

March 2007 Newsletter



Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich presents scroll to SSMPA board member Carla Henry commending the organization for its service to the community at the official dedication for Chatsworth Trail Park on December 11, 2006.

General Membership Meeting

Monday, March 19, 2007

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Dr. Jeffery Burkhardt is Fletcher Jones Professor of Biology and Chair of the Department of Biology at the University of La Verne (in the 'Inland Empire' east of LA), and is a native of Chatsworth where he grew up hiking the hills around what was then called the 'gun club'. Herpetology (the study of reptiles and amphibians) has long been an interest of his, and as part of his sabbatical leave for last year, he worked as senior herpetologist for Operation Wallacea in Cusuco National Park, Honduras. Operation Wallacea, affiliated with Oxford University compiles teams of scientists to conduct biotic surveys in third world countries that lack the resources to do so themselves. During a seven-week effort, Dr. Burkhardt's team discovered several new species of 'herptiles' and increased the known amphibian and reptile fauna of the park by 20%. In his presentation at the general meeting, he will show slides of his work and some of the animals and plants encountered.

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.

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.

Excerpt from an article in the LA Times/Valley News,
dated June 13, 1988

\$776-Million Payoff Caps Activists' Ultimate Crusade

Glenn Bailey was a high school senior with a burgeoning concern for the environment. Jan Hinkston was a conservationist, exhorting listeners to lobby for more parkland in the San Fernando Valley.

They met in 1973 in Sepulveda at a crowded meeting to discuss open space. After Hinkston's impassioned speech, Bailey asked how he could join her environmental crusade.

"I thought, 'Gosh, he is an enthusiastic young man and we really need somebody like that in our group,'" said Hinkston, who founded the Santa Susana Mountain Park Assn. in 1970.

Bailey and Hinkston have worked together ever since to preserve the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills, and to keep rural and mountainous land in the San Fernando Valley free of developers' bulldozers.

They mobilized a grass-roots movement among Valley voters to help pass Proposition 70, a statewide parks bond initiative to raise \$776 million for acquisition and restoration of parkland and protection of open space. The initiative won easily with the support of 65% of the voters, or 3.4 million people.

Bailey and Hinkston inspired 300 Valley-based volunteers to gather signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot and wrote portions of Proposition 70, concentrating their efforts on the West Valley's open areas. "We saw it as the only chance to get monies for the Rim of the Valley Corridor, and the only chance for the Santa Susanas," said Bailey. "We sure worked like heck for it, right up to the last minute," Hinkston said. "There was just nothing else to do - this area just has such wonderful attributes."

Hinkston, a kindergarten and first-grade teacher, has never cared much for the political process. She prefers leading monthly hikes in Chatsworth Park, where she lectures to hikers about history and wildlife and points out the topography and the 80- to 100-million-year-old rock formations of the nearby Simi Hills.

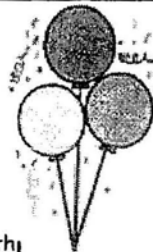


LAWRENCE K. HO / Los Angeles Times

Jan Hinkston and Glenn Bailey led the fight for Proposition 70 in the San Fernando Valley to protect open space like that here in Chatsworth Park.



At its general membership meeting on Monday, February 19, 2007, the election of the SSMPA Board of Directors for 2007 took place with the following results. Voted into office were Jan Miller, President; Teena Takata, Vice President; Diana Dixon-Davis, Treasurer; Patty Miller, Recording Secretary; Susan Gerke, Corresponding Secretary; Reid Bogert, Member-at-Large; Todd Doherty; Member-at-Large, Carla Henry, Member-at-Large; Warren Stone, Member-at-Large; and (new to the Board) Jack Unger, Member-at-Large.



Jan Hinkston's 80th!

Janice Hinkston, founder of SSMPA and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains is being given a very special party on her 80th birthday by her friends during her upcoming visit to California. She is looking forward to seeing old acquaintances and making new ones. Jan emphasizes that she doesn't want presents (just your presence) at the party. Come join the fun on **Sunday, March 25th, 4:00 p.m.**, at Los Toros Mexican Restaurant, located at 21743 Devonshire Street (just east of Topanga Canyon Blvd., on north side of street) in Chatsworth, California. Los Toros serves delicious Mexican fare. For the party, dinner will be a special Mexican combo plate with coffee or a soft drink. Cost at the door is \$15.00, which includes the gratuity.

