

September 2002 Newsletter

Chatsworth Hills Reveal Historical Data



from *The Daily News* dated August 17, 1977

By Dave Whitwer

Residents of Chatsworth 700 years ago, contrasted to the present houses, tax system and councilman representation, gathered acorns and killed rabbits and deer, then brought them to a village official, the "Divider of Food" to be distributed throughout the village of thatched huts with approximately 30 inhabitants.

This primitive village, located at the foot of Santa Susana Pass near Stoney Point, seemed to be inhabited from four to six months a year while the rest of the time inhabitants broke up into smaller groups to harvest acorns further back into the hills, according to Louis Tartaglia, Ph.D., of the Northridge Archaeological Research Center at Cal State Northridge.



Past era

John Ecroyd, head of Security at the Rocketdyne and NASA test site, looks at an Indian pictograph located two miles west of the Chatsworth reservoir. The site is closed to the public since it is situated on government restricted property. Authorities date the pictograph before the time of the Spanish explorers.

SSMPA General Membership Meeting

Monday, Sept. 16, 2002

After some delays, SSMPA will hold its election of a new Board of Directors on Sept. 16th. Candidates will have the opportunity to talk about their qualifications and experience as well as answer questions about their candidacy. Then the election will be held, the votes counted, and the new and incumbent board members will assume office at the conclusion of the meeting. Election shall be by secret ballot. All paid-up SSMPA members can vote for the candidates whose names appear on the ballot, or if you prefer, you can write in the names of the candidates of your choice. Please come to the meeting and exercise your vote, bringing the ballot which is located in this newsletter, or mail in your ballot prior to the meeting.

Our program speaker for the evening will be George Malone, Section Head, General Plan Development Section, LA County Dept. of Regional Planning, who will speak about the Critical Analysis of the Proposed Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills Significant Ecological Area (SEA) designation and the anticipated effect of the designation upon projected urban development.

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

Members are invited to attend both 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. Refreshments are served at program meetings.

"A lot of this is just 'guesstimates' since we have not done Carbon-14 dating on manos and matates (stones used for grinding seeds found at different sites in Chatsworth and the Valley)," he said.

A sizable village with a graveyard, beads, stone fire rings and food preparation materials has been excavated near Stoney Point. But in the hills surrounding the area seems to be numerous satellite sites where just mano and matates, the food preparation materials, have been found.

A chief ruled the village and had prerogatives like the ownership of the eagles and aeries and custody of sacred regalia. By reasons of his office he was a man of wealth, but he also was required to dispense

continued on next page

large quantities of food and property, such as shell money and other beads, to visiting officials.

It was considered a virtue for the chief to impoverish himself. For this reason he alone, among his monogamous clansmen, was allowed to marry two or more women whose combined efforts were supposed to replenish his depleted stores of acorns and seeds.

Another official, called the "Paha," was an announcer, treasurer and general assistant. He and other wise old men became orators who gave moral lectures to the young.

Respect, bordering on awe, was accorded these elders and others of high degree. And disrespect of sacred traditions by youths was punishable by death.

Another official, called "Takwa" or the Divider of Food, besides making sure everyone received sufficient amount of food, was probably in charge of the elaborate Mourning Ceremony.

Bathing was done everyday, and relaxing in the warm sulfur springs on the village's boundary was a form of relaxation.

These Indians in Chatsworth grew no corn for reason of the long dry summers and because of a crop of tons of acorns. The acorns were pounded into meal in mortars and subject to leachings in leaf-lined sieve baskets set into sand basins.

Hunting every type of animal in the area from rabbits and deer was done by the men. The practice of stinging the body, particularly the eyelids, with nettles before going out on a big hunt served as sort of a ritual reminder to the man that he really possessed the power and courage to carry out the hunt with success.

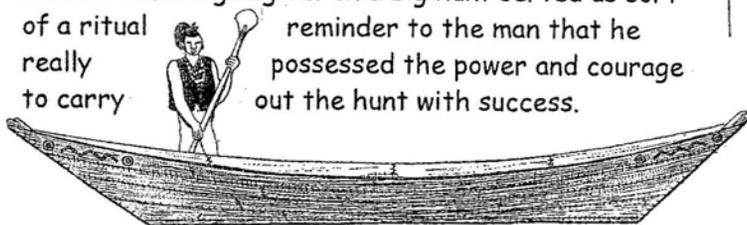


FIGURE 46. Chumash planked canoe. Length, 22 feet. Based on eye-witness accounts by Font (1775) and Menzies (1793).

