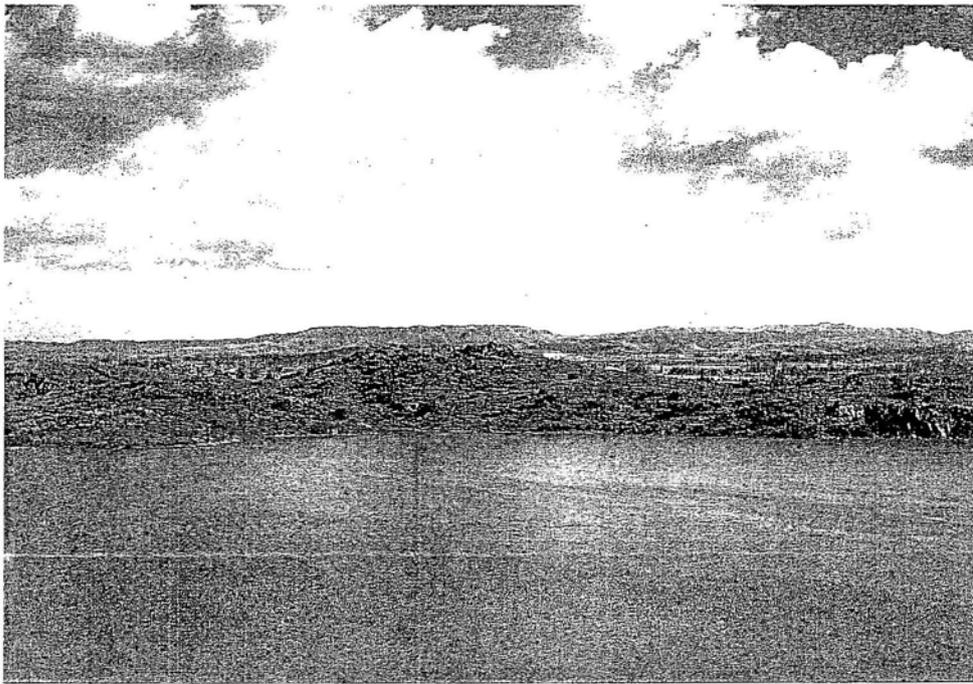


May 2007 Newsletter



Chatsworth Reservoir (photo by Tony Mayr - 1960)

The Old Chatsworth Reservoir

was placed in service in 1919 at a time when the San Fernando Valley was a sparsely populated agricultural area, and for many years it served agriculture irrigation needs as the principal water storage facility in the western part of the Valley. It has been out of service as a reservoir since August 1969 and was abandoned as a reservoir as of June 30, 1987.

We can thank former City Councilman Hal Bernson, as well as David Freidman, the General Manager of the Dept. of Water & Power, and the Board of Commissioners, who worked to declare the Chatsworth Reservoir as the **Chatsworth Nature Preserve** (1996).

Over the years the 1300 acres have been threatened by commercial and residential development and have been a battleground for bobcats vs. ballfields. So far, bobcats and coyotes still roam craggy rocks that house Chumash artifacts. Migratory birds and waterfowl have been attracted to the 30-acre ecology pond, mule deer forage under ancient oaks, and the endangered Santa Susana tarweed still grows within the boundaries. As Art Langton told a LA Times reporter, "Roadrunners and rabbits make up the main traffic on the reservoir's road, and the pavement percolates with tiny toads during the rainy season. It's about the last place you can go to get some idea what the Valley was like before paving, strip malls and residential neighborhoods, and there's not much of it there."

The nature preserve lies in LA City District 12. Please read the statements of 12th District's Councilman Greig Smith, regarding the future of this preserve, on the following page.

SSMPA General Membership Meeting Monday, May 21, 2007 – 7:00 p.m. NOTE TEMPORARY LOCATION:

Devonshire Elementary School,
10045 Jumilla St., Chatsworth,
southeast corner of Mayall St. &
Hatillo Ave. (1 block west of
Corbin).

Our program presenter, Art Langton, is a retired mid-school teacher (28 years) and former president of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. He has compiled the yearly Audubon Christmas bird count in the Chatsworth Nature Preserve for many years and has led countless field trips for adults and school children inside the gates of this natural wonderland. On Monday, May 21st, Art will talk about the preserve (see related article) and show slides of its wild inhabitants. This will be an informative and colorful evening. You are cordially invited to join us.

