



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

Volume 30, Issue 1

January 2000 Newsletter

A Non-Profit Organization
Incorporated August 31, 1971

RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL VICTORIES SET UPBEAT TONE

As the year draws to a close, residents of the North-west Valley have a lot to be thankful for:

- Our State Government approved the Villaraigosa-Keeley environmental bond act, and placed it on the March 2000 ballot as State Proposition 12.
- The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy bought five acres of open space northwest of the Ventura Freeway and Liberty Canyon interchange. The land, which had been slated for commercial development, will now be kept as open parkland with a trailhead for hikers. Not only that, the land contains another link in the corridor that lets wildlife roam from the Simi Hills and the Santa Susana Mountains to the Santa Monica Mountains, and back again – this part of the wildlife corridor will now be preserved.
- The Board of Water and Power Commissioners approved keeping the entire 1,326-acre Chatsworth Reservoir as a nature preserve. At the present time, the DWP will continue maintaining the nature preserve, while they negotiate with potential partners for the preservation of the site as a valuable environmental, historical and cultural resource. An advisory committee will be formed to maintain community involvement in the nature preserve.

Programs for Jan. & Feb. General Membership Meetings

Archaeologist and SSMPA Member Al Knight will present a program on local Native American rock art at our January 17th meeting.

Naturalist Sean Manion of the Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District will present a program about coyotes and other large mammals in the area at the February 21st meeting.

General Membership Program Meetings take place at 7:30 p.m., on every third Monday of the month, at the Rockpointe Recreation Center, 22300 Devonshire, Chatsworth (so. side of street), one block before entry to Chatsworth Park South.

Have an idea for a future program? Contact Dorian at 818-345-3795. *

While this latest position on the part of the DWP represents a great victory for Councilman Hal Bernson and all of us who want to preserve the entire site as a nature preserve, their ruling only ensures that no development is to be proposed at this time. Therefore, it may be prudent for a member of the SSMPA and perhaps other local groups to be on the advisory committee, which will meet quarterly.

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**WARM WISHES FOR HAPPY HOLIDAYS
AND THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN SAVING
OUR LITTLE PART OF NATURE. BEST WISHES,
AND MAY WE ALL HAVE BRIGHT FUTURES,
IN THIS NEW YEAR OF NEW YEARS!**

FROM YOUR SSMPA BOARD MEMBERS

2 RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL VICTORIES SET UPBEAT TONE

Continued from page 1 . . .

We need to obtain permanent protection for the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. We urge one of the following actions:

- Designate the entire nature preserve as a conservation easement in perpetuity.
- Make the entire nature preserve a part of the State Park system by adding it to the Santa Susana Pass State Historical Park.
- Obtain federal designation, as proposed by Helen Treend and Ann Hinckley.

Swift action may be necessary as Hal Bernson's last term as a Los Angeles City Councilman will end on June 30, 2002. ❀

A Walk in the Garden of the Gods

By Judy Garris

It had rained the day before I visited the Garden of the Gods for the first time. I parked and walked up the old road built in the movie-making days. In less than five minutes, I entered into a garden of large boulders. Here was a close-up view of the unique Simi Hills rock formation. The rain-darkened colors of the boulders contrasted with the orange lichen blooming on their surfaces. A turn in the path revealed cracks and nooks damp with spongy moss. This magical world of rocks, part of the Iverson Movie Ranch, was the venue for many of the old Western movies. I stood on a circular camera mount overlooking the stage coach road below. Across the road (now Red Mesa Drive), the picturesque Nyoka cliff, which was part of a cliff-hanger episode in the series "The Perils of Nyoka." A little north is the famous Lone Ranger rock.

This marvelous vista is very accessible. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Santa Susana Pass Road, go about a half mile and turn left on Red Mesa Drive. Watch for the Santa Monica Conservancy sign on your left. ❀

New Leaders Needed

The coming of the New Year means it's almost time to elect new Directors to the SSMPA Board. Hopefully, this year *you* will decide to participate in the SSMPA's efforts to preserve the wilderness in our backyard. Please think seriously about donating your time to save our local wildlife corridor by becoming an SSMPA Director, or assuming one of the many minor positions like that of Hospitality Chair. ❀

Park Planning, Garage Sale, and Bylaws

Dan Preece is scheduled to complete the Interim Management Plan for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park by mid-January, after which the plan will be submitted to State Park officials for their approval. The plan will reflect suggestions of members of the SSMPA, FPSSM, Chatsworth Historical Society, local community members, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy staff, and local State Park officials. Approval of the plan will make our park eligible for funds from the \$500,000,000 State Park allocation included in Proposition 12. We'll need to convince the public to vote for Prop. 12. Volunteers will soon be needed to pass out literature at Topanga Plaza, the Fallbrook Mall, and Northridge Fashion Square.

