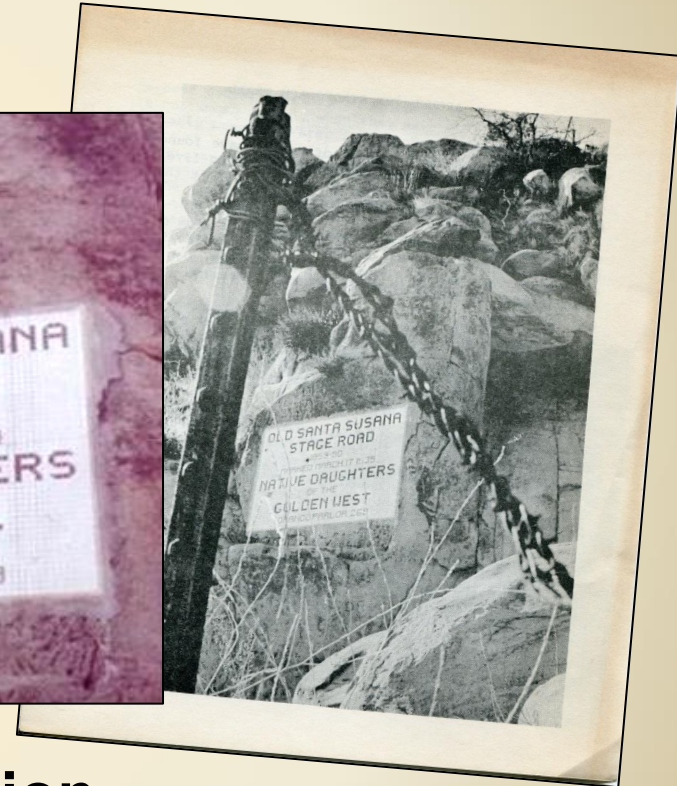
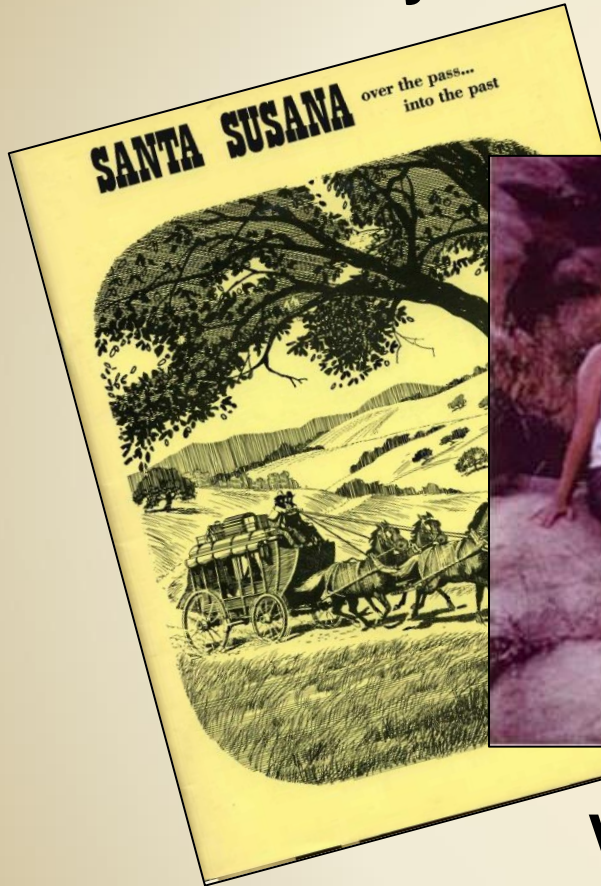


The History of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park



Volunteers with a Vision

The History of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park

- This presentation was inspired by the 25th anniversary of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park (SSPSHP).
- The Park was dedicated in January 1998, and a local dedication ceremony was held in May 1998 at Chatsworth Park South.



*Join us for the 25th
anniversary of the
Santa Susana Pass
State Historic Park*



March 19, 9:00-1:00 Hikes depart on the hour
**All walks led by Santa Susana Pass State
Historic Park volunteer Hike Leaders**

*Trained by the California Department of Parks and Recreation
Supported by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa
Susana Mountains FPSSM.org*

- **Welcome Walk from 9:00-11:00.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leaders:* Jill and Jeff. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate
- **Spahn Ranch Hike from 10:00-12:00.** Meet @the Rocky Peak parking lot on Santa Susana Pass Road. *Hike Leader:* Michelle. *Difficulty Level:* Difficult
- **Miranda Loop Wildflower Hike from 11:00-1:00.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leader:* Dottie. *Difficulty Level:* Difficult
- **Stagecoach Trail Hike from 12:00-2:00.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leader:* Teena. *Difficulty Level:* Difficult
- **Welcome Walk from 1:00-3:0.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leader:* Richard. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate

Rain, temperatures exceeding 95 degrees or red flag warnings cancel hike.

Bring water. Long-sleeved pants & shirt, walking stick, & close-toed shoes recommended.

Parent must accompany minors. Dogs on leash are welcome.

For more information or to join the park's email list, please contact
santasusanafriends@gmail.com

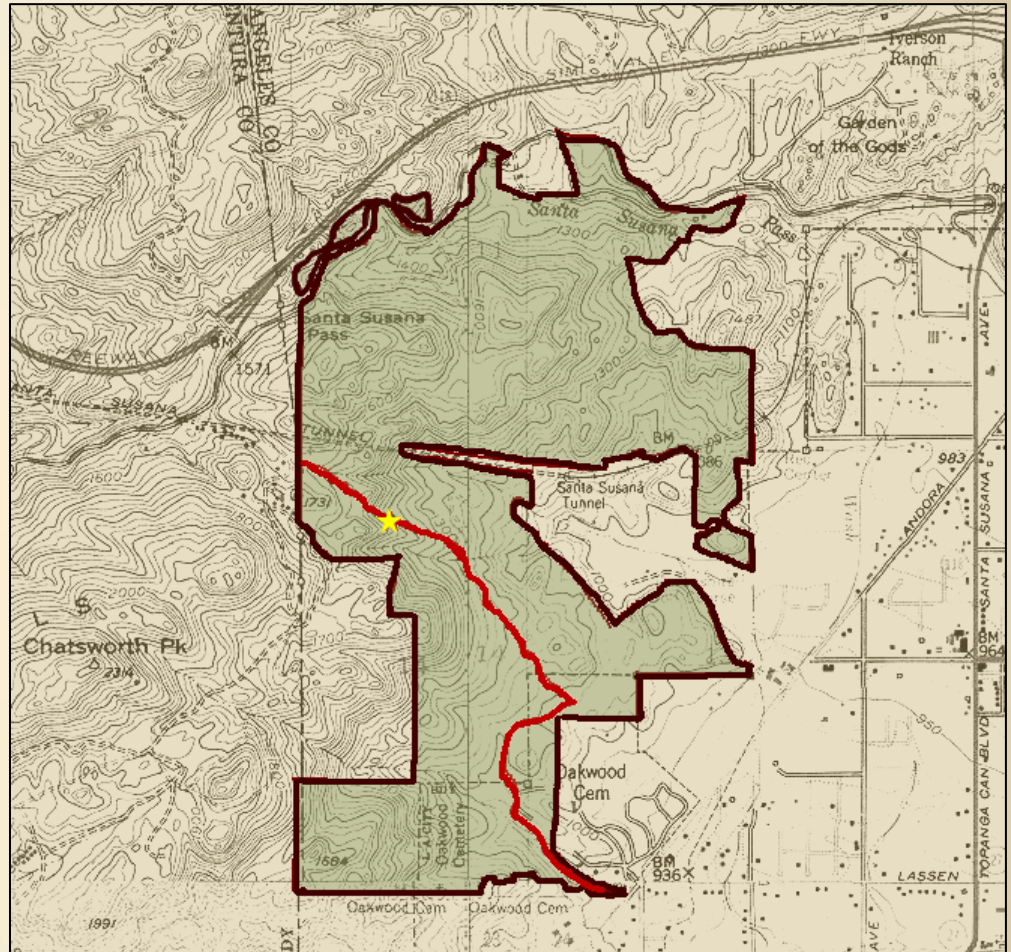
To support programs in this State Park, visit **FPSSM.org**

- After a brief introduction of the SSPSHP, this presentation will focus on the volunteers who created the park, and their continuing efforts to maintain the park, train volunteers, and lead hikes.

Introduction

- The **Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park** is a California State Park of **670 acres**.
- Located in the city of Los Angeles, in Los Angeles County on the boundary between Ventura and Los Angeles counties, between the communities of Chatsworth and Simi Valley.

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park with the Old Santa Susana Stage Road (in red, from the Andora trailhead). The star marks the 1939 historic plaque for the stage road.



Introduction

- Kiosks with park brochures (which include the map at right) and information regarding upcoming hikes are at the four main trailheads:
 - Andora Trailhead, 9861 Andora Ave, Chatsworth
 - Larwin Trailhead, 10249 Larwin Ave, Chatsworth
 - Chatsworth Park South, 22360 Devonshire St, Chatsworth
 - Lilac Lane Trailhead, 7700 Lilac Ln, Simi Valley

[Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park, Park Brochure map](#)

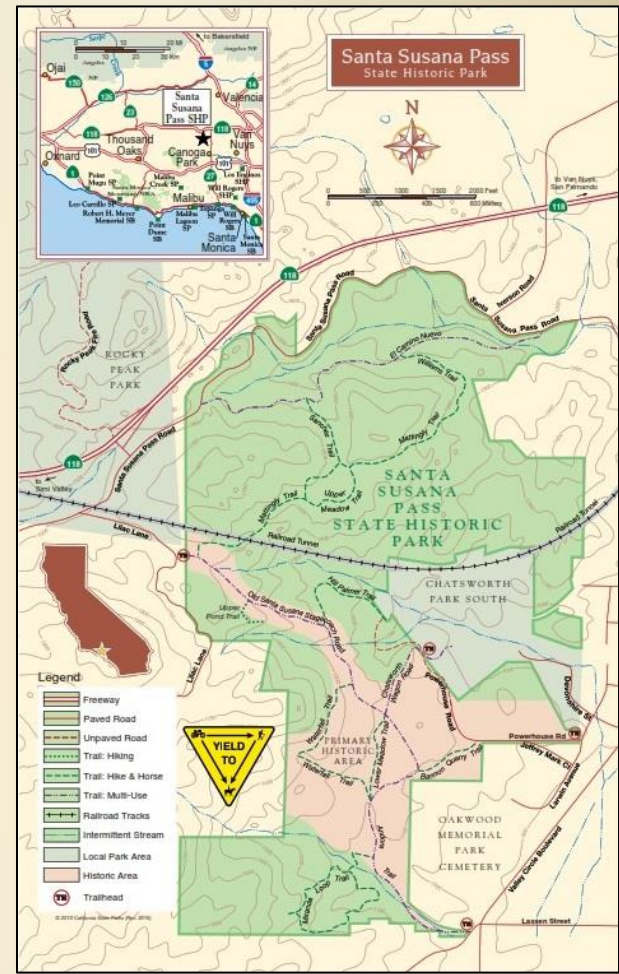


Table of Contents

This presentation will cover the following items:

- The first six years, 1969 to 1974 - Jan Hinkston and the founding of the SSMPA and FPSSM
- The next 23 years, 1975 to 1998 – Land acquisitions culminating in the State Park designation, and volunteer efforts to educate the public about the park.
 - 1986- A short clip from the “Santa Susana Where the Past is Present” promotional video.
 - 1998 – A short video trailer from the 1998 dedication video, and a short clip of Jan Hinkston speaking at the dedication.
- The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023 – The drive for improvements, Educational materials created by State Parks, and Volunteer efforts, in coordination with California State Parks, to maintain the park, train volunteers, and lead hikes.
- A listing of Educational Resources
- Appendix 1 - A History of The SSMPA by Jan Hinkston (up to 1973)
- Appendix 2 - Acquisition Summary by Parcel (670 acres)

The first six years, 1969 to 1974

Janice Hinkston was an elementary school teacher at Chatsworth Park Elementary. She lived on Jensen Drive in West Hills, across from the Chatsworth Reservoir and just north of Dayton Canyon.

