



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Incorporated Nov. 30, 1971

Email: mail@ssmpa.com

Founded Nov. 20, 1970

Website: ssmpa.com

WINTER 2016 Newsletter

SSMPA COMMUNITY MEETINGS: 7:00 pm

(Community Meetings are Free to SSMPA Members and the Public.)

Rockpointe Clubhouse: 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311

(On the south side, one block before entrance to Chatsworth Park South)

[\(map\)](#)



Monday, January 18, 2016 7:00pm

Nature Neighbors: Urban Wildlife

Presenter: Cathy Schoonmaker, Urban-Wildland Conservation Specialist Mountains Restoration Trust & National Park Service



As neighbors that live near or adjacent to natural open space habitat, we may enjoy many benefits such as; spectacular views, easy access to outdoor recreation, and wildlife viewing. Along with these benefits, we may also encounter a few **challenges like visits from wild creatures and the threat of wildfires.**

Cathy will provide [tips and tools](#) to **help neighbors protect their property, pets, and family.** She will provide information on how to take action and reduce urban impacts on wildlife and habitat, so that we all can fully enjoy the natural ecosystem woven into our communities.

More information at <http://go.usa.gov/3W5Xz>

SSMPA will also hold Community Meetings:

Monday, February 15, 2016 7:00 - 8:30pm

Monday, March 21, 2016 7:00 - 8:30pm

Topics will be posted soon at

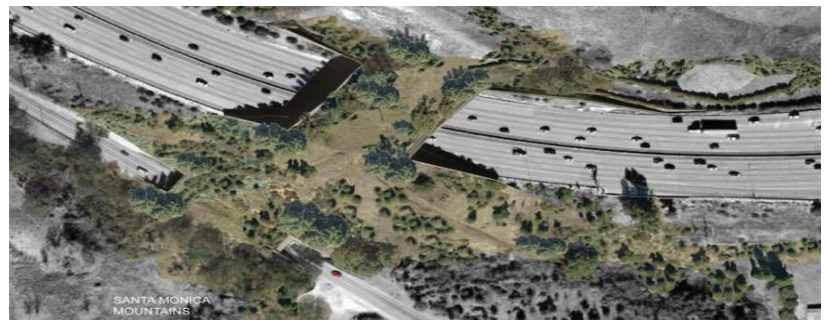
<http://ssmpa.com/events>

Proposed Wildlife Crossing over the 101 Freeway Public Scoping Meeting

January 14, 2016, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
at the King Gillette Ranch Auditorium
26800 Mulholland Highway in Calabasas

More information at:

<http://www.malibusurfsidenews.com/steps-taken-advance-liberty-canyon-wildlife-crossing-project#sthash.Km9XYT7V.dpuf>



Chatsworth Ecology Pond

After years of almost complete neglect of the pond at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve, LA's Department of Water and Power has recently been busy trying to make the pond a sustainable feature on the former Chatsworth Reservoir property. Since September 2015, DWP has removed tons of silt from the dried-up pond area, exposing a natural clay bottom, which should allow surface water to be retained after rains come and flow into the pond area.



SSMPA is pleased that DWP is working to make the ecology pond a viable habitat for local wildlife. We are especially pleased that DWP now calls the site the "Chatsworth Ecology Pond," and seems to no longer refer to it as a "detention basin."

DWP maintains online information on the Chatsworth Ecology Pond restoration project at www.ladwp.com/chatsworthpond

Hidden Creeks Estates Development

Up in the Air (with the methane)?

Readers of our Autumn 2015 Newsletter know that SSMPA has been following, and [advocating against](#), a planned 188-house residential development in the Santa Susana Mountains. SSMPA has registered its worries about Hidden Creeks Estates, just north and west of Porter Ranch, at the juncture of Brown's and Mormon Canyons: endangerment of streams, seismic and geologic hazards, wildfire hazard, endangerment of cultural artifacts, loss of habitat, obstruction of Rim of the Valley open space, and contradiction of City Planning's infill policy.

The Hidden Creeks development project received critical [map](#) and [zoning approvals](#) on December 11, 2015, from the City of Los Angeles Planning Department.