Thanks to the donations and efforts of members of the SSMPA and of the San Fernando Valley Sierra Club, the SSMPA garage sale on November 6th was a resounding success. Proceeds of the sale are partially funding the Interim Management Plan of our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

At the November 15, 1999 General Membership Meeting, a quorum of seven board members and ten other SSMPA members approved the 19th draft of the revised SSMPA Bylaws. The meeting also featured Judy Garris with her slides of the Santa Susana Mountain and Simi Hills trails. ❀

SSMPA Executive Board

Judy Garris, President	818-346-7654
Dorian Keyser, Vice President	818-345-3795
Susan Gerke, Treasurer	818-704-9304
Patti Milow, Corresponding Secretary	818-992-7757
Terrie Brady, Member-At-Large	818-349-8889
Bette Butler, Member-At-Large	818-700-0220
Diana Dixon-Davis, Member-At-Large	818-341-4242
Holly Huff, Member-At-Large	805-526-0961
Doreen Rusen, Member-At-Large	818-360-0894



LA County SEA Review

Los Angeles County is conducting studies on whether to revise its Significant Ecological Area (SEA) designations. Among others, Dorian Keyser has submitted recommendations for the Chatsworth Nature Preserve and the Simi Hills; Judy Garris has submitted recommendations for the Simi Hills and Santa Susana wildlife corridor; Dave Brown has made recommendations for the Santa Monica Mountains; and Betsy Landis has submitted recommendations for all Los Angeles County SEAs.

We will continue to be involved in this process and later in supporting the preservation of SEAs from development. Please write or call your County Supervisor and ask them to support recommendations that favor preservation of local SEAs and all SEAs in the County. ❀

Stagecoach Trail and Exploration Series hikes are offered by the Santa Susana Mountain Task Force (SSMTF) of the Sierra Club and publicized by the SSMPA and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains (FPSSM).

Stage Coach Trail Hikes

Sunday, January 16, 2000. Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. with the hike leader for the 4-mile (700 ft. gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. Bring water and a snack in a back or hip pack. Lugsole shoes or sturdy, closed shoes, and a hat are advised. From Topanga Canyon Boulevard, turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Park South to the second parking lot by the Recreation Building. Call Judy Garris (818-346-7654) for more information.

New Hike Leaders Needed

We're asking members to volunteer to lead easy Sun. a.m. hikes—Stage Coach Trail, Santa Susanas, Simi Hills. Sponsored by SSMTF for insurance reasons, hikes are open to all and are an important source of new SSMPA members.

Report on Santa Susana Trail Hike
Judy Garris, leader and Hiking Chair of the SSMTF, and co-leader Rosemarie White, Sierra Singles Program Chair, led this 5-mile hike on Saturday, Nov. 20th. There had been an early rain. It stopped misting as we started from the trailhead thru the Indian Springs development — large houses! Walking thru huge granite rock formations, we had beautiful views on all sides, glimpsed coyote scat and numerous quail and birds. We stopped to examine the relic of a once lovely & well-planned house in a scenic setting—we marvelled at why it had been abandoned. *By Cecelia Heppes.* ☼

OTHER HIKES

Chumash Trail

Every Thursday, starting at 6:00 p.m. Moderately paced 5-mile round-trip hike on the Chumash Trail. From the Westbound 118, exit and go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Drive. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. Call Arlene Altshuler of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers (805-581-9735) for more information. ☼

Rocky Peak

Every Sunday, starting at 4:00 p.m. Strenuous 5-mile round-trip hike to Rocky Peak. Exit the 118 on Rocky Peak Road. Park at north end of Rocky Peak Road. Call Arlene Altshuler of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers (805-581-9735) for more information. ☼



Donate Your Empty Coffee Cans!

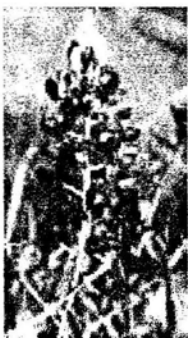
Your empty coffee cans are needed to help the Canada Geese. Businesses near Chatsworth Nature Preserve have contributed to buy rye seed and bird food for the geese, but volunteers need containers to bring the bird seed out to the preserve. Call Mary Gorman at 818-887-1345 to donate. ☼



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN / RENEW / REJOIN S.S.M.P.A. (Please circle one.)

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contributions to help ensure our futures. Please make checks payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.



- Senior or Student (\$5.00) Individual (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00)
- Business or Organization (\$25.00) Life Member (\$100.00)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Fax: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____ Email: _____

Special Interest/Expertise: _____

Come join our mailing parties! Food, fun and camaraderie! Perform a useful service! . . . We've improved our mail preparation methods and now the parties have to end earlier! Call Mary at 887-1345 to find out more!

If the expiration date on your label is marked in pink, your dues have expired. Please send in your dues if you wish to continue your SSMPA membership and continue receiving newsletters. If you already paid, please disregard this notice.

If the expiration date on the label is marked in blue, payment of your membership dues is due this month.

If the expiration date is marked in green, payment of your dues will be due next month.

Many thanks to Marie Furney, Manager of the Topanga Canyon/Roscoe Office Depot, for the donation of printing services, i.e., the duplication of our newsletter. We very much appreciate it!

December 1999 - No General Membership Program Meeting.

Jan. 3, 2000, 7:30 PM Board of Director's Meeting: Chatsworth Park Visitor's Center.

Jan. 17, 2000, 7:30 PM Program Meeting: Rockpointe Recreation Center.

Feb. 7, 2000, 7:30 PM Board of Director's Meeting: Chatsworth Park Visitor's Center.

Feb. 21, 2000, 7:30 PM Program Meeting: Rockpointe Recreation Center.

**All SSMPA members are welcome to both General Membership Program Meetings
and Board of Director's Meetings.**

**Jan. 6, 2000, 7:30 PM Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy - Valley Hearing on Prop. 12
Chatsworth High School - Chancellor Hall, 10027 Lurline Avenue, Chatsworth**

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association
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