the small remaining pockets is there in Chatsworth. And it is because of those rocks that made it difficult to get in sewage and gas lines and things like that that it is still there.

But this can be taken away, too. And it is magnificent. If you have seen it, it is a magnificent thing. It is a little piece of the America that used to be. This is a little piece of Americana. Are we going to destroy the last remaining little pieces that we have left?

I will tell you what will happen there as to access of the people to that little area. One would think that at least the coastline would have been saved for the people. No way. Money interests took that, too. And the people once had an

amendment that they voted on to keep the coast free of development. Well, the courts pushed that down, and so now when you drive up the coast on PCH you find that you don't see the Pacific Ocean, you don't see the coast, all you see are rows of houses, more houses, expensive houses, stretching for uncounted miles. And in between are very high fences so that the public not only doesn't have the view of the coast but does not have access, except in small beaches that have been put aside for their use, which are so crowded on hot days that one can't even walk on the beaches.

Now, what could happen here is that the money interests -- because these are going to be large estate houses, you know -- they will gate their area because they would not want their children or their pets to be frightened or possibly killed by coyotes or mountain lions. We will lose this wildlife, we will

lose also the vultures -- they exist up there -- and golden eagles.

HEARING EXAMINER: Time to wrap it up.

B.A.: Yes. They will be lost to us. Where will they go? There is no other place to go. And so they are soon gone because their habitat is destroyed. Then there will be large fences...

HEARING EXAMINER: You need to conclude.

B.A.: Okay. All right. They will be there to keep, you know, the riff-raff like myself from riding our horses or running our dogs on that beautiful area, and climbing up on the rocks to view the little holes that the Indians made to grind their acorns. This is an unusual area. It is one of the few remaining in the nation, and to just act as though it is just another place to build a house is not addressing the uniqueness of this area. And the desire of the people of this neighborhood, the hundreds who have signed the petition, is to keep it as it is.

HEARING EXAMINER: Thank you.

B.A.: I would say it should not be developed at all. It should be kept as open space.

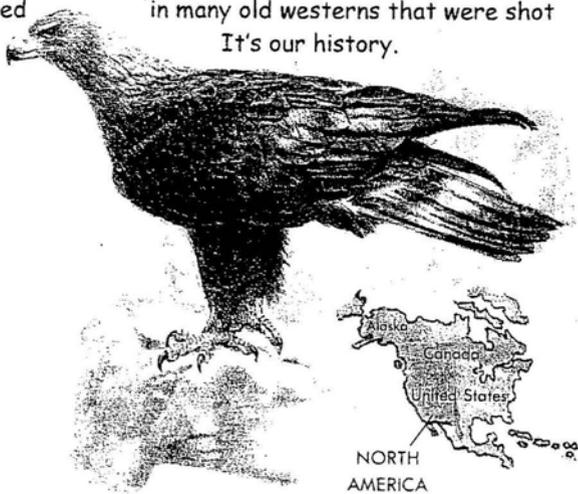
HEARING EXAMINER: Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. Anybody else? Okay. Just an aside before I comment: I flew yesterday from St. Louis, Missouri here, and there is not wall-to-wall, from sea to shining sea, malls and parking lots. Just an aside.



[article continued on next page]

BRUCE EVERETT: My name is Bruce Everett, and I live in Chatsworth Lake Manor. We urgently request that you deny Eagles Nest subdivision. This is a steep hillside area and a scenic corridor that is incompatible with an 18-home housing development, and there is no way to mitigate the damage this project would create. The large sandstone boulders that characterize this area would be destroyed in many cases for a project that is better suited for flat terrain. It would be painfully visible on the mountainside, destroying the aesthetics of this uniquely beautiful portion of the Scenic Corridor. Large homes dotting the hillside are not compatible with this designation even if they were painted in earth tones. These houses would still produce excessive light even if special lighting were to be used.

