

Meeting summary for Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council **June, 2026 Meeting (6/25/2026)**
In-Person Malibu Creek State Park

Directors Present: George Sherman—President; Don Brusselars — Vice President; Peter Sullivan—Treasurer; Roger Young—Secretary; Ruth Gerson—President Emeritus; Denise Pomonik, Livia Szoke, Vanessa Ting

Directors Absent/Excused: Robert Bittner

Guests Present: Barb Thomas—Past President, Barry Dydyk, Geoff Grant, Juan Carlo Mendoza, Jerry Mitcham,

Park Staff Present: Jason Finlay, Desiree Renta—State Parks, Lei DeVera—NPS, Miroslava Ramos — SAMO

George called the meeting to order as President at 6:55 PM.

Additions to Agenda

Financial Integrity – George reviewed how we handle financial accounts and safeguards in place.

Historical Record Keeping – We have years of paper minutes that should be scanned for future use and safekeeping. George asked for a volunteer to scan the historical minutes and Vanessa volunteered.

Letter of Support for Horse Camp at Reagan Ranch – Ruth requested that we write a letter in support and we have agreed to do so.

Juliet Ashley from Scouts BSA Troop 15 give a presentation on the third puncheon project that she led as part of her Eagle Scout work. She recruited 30 volunteers for the day the puncheon was assembled and had half of them working on the puncheon and half working on trail maintenance for the day.

Treasurer's Report

Peter presented the treasurer's report, noting total assets of \$168,396.58 at the end of May, with receipts of \$11,562.23 and expenses of \$17,510.76 resulting in net loss of \$5,948.53. Major expenses for the month of May were \$7641 of Backbone Trek expenses paid and a \$5,000 contribution to CSUCI for the 2026-27 academic year and a \$500 to the Chumash Museum. Peter reported that total revenues from the Backbone Trek were \$14,909 with expenses of \$12,676 and refunds of \$500 for hikers who had valid last minute cancellations. Revenue less expenses and refunds was \$1,734.

Agency Reports—State Parks

Jason gave the following update:

- Nicholas Flats weed clearing on the lower trails near the campground are complete along with brushing on the trail up to Nicholas Flats
- Crews are working in the Reagan Ranch area including Cistern, Lookout, Cage Creek, and Deer Leg
- Santa Suzanna bridge project is back on again
- Malibu Creek docents have requested work on the trail to the Rock Pool.
- Chicken Ridge bridge initial work is continuing. The replacement bridge will likely be built off-site and ferried into place with a helicopter.
- Other work is planned on Santa Ynez Waterfall Trail and Garapito
- Jason announced that there will be controlled burns in Topanga State Park beginning in July.
- Several state beaches including Dockweiler are being transferred from LA control to State Parks which will necessitate new management, hiring, etc.

Agency Reports—NPS

Lei and Miroslava gave the following update:

- Work is continuing in Chesebro Canyon
- New Zuma Canyon signs are in place
- Samo Youth Crew is beginning work in NPS areas
- Thank you to all the volunteers who worked on National Trails Day. This was our largest ever turnout.

Agency Reports—LA County Parks and Recreation None

Agency Reports—SAMO Fund None

President's Report

This past month, financial integrity and historical record keeping have been consuming a large amount of my time. Spurred on by questions from Board Member Roger Young, Peter and I were asked to provide steps on how we account for Trails Council funds. Our bylaws provide some guidance:

Section 14. Rights of Inspection. Every director shall have the right at any reasonable time to inspect all books, records, documents, and the physical properties of the corporation.

However, no director shall be entitled to use the records or membership list for purposes not authorized by the Board.

Towards that end. I will be bringing copies of the latest statements to the June Meeting.

Our bylaws also detail the roles of Treasurer and President:

Section 8. Treasurer. The Treasurer is the financial officer of the corporation and shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the corporation. The books of account shall, at any reasonable time, be open to inspection by any director.

The Treasurer shall deposit all moneys and other valuables in the name of and to the credit of the corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the Board. Such funds shall be paid out on the signature of officers on file with the depository, the President and Vice President. The Treasurer shall render to the President and the directors an account of all transactions and an account of the financial condition of the corporation whenever they request it and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

The Treasurer shall prepare a monthly financial statement of the corporation; and also prepare, or cause to be prepared, yearly income tax and/or other required financial reports of the corporation.

The Treasurer shall keep a list of all present and past members, that will include membership type, status, names and addresses, and payment dates.

If you have questions about our process, please provide your questions prior to the meeting.

The other issue is historical preservation of meeting minutes. My biggest fear is that we have been haphazard about the process. Some years we have the meeting minutes on the Google drive but not all. This task could be a good fit for a Board Member that has a scanner and understands that future board members will appreciate their efforts.

Lastly, two questions, our board has been around for more than 55 years, how are you going to add to our legacy? What can you do to help our mission move forward?

Trail Maintenance George that since last month we have worked 537 hours on trails. All of Serrano Canyon is complete and we worked in Upper Sycamore on Saturday the The event with Scouts BSA Troop 730 in Serrano Canyon is their 38th or 39th year.

Annual Dinner

George led a discussion about an appropriate cost for our annual dinner at Calamigos Ranch. After some discussion, Roger made a motion to sign a contract for up to \$?? Including tip and Denise seconded. The motion passed.

Social Media, Membership, and Outreach

No update on membership.

Vanessa will follow-up on a potential survey of Trail Days volunteers.

Denise will follow-up about buttons or t-shirts that say; "Ask me about SMMTC". Roger asked if we could add a "volunteer with us" link on our business cards. George suggested a QR code on the signs we put on the trail while we're working.

Denise discussed the potential videos to be produced by Caelin Jack who is an REI employee and film maker. He attended National Trails Day and captured video. He had agreed to attend if we covered commuting and food for himself and his partner for the day. Denise will follow-up with him for those costs. A budget can be determined later for social media videos.

Denise is planning to schedule another outreach event at REI during September when REI will be having their next sale. She is working with Ricardo at the Woodland Hills store.

Denise is also still working with Nat at Arc'teryx about publicizing our work at their store.

Web Site

George reported on the Linda Palmer page updates. "She was the embodiment of the Trails Council."

News and Announcements

Barb requested a contribution of \$3,000 for Trail Days 2027. This is the same amount as the 2026 contribution and if we can allocate the money not, Barb can shop the summer and falls sales for giveaways. Don moved to allocate \$3,000 and peter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

George adjourned the meeting at 8:38 PM.