

Volume 30, Issue 41

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Organization
Incorporated August 31, 1971

November 2004 Newsletter

General Membership

Program Meeting:

Monday, November 15, 2004

Greig Smith, L.A. City Councilman for the 12th District, will speak at our general meeting and has been invited to address issues that are relevant to our organization and community such as preservation of open space in the western San Fernando Valley, plans to preserve informal and official trail networks, the establishment of a Santa Susana Pass State Park Visitor Center (refer to letter on this page), how people can co-exist with nature in the Valley, his "wish list" and that of his constituents regarding land use, how best to approach urban sprawl, actions steps currently being taken and what can we as members of SSMPA can do to help. Please join us.

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every third 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, one block before Chatsworth Park South. Refreshments are served at program meetings.

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY HALL
200 N. Spring Street
Room 405
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 473-7012



Councilmember
Greig Smith
Twelfth District

August 13, 2004

Mr. Ted Jackson
Chief, Southern Section
California State Parks
700 Alameda Street, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I am writing in support of the improvements at Chatsworth Park South for the establishment of a Santa Susana Pass State Park Visitor Center. I have received copies of numerous petitions filed by the Chatsworth Women's Club, the Chatsworth Historical Society, the Santa Susana Mountains Park Association, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains, and the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council.

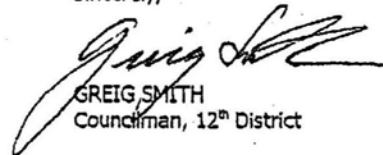
Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park has the potential of educating the community, especially the children, on the many historical land marks, plant and animal life, Chumash Indian history and to learn the responsibilities of taking care of our open spaces.

I have also been approached by Mr. & Mrs. Bill Powers on the feasibility of establishing a Native American Indian Cultural Center in Council District 12. This request has been endorsed by the Valley Cultural Center, Chatsworth/Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce and United Chambers of Commerce. This could be an important merger of two requests from the community to open a visitor center and a cultural center in Chatsworth Park South that would serve as a trail head into the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. If California State Parks are interested in a combined Historic Center and Chumash Indian Museum, additional funding may be available. I will be very supportive of such a combination.

I encourage you to consider these requests as I feel the San Fernando Valley is long overdue for a historic facility and center that will bring many benefits not only to the valley residents but also to people of the City of Los Angeles.

I look forward to your response and future discussions of these requests.

Sincerely,


GREIG SMITH
Councilman, 12th District

DISTRICT OFFICE:

NORTHROCK
18917 Northhoff St.
Suite 18
Northridge, CA 913
(818) 756-8501

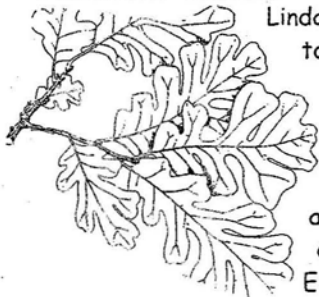
The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National 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.

Lawsuit Filed re: Santa Susana Field Lab

Hoping to protect west San Fernando Valley residents from radioactive and chemical contamination at the Santa Susana Field Lab site, City Atty. Rocky Delgadillo announced recently the city joined a lawsuit challenging the U.S. Dept. of Energy's cleanup of the former nuclear research site. Lab neighbors and watchdogs charge the DOE has broken promises to thoroughly clean the contaminated site, and now plans to leave 99% of the contaminated soil on hilltop property that could be used for homes. That level of contamination is 19,000 times greater than U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards. The radioactivity could pose a risk of cancer to one out of 50 residents, according to the lawsuit.

The 2,800-acre lab sits in the Simi Hills in Ventura County, near the LA city limits. From the 1940s to 1988, the government conducted nuclear testing on a 90-acre section of the lab called the Energy Technology Engineering Center. It was home to 10 nuclear reactors, one of which experienced a partial meltdown, and an open-air pit where workers burned radioactive and chemical waste.

Lawmaker Seeks More Protection for Oaks



Linda Parks, Ventura County Supervisor, wants to make it tougher for people to chop down oak trees. The County's existing rules to protect the graceful, towering valley oaks dotting the County's unincorporated areas are riddled with loopholes. There are over a dozen exemptions. Most people can obtain a permit over the counter easily. Even trees designated a historic landmark

can be removed with an over-the-counter permit.

But Supervisor Judy Mikels questioned a proposal sought by Parks to amend these rules, saying it would infringe on property owners' rights and be too costly to oversee.

Under amendments backed by Parks, developers and homeowners would have to go through a public hearing with the director of planning before receiving permission to cut down three or more protected trees, a designation that includes valley oaks, figs and walnuts. A request to remove more than three protected trees would trigger a full Planning Commission hearing. The full commission also would weigh in whenever even one historic tree was targeted for removal. That rare designation applies to trees identified by authorities as having historical significance.

