



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

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

May 2005 Newsletter

The "Write-Your-Letter" Corner

A handwritten letter to an elected official is a very worthwhile tool for working to protect the environment. We are a new column with this issue. Using this "corner", members are invited to write and send their own letter, using the suggested *sample-of-the-month*, as desired. This month features the following topic, about which you are invited to write to one or more of the officials listed here.

Michael D. Antonovich
LA County Supervisor, Fifth Dist.
869 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Admin.
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Audra Strickland
Assembly Member - 37th Dist.
2659 Townsgate Road, #236
Westlake Village CA 91361

Greig Smith
L.A City Council, 12th Dist.
200 North Spring St., Rm 405
Los Angeles CA 90012-1785

Tom McClintock
Senate Member - 19th District
223 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks CA 91360

Avoiding Use of Rodenticides Containing Certain Anticoagulants

Dear _____:

For the past several years, the National Park Service has been tracking wildlife in our local mountains. There were only four known adult mountain lions and four cubs in the more than 300,000 acres of the Santa Monica Mountains and in the Simi Hills. In December 2004, two adult mountain lions were found dead. The National Park Service confirmed that anticoagulant rodent poisons were responsible for their deaths.

A recent National Park Service study found that 80% of the bobcats in our area have some level of anticoagulants in their systems. That study also found that the 77% survival rate for bobcats in our area dropped to 50% in 2002 and to 20% in 2003. The primary reason for the sudden decline was anticoagulant poisons. Anticoagulants also affect mountain lions; the National Park Service suspects that mountain lions ingest the poison by eating coyotes that had eaten poisoned rodents.

Anticoagulants are toxins that are used in major rodent poisons. The use of these poisons is widespread, often used by schools, parks, golf courses, and in and around housing developments. Anticoagulants such as bromadiolone and brodifacoum, prevent clotting, causing animals to bleed to death internally. As these poisons move up the food chain, other wildlife and sometimes domestic pets, are unintentionally poisoned.

On February 22, 2005, Assembly Member Fran Pavley introduced AB 1548, which would authorize County Boards of Supervisors to adopt an ordinance prohibiting the sale of any poison designed to be used to control rodents that contains one or more of the following anticoagulants: brodifacoum, bromadiolone, diphacinone, or difethialone.

I believe we must take the deaths of two of the last known mountain lions in our region as a call to action. Please work to regulate, as much as possible the use of anticoagulant poisons in our State and local properties and facilities. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Sign your name; include your address]

General Membership Meeting

Monday, May 16, 2005

7:00 p.m. - ELECTION

Tonight's program will be a presentation by Steve Harris. Steve is Executive Director since 1999 and a founding Board member of the **Mountains Restoration Trust**, which was established in 1981 and is the largest private land holder/manager of real property in the Santa Monica Mountains. A businessperson for more than 30 years, Steve is Co-chair and Board Member of the California Council of Land Trust, a member of the PAC Committee to the County of Los Angeles for the California Coastal Commission Land Use Plan, Board Member of the California Wildlife Center and a Board Member of the Mountain Lion Foundation. Steve was a member of the Advisory Committee for Central Business District to the Community Redevelopment Agency (LA) for over 15 years. At our meeting, among other relevant topics, Steve will speak about the important work that is being done to preserve and protect local watershed areas.

At 7:00 p.m., preceding our program, SSMPA will hold the annual election for the Board of Directors. Please come and vote (you must be a member for at least two weeks, per the by-laws).

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday of the months September through November and January through May at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire St., Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South.



Dayton Canyon Hikers - April 9, 2005
photo by Sophia Wong

Young Environmentalist

Michael Wong-Sasso, who lives in Chatsworth, loves and knows all about dump trucks. When he was 6 years old in December of 2002, he wanted to have his birthday party at a real garbage dump. His parents arranged for an afternoon of cake and crafts at the Sunshine Canyon Landfill.

Michael believes that recycling is good for all the people in the world. He wondered why the City of New York wasn't recycling, so he wrote a letter to Mayor Bloomberg asking why not, and received a reply and a promise. He wondered why the residents of apartments in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles don't recycle, and found out that a pilot program for multi-family recycling has been developed and will be implemented soon.

After a teacher named John Quigley campaigned to save Old Glory, a 400-year-old oak tree in Santa Clarita, Michael went to talk with him at the tree. (Quigley had climbed down from his 50-ft high perch in January of 2003.) John sat down in front of the oak tree with Michael to speak about his campaign and tree-sitting experience. Michael asked many questions, including "How did you teach in the tree?" "Maybe in just trying to communicate that one person can make a difference and that the beautiful old tree, this heritage tree, was important, and maybe just the process of talking to people every day, maybe I was teaching doing that. Maybe just showing by example that sometimes here in the U.S. we need to stand up for what we believe in, otherwise we're going to lose things that we really care about."