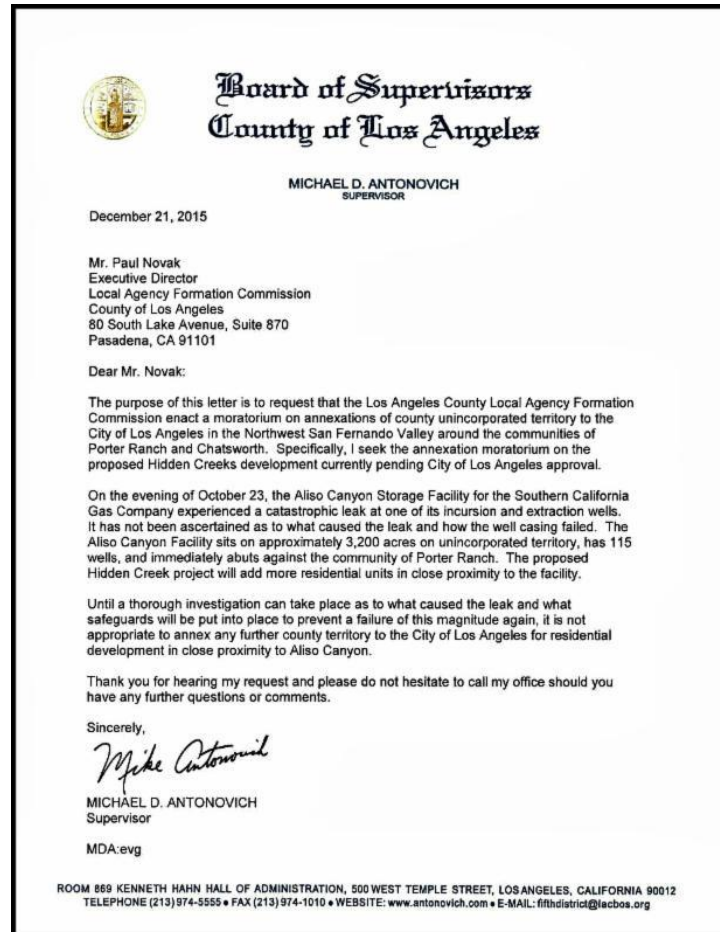


Planning Commission approval and City Council approval are still needed. We expected those approvals to be readily forthcoming, ... **until** SoCalGas reported **a leak in one of their many wells** above Porter Ranch. The well has been leaking methane and other gasses for two months now, and will not be shut down for another three or four months, best case. Several thousand Porter Ranch families have moved out of their homes because of the leak, and the story is being intensively covered in media reports around the world.

The Hidden Creeks property abuts the Gas Company's reservoir field and sits even higher than Porter Ranch. The City Planning Department claims that the proposed new development will have minimal negative impact on the "environment" around it, so it's OK. Even if that were true, **what about the reverse?:** the negative impacts of surrounding operations (i.e., Gas Company's reservoir and [Termo Company's oil well operations](#)) on the Hidden Creeks development itself?

Apparently City officials can see no significant drawbacks for existing San Fernando Valley neighborhoods, arising from throwing up a new upscale residential development. **But can they**, in light of the persisting, messy gas leak incident, pretend to ignore the obvious dangers that existing industrial operations like gas reservoirs and oil wells inflict on human habitations next door?

SSMPA does not think so, and neither do some Los Angeles County officials. County Supervisor Michael Antonovich, for one, has formally called for a moratorium on annexations of any county lands near SoCalGas into the City of Los Angeles, at least until the present wakeup call, the SoCalGas leak, gets sorted out.



~ Tom Nachtrab

Chatsworth Park South: Still Closed, but a Little Activity

We all know that Chatsworth Park South (City of LA) has been closed for 7- 1/2 years, awaiting cleanup of reported lead contamination on a portion of the acreage. The City has engaged a contractor to do remediation work (grading, capping the surface, etc.), and work is scheduled to begin after the coming El Niño season. City officials say they expect the work to be completed by the end of 2016.



In December 2015, there was a bit of activity in the park. Some light grading was done, apparently to help channel storm water **into** drainage channels on the east side of the park, **and away from** the adjacent Rockpointe neighborhood. There is also a stockpile of filled sandbags on the grounds (next to the sandbox area of the long closed playground).

For a timeline of the long saga of the Park's closure, see:
[SSMPA's Watch Center for Chatsworth Park South Reopening](http://ssmpa.com/chatsworth-park-south)
ssmpa.com/chatsworth-park-south

Let's be Poison Free

If you have lived near Los Angeles any length of time, it is likely you have encountered around your home wildlife from the surrounding natural areas: rats, mice, gophers, squirrels and/or other small animals. I have had all of these creatures at one time or another in my patio or garage.



Because we live adjacent to wildlife areas it stands to reason the wildlife will visit from time to time and maybe even find a great home close to yours. To deal with these small wildlife creatures, it has historically been a practice of many to contact a Pest Control company or run to the local store and purchase rodent poisons and poison boxes to eradicate these small "pests" from the space you inhabit.