Caltrans' Proposed Rocky Peak Road Improvement

The Santa Susana Mountains provide the only remaining habitat linkage between the Santa Monica Mountains-Simi Hills complex and the multi-thousand-square-mile Angeles and Los Padres National Forests. Caltrans recently completed an Environmental Assessment/Initial Study for the proposed expansion of the on/off ramps on the 118 Freeway at Rocky Peak Road. If this interchange is built, impacts on wildlife movement will be significant. If adequate habitat connectivity between the Simi Hills and the Santa Susana Mountains is not maintained, medium and large-bodied mammal populations in their collective 350-square miles of contiguous habitat are certain to decline. Only two connections remain between these ranges: at the Santa Susana Pass and at Alamos Canyon. Because of the probable construction of a full-scale 118 Freeway interchange at Alamos Canyon, the best hope for a fully functional, dedicated cross-freeway, inter-mountain range habitat linkage is in the Santa Susana Pass, either as a separate bridge or affixed to the existing bridge.



SSMPA members are asked to write to Keith Richman, State Assemblyman- 38th Dist., Attn: Debbie Schultz, 10727 White Oak Ave., #124, Granada Hills, CA 91344, asking for a full public hearing on the Rocky Peak Road improvement and no development in the chokepoint of the wildlife corridor. Call Caltrans (213-897-3656) and ask to be notified of a public hearing if and when it is scheduled.

Editor's Note: The proposed project is located within the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor portion of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's jurisdiction. SMMC owns the land adjacent to the project within Rocky Peak Park to the north and a small wedge of land along Santa Susana Pass Road to the south and has submitted a response letter to Caltrans.

CONGRESSMAN ADAM SCHIFF - WASHINGTON UPDATE

July 26, 2002

Representing the Communities of the 27th Congressional District of California Altadena * Burbank * Glendale * La Canada Flintridge * La Crescenta * Pasadena * San Marino * South Pasadena * Sunland * Tujunga

NATIONAL RECREATION AREA EXPANSION STUDY BILL ADVANCES

On July 18th, I testified in support of S. 2571, the "Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Act" during a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. As the author of the House version of the bill, I commended Senator Feinstein for her leadership on behalf of all Californians in introducing this legislation in the Senate. S. 2571, and my companion House bill, H.R. 2715, would call for a study by the National Park Service of the feasibility and suitability of more than doubling the size of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor consisting of areas of rare Mediterranean ecosystem. Since Congress set aside the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in 1978, federal, state and local authorities have worked in remarkable cooperation to manage what is the world's largest urban park. Now, nearly a quarter-century later and in the face of tremendous projected population growth and development pressures, Congress, by passing this legislation, again has the opportunity to help safeguard and supplement the existing state and local parks, open space and recreational opportunities in Southern California. ☞



UPCOMING HIKES

Hikers: Wear lugsoles & hat. Bring water, sunscreen and snack or lunch.

Sierra Club Hikes

Sun. 10/20 Stagecoach Trail Hike: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stagecoach Trail. From Topanga Cyn Blvd, turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Pk South to the 2nd parking lot by the Rec Bldg. Call Lee Baum at (818) 341-1850 for further info.

Sierra Club/Santa Susana Mountains Task Force, Natural Science Section Hike

Sun. 10/27: Devil Canyon/Halloween Potluck: Easy-paced 5-mile, 200' gain naturalist led walk through a devil of a canyon where demonic Santa Ana winds howl and carve skeletal designs on sandstone walls. Learn witch plant is native and witch is not! Join us for stream hopping fun. Meet 9 am at the north end of Topanga Canyon Blvd. by the 118 Fwy. At the end of Topanga, turn right and park in dirt lot on Mojave Trail or turn left and park on Poema Pl. Wear sturdy, wettable shoes with good tread and bring water, utensils, cup, plate, and potluck item for 6. Leader: Judy Garris, phone no. (818) 346-7654.

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Hike

Sat. 8/31 Point Mugu State Park: Moderate 6 MRT with 1000' elevation gain/loss. Visit waterfalls and the Danielson Memorial, with a great view of Oxnard Plain and Channel Islands from Old Boney Rd. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Bring snack and 2-3 qts. of water. Wear boots. Meet 7 am near Donut Delite at corner of Madera and Royal in Simi Valley.
(Information regarding September hikes is not available at this time. For inquiries, call the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at (805) 584-4400.)