She tells the History of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA) in the 1973 commemorative book “SANTA SUSANA over the pass... into the past”, pages 6-13.

Jan noticed some oak trees down on her drive to work, and decided to attend a meeting of “Chatsworth Beautiful” in May, 1969.

And she joined some committees.

The complete 8 page “A History of the SSMPA” is in the Appendix.

A History Of The SSMPA

By JANICE HINKSTON
President SSMPA

For over ten years now, from my house and yard, I have seen one of nature's greatest artistic masterpieces . . . with all the elements of art right there — unsurpassed — line, form, color, rhythm, variety, and unity too, as only nature can unify. Each day I see the west end of the San Fernando Valley, and the rugged escarpments above. Each day I feel how lucky I am to live in what still feels like the countryside, and to work within view of the breathtaking and unique rock formations of the Simi Hills.

As a teacher of young children, I feel strongly that they need the freedom to explore the hills and canyons, trees and flowers, and birds and animals that nature has placed so beautifully around our vast city.

Not only children, but people of all ages, all backgrounds, respond to the freshness, openness, unplanned, *unstructured* beauty in our mountains. With so many millions of us tied to concrete and asphalt, how *crucial* it is for us to have close access to nature and all its works.

One morning I drove by Chatsworth Reservoir on my way to school, and was appalled by the hundreds of ancient oaks laying severed on the ground on the north side along Valley Circle Blvd., I couldn't believe such a violent thing could occur in this day

and age without warning — for what reason? This incident was the one that triggered my getting involved in community life for the first time. How long had I watched this rape of the land and not done anything — thinking like everybody else, “Oh, they'll stop it, before it goes too far.” By “they,” I suppose I meant the Government officials. Ha! How naive that was! I was soon to get my first lesson on just who “they” really are in our society. I had seen a notice in the paper about a second meeting of a newly-formed group named “Chatsworth Beautiful.”

Chatsworth Beautiful was forming committees that night in May, 1969. One immediate concern was a proposed dump site in the beautiful canyon just south of Santa Susana Pass Road. Imagine! That was the epitomy of our stupid land use practices in Los Angeles. Co-chairmen, Chuck Smith and Nanci Oliva, were very intelligently and modestly proceeding, and my turn soon came to voice my concerns about Chatsworth Reservoir and preserving those gorgeous mountains that most of us moved here to be near. Of course, since it was my concern, I guess I was the logical person to become chairman of those committees. Having no idea of what that entailed, I innocently assented.

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg6

The first six years, 1969 to 1974

A few Highlights of “A History of The SSMPA” by Jan Hinkston follow:

September 1969 - Jan meets with the Simi Valley Sierra Club.

March 1970 - Jan begins to study the history, geology, and archaeology of the Simi Hills.

April 1970 – letters sent to legislators

November 1970 - SSMPA becomes a separate organization from Chatsworth Beautiful.

January 1971 - a zoning variance for a mobile home development on the upper stagecoach trail is denied (today's Lilac Lane Trailhead)

March 1971 - LA County Park and Recs and the LA County Historic Landmarks Committee tour the area.

June 1971 - Jan goes to Sacramento and shows slides to the Calif. Parks and Recreation Director.

January 1972 - Fifty-five acres of the Old Santa Susana Stage Road is declared Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #92

March 1972 - huge crowds hike the Stagecoach Trail in a two-day country fair in Chatsworth Park South, with proceeds going to the Land Trust Fund to save the Old Stagecoach Trail.

By 1973, more than \$10,000 has been raised for the SSMPA Land Trust Fund.

In 1974, 174 acres of the “Old Santa Susana Stage Road” is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

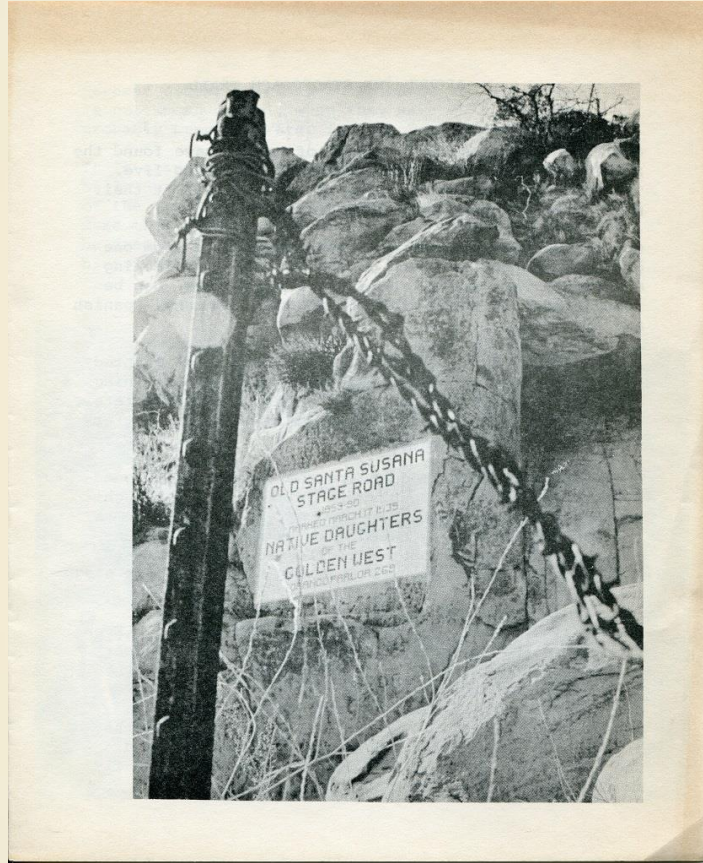


1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg7

The first six years, 1969 to 1974

In January 1972, Huge crowds hiked the Stagecoach Trail on Sundays of the 16th and 23rd.

In March 1972, This four page flyer was given to participants at the two-day country fair in Chatsworth Park South, with proceeds going to the Land Trust Fund to save the Old Stagecoach Trail.



2

AROUND THE STAGECOACH TRAIL

Over the centuries, many groups of people have found the San Fernando Valley to be a desirable place to live. The early inhabitants are gone now but they left their mark in many places around the valley.

One of the best places to see the transition from one group to another is found on the hillside overlooking Chatsworth Park South. Here, in a small area, can be found traces of three distinct groups: Indians, Spanish and Americans.

Indian inhabitants left pictures (pictographs) painted on a rock overlooking a midden (trash dump) containing debris from a village that was nearby. Archaeologists find middens to be a rich source of arrowheads, pottery and other non-decaying artifacts.

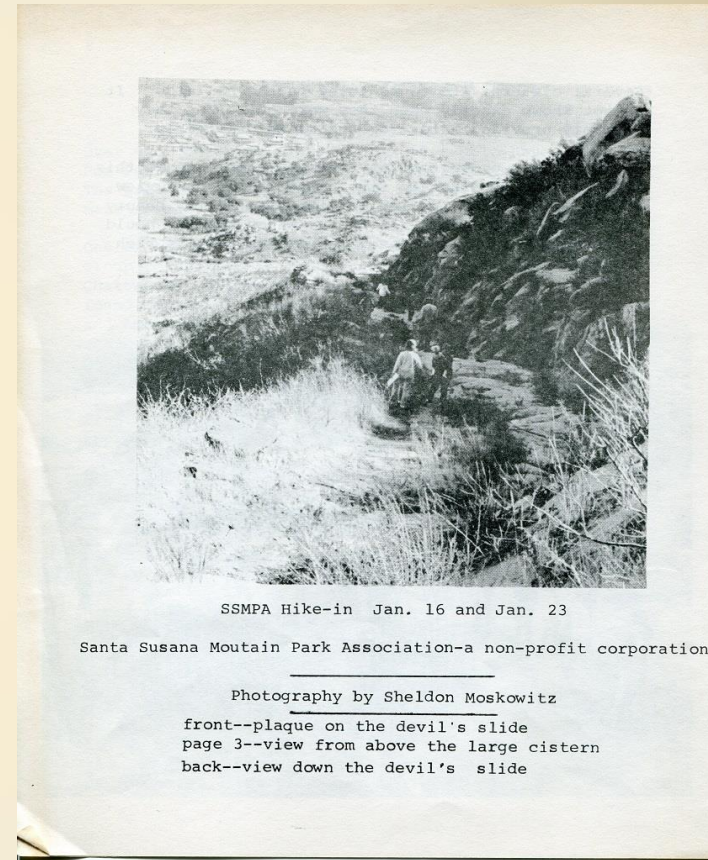
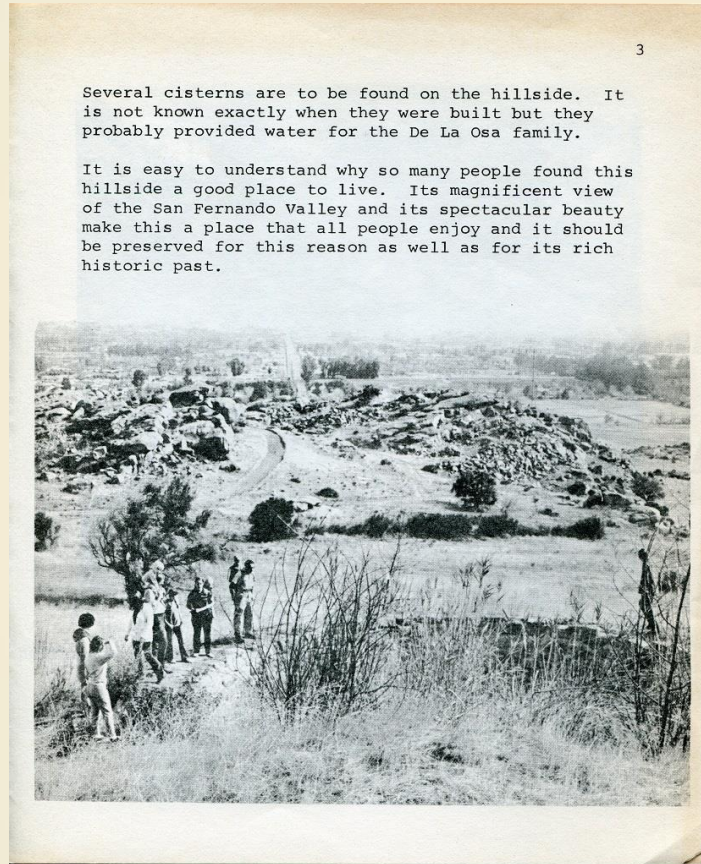
Up the hill from the midden are the remains of a foundation believed to be Spanish in origin. It is thought to have been built for the widow of Vincente De La Osa, the man who originally owned what is now Los Encinos State Historic Park about ten miles to the south-east. The building was later used as a way station on the stage coach trail.

The remains of the stage trail can still be seen. Even from a distance of several miles one can see the scar on the hillside where the trail was picked out of the rock over a hundred years ago. The trail linked the San Fernando Valley with the Simi Valley and points north from 1859 to 1890. So steep was this trail that it was necessary to set the brakes on the stage and tie its wheels before starting down. Sparks would fly as the metal tires slid down the rocky trail.

The first six years, 1969 to 1974

In January 1972,
Huge crowds hiked
the Stagecoach Trail
on Sundays of the
16th and 23rd.

In March 1972, This
four page flyer was
given to participants
at the two-day
country fair in
Chatsworth Park
South, with proceeds
going to the Land
Trust Fund to save
the Old Stagecoach
Trail.