Please take a second look at the method of rodent control you might be using and consider some suggested alternatives.

Here are the dangers:

Modern supertoxic rodenticide poisons are spreading throughout the ecosystem causing massive exposure, disease, and death beyond the intended targets. Rodents ingest anticoagulant poisons, but don't die for several hours to several days. As they go back to the wild areas, they begin to get sick, slow down and die. They are bleeding to death internally.

Predators find them as an easy catch and now the predator has ingested the poison. After eating many such small creatures, the predators in turn begin to get sick and die. Nearly every predator tested has tested positive for varying levels of rodenticides.

Understand that rodents are a natural part of the food chain for owls, hawks, foxes, snakes, raccoon, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and many other animals. The "Food Chain" unfortunately has now become the "Chain of Death". Larger predators are dying a slow painful death at alarming rates.

Anticoagulants rodent poisons containing any of the following should be eliminated from use: diphacinone and chlorophacinone, brodifacoum, bromethalin, bromadiolone, difethialone, difenacoum, diphacinone, warfarin and zinc phosphide. Most of these poisons unfortunately are available for purchase at many retail stores.



There are alternative solutions: **Clean up and Seal up!**

- Do not leave pet food or water on your patios or around the outside of your home.
- Do not hang seed bird feeders.
- Thin out dense planting, like ivy and ground cover where rodents can hide and breed.
- Seal any holes and openings to your home, garage and/or attic.

- Tightly seal trash cans & dumpsters. Keep the area around trash cans clean of spillage.

If you currently have rat poisons at home they must be disposed of properly. Please see www.lacitysan.org/solid_resources/special/hhw/safe_centers/ for disposal sites.

Information for this article is taken from, and more is available at: Poison Free Malibu <http://earthfriendlymanagement.com/info-on-rodenticide-issue/#chain>

All things are connected. It is a complex chain. The chain is disintegrating.

Let's Be Poison Free!

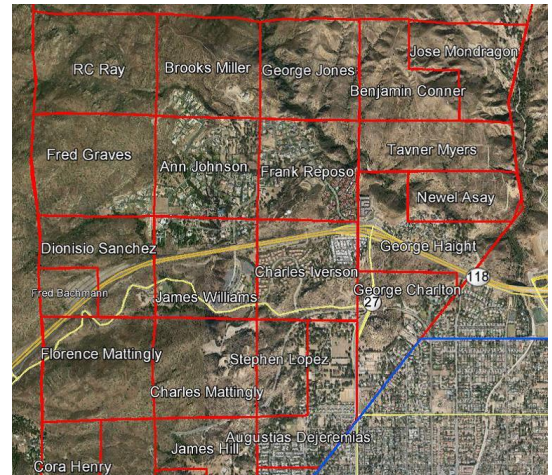
~Wendi Gladstone

Homesteading History in Chatsworth / Simi Hills

Bookmark this link to an amazing valuable resource: <http://www.chatsworthhistory.com/Presentations.html>

SSMPA members Ann & Ray Vincent have done (and continue to do) exhaustive research on a great many aspects of history in our Simi Hills. And they make the findings of their work available to all of us through the website www.chatsworthhistory.com

Check it out and enjoy their online presentations, all scrupulously well-documented using primary historical documents.



Santa Susana Field Lab:

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) for Cleanup at the Santa Susanna Field Lab (formerly Rocketdyne) recently released the following summary of the group's current recommendations and concerns.

The SSFL site is contaminated and must be cleaned up.

The site must be made safe and protective of human health and the environment.

The site should be left as open space or parkland.

The CAG supports the Native American initiative to designate the site as a National Monument.

The cleanup should be sufficient to remove harmful materials, but have minimal impact on historical, cultural, and environmental resources.

The cleanup must be done with least impact on surrounding communities.

The CAG opposes the Administrative Orders on Consent (AOC's) "cleanup to background or detect," which would not consider toxicity or risk to human health; which is an extreme target, untried elsewhere; and which will strip the land.

The CAG wants the site restored after the cleanup is completed.



The Present Status of the Cleanup

Soil sampling is near completion. The Department of Energy has yet to submit its own Environmental Impact Statement and the Department of Toxic Substances Control must issue a site-wide report with cleanup instructions for all three Responsible Parties.