The following report on the Deerlake Ranch project was submitted by Teena Takata and Allen Glazer. Further information can be found at <http://www.deerlakeranch.com> and <http://www.savechatsworth.org>.

LA County Supervisor Michael Antonovich feels Deerlake Ranch development should be equestrian-sized estates, minimum 15,000 sq. ft. lots.

Chatsworth residents who have spent many hours opposing a LA County project north of 118 between Topanga Cyn. Blvd. and Canoga Ave. known as "Deerlake Ranch" received a welcome respite when the Supervisor's staff advised that Mr. Antonovich stated that the proposed development, to gain his support, needs to provide 15,000 sq. ft. lots for new homes. The project seeks approval for 484 homes in the Chatsworth foothills of the Santa Susana Mtns. north of the 118 freeway and has been vigorously opposed by the community due to small lot sizes, loss of scenic trails in the foothills, environmental damage and traffic effects on two overly crowded access roads.

The welcome news was delivered by Conal McNamara, the Supervisor's deputy Planner, and Patti Friedman, who runs Mr. Antonovich's Chatsworth field office, at a meeting hosted by the Supervisor's office for community members on August 8th.

Community members vow to keep monitoring the project to try to achieve the very compatible lot sizes suggested by Mr. Antonovich's recent statement.

Michael D. Antonovich Open Space Preserve

LA County Supervisor Mike Antonovich dedicated 500 acres of open space in the Santa Susana Mountains on August 12th. This addition to the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park allows the park to expand to 4,000 acres and will provide continuous wilderness trails in the Rim of the Valley corridor.

Antonovich first introduced a motion in 1992 to acquire the property and an adjacent 520-acre parcel in Bee Canyon. The county required the owner, Browning-Ferris Industries ("BFI"), to hand over the deed to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. In exchange, the county granted BFI a permit to expand the Sunshine Canyon landfill, which it operates. Transfer of the parkland was stalled by environmental reviews, litigation and the cleanup of oil wells on the site. The supervisor saw the project through to the end.

Located on the northern border of LA, northwest of O'Melveny Park, the acquired property offers sweeping views of the Santa Clarita and San Fernando valleys and contains oak trees, Douglas fir, California walnut, deer, mountain lion and black bear.



Trails of the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains

(The majority of the trails and fire roads on this map are located on land owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. All trails and fire roads shown here are designated as multi-use. This means that mountain bikers, equestrians, and hikers regularly use these trails.)

Trail Descriptions

Rocky Peak Fire Road - The backbone of the Santa Susana Mountains trail system, Rocky Peak Fire Road runs from the 118 Freeway north approximately 8 miles where it meets Brown's Canyon Road, Canyon Motorway, and Llajas Canyon Road.

Chumash Trail - Serving as the major connector to Rocky Peak Fire Road from the Simi Valley side of the mountains, Chumash Trail starts at the end of Flanagan Drive and climbs approximately 2.5 miles to meet Rocky Peak Fire Road.

Upper Hummingbird Trail - This trail begins where Kuehner Drive ends just north of the 118 Freeway and climbs approximately 1.5 miles to meet Rocky Peak Fire Road. Upper Hummingbird Trail traverses the Western slope of the Santa Susana Mountains in a series of elaborate switchbacks that wind between rock outcroppings meander through areas of thick brush, and cut across solid rock plateaus.