A count of attendees is needed soon so please let us know you are coming by March 17th in one of two ways: (1) Send an email to SSMPA @yahoo.com or call either Pearl Turbush at 661-242-5506 or Nancy Razanski at 818-341-3512.

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

Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Rain cancels.

Sun., 3/18 & 4/15: Stagecoach Trail - 9:00 a.m. Interpretative hike into history in Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet 9:00 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Canyon lvd., turn W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to the 2nd parking lot. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850. (Sierra Club - Santa Susana Mtns Task Force Outing)

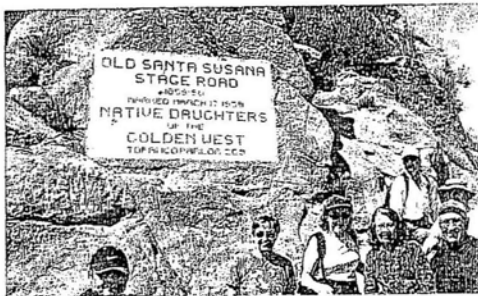
Sun., 4/1: April Food's Day Los Padres Wildflower Hike - 9:00 a.m. Moderate 5 mi, 1200' gain hike in Los Padres National Forest. View the extent of the recent Day Fire and hopefully the resulting wildflowers. Meet at entrance to Ed Davis/Towsley Cyn State Pk (take I-5 N. exit Calgrove, W to The Old Rd, S to park entrance, park outside main gate). Ldrs: Matthew Lax, Ray Lorme. (Sierra Club- Santa Clarita Outing)

Tuesday, 3/20 - Towsley Cyn./Santa Clarita Woodlands Pk - 8:30 a.m. Moderately-paced, 6 mi, 1000' gain hike with great vistas, a chilly narrows, diverse plant life, tar seeps & a fumarole. Meet at Ed Davis Pk, The Old Rd, Newhall (take Calgrove exit from 1-5 Fwy, W back under freeway, take The Old Rd S, R 1/2 mi to entrance on R, park in 2nd dirt parking area on R 50 yards inside entrance, before fee area). Ldrs: Pixie Klemic, Steve Rudolph. (Sierra Club - San Fernando Valley Outing)

The 7th ANNUAL CELEBRATION IN HONOR OF EARTH DAY AT THE CHATSWORTH NATURE PRESERVE will be held Sunday, April 1, from 10am until 4pm. Co-sponsoring organizations: Canada Goose Project, Sierra Club Endangered Species and Wildlife Committee, Southwestern Herpetologists Society, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association. Exhibits by the Mountain Lion Foundation exhibit, the Herpetologists Society and others. Aztec dancers have been invited to come and bless the land through their ceremonial dancing. There will be docent-led nature walks around the lake and a longer hike for those who want to see more of the property and hear the interesting history. Directions: take 101 north, through the San Fernando Valley, and exit Topanga Canyon Blvd. North, go approximately 5 miles to Plummer Street, turn left onto Plummer for 1/2 mile. The street becomes Valley Circle Blvd, and the gate is on the left. Parking is on the street. Walk-in only, no cars or smoking in the preserve. Bring hat, sunscreen, sitting-blanket, water, your own cup and picnic if you wish, along with a \$3 donation to honor the wildlife and oak trees living on this beautiful land. Take only pictures, leave only footprints. For more info, call Rosemarie White: 818-769-1521, x2.



Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership: Donald & Diane Fike, Arthur Langton, Carl Wilkening, Tony Gaudenti, Kathleen Nicholson, Bob Wood, Barbara Lilley, Leon & Shirley Brown, Elizabeth & Andrew de Sosa, Ed Embree. Thanks for the note of appreciation: The Browns.



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

invites you to JOIN / RENEW (circle one).