The proposed project would cut off the wildlife corridor to the Chatsworth Reservoir to the south and the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park to the north. What would the proposed homeowners do when they saw a bobcat walk through their backyard? They would probably call Animal Regulation and ask for it to be removed or killed. Approval of this subdivision would be another bad example of the over-development that has been allowed to take place in the nearby Santa Susana Mountains. A story in the LA Times which surveyed the last 20 years showed that LA County consistently allowed development which was denser than should have been permitted. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky has vowed that this would not continue. Please don't keep making the same mistakes in LA County. Don't allow this project to destroy the character of the distinctive rocky mountains of Chatsworth. These mountains were featured in many old westerns that were shot here. It's our history.



### Golden Eagle (aquila chrysaetos)

This booted eagle is probably the most numerous large eagle, and one of the best known. It lives on wooded and barren mountains throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and northern Africa. Adults are plain brown with amber-tipped nape feathers; juveniles are a darker brown. Depending on its habitat, this eagle ranges in weight from 7 to 13 pounds and in length from 30 to 36 inches. The female is up to one-third larger than the male. Golden Eagles eat mammals, large birds, and carrion. Their courtship ritual is a series of undulating dives, performed alone or in pairs. Their two freckled eggs are incubated for 40 to 45 days. The young fly by 70 days after hatching. Although small populations have disappeared from the eastern United States, these eagles are still abundant in the West.

### Eventually my painting students will say, "Wow, look what they did to the Real West!"

This is a misguided project, and we do feel some sympathy for the developer, but he has chosen an inappropriate area to build his residential development. We suggest he look elsewhere where the terrain is flatter, not in a scenic corridor, not in a wildlife corridor, not if the beauty of the area would be destroyed by this project. So please deny this subdivision of 18 homes.

I would like to add a couple of comments. The aesthetic reasons for cancellation or mitigation of such projects all seem to come last. For me, they are first on the list.

I am an artist and Professor of Art at Cal State Northridge and have lived at the base of the mountain for 25 years. Every semester I bring students up to paint this mountain, and every time they are amazed that the place even exists. This last spring I had a young woman from Greece in the class. I got a letter back saying that she had finally seen the real west. I am struck by the irony that developers also find it attractive, but for other reasons than the people who have lived here awhile. Developers see it as view property from which people can overlook the San Fernando Valley and admire the lights at night. So everyone who loves to look up at the mountain during the day will see houses, and at night all they will see are the lights from the houses. Eventually the only people enjoying the mountain will be those who will never see the mountain itself, only the lights of the valley from the mountain; and my painting students will say, "Wow, look what they did to the Real West!" It is up to the Planning Commission to put the brakes on such destructive cycles. You have all the information available to keep this beautiful mountain from being carved up. Please keep it from happening. Thank you.

### Eagles Nest Public Hearing

Please plan to attend the public hearing regarding tract approval of the Eagles Nest subdivision project:

**Date:** Thursday, February 21, 2002

**Time:** 4:30 p.m.

**Place:** To be determined, but in the Valley, not downtown LA.

Call (818) 704-9304 for updated information and to get the latest staff report following the appeals filed December 3, 2001.

**Election of SSMPA board members will take place this April. Please consider serving your community while supporting the preservation of your local natural environment by becoming a board member. Send letter with qualifications to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91311.**

**SSMPA Executive Board 2001-2002**

Judy Garris, President	818-346-7654
Dorian Keyser, Vice President, Program Chair	818-345-3795
Sandra Johnson, Recording Secretary	818-341-0341
Diana Dixon-Davis, Treasurer	818-341-4242
Jim Shirley, Member at Large	818-888-7631
Susan Gerke, Member at Large, News. Editor	818-704-9304
Holly Huff, Member at Large	805-526-0961
Jan Miller, Member at Large	818-702-0854

Whereas, California's state, regional, and local parks serve as recreational, social, and cultural centers for California's communities, providing important venues for youth enrichment and safety; community identity; protection of natural, cultural and historic sites, parkland and open space; and tourism, and