The first six years, 1969 to 1974

Two non-profit, tax exempt organizations were established to administrate the volunteer efforts to preserve and protect the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills:

- The **Santa Susana Mountain Parks Association** (SSMPA) is incorporated as a 501(c)(4)
 - Their website is ssmpa.com
 - Donations to the SSMPA are not tax deductible.
 - 501(c)(4)s must be operated exclusively to promote social welfare, and may engage in some partisan activity.
- The **Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains** (FPSSM) is incorporated as a 501(c)(3).
 - The foundation was formed in May 1974 to support the acquisition of land, and ultimately facilitated the purchase of the 670 acres for what is now the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.
 - Their website is fpssm.org
 - Donations to the FPSSM are tax deductible.
 - 501(c)(3)s are prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for elected public office and must only engage in nonpartisan advocacy.

The next 23 years, 1975 to 1998 – Land acquisitions and volunteer efforts

- The first acquisition was announced in **1977**, the 265 acre Nichols Property ([1977-01 SSMPA newsletter](#))
- The map at right identifies the five parcels at the northern end of the Park
- They were a part of two homestead parcels, husband and wife Charles Mattingly (160 ac) and Florence Mattingly (160 ac). Three Mattingly descendants owned equal shares of the 265 acres: daughters Helen Mattingly McDonald, Elizabeth Mattingly Nichols, and the daughter of deceased Ruth Mattingly, Olive Valdez.
- This property includes the 1895 Chatsworth Grade Road, labeled in the State Park as “El Camino Nuevo”

ZIMAS

Search Reports Resources News!

No Address Font: A A A +/-

Address/Legal

Site Address	None
ZIP Code	None
PIN Number	2108097 26
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	1,445,914.2 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 499 - GRID G3
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 499 - GRID G3
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	2723001901
Tract	None
Map Reference	SEC 11 T2N R17W
Block	None
Lot	PT 3
Alb. (Lot Cut Reference)	2
Map Sheet	2076093
Map Sheet	2076097
Map Sheet	2108093
Map Sheet	2108097

Jurisdictional

Permitting and Zoning Compliance

Planning and Zoning

Assessor

Assessor Parcel No. (APN) 2723001901

Ownership (Assessor)

Owner1

Address

Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)

Owner

Address

Select Parcels

Show total area for selected parcels

Total Area in:

Sq. Feet: 11,509,989.847

Sq. Miles: 0.413

Acres: 264.233

Perimeter (ft.): 39,180.361

ZIMAS is an LA City mapping tool that identifies the parcel number, last owner change date, acreage, and the last sales price.

A side story on the Nichols (and Spahn Ranch) properties

- Charles Mattingly was an attorney living in Downtown Los Angeles. Charles and Florence purchased two 160 acre parcels in 1909 and 1912.
- In the SSPSHP Nichols property folder, their daughter, Elizabeth Nichols, in a letter of March 1, 1974, spoke of her childhood in Chatsworth. *"We are enjoying perfect weather here in Alamos (Sonora, Mexico). Alamos is surrounded by very beautiful mountains, and reminds me a little of my early experience on the ranch in the Santa Susana Mountains. When we were children our father owned, in addition to the land we now hold, all of the property bought by Mr. Retz, as well as over one hundred acres, on the other side of the road which is now owned by John Brandeis and is the west end of his ranch. Papa sold all of this property to a **cowboy actor named Fred Thomson**, who had a famous white horse. It has changed hands several times since. I hope the Brandeis ranch is still intact. It is very beautiful property too."*

March 1, 1974

Dear Mrs. Skillman,

I received a letter from my sister Helen today. The two letters I wrote, one to Mr. West, the other to Mr. Ward, were forwarded to their office after Helen and Olive had read them.

We are enjoying perfect weather here in Alamos. Alamos is surrounded by very beautiful mountains, and reminds me a little of my early experience on the ranch in the Santa Susana Mountains. When we were children our father owned, in addition to the land we now hold, all of the property bought by Mr. Retz, as well as over one hundred acres, on the other side of the road which is now owned by John Brandeis and is the west end of his ranch. Papa sold all of this property to a cowboy actor named Fred Thomson, who had a famous white horse. It has changed hands several times since. I hope the Brandeis ranch is still intact. It is very beautiful property too.

I hope all is progressing satisfactorily with your project.
If I can be of any further help please let me know.

Best wishes, sincerely,

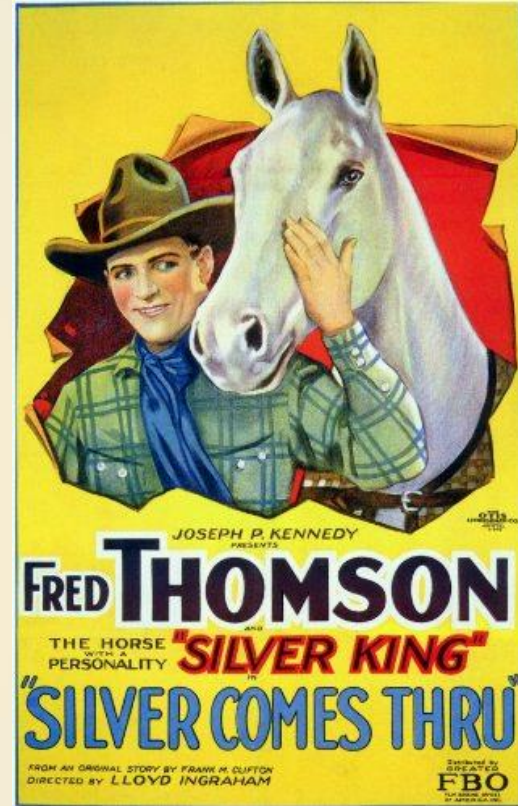
Elizabeth Nichols

A side story on the Nichols (and Spahn Ranch) properties

Fred Thomson (1890-1928) was an American silent film cowboy who rivaled Tom Mix in popularity before dying at age 38 of tetanus. His pallbearers at his funeral included Harold Lloyd, Charles Ferrell, Douglas Fairbanks, and George W Hill. Honorary pallbearers included Buster Keaton and movie mogul Joseph M. Schenck.

The [Spahn Ranch](#) chain of title is as follows:

- 1909/1912 Florence and Charles Mattingly
(purchased via the 1820 Cash Act)
- ?? Fred Thomson (1890-1928) with horse Silver King
(per Elizabeth Mattingly Nichols)
- 1928 Dr. Sharon Atkins, prominent Hollywood physician
(per author Bob Turner, Dr. Atkins owned Silver King)
- 1947 Lee and Ruth McReynolds
- 1955 George Spahn
- 1980 State of California Department Of Parks & Recreation



1927 *Silver Comes Thru*
a silent Western

The next 23 years, 1975 to 1998 – Land acquisitions and volunteer efforts

- The second acquisition in **1980** was the 43 acre [Spahn Ranch](#) site south of Santa Susana Pass Rd.
- The map at right identifies the two parcels on either side of today's 10 acre Rocky Peak Fields, a part of Rocky Peak Church.
- They were a part of two homestead parcels, Dionisio Sanchez (129 ac) and James Williams (160 ac)

ZIMAS

Search Reports Resources

Lot: PT NW 1/4 SEC 12 T2N R17W
Arb (Lot Cut Reference): 70
Map Sheet: 210B097
Map Sheet: 210B101

► Jurisdictional
► Permitting and Zoning Compliance
► Planning and Zoning
▼ Assessor

Assessor Parcel No. (APN): 2723002900
Ownership (Assessor):
Owner1:
Address:
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records):
Owner:
Address:
APN Area (Co. Public Works): 27,230 (ac)
Use Code: 540V - Dry Farm - Pasture - Vacant Land
Assessed Land Val.: \$74,549
Assessed Improvement Val.: \$0
Last Owner Change: 04/15/1980
Last Sale Amount: \$0
Tax Rate Area: 2319
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk): None
Building 1: No data for building 1

Select Parcels

Show total area for selected parcels

Total Area in:
Sq. Feet: 1,856,911.101
Sq. Miles: 0.067
Acres: 42.629
Perimeter (ft.): 11,087.559

ZIMAS is an LA City mapping tool that identifies the parcel number, last owner change date, acreage, and the last sales price.

The next 23 years, 1975 to 1998 – Land acquisitions and volunteer efforts

- The third acquisition was announced in **1983**, 120 acres, includes the Devil's slide, relay station, and cistern ([1983-08 SSMPA newsletter](#))
- The map at right identifies the five parcels at the westerly end of the Park, the Lilac Lane Trailhead to the olive trees below the way station.
- They were a part of two homestead parcels, Cora Henry (135 ac) and William Bannon (160 ac)
- The upper 42 acres were owned by Leland Webster, and the lower 78 acres were owned by Douglas Palmer (no relation to Minnie Hill Palmer). The Palmer property was the Bannon Homestead later purchased by Hill in 1926.

The screenshot displays the ZIMAS web application interface. At the top, the 'ZIMAS' logo is visible. Below the logo, there are three main navigation tabs: 'Search', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. The 'Search' tab is active, showing a search results table with columns for 'Arb (Lot Cut Reference)', 'Map Sheet', and 'Map Sheet'. The table contains the following data:

Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	Map Sheet	Map Sheet
30	2048097	2078097

Below the table, there are several expandable sections: 'Jurisdictional', 'Permitting and Zoning Compliance', 'Planning and Zoning', and 'Assessor'. The 'Assessor' section is expanded, showing the 'Assessor Parcel No. (APN)' as 2723010905. Below this, there are sections for 'Ownership (Assessor)', 'Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)', and 'APN Area (Co. Public Works)'. The 'APN Area' section shows the following data:

APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	Use Code	Assessed Land Val.	Assessed Improvement Val.	Last Owner Change	Last Sale Amount	Tax Rate Area	Dead Ref No. (City Clerk)	Building 1
80.020 (ac)	8800 - Miscellaneous - Government Owned Property	\$883,263	\$0	06/17/1983	\$0	2319	None	No data for building 1

At the bottom of the 'Assessor' section, there is a 'Select Parcels' button. Below this, there is a checkbox for 'Show total area for selected parcels' which is checked. The total area information is displayed as follows:

Total Area in:
Sq. Feet: 5,193,151.08
Sq. Miles: 0.186
Acres: 119.218
Perimeter (ft.): 18,383.07

The map on the right shows an aerial view of a hilly area with a blue outline highlighting a large parcel. A red dot is visible on the map, and a white scale bar is on the left side.

ZIMAS is an LA City mapping tool that identifies the parcel number, last owner change date, acreage, and the last sales price.

1986 Santa Susana Where the Past is Present

- The [October 1986 newsletter](#) announced a new 16 minute video tape. The film was funded by a grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.
- The video is posted on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2B0_fgzoIY&t=76s
- It includes an Introduction by Jan Hinkston, and a Burro Flats Painted Cave interpretation by Paul Faulstich.

- **Up Next:** The first 4 minutes of the 16 minute video, “Santa Susana Where the Past is Present”



The first 4 minutes of
the 1986 video,

Santa Susana Where
the Past is Present

It includes an
Introduction by
Jan Hinkston, and a
Burro Flats Painted
Cave interpretation by
Paul Faulstich.



The next 23 years, 1975 to 1998 – Land acquisitions and volunteer efforts

- The fourth major acquisition was announced in **1991**, the 55 acre, Larwin Trailhead to the Quarry and Stagecoach Trail ([1991-07 SSMPA newsletter](#))
- This was the last unpurchased portion of the Old Stagecoach Trail that was on the National Register of Historic Places.
- This parcel was a part of two homestead parcels, William Bannon (40 ac) and James Hill (160 ac). The Hill family purchased the Bannon acreage in 1926, and Douglas Palmer owned the 55 acres in 1973.
- It was purchased by the State Parks Department with the 1988 Proposition 70 bond funds.