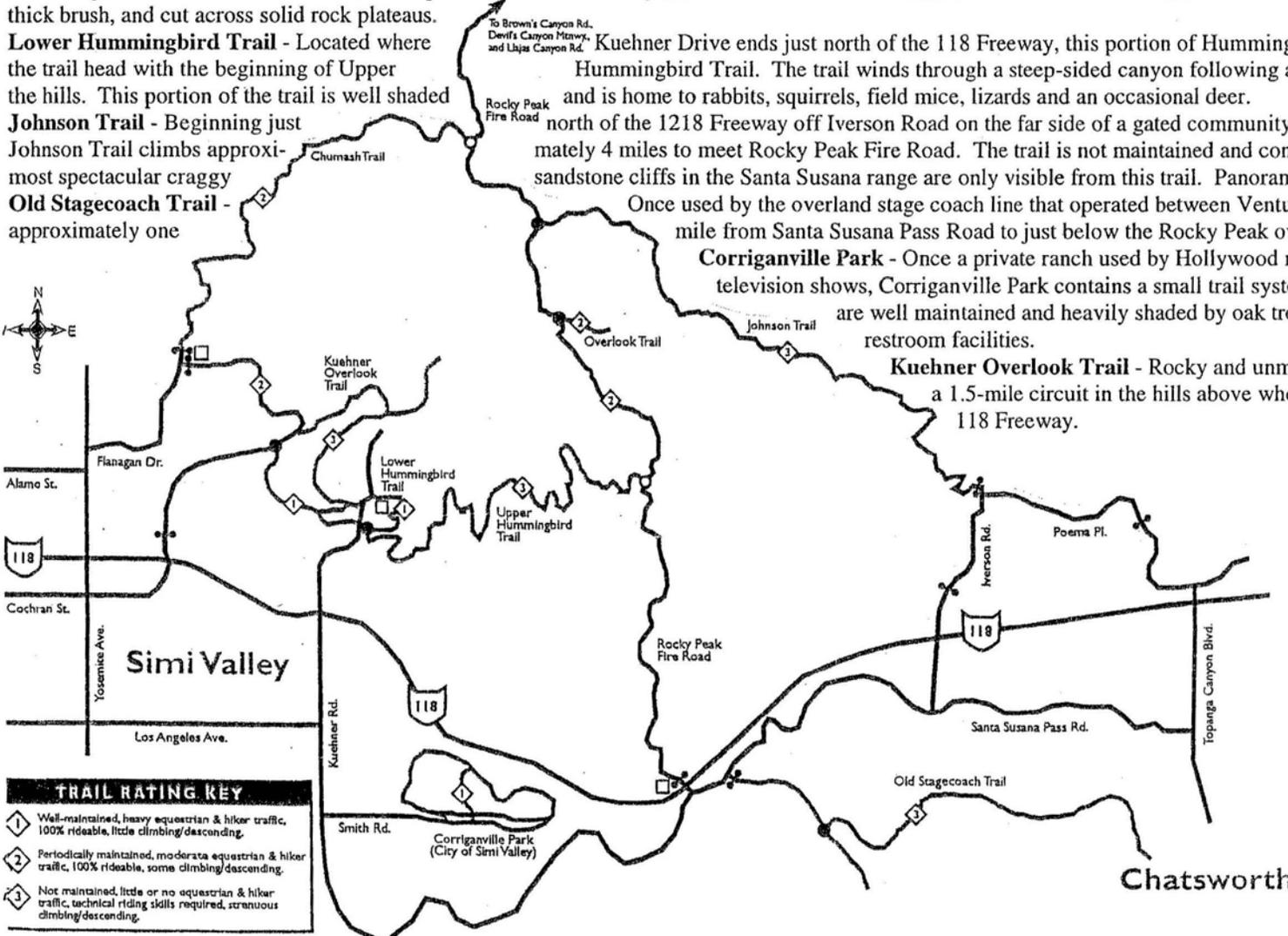
Lower Hummingbird Trail - Located where Kuehner Drive ends just north of the 118 Freeway, this portion of Hummingbird Trail is a half-mile loop that connects the trail head with the beginning of Upper Hummingbird Trail. The trail winds through a steep-sided canyon following a stream that flows out of a spring hidden in and is home to rabbits, squirrels, field mice, lizards and an occasional deer.

Johnson Trail - Beginning just north of the 1218 Freeway off Iverson Road on the far side of a gated community nestled in the hills above Chatsworth, Johnson Trail climbs approximately 4 miles to meet Rocky Peak Fire Road. The trail is not maintained and contains many rocky sections. Some of the sandstone cliffs in the Santa Susana range are only visible from this trail. Panoramic views.

Old Stagecoach Trail - Once used by the overland stage coach line that operated between Ventura and LA, the Old Stagecoach Trail climbs approximately one mile from Santa Susana Pass Road to just below the Rocky Peak overpass.

Corriganville Park - Once a private ranch used by Hollywood movie studios to film western movies and television shows, Corriganville Park contains a small trail system that winds through the park. The trails are well maintained and heavily shaded by oak trees. The park also contains picnic and restroom facilities.

Kuehner Overlook Trail - Rocky and unmaintained, Kuehner Overlook Trail makes a 1.5-mile circuit in the hills above where Kuehner Drive ends just north of the 118 Freeway.



