

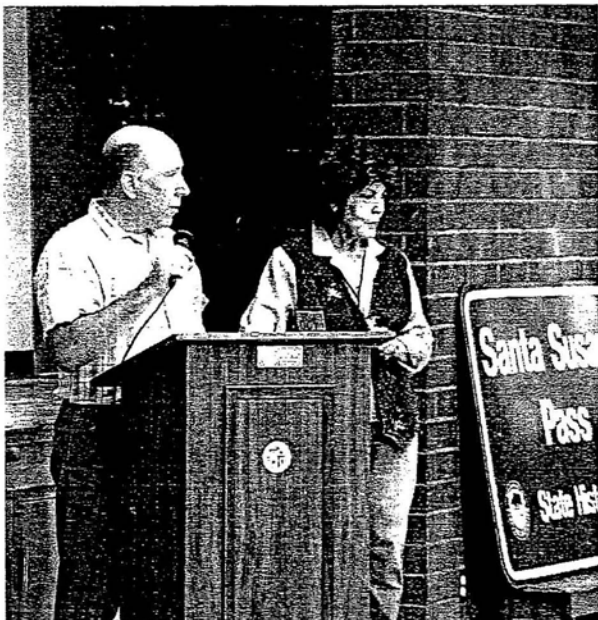
October 2003 Newsletter

The Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park had a voice

on Saturday, Sept. 20. It spoke loud and clear that the community wants the Park honored, protected, improved and enlarged so that it can enrich the lives of the many who will visit there for generations to come.

"This park is one of the best in the Angeles District." "We must continue to make a presence and keep eyes and attention focused on its needs." Virginia Watson (Chatsworth Historical Society), Laurie Dager (Chatsworth Women's Club), Pearl Turbush (Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains), Jan Miller (Santa Susana Mountain Park Assn.), Steve Bylin (Supervising Park Ranger, Topanga Sector), Dianne Kartiala, (Deputy, Council Dist. 12), Michael Tou (Field Rep for Brad Sherman, U.S. House of Representatives 27th Dist.) and Tracey Poirier (Field Rep for Lloyd Levine, Assemblymember, 40th Dist.) all came forward to tell us of the park's importance and how individuals can make a difference by communicating their interest to elected and state park officials.

The rally was organized by the Chatsworth Historical Society, the Chatsworth Women's Club, the Santa Susana Mountain Park Assn. and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains.



Teena Takata

Jan Miller, Pres. SSMPA, and Laurie Dager, Pres. Chatsworth Womens Club

Joughin Ranch Dedication September 22, 2003

Although the day was hot, from the top of the Santa Susana Mountains that overlook Chatsworth, a gentle breeze wafted through the dry plants and oaks. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (through the Mountains Recreation Trust), Supervisor Antonovich, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and the Nature Conservancy all were on hand to welcome the 1,733 acre Joughin Ranch into public ownership.

The Joughin Ranch has been joined with other acquisitions in the Brown's Canyon area (including the 400-acre "quarry" property) to form a 2,426 acre park, the "Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park at Joughin Ranch".

Speakers at the dedication included Joe Edmiston from the SMMC. Jeffrey Sparrow, a member of the Joughin family who was present on behalf of the descendants of Andrew Joughin, spoke with pleasure at allowing the lands to pass into public ownership. Andrew Joughin had purchased the land in 1872, hoping to drill for oil and hold the real estate to make his fortune that way, but the slow market for oil made him go into cattle ranching instead. The Ranch was recently owned by four families, all descendants of Andrew Joughin. The families hosted lunch for the attendees at the dedication ceremony.

(continued on pg. 2)

SSMPA General Membership Meeting Monday, October 20, 2003:

Al Knight, a professional archeologist, will give us a slide show presentation of cave and rock art in various locations in Southern California. This should be fascinating and fun, just like Al's presentations always are. He enjoys sharing his wealth of information!

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday of the months during the months of 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, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South. Refreshments are served at program meetings.