ZIMAS

Search Reports Resources

Map Sheet 204B101
Map Sheet 207B097
Map Sheet 207B101

▶ Jurisdictional
▶ Permitting and Zoning Compliance
▶ Planning and Zoning

▼ Assessor
Assessor Parcel No. (APN) 2723010911
Ownership (Assessor)
Owner1
Address
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)
Owner
Address
APN Area (Co. Public Works)* 54.980 (ac)
Use Code 010V - Residential - Single Family Residence - Vacant Land
Assessed Land Val. \$366,000
Assessed Improvement Val. \$3
Last Owner Change 04/26/1991
Last Sale Amount \$9
Tax Rate Area 464
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk) None
Building 1 No data for building 1

Select Parcels

Show total area for selected parcels

Total Area in:
Sq. Feet: 2,398,327.825
Sq. Miles: 0.086
Acres: 55.058
Perimeter (ft.): 8,414.521

ZIMAS is an LA City mapping tool that identifies the parcel number, last owner change date, acreage, and the last sales price.

The next 23 years, 1975 to 1998 – Land acquisitions and volunteer efforts

- The fifth major acquisition was announced in **1991**, the 156 acre, Andora Trailhead to the Quarry, Miranda Meadow and Stagecoach Trail ([1991-11 SSMPPA newsletter](#))
- The map at right identifies the six parcels totaling 156 acres.
- This parcel was a part of two homestead parcels, Francisco Miranda (133 ac) and William Bannon (160 ac).
- In 1923 Oakwood Cemetery purchased five 40 acre parcels totaling 200 acres. In 1991 it was referred to as the Ransbottom property. Ransbottom Corp. developed Summit Ridge in Chatsworth in 1987.
- These parcels were also purchased with bond funds.

ZIMAS		
Search	Reports	Resources
Lot: L 112 3L 114 3C 114 12W R17W		
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	1	
Map Sheet	204B097	
▶ Jurisdictional		
▶ Permitting and Zoning Compliance		
▶ Planning and Zoning		
▼ Assessor		
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	2724006904	
Ownership (Assessor)		
Owner1		
Address		
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)		
Owner		
Address		
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	40 380 (ac)	
Use Code	010V - Residential - Single Family Residence - Vacant Land	
Assessed Land Val.	\$542,106	
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$0	
Last Owner Change	01/28/1992	
Last Sale Amount	\$9	
Tax Rate Area	52	
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	None	
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* Select Parcels		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show total area for selected parcels		
Total Area in:		
Sq. Feet: 6,805,113.659		
Sq. Miles: 0.244		
Acres: 156.224		
Perimeter (ft.): 26,647.152		

ZIMAS is an LA City mapping tool that identifies the parcel number, last owner change date, acreage, and the last sales price.

The January 1998 State Park Dedication

On January 27, 1998, The California and State Park Recreation Commission designated the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. (the article below was published Jan 26th)

‘People have thought I was dreaming the impossible dream, but it was just too important to give up.’

JANICE HINKSTON, who fought to win historical recognition of a 670-acre tract near Chatsworth



Photos by RICARDO DEARATANIA / Los Angeles Times

The Santa Susana Pass area is popular with local equestrians. “We don’t want to see it developed at all,” said one.

A Park With a Past

■ **Preservation:** State commission is expected to designate Chatsworth area used by Indians, explorers and modern-day nature lovers a historic site.

By T. CHRISTIAN MILLER
and EDWARD M. YOON
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

CHATSWORTH—Native Americans once built a thriving village in the shadow of the jutting boulders here. Later, Mexican settlers raised adobe homes. Then came the stagecoaches, rattling across steep and rocky roads.

Now, the 670-acre site of grassy trails and sandstone bluffs tucked in the hills above Chatsworth is set to take on its next role: the state’s newest historic park.

The designation, expected to come Tuesday at a California State Park and Recreation Commission meeting, will not bring any immediate improvements to the site just south of Santa Susana Pass Road. Nonetheless, park boosters call it



Archeologist Al Knight shows off a cave in the Santa Susana Pass area that might get historic designation.

an important step.

“I’m thrilled,” said Janice Hinkston, who began working in 1970 to win recognition of the tract, which often is overlooked even by local residents. “People have thought I was dreaming the impossible dream, but it was just too important to give up.”

Supporters have at least one fear about the area’s increased visibility, though. Past publicity has brought vandals, who spray-painted rocks, and pot hunters, who dug up chunks of earth in a search for artifacts. Such excavation is illegal and carries the possibility of a two-year prison sentence or a stiff fine.

Filled with steep cliffs, sharp ridges and abundant wildlife, the area’s varied geography is matched by a rich history dating back thousands of years, when it served as a border outpost of the Chumash and Tongva cultures. The village, a sort of ancient Tijuana where two cultures often met, shows influences from both tribes, and it numbered between 50 and a few hundred people, say local archeologists.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, Spanish explorers began traveling through the area, and by 1804, the Santa Susana pass is mentioned as one of the

Please see **PARK, B4**

The January 1998 State Park Dedication

On January 27, 1998, The California and State Park Recreation Commission designated the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. (the article below was published Jan 26th)

B4 MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 1998 / F

VALLEY NEWS



Photos by RICARDO DABATANIA / Los Angeles Times

A palm-size piece of a metate, a stone used by Native Americans for grinding food, was found in the area that was home to Indians long ago.

PARK: Over Years, Battles Fought With Developers

Continued from B1
primary north-south routes between Los Angeles and the rest of the state.

Over the next century, several important roads were built through the area, despite a treacherously steep portion of the pass at the western end of the park called "Devil's Slide."

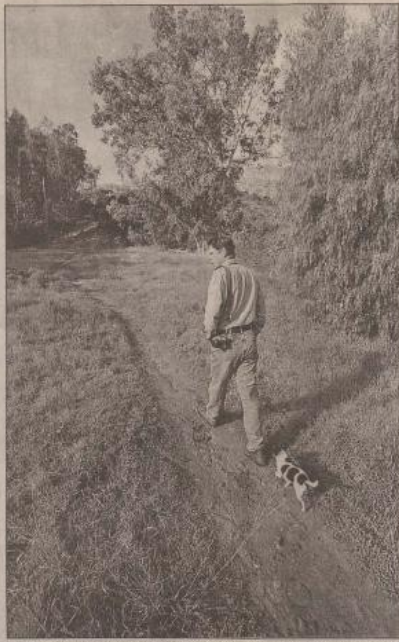
The section was so pitched that stagecoaches were lowered down it by hand. There were three fares: one for those who stayed in the coach, one for those who got out and hiked that leg of the journey, and the cheapest for those who helped do the lowering. On both

sides of the pass, local families established stagecoach stops and watering holes.

tain Park Assn. Over the years, Hinkston, who is divorced, turned down two wedding proposals from suitors who wanted to take her away from her beloved park. Only recently did she move to Oregon to be with her daughter and 5-year-old grandson.

"I still am very passionate about it," said Hinkston, who plans to fly down for Tuesday's hearing in Valencia. "I love the rocks and the land and the history."

Although state park officials were at first reluctant to become involved with a project so close to an urban area, they began buying land in 1978. Tracts came in bits



Al Knight and follower Deedee stroll a trail. The Santa Susana Mountains Park Assn. conducts tours of the historically significant area.

and pieces, with a 34-acre section in the process of being added even now.

There were plenty of battles with developers. One wanted to build a mobile home park. Another wanted luxury homes catering to equestrians. In 1972, at the height of the Cold War, suspicious neighbors accused the whole effort of being a Communist plot to seize land.

The project also labored in the shadow of better-known conservation battles in the Santa Monica Mountains. There, clashes between big developers and preservation groups won much of the public's attention thanks to wealthy—and well-known—homeowners and the aggressive Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the state agency charged with preserving open space there.

"It was never easy," archeologist Knight said.

On a recent hike, Knight showed off the potential of the area, which state officials are proposing to call the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

Although the site is already open to the public, it is hardly marked with distinction. One entrance is through a tear in a chain-link fence near the foot of Lassen Street and Valley Circle Boulevard. Another is in Ventura County, at the foot of Lilac Lane.

The 1,700-foot peaks of the San Hills form the backdrop, encircling the park area with a massive, red-orange wall. The ramparts in the park were formed about 5 million years ago by mountain-building forces shoving the earth upward, according to a state report.

The Native Americans in the area had a different explanation. According to one recorded legend, a local chief named Sparrow Hawk fled to the hills to mourn the death of his bride. There he remained forever, his outstretched, questioning arms forming the shape of a hawk that can still be seen today (with the help of a squint) in the peaks overlooking the tract.

The park association offers

weekly tours through the area, which is laced with trails. In addition, hikers, joggers and horse riders use the proposed park on a routine basis. Knight estimates there are 10,000 to 20,000 visitors a year.

Nearby residents Zeussu Iles and Laura Moran were out riding horses Friday. For them, the area is a convenient place to enjoy an activity not normally associated with city living.

"We don't want to see it developed at all," said Moran, 35, as she rode Tommy, her 17-year-old quarter horse.

A little farther up the trail, Kate Poole was hiking toward the top of the pass for a view of the valley. A 33-year-old Chatsworth equestrian, she said she enjoys the convenience of the area and its rural view.

But more important, she said, the park is a refuge of sorts.

"I'm not really a city person," said Poole. "Here I can escape."

The May 1998 State Park Dedication Ceremony

On May 16th, 1998, a local dedication ceremony was held at Chatsworth Park South (article below published May 17)

WELL WORTH THE WAIT



Tom Mercurio/Daily News

Park opens after 28-year fight

By Melissa Schmitt
Daily News Staff Writer

CHATSWORTH — It took 28 years, but California's newest state park was worth it.

On Saturday, the Santa Susana Mountains Park Association celebrated the opening of Santa Susana Pass State Historical Park with an old-fashioned picnic, hikes and a dedication ceremony.

The event park brought tears to the eyes of Helen Treend, founder of the Chatsworth Reservoir Conservancy, a group now lobbying for the preservation of the Chatsworth Reservoir near the park.

Treend has been involved in the effort to preserve the park as open space since park activist Jan Hinkston began lobbying for the designation in 1970.

"This is especially important because it's at the end of a valley," Treend said. "We're overdeveloped. It's taken us 30 years to get this space, and it may take another 30 years to get another few acres added on.

"It shouldn't be this way. We should be saving open space. It should be a cooperative effort."

Hinkston began lobbying for the preservation of the historic Old Stagecoach Trail and development of a park in the Santa Susana area in November 1970. By September 1971, she had won for the trail a designation as a state historical point of interest. By the next year, Hinkston and her followers had 55 more acres of the trail designated.

Since that time Hinkston and the park association have lobbied tirelessly to win the park the historical designation. They eventually want to expand the park with the purchase of 428 more acres.

Ted Dent, the association's recording secretary, can remember the day he began working for the park in the early 1970s. He had gone to pick up his daughter from kindergarten, and her teacher asked if he wanted to go on a hike with her class that Saturday.

"My daughter is 32 now," Dent said Saturday after the ceremony. "That's 27 years I've been

involved in this."

Winning the designation at that time seemed beyond everyone's wildest dreams, he said. "This is a dream come true. When we first started hiking this trail it was about to be turned into a trailer park. This is just beyond belief."

There are artifacts in those mountains, Dent said, adding, "This is older than the Himalayas."

Also included in the portion of the mountains now protected by the historical designation is the famous Iverson Movie Ranch.

Hundreds of western films were made on four locations near the Santa Susana Pass, including Corriganville, which has been saved.

There is an Indian village and a sulfur spring used by the Indians. Real stagecoaches crossed over the Santa Susana Pass between 1860 and 1890. Evidence of the many types of transportation used in the last two centuries is still visible.