Partial List of the Community Advisory Group's Concerns

- Truck traffic carrying away excavated soil.
- Valley fever from excavation dust.
- Potential destruction of cultural, historical and environmental resources.
- Length of time for a "cleanup to background or detect"
- Unclear plans for restoration of the site.
- Unaffordable costs.
- Backfill material not available to satisfy the AOC's unrealistic requirements.

For more information about the Community Advisory Group's work to clean up Santa Susana and preserve the land as open space, parkland, and wildlife corridor, see ssflcag.net and [SSFL CAG Facebook page](#).

SSMPA's October (2015) Community Meeting Presentation was entitled:

Water, Water, Water, Water

The presentation touched on the following topics, more or less...

salt and fresh; flood and drought; rising and falling;
 solid, liquid and gas; freezing and melting; evaporating and condensing;
 sublimating and precipitating; as a greenhouse gas; potable and not;
 bottled and piped; polluted and clean; dammed and flowing;
 expensive and cheap; springs and seeps; aquifers and wells;
 treated wastewater and the yuck factor;
 purple pipes; reclamation and de-reclamation;
 agricultural, industrial, urban, and environmental;
 Owens Valley and Chatsworth Reservoir;
 channels and spreading grounds;
 peripheral canals and under-bay tunnels

The presentation also covered flood control, including our local **debris basin in Limekiln Canyon**, our local sediment placement site in Browns Canyon, and the **Devil's Gate Dam** in Arroyo Seco.

See the presentation [HERE](#)



HIKES

Welcome Walks: Interpretive hikes in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park (SSPSHP): Facebook: [Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains](#) & fpssm.org

SSPSHP Volunteer Hikes: Contact: Jennifer Dandurand, park interpretive specialist, Los Encinos SHP: 818.784.4849; jdandurand@parks.ca.gov

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers: www.simitrailblazers.com

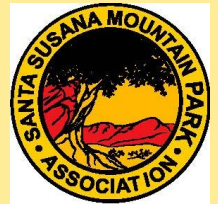
Sierra Club: www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfvg/ Meetings, hikes

SFV Audubon: www.sfvaudubon.org Meetings and Bird Walks for families

Hiking and Event Updates: ssmpa.com

SSMPA Mission

SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, and regional open space.



Contribute to SSMPA?

Use your debit / credit card or Paypal

Contribute [HERE](#)

<http://ssmpa.com/membership.php#Contribute>

Thank you!

Please confirm your interest in SSMPA by clicking on:

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

Thank you!

2015/2016 SSMPA Board of Directors

President, Treasurer: Teena Takata
Vice President: John Luker
Recording Secretary: Donna Nachtrab
Director-at-Large: Vanessa Watters
Director-at-Large: Robert "Bob" Dager
Director-at-Large: Warren Stone
Director-at-Large: Wendi Gladstone
Director-at-Large: Tom Nachtrab



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Mail label here

Come Aboard! Be an SSMPA Member

We gratefully accept your new memberships, renewals, and donations all year round!



Your membership (new and renewal) and donations help SSMPA efforts and continued success in providing free community meetings; advocacy for open space/nature preserves; keeping or reopening local parks; acquiring easement land parcels to protect native plants and habitat, wildlife corridors and park space; environmental educational opportunities; preservation of Chatsworth's and the surrounding area's historical, cultural, and archaeological sites.

If you do want to not receive your newsletter via e-mail and must receive it by snail mail, please send an additional \$10.00. If you have moved, please be sure to let us know your new address.

SSMPA MEMBERSHIP GIVES YOU A VOICE IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

THANK YOU for your recent Family Life Membership: **Robert Whitman**

THANK YOU for your recent New Memberships: **Judy Alban and Old Agoura HOA**

And THANK ALL OF YOU **loyal members** who have recently renewed your SSMPA Membership

YOU CAN NOW USE YOUR CREDIT CARD OR PAYPAL ACCOUNT: Go to our website: ssmpa.com/membership

Sign up for a LIFE MEMBERSHIP and/or a DONATION of \$50.00 and receive a FREE Chumash designed [T-Shirt](http://ssmpa.com/membership) (image on ssmpa.com/membership)

Let us know your size when you mail in your check, or send an email to mail@ssmpa.com if you pay online.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL OR NEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

- () \$20.00 for individuals () \$25.00 for a family () \$30.00 for a business or organization
- () \$150.00 for Individual Life Membership () \$200.00 for a Family Life Membership

Make your check payable to SSMPA and mail to: SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

Be sure to fill in the following information

Name(s) _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Special interests or skills _____

Your e-mail address is used exclusively for SSMPA newsletter and community announcements.