Members are invited to attend Board of Directors meetings at the Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center at 7 p.m. each first Monday of the month. For more info, call Jan Miller at (818) 702-0854. ▲



Joughin Ranch Photos by Teena Takata

WATCH FOR ILLEGAL GRADING

If you ride or hike up the ridge trails west of Browns Canyon or Devil Canyon, please keep your eyes open for any grading going on. If you observe any grading activity, leave the immediate area and call the Lost Hills Sheriff's office at (818) 878-1808. All grading in that area is illegal. Note: Call the Sheriff only if ACTIVE grading is taking place. DO NOT approach anyone participating in the active grading activity and DO NOT indicate that you are going to contact the Sheriff, as they want to catch the culprits. Let the Sheriff's office know that Supervisor Antonovich's office and County Bldg. & Safety have confirmed that the grading activity is illegal and it should be shut down immediately.

On August 12th, an equestrian observed and reported that 1 to 2 miles of massive illegal grading had been done through Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's canyon park property apparently to gain access to yet unknown adjacent property(s). Likely, the activity had been going on for some time.

(continued from pg. 1)

The dedication ceremony was held in a flat, graveled area in the northeast part of the property, far up the mountain, near a large, well-balanced oak on a hillside that Mr. Sparrow referred to as the "lone oak". This special oak has been featured in many movies on the site. Several speakers spoke of the contribution that preservation of the ranch as open space will make to preservation of the wildlife corridors through the Santa Susana Mountains. Deer, bear and condors were some of the more unusual wildlife mentioned that live on the property, as well as the Santa Susana tarplant and the slender mariposa lily. The cattle have been removed from the property, so it will no doubt revert to a more natural state over the next many years.

As well as contributing significantly to the wildlife corridor in the Santa Susana Mountains, the ranch includes the headwaters of the Los Angeles River, sourced in three canyons on the property: Ybarra Canyon, Blind Canyon, and Devil Canyon.

A representative from the Nature Conservancy told attendees that the Joughin Ranch is within one of their major preservation project areas that includes lands from the Pacific Ocean to the Santa Clara River and the Santa Susana Mountains. The Nature Conservancy is actively seeking to preserve the wildlife corridors and open space in those areas that are very impacted due to current development trends. The speaker from the Wildlife Conservation Board emphasized that they were excited to have acquired a significant parcel of land so close to urban population centers. Other speakers were Russ Guiney, head of the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Dept., Greig Smith, the local City Councilman, and Supervisor Michael Antonovich. **The County of Los Angeles, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Nature Conservancy, and the Mountains Recreation Trust all contributed significantly to the acquisition.**

The park includes signage that it is open from dawn to dusk. The Conservancy Rangers advised only the lower part of the ranch would be open for vehicular access in the near future. The City of Los Angeles operates a SWAT police training facility near the north to south center of the Joughin Ranch. Scheduling open periods at the Ranch will need to be coordinated with the SWAT training facility before the upper part of the ranch will be open for vehicular access.

This is definitely a place to visit on a clear, clear day. As the speakers noted, one can see 100 miles to Catalina Island from the right spot on the ranch, as well as all the way to downtown Los Angeles. Beautiful views of Devil and Ybarra Canyon can be enjoyed, as well as impressive views to the northwest into the Santa Clarita area. **Travel north on Browns Canyon Road (go north from the DeSoto offramp of the 118 freeway) approximately four miles to reach the ranch. Parking available shortly after the gate in a clearly marked parking area, but we suggest driving up the road as far as possible to explore by car prior to parking.**

We are, indeed, fortunate that this area has received funding and the attention of the conservation trusts to enable these acquisitions to occur.