There also are olive trees believed to have been cut from those at the San Fernando



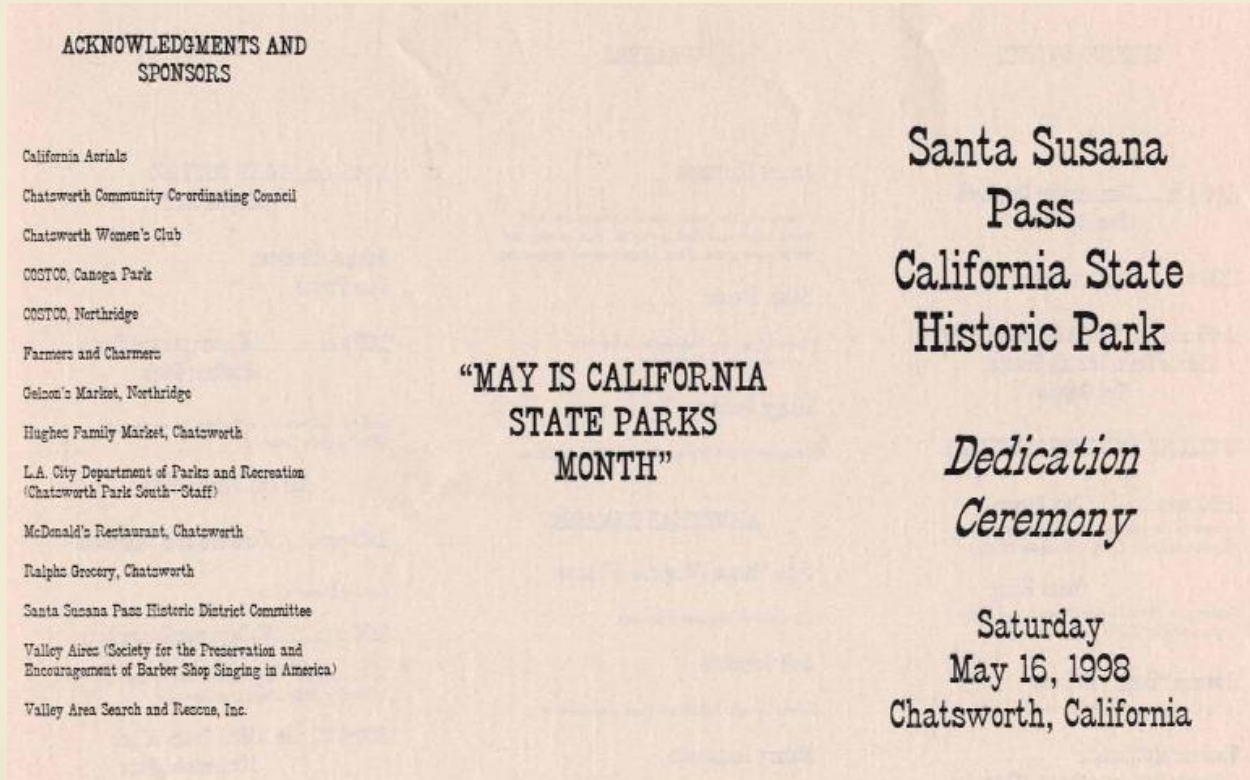
Mission.

The Stagecoach Trail is the key to the historical designation, as it is the gateway to the San Fernando and Simi valleys. It is listed on the National Register of the Historic Places and is a Los Angeles City Historical Cultural Monument.

Association members say their efforts will now turn toward the park's funding and management.

The 1998 State Park Dedication Ceremony

On May 16th, 1998, a local dedication ceremony was held at Chatsworth Park South



The 1998 State Park Dedication Ceremony

On May 16th, 1998, a local dedication ceremony was held at Chatsworth Park South

OPENING EVENTS	SPEAKERS	
11:00 a.m.....Community Displays Family Hikes	Janice Hinkston <i>Founder of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association and Founder of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains</i>	12:45.p.m.....CAKE CUTTING CEREMONY
11:30 a.m.....California Aerials	Helen Treend <i>Founder of the Chatsworth Reservoir Conservancy</i>	Janice Hinkston Dan Preece
11:45 a.m.....CHUMASH BLESSING Charlie Cook, Dennis Garcia, Ted Garcia	Marge Feinberg <i>Founder of the Rim of the Valley Association</i>	1:00 p.m.Hikes into the State Historic Park <i>Led by California State Park Rangers and SSMPA Hike Leaders</i>
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	ADDITIONAL REMARKS	ENTERTAINMENT
12:00 noon.....Dan Preece <i>Master of Ceremonies and Superintendent, Angeles District, California State Parks</i>	John Thorpe (Virginia Watson) <i>Chatsworth Historical Society</i>	2:00 p.m.....Farmers and Charmers <i>Square Dance Group</i>
Bara King <i>Supervisor, West Valley District, L.A. City, Department of Parks and Recreation</i>	Jeff Johnston <i>Santa Susana Mountain Park Association</i>	2:30 p.m.....Valleyaires Ensemble <i>Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Singing in America</i>
Howard "Buck" McKeon <i>U.S. Congressman, 25th District</i>	Nancy Razanski <i>Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains</i>	1:00-4:00 p.m....Mini Tours of the Homestead Acre <i>Chatsworth Historical Society Docents</i>
Thomas McClintock <i>California State Assemblyman, 38th District</i>		
Acknowledgments and Sponsors		

The 1998 State Park Dedication Ceremony

On May 16th, 1998, a local dedication ceremony was held at Chatsworth Park South

- The video of the dedication ceremony is posted on YouTube as a [Playlist](#)
- It is in 4 parts
 - 1998-05-16 SSPSHP Dedication 1 - 2014 Trailer 4 min
 - 1998-05-16 SSPSHP Dedication 2 before Dedication 39 min
 - 1998-05-16 SSPSHP Dedication 3 Dedication Ceremony 1 hr, 1 min
 - 1998-05-16 SSPSHP Dedication 4 after Dedication 15 min
- It was digitized and shared in 2014 during the 16th anniversary of the State Park
- **Up Next:** The 4 minute video, 1998-05-16 SSPSHP Dedication 1 - 2014 Trailer
This video identifies many of the volunteers at the event

A 4 minute video,
1998-05-16 SSPSH
Dedication Trailer

This Trailer is part 1
of the 1998 Santa
Susana Pass State
Historic Park
Dedication Ceremony
playlist.

The trailer was made
to commemorate the
16th Anniversary of
the Park, at a
presentation at the
Chatsworth Library
on May 24, 2014.

02/21/2023

Chatsv

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The drive to set the area aside as a State Park began in 1970, led by Jan Hinkston, a kindergarten teacher at Chatsworth Park Elementary School.

For the next two decades, a true community effort by individuals and organizations such as Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA) and Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains (FPSSM) gradually overcame the initial reluctance of State Park officials; bits and pieces of land began to be bought in 1979. The community battled land developers looking to build a mobile home park and luxury equestrian estates.

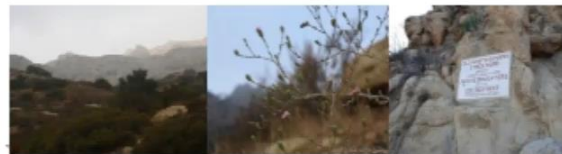
After its dedication in 1998, the new Park remained obscure until a drive for improvements was begun by the Chatsworth Women's Club in 2002. Thousands of names were gathered by petition, along with letters of support from local community organizations. Hundreds of postcards were sent to elected officials representing the area, enclosing the petitions and letters. This grass-roots campaign continued for five years and resulted in the development of a General Plan/EIR that was approved by the California Department of Parks and Recreation at a meeting here in Chatsworth. Community efforts kept the park open through two threatened closures by the State. Presently, a corps of Volunteers are working hard in the Park on graffiti removal, weed abatement and as Interpretive Docents and Park Observers.

One thing is sure - this is **our** State Park; celebrate it, visit it.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has". Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist.

SPECIAL THANKS for contributions and support to:
Chatsworth Branch Library, Jan Metzler, Head Librarian;
Friends of the Chatsworth Library;
Nancy Razanski.

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park



A PARK WITH A PAST

May 24, 2014

16th Anniversary of SSPSH Dedication Ceremony

Presented by the Foundation for the Preservation of the
Santa Susana Mountains, celebrating the
150th Anniversary of California State Parks

Sponsored by the Chatsworth Branch,
Los Angeles Public Library

The 1998 State Park Dedication Ceremony

On May 16th, 1998, a local dedication ceremony was held at Chatsworth Park South

- **Up Next:** A 4 minute video clip of the one hour dedication, Jan Hinkston speaking...

A four minute video
clip of the 1998-05-16
SSPSHP Dedication

Jan Hinkston
speaking



02/21/2023

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Jan Hinkston had retired by 1998 and moved to Oregon to be with her family.

In 1998, Al Knight compiled some of Jan's papers in "*The Papers of Jan Hinkston - A Collection*". He also sent many boxes of Jan's SSMPA records to CSUN.

Jan passed away in 2010 in Madison Wisconsin. A tribute to Jan and her many achievements are found in the [Nov 2010 SSMPA Newsletter](#)

A public memorial service was held on March 25th, 2011 at the Homestead Acre.

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- After its dedication in 1998, the new Park remained obscure until a drive for improvements was begun by the Chatsworth Women's Club in 2002.
- Thousands of names were gathered by petition, along with letters of support from local community organizations. Hundreds of postcards, petitions and letters were sent to elected officials representing the area.



Laurie Dager, Virginia Watson at a 2003 Rally Day at Chatsworth Park South



History, Trails, Wildflowers, Scenic Vistas Hidden in the Northwest Corner of Chatsworth

Join Us For Rally Day-Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park, Chatsworth

Rally Day for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park
 Saturday - September 20, 2003 - 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon
 Chatsworth Park South Recreation Center
 (22360 Devonshire Street, West of Topanga Canyon Blvd.)

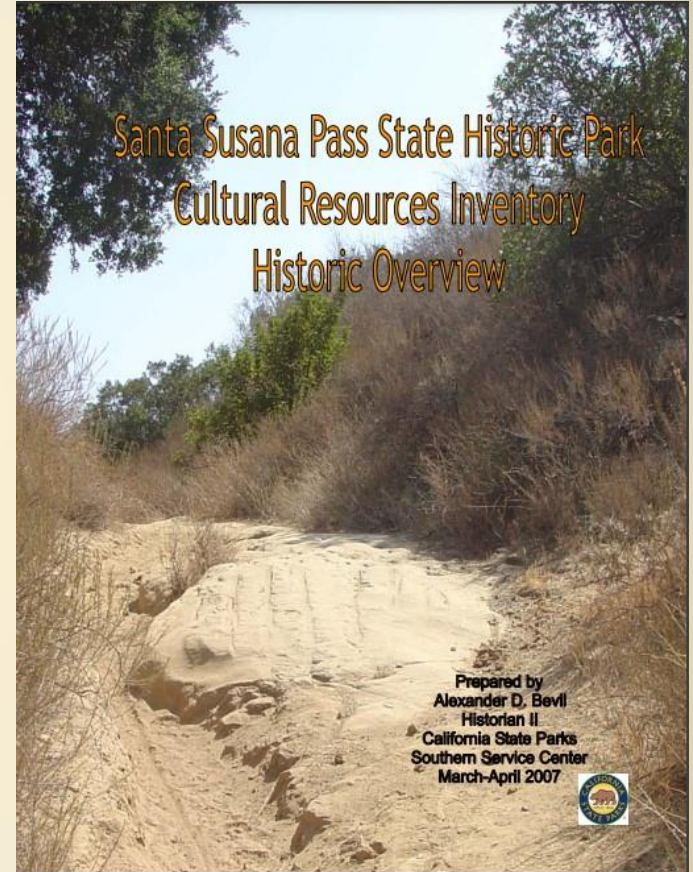
The Park needs funding for rangers, exhibits, trail maintenance, and a visitor center, as well as for nearby land acquisitions. We need to show local elected officials we care! Come learn more, and meet our elected officials and others who can improve the future for our Park and our children.