THIS WILL BE THE LAST GENERAL MEETING UNTIL FALL. THE NEXT MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON MONDAY, SEPT. 17, 2007 AT THE ROCKPOINTE CLUBHOUSE, 22300 DEVONSHIRE, CHATSWORTH. Program meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and conclude at 9:00 p.m.



Art Langton & Friend in the CNP (photo by Helen Treend - 1994)

Councilman Greig Smith Comments on the Chatsworth Nature Preserve – May 4, 2007

Q: *What will probably happen in the Chatsworth Nature Preserve if a City department takes over management?*

A: That depends. We're negotiating with the Dept. of Recreation and Parks on the future management. We will see if they are able to manage it, or if it may be possible to have a joint operation with a group such as the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

Q: *What is the status of the BFI mitigation of wetlands in the preserve?*

A: For the past couple of years, we have been negotiating with BFI for them to restore wetlands as part of their conditions in the local area. We just completed those negotiations and are in the process of getting approvals, for which BFI will conduct a large-scale restoration of the wetlands adjacent to the ecology pond at the preserve. Furthermore, the restoration will include an environmental easement to ensure the wetlands are protected in perpetuity. In addition, the negotiations include the transfer of ownership of that location from the Dept. of Water and Power to the Dept. of Recreation and Parks to further ensure the future protections. All of the associated costs will be borne by BFI.

Q: *Will the Chatsworth Nature Preserve ever become Los Angeles' only wildlife refuge?*

A: The Chatsworth Preserve is now in fact the first and only wildlife preserve in the City limits, but hopefully not the last.

Janice Hinkston

In the 1960s Janice Hinkston convinced the Dept. of Water and Power to form a large ecology pond in Chatsworth Reservoir so migratory waterfowl such as Canada Geese could land there. For this effort, she received an award presented by the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. Later, she found a dedicated person in Helen Treend to take over the Chatsworth Reservoir preservation efforts.

Janice then joined a group called "Chatsworth Beautiful" to save the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills. She headed a committee to save the hills. The task became so great that Janice decided to break away and form her own group. She detailed her plans in a newspaper and printed her phone number so that interested people could call her. Ten people responded and came to her home for the first meeting (November 1970) of the group that later became known as the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association.

In 1988 Janice received a Sierra Club award for obtaining 3,500 petition signatures to place Proposition 70 on the ballot, which resulted in the SSMPA project getting \$10 million to purchase the last 55 acres of the old Stagecoach Trail National Register property. Also, approximately 1,556 ¹³⁷⁶ acres to the north of Oakwood Cemetery was obtained by the State Dept. of Parks and Recreation for parkland.

On May 15, 1998 Janice received a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council at their annual awards banquet. The next day, on May 16, 1998, Janice received another award at the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park dedication party. Janice had spearheaded the 28-year effort to obtain this 670-acre park.

More recently, Janice continues to inspire her friends in her Christmas letters written from Madison, Wisconsin. She is studying in detail the exploits of the Lewis & Clark expedition by traveling along their original routes and sharing her travels in correspondence with friends. She also recommends everyone read the book about Lewis & Clark written by Stephen Ambrose entitled Undaunted Courage.

In December 2006 when Janice learned that the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park would be getting two permanent rangers she said, "Hurray! This sounds like a



good excuse for a celebration. I am planning to come to Chatsworth in March to celebrate my 80th birthday. Perhaps we can tie in both things. I want to see as many old friends as possible and meet new ones."

Janice is a visionary who really plans ahead. She plans to select a healthy oak on our state parkland and get her ashes placed there when the time comes.

—Nancy Razanski – March 2007

Good News - May 3, 2007

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California has just issued its long-awaited decision in the lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Energy by the Committee to Bridge the Gap, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the City of Los Angeles regarding the inadequate cleanup of the contaminated Santa Susana Field Laboratory, site of one of the only reactor meltdowns in the world. Judge Samuel Conti declared that the DOE has violated and continues to violate the National Environmental Policy Act and permanently enjoined DOE from transferring ownership or possession, or otherwise relinquishing control over any portion of the nuclear area at DOE until it has completed an Environmental Impact Statement.