Teena Takata

Agency Mulls Canada Geese Problem

The US Fish & Wildlife Service is proposing to eliminate the need for individual permits for Canada goose control and hand over management responsibilities to the State Dept. of Fish & Game. Under this proposal, state wildlife officials would have the freedom to harass the geese, destroy their nests, and if necessary, kill them under expanded hunting opportunities or capture and kill by the state agency. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement analyzes other alternatives, including continuing current management practices, trapping and culling programs, and managing habitat to make certain areas less attractive to geese. The greatest danger of the proposal is the fact that the US Fish & Wildlife Service must re-delineate the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1919 to transfer authority from the federal to state level, thereby weakening present regulations, abrogating federal management, and handing control over to the states along with wide and waived permit requirements.

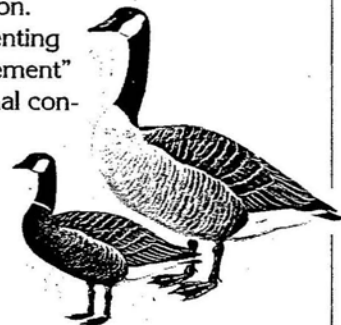
Please send your comments (by Oct. 20 - you can use e-mail) urging caution in the re-delineation. Further examination of alternatives is strongly suggested, with strict controls at the local level preventing abuse of an unfortunate situation. The alternative "Increase Use of Non-lethal Control and Management" should be encouraged over the "State Empowerment" alternative and its inevitable increase in lethal control and abuse. Send your comments to:

Chief, Div. of Migratory Bird Management
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Dept. of the Interior
4401 N. Fairfax Dr., MBSP-4107
Arlington, VA 22203 - or via e-mail - to: canada_goose_eis@fws.gov.

Copies of the draft EIS are available through the Internet at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>.

For further info, contact Rosemarie White, Sierra Club Endangered Species Task Force, (818) 769-1521.

It is important to realize that when the presence of geese in urban areas becomes problematic to people and wildlife managers are forced to cope, the cause is the removal of 95% of wetlands along the Pacific Flyway.



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAINS TASK FORCE

The Santa Susana Mountains Task Force (SSMTF) of the Sierra Club supports the protection of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as the primary wildlife corridor linking the Angeles and the Los Padres National Forests to the Santa Monica Mountains. This narrow corridor and its choke point at the 118 freeway are important for genetic mixing of wildlife species as they are pushed from the source, the northern national forests into the receiver, the Santa Monica Mountains. Task Force members work to preserve this unique land by attending public hearings and submitting written comments. We believe it is extremely important to preserve our rapidly disappearing natural open spaces not only for wildlife but also for future human generations to experience, respect and enjoy.

The SSMTF trains hike leaders, after they have completed Sierra Club leadership training, in local land issues, history and the natural science of the mountains. At the present time, we are looking for a Sierra Club member to come on board who can arrange and write up hikes for the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills.

Task Force meetings are held five times a year (dates to be announced), on the first Monday of the month, at 6:30 p.m., prior to the SSMPA meetings at the Rockpointe Clubhouse. **OUR NEXT MEETING IS MONDAY, OCT. 20.** Any Sierra Club member who becomes a member of the Task Force will receive a 1-year subscription to the SSMPA newsletter. If interested, call me at (818) 346-7654.

Judy Garris, Interim Chair SSMTF



Desert Almond

Ahmanson Ranch

On Oct. 10, the state Public Works Board is to have signed off on the paperwork to seal the deal that will ultimately preserve this 2,900-acre expanse in eastern Ventura County as open space. The 10-year struggle against development of a planned community culminated in the \$150 million deal funded by the state to buy Ahmanson Ranch from Washington Mutual and make it part of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The ranch is one of the last undeveloped areas in a major metropolitan area. The state Wildlife Conservation Board committed \$135 million to the purchase. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the State Coastal Commission provided the rest of the funds from a \$3.4 billion water bond that earmarked \$300 million for watersheds and wetlands in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

We could use a few more good people to fill our Board. The time commitment is small, and the rewards are many. If you would be interested in serving in this way, please call Jan Miller at (818) 702-0854.