Laurie Dager, President
 Chatsworth Women's Club
 P.O. Box 3554
 Chatsworth CA 91311-3554

Rally Day is jointly sponsored by the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains, the Chatsworth Historical Society, and the Chatsworth Women's Club. Rally Information 818 908-5243; <http://www.chatsworthchamber.com>-Local News

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- The grass-roots campaign continued for five years and resulted in the development of a General Plan/EIR that was approved by the California Department of Parks and Recreation at a meeting here in Chatsworth, and published in 2008.
- [Santa Susana Pass SHP - General Plan](#)
 - Under Resources Inventory
 - [Historic Overview](#) - Alexander Bevil - 78 pgs
 - [Ethnohistoric Overview](#) - John Johnson - 72 pgs
 - [Cultural Resources Inventory - Archaeology](#) - Mealey/Brodie - 36 pgs

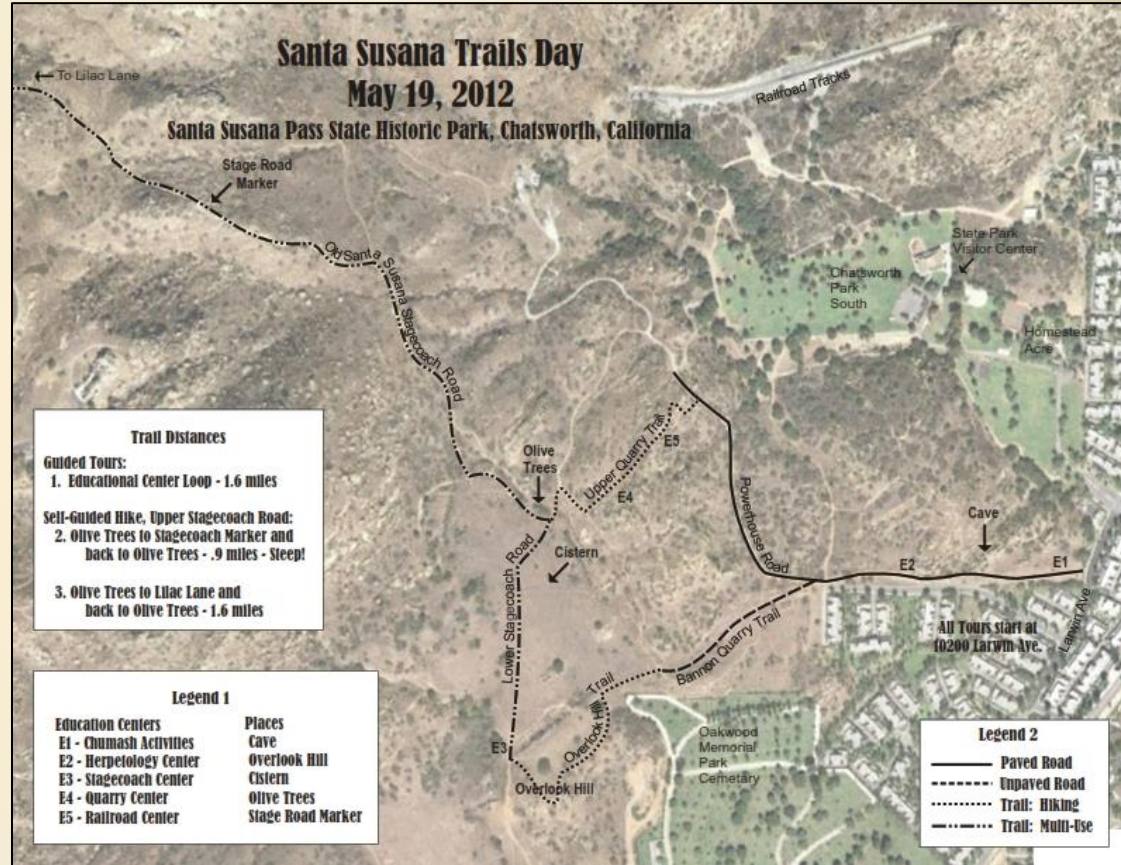


The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- In 2008 Santa Susana Pass SHP was one of the 48 California state parks proposed for closure in January 2008 as part of a deficit reduction program.
- In 2008/2009, Volunteers signed up for the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP) with Barbara Tejada, Angeles District Archaeologist, California State Parks
- In 2011, FPSSM rebooted to serve the need to oversee the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. FPSSM has taken over the responsibility of the SSPSHP-Volunteer Program set up in 2010 by SSMPA to provide Park Observers, Graffiti Squad and Interpretative Hike Leaders.
 - FPSSM filed paperwork to convert itself to a State Co-operating Agency - [Cooperating Associations Program](#). There are 89 non-profit Cooperating Associations serving most of the 280 state parks.
- Community efforts keep the park open. Presently, a corps of Volunteers are working hard in the Park on graffiti removal, weed abatement and as Interpretive Docents and Park Observers.

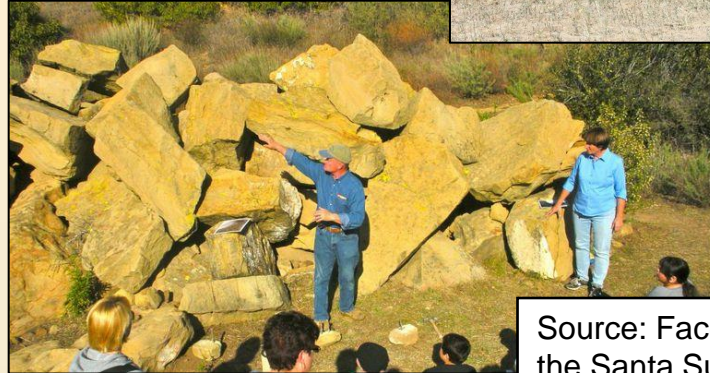
The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- In 2012, we had a **Trails Day** in May, with five educational centers, from the Larwin Trailhead
- Smokey the Bear showed up at Trails Day in 2014, with John Luker and Teena Takata



The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- 2012 Trails Day at Larwin Trailhead
- Assemblyman Bob Blumenfeld gives certificate to John Luker
- And they remove the park closing sign
- Ray & Ann Vincent at Rock Quarry
- Bob Dager at Stagecoach presentation



Source: Facebook - Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023



- 2013 Trails Day at Larwin Trailhead
- John Luker and Jelena Csanyi
- Elizabeth Harris and Dale Chaloukian with equestrians
- Teena Takata leading a hike with Donna Nachtrab

Source: Facebook - Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023



- 2014 Trails Day at Larwin Trailhead
- Dale Chaloukian at entrance
- Warren Stone and Jelena Csanyi at sign-in table
- Bob Dager at the Stagecoach
- Donna and Tom Nachtrab at the Quarry



Source: Facebook - Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- 2014 Welcome Walk Hike to the Stagecoach Trail Plaque led by Teena Takata
- Including Tom & Donna Nachtrab, Carol Lucas, Jelena Csanyi, Ann Vincent, Wendi Gladstone



Source: Facebook - Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023



Winter - Spring 2023 Community Nature Walks and Hikes



All walks led by Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park volunteer Hike Leaders

Trained by the California Department of Parks and Recreation
Supported by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa
Susana Mountains FPSSM.org

- **1/1 First Day Hikes from 11:00-1:00.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leaders:* Various. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate (Welcome Walks); Difficult (Stagecoach Trail, Waterfall Trail)
- **1/22 Welcome Walk from 9:30-11:30.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leader:* John Kuhn. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate
- **2/19 Welcome Walk from 9:00-1:00.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leader:* Jeff Snell. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate
- **3/19 Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park 25th Anniversary Hikes, departing on the hour from 9-1.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leaders:* Various. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate (Welcome Walks); Difficult (Spahn Ranch, Stagecoach Trail)
- **4/16 Miranda Loop Wildflower Hike from 10:00-12:30.** Meet @Andora Trailhead. *Hike Leader:* Dottie Acker. *Difficulty Level:* Difficult
- **5/14 Special Mother's Day Hike from 10:00-12:00.** Meet in front of the Chatsworth Park South Recreation Center. *Hike Leader:* Michelle Franks. *Difficulty Level:* Moderate

Rain, temperatures exceeding 95 degrees or red flag warnings cancel hike.
Bring water. Long-sleeved pants & shirt, walking stick, & close-toed shoes recommended.

Parent must accompany minors. Dogs on leash are welcome.

For more information or to join the park's email list, please contact
santasusanafriends@gmail.com

To support programs in this State Park, visit FPSSM.org

- Today, hikes are held year round by volunteer Hike Leaders
- Naturalist and Hike Leader Training is also offered annually

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park 2023 Simi Hills Naturalist Training



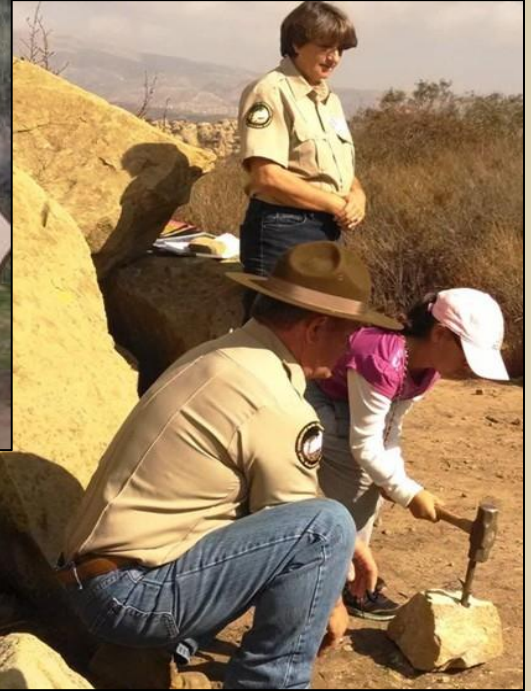
Sponsored by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
HOW MUCH: \$50 for the series; \$15 per class (drop-ins)
HOW OFTEN: 12 session series - Sessions run from January - March
WHAT TIME: Each session runs from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
WHERE: See below

All interested must register by Email at santasusanafriends@gmail.com

- 1/07 - Native Americans of the Santa Susanas** Location: SSFL
(Presenter: Alan Salazar - Fernandeno Tataviam Tribal Elder)
 - 1/14 Oak Trees of the Santa Susanas** Location: SSFL
(Presenter: Rosi Dagit - Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District)
 - 1/21 - Birds of the Santa Susanas** Location: SSFL
(Presenter: Art Langton - Audubon Society)
 - 1/28 - Archaeology & Geology of the SSPSPH** Location: SSFL
(Presenter: Barbara Tejada - California Department of Parks and Recreation Archaeologist)
 - 2/04 - Plants in the Santa Susanas** Location: SSFL
(Presenters: Teena Takata & Dottie Acker - Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park [SSPSHP] Hike Leaders)
 - 2/11 - Critters of the Santa Susanas** Location: SSFL
(Presenters: John Lauerman & Zeev Ginsburg - Herp Connection & Cathy Schoonmaker - National Park Service)
 - 2/18 - Parks of the Simi Hills & Santa Susanas** Location: SSFL
(Presenters: Featuring representatives from the Boeing Corporation, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains, Rancho Simi Trailblazers, and the Sky Valley Volunteers)
 - 2/25 - Stagecoach Trail History Hike** Location: Andora entrance to the SSPSPH
(Presenter: Dottie Acker - Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park Hike Leader)
 - 3/4 - Third Grade Field Trip Program** Location: Andora entrance to the SSPSPH
(Presenters: Dottie Acker, Karen & Richard Dow - SSPSPH Field Trip Program Coordinators; Bob Dager - SSPSPH Stagecoach Educator)
 - 3/11 - Interpretation Basics** Location: SSFL
(Presenter: TBD - California Department of Parks and Recreation Interpretive Specialist)
 - 3/18 & 3/25 - Choose between Hike Leader Training or Oak-Intensive Practicum** (Featuring Hike Leaders of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park and the Sky Valley Volunteers)
- NOTE - SSFL = Boeing - take Woolsey Canyon from Valley Circle Blvd**

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- **Third-grade interpretive hikes** began in 2011, and continue to this day.