Parks said she was concerned that the County's distinctive oak groves would slowly dwindle unless tougher regulations were put in place. Although the new protections could affect homeowners, more likely targets are developers of commercial and residential projects. If developers know they will be forced to go through a public hearing before removing protected trees, they will have good reason to design projects so the trees are not uprooted, Parks said. "You can maybe rotate a building a few degrees or realign a road," she said. "This law would tell them that the Board of Supervisors puts a priority on protecting our trees."

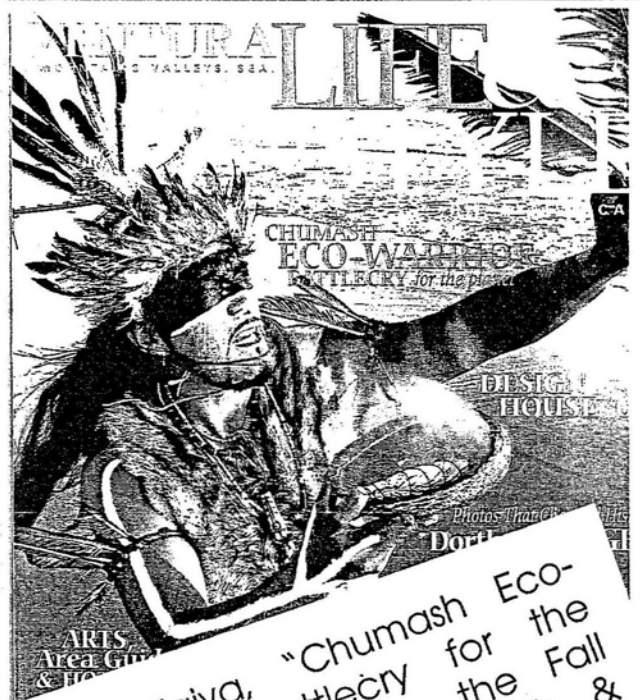
Both Thousand Oaks and Ojai have adopted tough tree protection laws. Parks disagreed with Mikels' contention that the changes would increase red tape for the average homeowner. "For most homeowners, it would not come up," she said. "And if it does, it's appropriate."

The Board Members Go On An Outing

On a perfect Saturday morning, Oct. 10, 2004, some Board members of SSMPA and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mtns. went on a caravan excursion to view some sites. Present were Jan Miller, Janet Lasik, Andrea DeYoung, Susan Gerke, Reid Bogert, Sandra Johnson and Diana Dixon-Davis. We started out at where Andora Ave., Lassen St., Oakwood Cemetery, and the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park all meet. Walking along the dry streambed a bit, we studied the juxtaposition of the State Park and the Eagles Nest property. Then we motored on over to the Chatsworth Oaks Park and enjoyed the coolness of the valley oaks there, again gaining perspective of the Eagles Nest and Tone Yee properties from another angle. Some of the members were not familiar with the location of the properties, so this was an educational tour. From there, we drove up Box Canyon Road, turning off onto Studio Road and continuing on up into the hills with an intent to view the Peachtree property. Near the property, we got as far as a recently placed gate, which was being opened by a workman. Although we explained our wish to briefly look at the property, we were not allowed in. Jan had brought maps of the area and we spread them out on top of the car hoods and learned about locations and boundaries of properties. The Peachtree property (37 acres) has been for sale for years, and the price has risen with the market. A very nice piece with views of the valley, it's also in a wildlife corridor and watershed and has a natural trail system that cuts into Box Canyon, Woolsey Canyon, and all the way to Las Virgines and Cheesboro.

Our two vehicles then bumped down a dirt road to visit the old adobe cabin that is still standing despite taking hard hits from vandals. It is rumored that this cabin was used for movies and/or TV shows in the past, but its exact history is unknown. It is sometimes referred to as "Zorro's Cabin."

It's nice to hear about these special places, and even better to get out and see them, when you can!

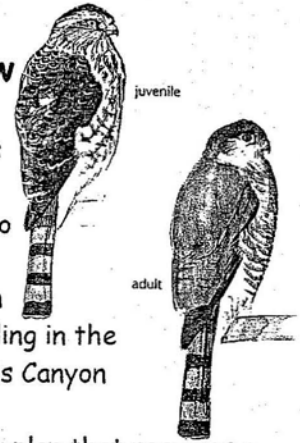


Mati Waiya, "Chumash Eco-Warrior - Battlecry for the planet" featured in the Fall 2004 issue of Ventura Life & Style (beautiful photographs!).