Santa Susana Mountain Park Assn. Board of Directors 2003

President Jan Miller	Vice President Dorian Keyser
Recording Secretary Patty Miller	Treasurer Diana Dixon-Davis
Corresponding Secty. OPEN	Member at Large Teena Takata
Member at Large Sandra Johnson	Member at Large OPEN
Member at Large OPEN	Member at Large OPEN

Updates from Save Chatsworth Inc.:

Deerlake Ranch Project

On September 3, 2003, the Regional Planning Commission approved the Deerlake Ranch Development Project at 388 homes. Save Chatsworth, Inc. had hoped for a different outcome - we made a strong case for a reduced-density project. One particularly frustrating aspect of the outcome was the fact that the commission did not ask the developer or the County Department of Public Works to further study the proposed storm water run-off system. Rather than tie into the existing system that goes into the Brown's Canyon concrete channels, the developer has proposed a filtration system that takes the water directly into the Devil Canyon creek. This proposed system is relatively new, and the long-term effectiveness is unknown.

In addition, the community has had particular concerns about the fact that this developer will not build the project - they will sell it to different builders. The commissioners did question Presidio long and hard in regards to making certain that the builders to whom they sell will take over responsibility for the benefits that Presidio has promised the community. Ultimately, we will depend on the County to enforce compliance.

The community does have the right to file an appeal, but an appeal could be a costly venture. We will keep you advised of the process.

Regardless of the Planning Commission's decision, Save Chatsworth, Inc. has made a significant difference in the project - we reduced it by 100 homes, and obtained much-needed mitigations for the community.

Topanga Canyon Condominium Project

This case was approved by Regional Planning on September 17. The developer did remove a proposed tennis court from the project plans, but the project was approved at 65 units. The only concession was the request that the hiking and equestrian trails be worked on in a collaborative effort by both developers of the Deerlake Ranch project and the condominium project, so as to ensure a system that is adequate and acceptable for the community.

Save Chatsworth, Inc. is disappointed in these recent decisions, as we feel that the infrastructure to support either project is sorely lacking. Development continues to be approved at such a rapid pace in Southern California, and planning so as to reduce the negative impacts of development projects seems to be negligible.

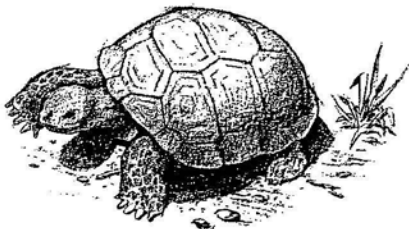
If the outcome of the above cases concerns you, please write to:

Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Fifth District
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
869 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Your interest in Save Chatsworth, Inc. has definitely fueled our efforts, and we hope that you will continue to give us your support. We still hope to make a difference in the final project designs, and the more people who voice their concerns, the more power that we have to do so.

For more information, please contact me.

Vanessa Watters
Secretary, Save Chatsworth, Inc.
e-mail: vangarden@aol.com



New Resource for SSMPA Members & Friends

We've set up a "Yahoo Group" internet site where a host of resources (documents, photos and links) of potential interest to SSMPA's members have been posted. These include resources relating to the appreciation and conservation of our local natural environment and to the challenges posed by land developers. We've also posted an archive of newsletters and materials relating to the history of SSMPA.

Many SSMPA members' email addresses have been added to the group's email list. (If you are a member on email, you will have received a notice.) If you'd like to be included on the group's email list, please send your address to SSMPA@hotmail.com. You'll need to "join" and become a full member of the Yahoo Group before you can access the site's resources. Have you joined yet? Would you like to? Simply go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SSMPA/join>

If you have any questions, please contact us at SSMPA@hotmail.com. We can provide assistance.