Michael, in his young life, is already exemplifying that. Way to go, Michael!

Raising Consciousness Levels Regarding Parks & Access Thereto

Our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park is struggling along with still no funding for a badly needed general plan. Efforts are being made to raise the consciousness level of our elected officials who have the power to direct money to save the park.

There is much room for improvement regarding other local parks. Upon attempting to access Sage Ranch and Michael D. Antonovich Park through the hills, hikers will meet up with hostile no trespassing signs, or worse. This is an area that will be addressed as SSMPA members continue to make their voices heard so that the public can enjoy the local natural resources of the parks into the future.



Michael Wong-Sasso & John Quigley in front of "Old Glory", a 400-year-old Coast Life Oak
photo by Sophia Wong

Wednesday Evenings with the Condors

May 4 & 18, June 8 & 22

Micro-Trash Clean Up, Angeles National Forest

We'd love to have you join us one of these Wednesdays, helping Condors in the wild by removing micro-trash from the play areas they habituate. Adult condors are very curious and playful, and seem to ingest a lot of small trash (bottle caps, bits of plastic, rubber, etc.) in the process. Unfortunately, this trash is then inadvertently regurgitated in food for their nestlings.

Micro-trash has been a factor in the mortality of many condor chicks in the wild breeding program. We picked up a lot of micro-trash last year, and feel like it made a difference. In 2004, the Sespe Condor Sanctuary had its first successful fledgling in the wild breeding program. We hope there will be many more nestlings on the sanctuary this year, and that these clean-up efforts will continue to reduce the threats posed by micro-trash.

We will meet at 4:30 p.m., a short distance into the Angeles Nat'l. Forest, for some condor talk, updates and nestling gossip, and then caravan to the site and pick up micro-trash until around 7:30 pm. Bring a light jacket, visor or hat, comfortable work gloves (some latex will be available), water and snacks.

There have been some very explicit condor sightings at these clean ups, so bring your binoculars! Call or e-mail to let us know which date(s) you're coming. See you there!

Kim and Tom, Habitat Works of Southern California
818-353-4653

Upcoming Hikes

Sunday, 5/15 - Stagecoach Trail: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet 9:00 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Cyn Blvd., turn W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, lugsoles are preferred, bring water & snack. Ldr: Lee Baum. (818) 341-1850.

Tuesday, 5/17 - Ahmanson Ranch Parklands - 8:30am. Easy-paced 4-6 mi rt, 700' gain walk. Enjoy our newly acquired Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy land of oaks and rolling hills. Meet at trailhead (take 101 Fwy W, N on Valley Cir Dr to Vanowen St, W on Vanowen ¼ mi to gate on L, park). Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, hat, lugsoles. Ldrs. Ramona Dunn, Judy Garris, Marcia Harris. (San Fernando Valley, Santa Susana Mtn. Task Force hike)

Saturday, 5/21 - Fire-Followers Plant Walk - 9:30am. Hike up "The Old Trail" in Devil Canyon. Discover which flowers are blooming the second spring after last year's Santa Susana Mtn. wildfire. Easy-paced but there will be some hill climbing as we ascend from riparian into chaparral plant communities. Meet at the north end of Topanga Cyn Blvd just north of the 118 freeway. Call (818) 346-7654 for info. (California Native Plant Society hike)

Thursday, 5/26 - Towsley Cyn, Santa Clarita Woodlands - 8:00 a.m. Moderately paced 7 mi, 1400' gain (optional 6 mi, 1100' gain) hike with great vistas, a chilly narrows, diverse plant life and tar seeps. Meet Ed Davis Park, Newhall (take Calgrove exit from I-5, W under freeway, take The Old Rd S ½ mi to Ed Davis Park on R, meet at dirt parking area on R, 50 yards past entrance gate, before fee area). Bring 2 qts water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen). Ldrs: Bob Galletly, Lee Baum. (San Fernando Valley hike)

Monday, 5/30 - Sage Ranch in Simi Hills - 8:30am. Moderate, easy-paced 4-6 mi rt, 200' gain. Enjoy a beautiful California morning. Refreshments at Ramona's place after hike. Meet at trailhead (take 101 Fwy to Valley Cir Blvd offramp, N 6 mi to Woolsey Cyn Rd, L up hill to end of Woolsey Cyn Rd, R ¼ mi on Black Cyn Rd to Sage Ranch parking lot on L). Bring water, lugsoles, suncreen, hat. Please RSVP. Ldrs: Ramona Dunn, Judy Garris (818-346-7654), Marcia Harris. (San Fernando Valley, Santa Susana Mtns Task Force hike)