This is a huge victory for the environment. *The above statement was originally provided by Daniel Hirsch of Committee to Bridge the Gap and was submitted to this newsletter by Jack Unger.*

Connector Parcel Between East & West LA County Open Spaces Donated to State Parks Agency

A major LA wildlife corridor pinchpoint parcel will be saved. Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI) owns approximately 1,200 acres of vacant land in Elsmere Canyon and has offered to donate the northerly 400 acres to the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority. This property connects the thousands of acres of parks in the Santa Monica Mountains, Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains with the Angeles National Forest and parks in the eastern half of LA County.

Did you know that the barn owl -- an owl that acclimates well around people -- should live for 10 years in the wild, but its life expectancy is now only 1 to 2 years because of rat poison?

What Birds Have You Seen?

For us amateur birdwatchers, it's especially thrilling to spot the less-common birds in our midst. We invite you to send in your finds to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

Susan Gerke's bird feeders (near the *Chatsworth Nature Preserve*) have been visited by Lazuli Buntings.

Jack Unger spotted these: In *Woolsey Canyon* - Canyon Wren, Bewick's Wren, Black-Headed Grosbeak, Hooded Oriole, Spotted Towhee, Roadrunner, Bushtit and Wrentit. In *Canoga Park (Shoup/Saticoy area)* - Nuttall's Woodpecker, Red-Shafted Flicker, Cedar Waxwing, Bullock's Oriole, Audubon's Warbler, Lesser Goldfinch, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. In *Simi Valley* - Western Kingbird. On the fence of the *Chatsworth Nature Preserve* along Valley Circle - Barn Owl.

And your sightings?

Living Lightly

The downtown LA-based environmental group **North East Trees** (a nonprofit urban forestry organization that creates park projects) has published a 40-page booklet entitled "Living Lightly" encouraging a larger perspective or "watershed approach" to protecting our natural resources. To receive a copy, call the office at 323-441-8634. (Their website is being rebuilt and is currently unavailable.)



Black-throated Gray Warbler

Help LA Kids

Inner city youth benefit greatly by trips to parks, mountains and beaches. Demand for trips exceeds resources, as funds are needed to pay for transportation, etc. Last year 4,500 LA kids enjoyed outings given by the LA Inner City Outings Committee of the Sierra Club. If you would like to help with a donation, make checks payable to Sierra Club Foundation/LA ICO and mail them to Catherine Ronan, ICO Treasurer, 22127 Ybarra Rd., Woodland Hills, CA 91364.

Members: This is my 56th issue, and it is time to say goodbye and move on. It has been a very satisfying task, and I invite someone with the necessary skills to come forward and take over this fun job. You will get support from others and will know that you are making a worthy contribution! Call (818) 704-9304 for more information.

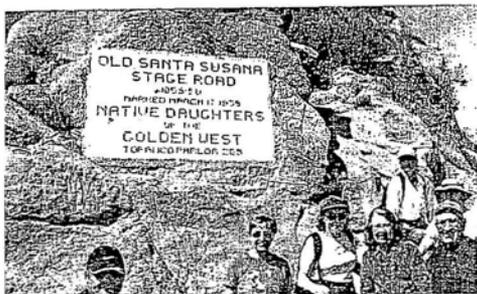
Susan Gerke, Newsletter Editor

Calling all pack rats, do you still have these newsletters? We are compiling a complete set for our Visitor Center, and a few issues are lacking. If you check the top of your newsletters where it says "Vol. 30, Issue xxx", it will be easy to locate the specific issue. **Vol. 30, Issue 25 (Feb. 2003)** **Vol. 30, Issue 29 (2003)** **Vol. 30, Issue 30 (2003)**
Vol. 30, Issue 36 (March 2004) **Vol. 30, Issue 39 (2004)**

If you find them and would like to donate them to us, just drop one (or all) in the mail: SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership: John T. Schillo, Pearl & Chuck Turbush, Robert Lisenby, Willem & Cheryl Rietveld, Judith Rothman, Marie Burdick, Grace & Jeff Taylor and Virginia Watson.

Welcome New Members! Kelly McMahon, Nicole Garcia and Moonyeen Powers.



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.