Some of the interpretive educational centers in 2015

Left to right

Lorie Lussier-Lawrence, Bob Dager, Ann & Ray Vincent

The next 25 years, 1998 to 2023

- Third-grade interpretive hikes continue today, coordinated by Dottie Acker and Richard and Karen Dow



Some of the interpretive educational centers

Left to right

Dennis Garcia, Terry Tanner & Richard Dow, Linda van der Valk & Ann Vincent



Educational Resources

- [Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains](#) - includes upcoming hikes, events, and Naturalist/Hike Leader Training schedules
- [Santa Susana Mountains Park Association](#) - includes events and positions on regional issues.
- [CSUN Digital Collections - SSMPA](#) - includes a 1972 hiking certificate, a 1972 invite to Gov. Reagan to the two-day country fair in Chatsworth Park South
- [CSUN Archives - SSMPA](#) - 21 boxes, administrative records in first 4 boxes
- SSMPA Newsletters - 1971 to current (at both [CHS](#) and [SSMPA](#))
- [Santa Susana Pass General Plan](#) - includes Historic, Ethnohistoric and Archaeologic reports
- [Chatsworth Historical Society Digital Archives](#) - includes presentations on the Stagecoach Trail, Chatsworth Quarry, 1917 Jack and the Beanstalk, and many more. The monthly newsletters also contain articles relating to features and history of the State Park.

Sources/Acknowledgements

- Special Thanks to Bob Dager for sharing his SSMPA files, and answering many questions.
- Special Thanks to Nancy Razanski for sharing her videos and identifying photographs of key participants.
- Special Thanks to Al Knight for compiling some of Jan's papers in 1998 "*The Papers of Jan Hinkston - A Collection*", and preserving the SSMPA records at CSUN.

- Prepared by Ann and Ray Vincent in February 2023

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

Janice Hinkston was an elementary school teacher at Chatsworth Park Elementary. She lived on Jensen Drive in West Hills, across from the Chatsworth Reservoir and just north of Dayton Canyon.

She tells the History of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA) in the 1973 commemorative book “SANTA SUSANA over the pass... into the past”, pages 6-13.

Jan noticed some oak trees down on her drive to work, and decided to attend a meeting of “Chatsworth Beautiful” in May, 1969.

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg6

A History Of The SSMPA

By JANICE HINKSTON
President SSMPA

For over ten years now, from my house and yard, I have seen one of nature's greatest artistic masterpieces . . . with all the elements of art right there — unsurpassed — line, form, color, rhythm, variety, and unity too, as only nature can unify. Each day I see the west end of the San Fernando Valley, and the rugged escarpments above. Each day I feel how lucky I am to live in what still feels like the countryside, and to work within view of the breathtaking and unique rock formations of the Simi Hills.

As a teacher of young children, I feel strongly that they need the freedom to explore the hills and canyons, trees and flowers, and birds and animals that nature has placed so beautifully around our vast city.

Not only children, but people of all ages, all backgrounds, respond to the freshness, openness, unplanned, *unstructured* beauty in our mountains. With so many millions of us tied to concrete and asphalt, how *crucial* it is for us to have close access to nature and all its works.

One morning I drove by Chatsworth Reservoir on my way to school, and was appalled by the hundreds of ancient oaks laying severed on the ground on the north side along Valley Circle Blvd., I couldn't believe such a violent thing could occur in this day

and age without warning — for what reason? This incident was the one that triggered my getting involved in community life for the first time. How long had I watched this rape of the land and not done anything — thinking like everybody else, “Oh, they'll stop it, before it goes too far.” By “they,” I suppose I meant the Government officials. Ha! How naive that was! I was soon to get my first lesson on just who “they” really are in our society. I had seen a notice in the paper about a second meeting of a newly-formed group named “Chatsworth Beautiful.”

Chatsworth Beautiful was forming committees that night in May, 1969. One immediate concern was a proposed dump site in the beautiful canyon just south of Santa Susana Pass Road. Imagine! That was the epitomy of our stupid land use practices in Los Angeles. Co-chairmen, Chuck Smith and Nancy Oliva, were very intelligently and modestly proceeding, and my turn soon came to voice my concerns about Chatsworth Reservoir and preserving those gorgeous mountains that most of us moved here to be near. Of course, since it was my concern, I guess I was the logical person to become chairman of those committees. Having no idea of what that entailed, I innocently assented.

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

In September 1969 she met with the Simi Valley Sierra Club.

In March 1970 she began to study the history, geology, and archaeology of the Simi Hills.



Janice Hinkston

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg7

The following log represents a history of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association. My comments appear in italics.

EARLY DAYS

SEPT. 1969: Sierra Club Conservation Committee meeting brings Simi Valley Sierra Club member Jean Searle, together with Jan. Mrs. Searle, also had been trying to create a park. Park concept changed from local idea to regional plan. Photographic slide collections started.

DEC. 1969: Conference on Environmental Action held in Pacific Palisades. Executive Director Bruce Dowling of “America the Beautiful” heard of park idea from Jan and later sent a \$100 “Seed Grant” to get project started.

He came to see “our rocks” while still in town and was impressed! He wrote down some strategy for us, but we weren’t ready for it yet.

MARCH 1970: We continued to explore and study the history, geology, plant life, and archeology of the Simi Hills in the West and the larger range of the Santa Susanas across the North San Fernando Valley. Historically, both were the “Santa Susanas.”

I began to become interested for the first time in wanting to know the names of plants — and not just appreciating their infinite beauty.

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

April 1970 – letters sent to legislators

June 1970 – Proposal sent to State of California Department of Parks and Recreation

July 1970 – The first TV debut in conjunction with the Iverson Ranch auction....thanks to Baxter Ward News

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg8

Simi Valley Beautiful voted funds and manpower assistance for Park work.

That's when our great newsletter writer and researcher, Doris Murphy, began to get involved.

LEGISLATORS CONTACTED

APRIL 1970: Thoughts began to jell and the first batches of letters started out to Congressman Barry Goldwater, Jr., Supervisor Warren Dorn, and Senator Alan Cranston, who were most helpful and encouraging.

Without Nanci Oliva's marvelous letter writing, we'd never have gotten off the ground!

MAY 1970: Our first aerial reconnaissance afforded by pilot Bruce Anspaugh. Jean Searle completed first proposal with photos and sent it to America the Beautiful Fund to apply for seed grant.

Bruce had to land at the Santa Susana airport because I got a little motion sickness while taking pictures. That airport would be very handy for small planes visiting the park. Jean is more down to earth and pragmatic than I — a good balance to our team!

JUNE 1970: Proposal was sent to State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, William Penn Mott, Jr., Director.

JULY 1970: Our first TV debut in conjunction with the Iverson Ranch auction ... thanks to Baxter Ward News.

Our first placard carrying and flyer handing out experience (not my cup of tea, but necessary sometimes). We thought we might influence a prospective buyer into purchasing it for a park — with tax benefits, of course.

AUG 1970: Roy Greenaway, field deputy for Senator Cranston, took the first tour. It included Stony Point, Iverson Movie Ranch, Garden of the Gods, Cactus Gardens (also known as Manzanita Flats), and Hummingbird Ranch.

It was the wrong time of year for a tour, everything was so dry! My first visit to the Stagecoach Trail took place around this time. I'd heard about the plaque, but had no idea that the trail itself was in such good condition — and there was so much else!

SEPT. 1970: Thanks to Bob Bessom for his research during August. Jan's first public hearing — the L.A. County Board of Supervisors regarding the German-American Zone Exception Case.

I was incoherent — no wonder we lost! Oh well, you have to dive in!

The worst fire in my memory took place at the end of Sept. It had started in Newhall and literally blew southwest across Chatsworth so fast that many, many homes were lost. It came very close to burning mine.

NOV. 1970: Park Consultant for State Parks and Recreation Department Mr. Mervyn Filipponi had toured site by this time and suggested contacting local government levels for aid.

Of course, the fire had burned away much of the beauty we were hoping to show him, but he was very kind to tell us that he had once lived in Canoga Park, and knew what he was missing.

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

In November 1970, SSMPA becomes a separate organization from Chatsworth Beautiful.

In December 1970, a 150-acre Santa Susana Mountain Park site is deleted from the L.A. County Budget.

In January 1971, a zoning variance for a mobile home development on the upper stagecoach trail is denied (today's Lilac Lane Trailhead)

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg9

FIRST ENDORSEMENT ARRIVES

NOV. 1970: First governmental body, Simi Valley Recreation and Parks District recognizes that a large recreation area is needed for the increasing high population densities on both sides of the mountain and endorses the creation of the Santa Susana Mountain Park. Subsequent resolutions of support come from L.A. County Regional Planning Commission, City of Simi City Council, Regional Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club, and the American Association of University Women-Simi Valley, and many others.

We began to realize the tremendous scope of our undertaking. We had enough interested people from both Los Angeles and Ventura Counties to warrant a separate structure from our parent, Chatsworth Beautiful.

NOV. 1970: Santa Susana Mountain Park Association becomes separate organization from Chatsworth Beautiful. First meeting held Nov. 20.

One of the first decisions was to appeal the granting of commercial zoning for the German-American development in Santa Susana Pass. It was felt to be a vital link.

DEC. 1970: A 150-acre Santa Susana Mountain Park site recommended for acquisition by L.A. County Parks and Rec. Dept. later deleted from budget as one of many cuts in L.A. County Budget. (In County brochure, soon-to-be-developed Iverson Ranch acknowledged as potential County Park area — as well as Stoney Point.

HIKE-INS START

DEC. 1970: We enjoyed our first invitational Hike-In up the steep Stagecoach Trail, with many guests of all ages, “walking into history.”

JAN. 18, 1971: Third meeting of the group. Permanent meeting place and date established — Glendale Federal, Chatsworth, 8:00 P.M. every third Monday. Announcement made that zoning variance for a mobile home development on the Webster property denied. (upper stagecoach trail)

Colorful and informative slide presentations continued at clubs, government agencies, schools, fairs, conferences.

Two people and two organizations should get special mention here: Mary Gorman tried to write thank you's to everyone (in spite of a lost list of helpers from the Hike-In) and also began a series of fund raising activities (cookie sales, market research, etc.) as conservation chairman of the Canoga Park Junior Women's

Club. Joy Totschek became chairman of a major fund raising effort: the Stagecoach Trail Sponsor Book in conjunction with the Chatsworth Junior Women's Club. It is people like these whose abilities together with hard work and devotion have made the organization successful.

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

In February 1971, a feasibility study of the proposed Park is requested by Assemblyman Cline.

In March 1971, LA County Park and Recs and the LA County Historic Landmarks Committee tour the area.

In June 1971, Jan goes to Sacramento and shows slides to the Calif. Parks and Recreation Director.

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg10

Club. Joy Totschek became chairman of a major fund raising effort: the Stagecoach Trail Sponsor Book in conjunction with the Chatsworth Junior Women's Club. It is people like these whose abilities together with hard work and devotion have made the organization successful.

FEB. 1971: Assemblyman Robert Cline began drawing up legislation requesting a feasibility study of the proposed Santa Susana Mountain Park.

Yeah!

ZONING CASE LOSES

FEB. 1971: Even though there had been a fire and an earthquake since the first hearing last September, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors would not consider new evidence. We lost the Zoning Appeal Case for commercial zoning on the Santa Susana Pass Rd. (We even had a new resolution of support from the L.A. Regional Planning Commission.)

MAR. 1971: Los Angeles County Park and Recreation Commission and department members toured area. Also Mr. Orrin Fox, member of the California State and Los Angeles County Historic Landmarks Committee.

Mr. Fox helped us prepare formal requests for County and State recognition of the historical merit of the Stagecoach Trail.

APRIL 1971: We were gratified to learn from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of the Interior, that the Santa Susana Mountains would be included in their national Urban Park Studies for the Los Angeles Region.

JUNE 1971: Jan goes to Sacramento; shows slides before State Natural Resources and Conservation Committee and Calif. Parks and Recreation Director, Mr. William Penn Mott, to encourage them to pass both bills, AB 2470 and ACR 83 — a back-up bill with no funds attached for feasibility study of Santa Susana Mountains. Jan also encourages them to pass SJR 23, a bill to include the mountains in a national urban park study, a federal effort to procure urban parks near large population areas.