TRAIL RATING KEY	
1	Well-maintained, heavy equestrian & hiker traffic, 100% rideable, little climbing/descending.
2	Periodically maintained, moderate equestrian & hiker traffic, 100% rideable, some climbing/descending.
3	Not maintained, little or no equestrian & hiker traffic, technical riding skills required, strenuous climbing/descending.

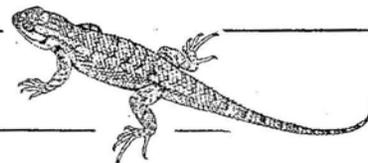
LEGEND	
	Paved road
	Fire road (dirt)
	Singletrack trail (dirt)
	Locked gate
	Trail junction - marked
	Trail junction - unmarked
	Trailhead (with signage)
	Trail rating (see below for trail rating system key)

INSTRUCTIONS: If you are an individual member, mark your votes in one of the ballots below. If you have a family membership, use both ballots to indicate your votes. Bring your ballot to the general membership meeting on Monday, September 16, 2002, or mail it to: SSMPA, Attn: Election Committee, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

SSMPA 2002 BALLOT

The Elections Committee of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association has considered and approved the following candidates for the 2002 SSMPA Board of Directors. Please vote for ONE candidate for each of the following offices by circling the printed name or by writing in the name of a candidate of your choice.

President:	Jan Miller	OR	_____
Vice President:	Dorian Keyser	OR	_____
Treasurer:	Diana Dixon-Davis	OR	_____
Recording Secretary:	Patty Miller	OR	_____
Member at Large:	Teena Takata	OR	_____
Member at Large:	Sandra Johnson	OR	_____
Member at Large:	Judy Garris	OR	_____
Member at Large:	Holly Huff	OR	_____



SSMPA 2002 BALLOT

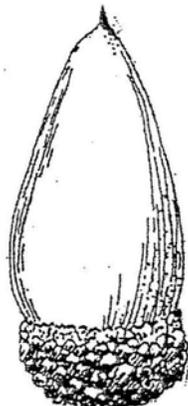
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Member at Large:	Sandra Johnson	OR	_____
Member at Large:	Judy Garris	OR	_____
Member at Large:	Holly Huff	OR	_____



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: _____

The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National Forest, to the Santa Monica Mountains; as habitats for plants and animals native to the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills; as locales of unique geologic formations; as sites of ethnological, archaeological and historical interests; to provide passive recreational opportunities and environmental education opportunities; and, to support the acquisition of new public parks, open space and conservation easements, the expansion of existing parks, participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs, and support said programs. To find out how you can volunteer for SSMPA, call Judy Garris at 818-346-7654.



For your calendar



SSMPA BOARD MEETINGS

@ Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center:

Monday, Oct. 7, 2002, 7:30 p.m.

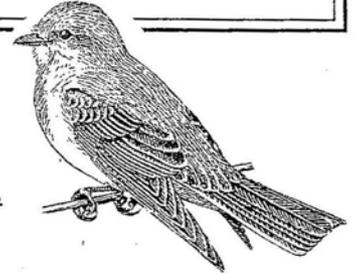
Monday, Nov. 4, 2002, 7:30 p.m.

SSMPA PROGRAM MEETINGS

@ Rockpointe Clubhouse:

Monday, Sept. 16, 2002, 7:15 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 21, 2002, 7:15 p.m.



Western Kingbird

Please note the renewal date on your label and send in your dues if you wish to continue your SSMPA membership and receive the newsletter. If you are current with your dues, kindly disregard this notice. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help meet the costs of producing this newsletter.

Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership: ♣

Leon & Shirley Brown, Ellen Pifer, Beverly Cervini, Leslie & Mark Bashaar, Judith Rothman, Arlene Bernholtz, Jim & Maureen Shirley, Mike Stevens, Annelore & John T. Schillo, Bill Geller, Ann Monaco, Joanne Woodruff, Mrs. James Nicholson, Debora Koslowsky/ Working Artists Agency, Jim & Donna Swavely, Margo Murman, Pearl & Chuck Turbush, the de Sosa Family, Marie Burdick, Grant & Bea Samuel, Gail Boudreaux, Jeff Pomerantz, J.W. Proffit, Yvonne Karukas, Jeffery Burkhart, Melissa Lovelady, Holly Huff and Michael McIntyre.

Welcome to our new members: Barbara & Michael Haas, Muriel Merchant and Bob Wood. ♣



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
P.O. Box 4831
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

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