Commentary Corner

The Sesnon Blvd. Issue - Several Points of View

The east end of Sesnon Blvd. starts at Balboa Blvd., which goes northward to connect to the I-5 Freeway. Sesnon continues westward until it reaches a .6-mile gap at Porter Ranch's eastern Boundary. West of this gap Sesnon continues (westward) until it reaches another gap, this time about .5 miles between it and Brown's Canyon Road. Thus, widening Sesnon into two lanes each way and completing these gaps and Brown's Canyon Road would greatly facilitate the development north of the Porter Ranch, Brown's Canyon and west of Brown's Canyon Road. Therefore, I believe that it is critical to prevent the widening of Sesnon Blvd. and filling in the gaps. Housing development in the Brown Canyon Corridor and to the east and west of Brown's Canyon Road is highly undesirable; this area should be preserved as a public park.



A report indicated that Brown's Canyon Road is a major highway in the LA County highway plan that requires a 100-foot right-of-way plus necessary slope easements. This could imply that the entire region north of the Deerlake Highlands could be opened to development, as has been the case with the Porter Ranch.—D. Keyser, Tarzana



I have watched the Porter Ranch project from the very beginning. It is a part of me. I go up to the top of Porter Ranch every day. I used to see a lot more wildlife in the area than I do these days. I dislike seeing the hills taken away. However, improving Sesnon is a perfect way to provide homes for deserving people. I live directly south of Porter Ranch shopping center and would miss the soaring redtail hawks, turkey vultures, roadrunners, the beautiful gopher snakes and California quail, should they all disappear. So I am in favor of conserving; however, I believe that one can never reserve for oneself that which they would deny another person. —W.B., Chatsworth



Many forward-looking communities are working to preserve outlying space - whether it is undeveloped, farmland, wildlife corridors or simply scenic. Our economy and existing population growth requires development; but "smart growth" blocks development from selected outlying areas. These policies, in turn, promote in-fill growth by encouraging development in older or run down areas within the City. It's time for the City of Los Angeles to implement policies for "smart growth", instead of constantly allowing development of outlying areas, especially in our local hillsides. —T.T., Chatsworth

Thank you for renewing your membership and supporting SSMPA: George W. Banks, Paul A. Dentzel, Willem & Cheryl Rietveld, Barbara L. Perkins, Tom Siebert, Keith Larson Family, Bernie Leytus, Margaret Vernallis, Mrs. Weldon E. Combs, Hal & Marlene Lovett, Merrily Lovell, Greg Jensen, and George & Eleanore Rembaum,



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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City / State / Zip: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

HIKE SCHEDULE

Tues., Nov. 16: Moderate 4-6 mile easy pace hike in Las Virgenes Cyn: 500' gain on picturesque trail. Meet 8:30 a.m. at kiosk (take 101 Fwy to Las Virgenes Rd, N to end of road, park). Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Rain cancels. Ldrs: Virve & Ants Leps, Ramona Dunn. *Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley) Outing.*

Thurs., Nov. 18: Moderately paced 8 mi, 1400' gain hike in Santa Susana Mtns. Meet 8:30 a.m. trailhead (from 118 Fwy, take Yosemite Ave exit N $\frac{1}{2}$ mi, R on Flanagan Dr., continue $\frac{1}{4}$ mi to end, park). Bring 2 qts. water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Rain cancels. Ldr: Margaret Vernallis. Asst. Bob Galletly. *Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley, Wilderness Adventure) Outing.*

Tues., Nov. 30: Moderate 4-6 mile easy pace hike in Chatsworth Park. Explore assorted areas: 800+ gain, rough areas possible. Meet 8:30 a.m. parking lot (from Topanga Cyn Blvd, W on Devonshire, into Chatsworth Park, S to second lot by rec building). Bring lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen, lots of water. Rain cancels. Ldrs: Virve & Ants Leps, Ramona Dunn. *Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley) Outing.*

Sat., 12/4: Old Stagecoach Trail & Devil's Slide: Hike in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park while hearing the colorful history that lies within its rocky hills. We'll tour the old sandstone quarry, hike to the famous plaque (moderate, 700' gain) and back, visit the grinding stones and a beautiful smooth rock area, then loop back along a creekbed. 4 miles. Meet at 9 a.m. From Topanga Cyn Blvd., turn W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, shoes with good tread, bring water & snack. Ldr. Susan Gerke. Asst: Bob Galletly. *Sierra Club (Santa Susana Mountains Task Force) Outing.*

Sun., 11/21 & 12/19: 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 W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, lugsoles, bring water & snack. Leader: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850. Assts: Judy Garris, Bob Galletly. *Sierra Club (Santa Susana Mountains Task Force) Outing.*

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



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Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
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