Whereas, in order to maintain a high quality of life for California's growing population, a continuing investment in parks, recreation facilities, and in the protection of the state's natural, cultural and historic resources is needed, and

Whereas, each generation of Californians has an obligation to be good stewards of these natural and community resources in order to pass them onto their children, and

Whereas, California's citizens and visitors have increased their visits to state and local parks for healing and strength, sense of community, freedom and peace during these turbulent times, and

Whereas, California is known for its incredible natural resources of open space, parks, mountains, rivers, coastline, and forests that positively impact the state and local economy, and

Whereas, California is largely an urban state where it is projected the state's population will continue to grow by 18 million by 2020; thereby placing more pressure on existing parkland and facilities, and

Whereas, California's economy is dependent upon maintaining a high quality of life that includes attractive and safe public park and recreation facilities and services, and

Whereas, Proposition 40, the Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhoods Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002, provides \$2.6 billion for state and local park projects to preserve California's natural heritage and allow urban areas to expand much needed recreation facilities that serve children, youth, seniors, and families.

Therefore, be it resolved, the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association supports the passage of Proposition 40, the Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002, and encourages California voters approve this bond act on March 5, 2002.

Passed and adopted this day 27 of JANUARY, 2002

By Judy Garris  
Judy Garris, President

**Ventura County Gets Reall**

After 3 years of debate and delays, open space supporters applauded Ventura County policymakers for using their clout to back the creation of a land conservation district, clearing the way for local voters to weigh in on the issue on the March 2004 ballot. Voters will decide whether Ventura County should join a growing list of counties seeking to prevent urban sprawl by buying up undeveloped land for permanent preservation.

Supervisor Judy Mikels dropped earlier opposition to the plan after County board members assured her that they did not intend to create the district without a public vote. Mikels said she is pleased that her colleagues agreed to create an advisory committee to help define the district's goals and land-purchase priorities saying, "There is nothing more critical than having voter buy-in for the long-term success of this district." The broad-based committee will be made up of representatives from the county, its 10 cities, environmental groups, and the business community.

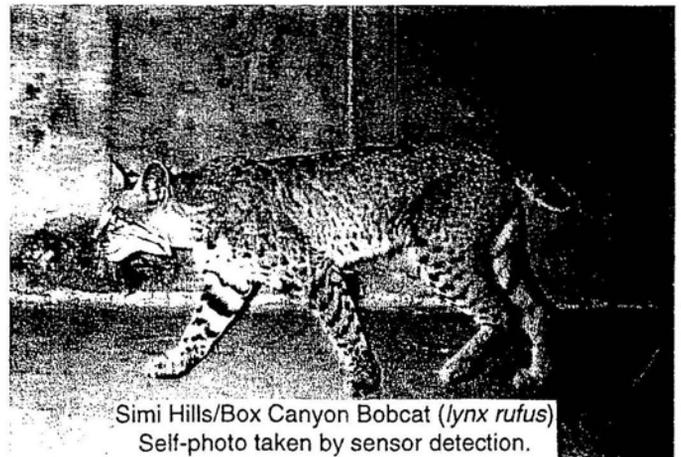
*Note: The success of this measure should help to preserve open spaces and the semi-rural atmosphere of Box Canyon and the Simi Hills.*

**The New Chatsworth Neighborhood Council**

Please join us in the formation of the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council as we discuss the issues important to our neighborhood, how to accomplish the necessary outreach to include all of the community stakeholders and the critical steps for certification by D.O.N.E. (Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment).

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2002 - 7:00 P.M.  
LAWRENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY  
10100 Variel Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311**

For further information, call Jon Lauritzen (818) 341-4506 or Jane Lowenthal (818) 366-5009.



Simi Hills/Box Canyon Bobcat (*lynx rufus*)  
Self-photo taken by sensor detection.