Marge Feinberg and I had a busy exciting day.

JUNE 1971: Urged Los Angeles County Supervisors to reinstate allocation for 150 acre site in park.

No way.

JULY 1971: Resolution Chapter 105 (formerly SJR 23) comes through Sacramento. Those coauthoring SJR 23 were Senator Cusanovich and Senator Harmer from Los Angeles County, Senator Lagomarsino and Assemblyman MacDonald from Ventura County.

(SJR 23 formally requested the Federal government to include the Santa Susana Mountains in the National Urban Park study.)

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

In September 1971 the Santa Susana Stagecoach Trail is approved as a Point of Historical Interest by the California Historical Landmarks Committee.

In January 1972 Fifty-five acres of the Old Santa Susana Stage Road is declared Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #92

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg11

JULY 1971: Chairman, Bill Watson and member, Hilma Cohn of The Nature Conservancy, visited key sites including the Santa Susana Stage Rd.

AUGUST 1971: Mr. Robert Wilkinson, L.A. Councilman, on State Affairs Committee, passes motion to support principles of SJR 23, relative to establish federal study for national urban park in Santa Susana Mts.

SEPT. 1971: Articles of Incorporation, prepared by Attorney Don Gudin, accepted by Sec. of State.

SEPT. 1971: Santa Susana Stagecoach Trail approved as a Point of Historical Interest by the California Historical Landmarks Committee.

PRESENTATIONS CONTINUE

OCT. 1971: SSMPA President Jan Hinkston gives slide presentation before Cultural Heritage Board, City of Los Angeles. Tour of Stage Coach Trail is scheduled for December when they will decide if it becomes a Cultural Heritage Monument.

NOV. 1971: Slide presentations have been given before more than 50 groups. A year of meetings with various government agencies and politicians have shown money is not available for this project. More than 3,000 signatures in support of park have been received. Santa Susana Mountain Park Association became a California Non-Profit Corporation with tax-deductible donations.

DEC. 1971: Although various allocations are available for open space and recreation sites, all seem to need some funds for matching. And because owners of the Stagecoach Trail parcels were interested in prompt sale, we felt we must begin raising funds as quickly as possible.

Since the lower 136 acres were in escrow, we decided to try to acquire the upper 42 acres.

JANUARY 1972: Fifty-five acres of trail property are declared Cultural-Heritage Board Monument no. 92. Eight thousand visitors hike the old trail on Sundays of the 16th and 23rd. An effort is launched to acquire option on \$5,300 upper 42-acre stage-coach trail property. The Chatsworth Juniors and the Park association launch the stagecoach trail sponsor book. End of January, escrow dropped on lower 136 acres of stagecoach trail property.

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

In February 1972 the Santa Susana Mountain Park is requested to be designated as a park on the L.A. City Master Plan.

In March 1972 huge crowds hike the Stagecoach Trail in a two-day country fair in Chatsworth Park South, with proceeds going to the Land Trust Fund to save the Old Stagecoach Trail.

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg12

Our deepest gratitude goes to all the individuals and organizations whose efforts contributed so much to the great success of the hike-ins and the country fair in March.

FEB. 1972: Columnist Art Seidenbaum visits the trail. Los Angeles Times (Feb. 17) tells of his interest. Simi Channel 8 shows entire slide presentation during interview.

Both the Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Commission and Recreation and Parks Committee of the City Council endorse the Santa Susana Mountain Park and request area be designated as park on L.A. City Master Plan.

MORE ENDORSEMENTS

MARCH 1972: 13,000 people attend Chatsworth's 84th birthday celebration in two-day country fair in Chatsworth Park South sponsored by Santa Susana Mountain Park Association with proceeds to Land Trust Fund to save Old Stagecoach Trail. Sears SAVE project organizes a bike rally. Jan Hinkston and Joy Totchekego to San Francisco regional office of the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to investigate progress of federal feasibility study which had been delayed, and discovered no funds were available at present to include Santa Susana Mountains in national park study as specified by SJR 23.

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association begins effort to get MAI appraisal on 178-acre stagecoach property to entitle us to matching federal funds for purchase of property.

A special thanks to the Guilmettes and the Lusters for their monumental efforts in making the fair and parade a success.

Realized the need for a State approved appraisal so that we could begin negotiation with property owners and begin filing for matching funds. America the Beautiful will send \$1,000 for Land acquisition when our attorney notifies them negotiations are underway. A formal appraisal is costly, but necessary, we learned. Zelma Skillman, our vice-president, worked on the appraisal.

APRIL 1972: Adele Sax and Dr. James N. Hill investigate possibility of having UCLA conduct archeological digs on lower 136 acres of stagecoach property. Permission is granted by UCLA Archeological Survey.

Now we are lacking Mr. Palmer's permission for the dig.

Appendix 1 – A History of The SSMPA

In June 1972 there were three hike-ins, including a private one for the Museum Alliance.

By 1973, more than \$10,000 has been raised for the SSMPA Land Trust Fund.

In 1974, 174 acres was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1973 – “SANTA SUSANA over the pass into the past” – SSMPA pg13

LANDOWNERS COOPERATE

MAY 1972: SSMPA board toured the north side of the Santa Susana Mountains owned by Newhall Land and Farming, and were gratified to learn that they are concerned with conservation of the land. These mountains have a grass and oak forest, geologically significant fault areas, and historic oil wells.

This was such a dry year, even the north side was dry. Walter Houk from Sunset Magazine went with us, but it was a hazy day for photographs. Thanks to Jean Searle for her continued interest and transportation, and thanks also to Capt. Audie Callaway for Rocky Peak tour.

JUNE 1972: Three hike-ins, including a private one for the Museum Alliance.

Our San Fernando Valley Area Chairman, Zorka Nelson, a dynamic, caring, lover of nature and history, made a very special Hike-in chairman.

Thanks to Supervisor Dorn, the helicopter ride was great fun, but helped us realize that we would see better on the ground. (I got sick.) So for the State parks tour, he provided us with other transportation.

JUNE 1972: Assemblyman Cline arranged for a high level tour to launch the State Feasibility Study. Guests included Robert H. Meyer, Deputy Director of the State Department of Parks and Recreation, Emmett U. Blanchfield, Senior Landscape Architect; Robert M. Baker, Deputy Director, L.A. Office of the State Parks Department; Frank Hendler, independent land-use consultant and adviser for Congressman Barry Goldwater Jr.; Jim Dougherty, representing Assemblyman J.K. MacDonald; Stuart Nolton, representing State Senator Robert J. Lagomarsino; Jean Swallow Johnson, Field Deputy for Congressman Goldwater; and Mrs. Warren Dorn, representing the chairman of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors.

Also attending were Robert E. Pegg, Administrative Assistant to Glen L. Schmidt, Supervisor, Fourth District, Ventura County; Shirley Najemnik, Chairman Simi Valley Parks and Recreation District; and Audie Callaway, Vice Chairman, Simi Valley Parks and Recreation District.

We all had a wonderful day — Mrs. Dorn is a charming person — Mr. Blanchfield is a dear, sensitive to nature and to the specialness of our mountains . . . we saw a deer, not more than a mile from the Simi freeway, bounding astonishingly over the rocks . . . we were thrilled to see that after only two years since the terrible fire, Nature was renewing itself. We, too, felt renewed, to feel once again a part of nature.

Appendix 2 – 1992 Acquisition Summary

SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAINS PROJECT ACQUISITION SUMMARY (AS OF 5/92)

FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

	PHASES I-III	PHASE IV
FUNDS APPROPRIATED	\$ 6,500,000	\$10,000,000
COMPLETED ACQUISITIONS	3,753,955	9,959,000
OVERHEAD COSTS	173,288	345,126
SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING	314,000	2,055,000
FUNDS REVERTED	<u>2,886,757</u>	<u>1,754,000</u>
BALANCE	- 0 -	\$ - 3,126
GIFTED DEED VALUE	88,445	- 0 -

ACQUISITION ACTIVITY

PARCEL	ACRES	PHASE	ACTION	LAND COST	ACQUIRED (OR DROPPED)
U.S. National Bank	(235.13)	I	D	-	(5/79)
Baer	(179.74)	I	D	-	(5/79)
Diesing	(65.96)	I	D	-	(12/79)
Eifels	(2.97)	II	D	-	(11/78)
Foundation for S.S. Mtns.	248.76	II	A	\$ 587,500	7/79
				84,500 g	
Oak Valley Equestrian	39.81	II	A	995,250	4/80
Conservation District	16.26	II	A	40,055	6/80
				3,945 g	
Retz	(45.04)	II	D	-	(4/81)
Bryant	1.17	II	A	3,150	10/82
Hign, D.	(.03)	III	D	-	(11/81)
Hign, M.	(.84)	III	D	-	(11/81)
Deakin	2.33	III	A	170,000	5/83
Webster	39.84	III	A	597,500	5/83
Ramos	80.02	III	A	1,360,500	6/83
Gaieski	(3.78)	IV	D	-	(8/89)
Faith Church	(45.65)	IV	D	-	(5/90)
Culbreth	(2.04)	IV	D	-	(5/90)
Brown	(.55)	IV	D	-	(5/90)
Oak Valley Equestrian	(10.27)	IV	D	-	(7/90)
Stagg	1.16	IV	A	3,000	7/90
B & L Properties Inc.	8.55	IV	A	762,500	8/90
Salletmaier	3.11	IV	A	230,000	9/90
1st United Finance (Kimbrough)	1.69	IV	A	60,000	9/90
Weiss	.61	IV	A	100,000	9/90
Brown	1.01	IV	A	225,000	9/90
Hains	5.89	IV	A	160,000	10/90
Orsatt	(1.17)	IV	D	----	(10/90)
Weems/Synder	(21.25)	IV	D	----	(11/90)
Synder	(21.25)	IV	D	----	(11/90)
Retz	(48.75)	IV	D	----	(11/90)

PARCEL	ACRES	PHASE	ACTION	LAND COST	ACQUIRED (OR DROPPED)
Becker	(4.47)	IV	D	----	(12/90)
Julian	3.38	IV	A	8,500	3/91
Cooney	54.98	IV	A	2,750,000	4/91
McGuire	(10.69)	IV	D	----	(4/91)
Laykin	(.58)	IV	D	----	(9/91)
Ransbottom	150.11	IV	A	5,285,000	1/92
Pudenz	6.00	IV	A	375,000	5/92
Remaining parcels	(27.75)	IV	D	----	(5/92)

Total Acquired 670.68 \$13,801,400

KEY: A - Acquired
D - Dropped
g - gifted to State

APPROPRIATIONS (BY PHASE)

PHASE I 1977/78

\$ 2,500,000 - Chapter 219/77; 443C(b) as added by Chapter 756/77
'76 Bond

PHASE II 1978/79

\$ 1,650,000 - Chapter 359/78; 457(d)
\$ 314,000 - P.W.B. augmentation on 10/30/79
P & R Revolving Fund (changed to SPRF)

PHASE III 1982/83

\$ 2,350,000 - Chapter 326/82; 3790-301-721(v)
'80 Bond

PHASE IV 1988/89

\$10,000,000 - PRC, Section 5907(b)(1)(E) (CWCPA of 1988) *Prop 70*
'88 Bond
55,000 - Habitat Conservation Fund (Augmentation)
2,000,000 - Augmentation from Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

REVERSIONS (BY PHASE)

PHASE I 6/30/79 and 6/30/80

\$ 1,500,000.00 - Reduction in appropriation
\$ 949,358.77 - Chapter 510/80; 588(3)

PHASE II 9/30/81

\$ 247,929.95 - Chapter 99/81; 379-495-392(8)

PHASE III 6/30/84

\$ 189,457.92 - Chapter 258/84; 379-495-721(11)

PHASE IV 7/1/90 *Prop 117*

\$ 1,754,000 - Reallocation to Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.