Tuesday, 5/10 - Newton Cyn/Backbone Trail - 8:30am. Moderate, easy-paced 4-6 mi rt, 800' gain on scenic trail through oak woodlands and chaparral. Meet at Newton Cyn trailhead (take Kanan Rd off 101 Fwy L; trailhead is just before 3rd tunnel, sign is on R; possible \$3-5 parking fee). Ldrs: Ramona Dunn, Judy Garris, Marcia Harris. (San Fernando Valley, Santa Susana Mtns Task Force hike)

PRAIRIE FALCON OVERHEAD



Workshop

Saturday, 5/14 and Sunday, 5/15 - 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mountains Restoration Trust presents Patrick Callaghan's Rattlesnake Avoidance Workshop for Canines at Headwaters Corner in Calabasas. Teach your dog to avoid rattlesnakes and to warn you when one is in the area. Over 30 years experience. Safe and humane. Nominal fee. Space is limited. Reservations required. Allow a half hour for each dog's training session. Call for information or to volunteer (volunteers will receive training for half price). 818-591-1701, ext. 189. Park at 23075 Mulholland Highway, near the intersection with Old Topanga Cyn Rd.



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

invites you to JOIN / RENEW (circle one).

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contribution lend your support. Make your check payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

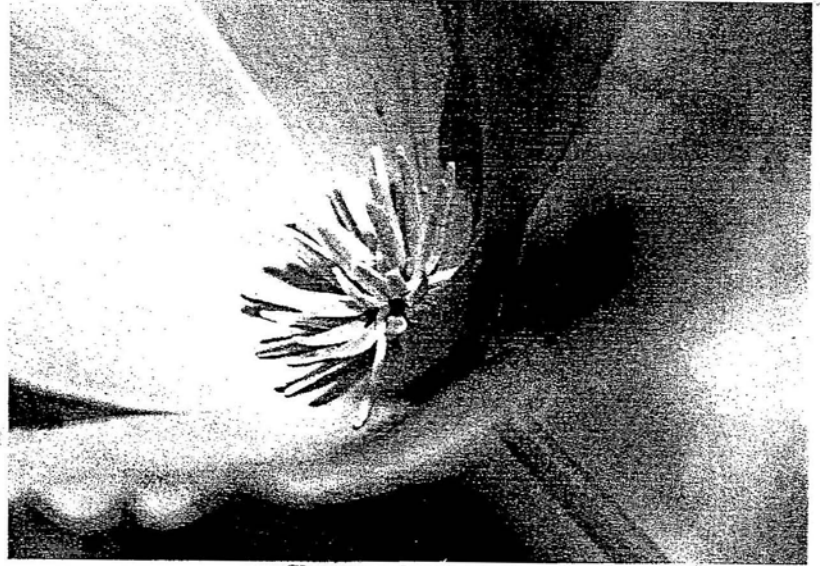
- Senior or Student (\$5.00) Individual (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00)
 Life Member (\$100.00) Business / Organization (\$25.00)

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Street Address: _____ E-mail: _____
 City / State / Zip: _____
 Special Interest / Expertise: _____

To read the by-laws of SSMPA, please go to its internet group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SSMPA/>) where you will also find many documents and resources relevant to the issues of concern to SSMPA and its members. If you have any questions regarding the website, please feel free to call Reid Bogert at (323) 661-4686.

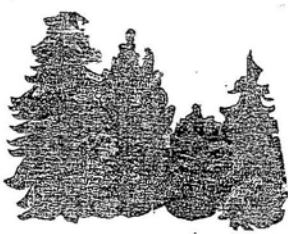
Thank you for renewing your membership:
Jim & Leona Wolff, Mrs. James Nicholson, Robert Lisenby, John & Annelore Schillo, Yvonne Ash, Bill Geller, Natalie Krah & Todd Doherty, Susan Bradshaw, Marty, Clara & Erik Woll, and Jim & Donna Swavely.

Subscribers & Members: We appreciate you! Please note the renewal date on your label. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help us meet newsletter costs. *Susan Gerke, Newsletter Editor*



Close-up - California Poppy
photo by Sophia Wong

The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National Forest, to the Santa Monica Mountains; as habitats for plants and animals native to the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills; as locales of unique geologic formations; as sites of ethnological, archaeological and historical interests; to provide passive recreational opportunities and environmental education opportunities; and, to support the acquisition of new public parks, open space and conservation easements, the expansion of existing parks, participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs, and support said programs. To find out how you can participate, contact Jan Miller at (818) 702-0854.



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &
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