Feb 27 10



# FEBRUARY HIKES

**Hikers: wear lugsoles & hat; bring water, sunscreen and snack.**

**Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy/Mtns. Rec & Conservation Authority (310) 589-3200**

Sat. 2/9: Towsley Canyon Park Campfire: A traditional campfire program filled with stories, singing and fun. 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Bring some marshmallows and toasting sticks.

Sun. 2/17: Towsley Canyon Park: Hike 2:30 to 4:30 pm. Have you ever looked at the brush-covered hills of California and wanted to know more about plants found there? Here's an opportunity to gain new understanding and appreciation for the chaparral!

Towsley Canyon Park directions: Traveling north, take Calgrove exit from I-5. Turn west back under freeway and take Old Road south, proceed to first driveway on right. Look for sign "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon". Park in back lot; meet at kiosk.

Sun. 2/24: Happy Camp Canyon: Hike 9:15 am to 3:45 pm. See panoramic view of Simi Valley, Moorpark and Channel Islands. 8 miles RT, 1300' gain. Bring lunch, binoculars and 2-3 qts of water. Call (805) 529-4828 for more information and directions.

## Sierra Club Hikes

Sun. 2/10: O'Melveny Park: 8 mi RT, 1200' gain in the Santa Susana Mtns. Moderately strenuous. Meet 9 am at O'Melveny Park. Go north on Balboa Blvd. Turn left on Sesnon to the park on the right. Ldr: Gabe Szende (818) 999-5384, Asst: Al Kolb (818) 886-7408.

Thur. 2/14: Towsley Canyon: Moderately paced 5.5 mi, 1000' gain (optional 8 mi, 1300' gain) hike with great vistas, a chilly narrows, diverse plant life and tar seeps. Meet at 8:30 am at Ed Davis Park, 24255 The Old Road, Newhall (from I-5 exit Calgrove, turn right under freeway, follow Old Road 1/2 mi south to park entrance, turn right and follow dirt road 1/2 mi to nature center and parking lot). Ldrs: Margaret Vernallis (818) 360-4414, Bob Galletly (818) 885-1920.

Sun. 2/17 Stage Coach Trail Hike: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9:00 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Park to the 2nd parking lot by the Rec Bldg. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850.

Wed. 2/27 Mission Peak Moonlight Conditioning Hike: Moderate 5 mi, 1200' gain to view lights of San Fernando Valley. Meet 7 pm at trailhead. (Take 405 Fwy to 118 Fwy, west to Balboa, north 2 mi to Sesnon, west 1 mi to Neon Way, right to end of street). Rain cancels. Leaders: Casey Bialas (661) 251-4619, Henry Schultz (661)-284-5613

## Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Hikes

Every Thursday Chumash Trail: Moderate paced 5 mi, approximately 1000' gain. Meet at 6 pm at trailhead. Directions: take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit, north on Yosemite, right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead: end of Flanagan Dr.

Every Sunday Rocky Peak Trail: Strenuous, 5 mi, approximately 1000' gain. Meet at 4 pm at trailhead. Directions: take 118 Fwy to Rocky Peak exit. Trailhead is north of fwy.

For more information on hikes contact the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at (805) 584-4400.

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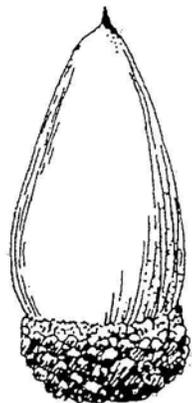
Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership: Yvonne Ash, Hollace Wood & Mrs. James Nicholson.

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## SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN / RENEW / REJOIN S.S.M.P.A. (Please circle one.)



valley oak

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contributions to help ensure our futures. Please make checks payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

- Senior or Student (\$5.00)   
  Individual (\$10.00)   
  Family (\$15.00)  
 Business or Organization (\$25.00)   
  Life Member (\$100.00)

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

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

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest/Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_