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

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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street Address: _____ E-mail: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

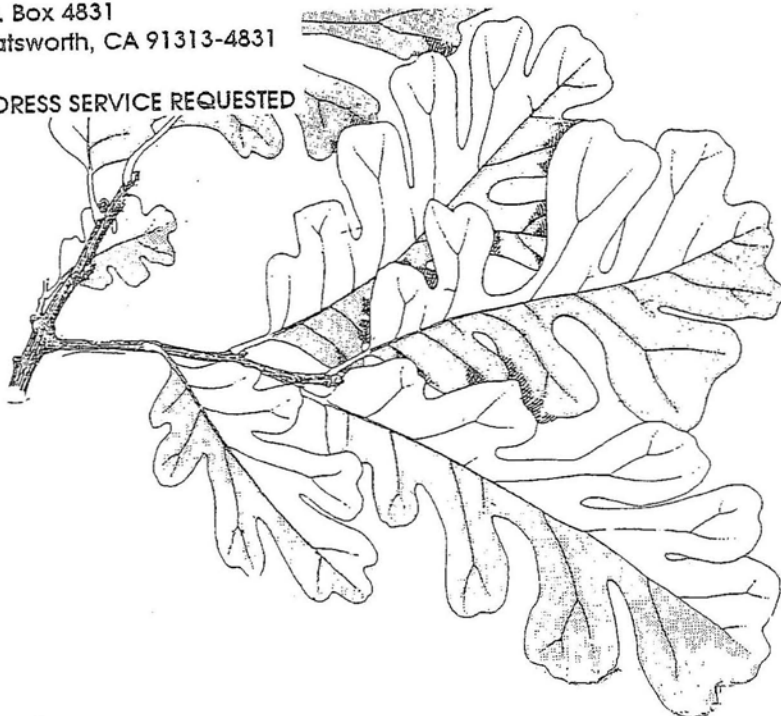
The **BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) is a small, long-legged owl found throughout open landscapes of North and South America. Burrowing owls can be found in grasslands, rangelands, agricultural areas, deserts and any other open area with low vegetation. Unlike most owls, burrowing owls are often active during the day. However, most hunting is done at dusk or at night. Burrowing owls are able to live for at least 9 years in the wild and over 10 years in captivity. They are often killed by vehicles when crossing roads, and have many natural enemies, including badgers, coyotes and snakes. They are also killed by feral and domestic cats and dogs. Their highly variable diet includes small mammals, small birds, snakes, lizards, frogs, insects and scorpions, but the owls mainly eat large insects and small rodents. Although burrowing owls often live in close proximity to ground squirrels, they rarely prey upon them. Unlike other owls, they also eat fruits and seeds, especially the fruit of tasajillo and other prickly pear cacti. When hunting they wait on a perch until they spot prey. Then they swoop down on prey or fly up to catch insects in flight. Sometimes they chase prey on foot across the ground. Conservation status: burrowing owls are a species of least concern. The nesting season begins in late March or April in North America. Burrowing owls are usually monogamous, but occasionally a male will have two mates. Pairs of owls will sometimes nest in loose colonies. Their typical breeding habitat is open grassland or prairie, but they can occasionally adapt to other open areas like airports, golf courses, and agricultural fields. Burrowing owls are slightly tolerant of human presence, often nesting near roads, farms, homes, and regularly maintained irrigation canals. The owls nest in an underground burrow, hence the name Burrowing Owl. They use burrows created by other burrowing animals such as prairie dogs, ground squirrels or badgers. If burrows are unavailable and the soil is not hard or rocky, the owls may excavate their own. Burrowing owls will also nest in shallow, underground, man-made structures that have easy access to the surface. The female will lay as many as 8-12 eggs over a two week period. She will then incubate the eggs for three to four weeks while the male brings her food. After the eggs hatch both parents will feed the chicks. Four weeks after hatching, the chicks are able to make short flights and begin leaving the nest burrow. The parents will still help feed the chicks for 1 to 3 months. While most of the eggs will hatch, only four to five chicks usually survive to leave the nest.



This burrowing owl was recently photographed by SSMPA member George Banks at a construction project in the foothills of the Santa Susana Mountains.

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