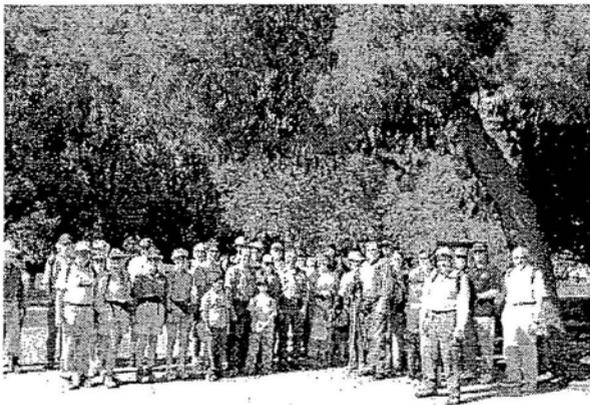
- Senior or Student ((\$10.00) Individual (\$15.00) Family (\$20.00)
 Life Member (\$150.00) Business / Organization (\$30.00)

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Street Address: _____ **E-mail:** _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____



Hikers in O'Melveny Park, the second largest park in LA, enjoying the Bee Canyon/Mission Peak Trail recently with Councilman Greig Smith.

U P C O M I N G H I K E S

Sun., 5/20 & 6/17: Stagecoach Trail – 9:00 a.m. 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. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850. *Sierra Club (Santa Susana Mountains Task Force) Outing.* Note: Lee gives hikes every 3rd Sunday through June 2006. No hikes during the hot months of July, August & Sept. Hikes resume October 21.

Tues., 5/22: Las Virgenes Canyon – 8:30 a.m. Moderate easy-paced 6 mi, 800' gain hike on picturesque trail and along seasonal stream. Meet at trailhead kiosk (from 101 Ventura Fwy, take Las Virgenes Rd., exit N 1 mi to end, street parking.) Bring water, lunch, hat sunscreen. Ldrs: Pixie Klemic & Ramona Dunn. *Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley) Outing.*

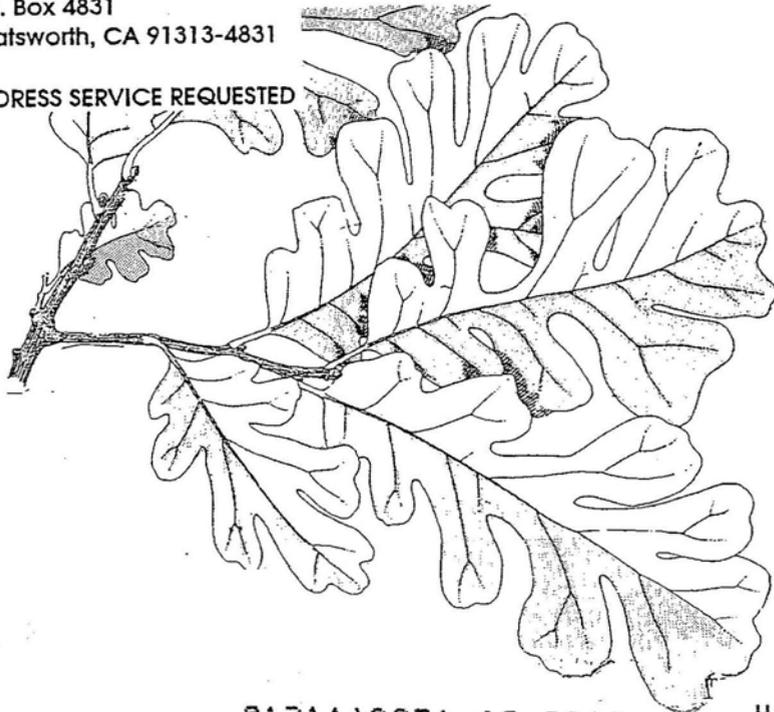
Weds., 5/23: Johnston's Motorway to Rocky Peak – 8:00 a.m. Moderately paced 10 mi, 1500' gain on picturesque trail in Santa Susana Mtns. Meet outside Indian Oaks gate (from N end of Topanga Cyn Blvd in Chatsworth just N of 118 Fwy exit, L on Poema Pl ¼ mi, park along curb outside gate). Bring 2 qts. water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Ldrs: Bob Galletly & Nancy Krupa. *Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley) Outing.*

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.

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
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