Mule Fat (*Baccharis viminea*)

Mule Fat is a very common shrub which ranges up to 10 feet tall. Its willow-like leaves range from 1 to 3½ inches in length, and their margins are either uncut or evenly toothed all around. The small clusters of heads are borne on numerous short lateral branches. *B. glutinosa*, Seep Willow, is similar, but the leaves more often have toothed margins, and the heads are in a large cluster at the top of the stem. Mule Fat is found throughout southern California away from the deserts, whereas Seep Willow is found in wet places on the deserts and in the interior ranges. Both might be confused with *B. douglasii*, which is nearly herbaceous to the base but often 6 feet tall. It occurs in the Coast Ranges in moist places, as behind salt marshes on the immediate coast, and blooms in the late summer and fall; the two truly woody species bloom in the spring (although occasional flowers can be found on the bushes at any time of year).

From Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains Board Member, CARLA HENRY:

In celebration of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area 25th Anniversary, you are invited to the **Allied Artist of the Santa Monica Mountains & Seashore Art Exhibit & Paradigm Poets**, hosted by Carla Henry, **READING OF NATURE POEMS**, Sun., Nov. 9, 2 p.m. at the Hillcrest Center for the Arts, 403 W. Hillcrest Dr., Thousand Oaks. Hillcrest Center for the Arts is next to National Park Service Visitor Center. For directions/event info, www.hillcrestarts.com.



Hollyleaf Cherry

OCTOBER HIKES

Sierra Club (Santa Susana Mountains Task Force)

Sunday, 10/19: 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 (700¹ gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Park South to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, lugsoles are preferred, bring water & snack. Leader: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850.

Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley Group)

Thursday, 10/23: Johnston's Motorway to Rocky Park. "O" hike - Moderately-paced 8 mi., 1000' gain on picturesque trail. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Iverson Ranch gate. Take 118 Fwy, exit Topanga Cyn. Bl., go south, turn R on Santa Susana Pass Rd., drive 1/4 mi. to Iverson Ranch Rd., just past Rocky Peak Church (sign may be obscured by oak tree on L side), turn R on Iverson Rd., park on dirt shoulder near end of road.) Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Leader: Bob Galletly. Asst. Leaders: Joanne Proffit & Ramona Dunn. Call Ramona at (818) 783-8318 for more info.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you wish to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact Outings Dept. at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

Saturday, 10/25: 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. - Towsley Cyn. Family Campfire: "Sky Stories." Native American stories about the constellations can teach us about their culture and beliefs, as well as being fun and entertaining. Traveling north through Santa Clarita, take the Calgrove exit from the Golden State Freeway (I5). Turn W back under freeway and take the Old Road S, proceed to the first driveway on R. Look for Sign: "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Cyn." Park in back lot and *meet at nature center.*

Sunday, 10/26: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. - Towsley Cyn.: Native American Plant Hike: Learn which plants the Native Americans used and how they used them. See above directions, except *meet at kiosk.*

Sunday, 10/26: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Happy Camp: Family Activity, easy hike for the young at heart. Hike to spring, cathedral grove & back. Bring water & snack. From 101 Fwy., take 23 Fwy N, connecting to go on 118 Fwy E., & from W-bound 118 Fwy. exit LA Ave./Princeton Ave. (NOT New LA Ave.). Turn N on Princeton Ave. Go 2 blks. to Campus Pk. Dr., turn L, past 2 more blks. & straight into park at Rustic Cyn. Golf Course sign & gate. Follow paved road. Park in golf course parking lot. Docent will meet you. Call (805) 529-4828 for more info.

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Every Sunday - Rocky Peak Trail: Strenuous, 5 mi, approx. 1000' gain. Meet at 5 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.)



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

invites you to JOIN / RENEW (circle one).

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 contribution lend your support. Make your check payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

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|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior or Student (\$5.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$10.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$15.00) |
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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 participate, contact Jan Miller at (818) 702-0854.



Rally attendees enjoying the day.



Charlie Cook gives sage blessings.



Photos by Gretha Davis

Rally Day at Chatsworth Park South - September 20, 2003

Subscribers & Members: We appreciate you! Please note the renewal date on your label. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help SSMPA meet the costs of producing this newsletter. *Susan Gerke, Newsletter Editor*



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