

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



FALL 2005

TRAIL NEWS

Sostomo Trail, Solstice Canyon

A slide on Sostomo Trail was being repaired at the time of this newsletter's deadline, according to Leslie Jehnings, Landscape Architect for NPS. It is expected that the trail will be restored by the end of September and crews will return to building the Etz Meloy segment of the Backbone Trail.

Sostomo Trail climbs uphill from the north end of Solstice Canyon Trail.

Gillette Ranch (Soka University)

All park and trail enthusiasts are pleased with the recent purchase of the Gillette Ranch property from Soka University. Much of the land is available for hiking. The university grounds (only) have been temporarily leased back to the university so that the students who have been going there can complete their studies and graduate. This will also provide time for parks personnel to complete planning and get ready for occupancy starting December 31, 2007.

The public is now allowed to hike between 9 am and 5 pm in the hills surrounding the built-up campus. Turn in at the gate off of Mulholland Highway and tell the guard you would like to hike. The guard will take your car license number and tell you how to find parking. If you walk to the right of the campus, passing Wisdom Hall, you should be able to find the wide trail that winds to the top of a small hill with a good view in all directions, including into Malibu Creek S.P. A fast hiker can go to the top and back in under an hour. No dogs are allowed.

Topanga State Park

Santa Monica Mountains Sector Superintendent Kathleen Franklin said that construction will begin on a trail in the new lower section of Topanga State Park and will be completed sometime next year. Although less than a mile in length, the trail will climb to a beautiful coastal view. The trailhead will be north of Pacific Coast Highway and west of Topanga Canyon Blvd.

(Continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HEALTH – Yours and the Trails

Healthy people enjoy life more, so take care of yourself and don't take your health for granted. Be watchful for signs of poor health so as to catch problems before they exacerbate. Healthy trails are even more prone to problems, not only from Mother Nature but also from the various and numerous uses by man.

Everyone can do something to monitor their own health, including their mental, physical and emotional well being. Trails, too, can benefit by each person's individual attention and contribution, no matter how small and no matter what form. Some ways are by physically working on the trails, by giving money to pay someone else to do the physical work, by coordinating and collaborating with others to plan and implement while avoiding duplication, and by communication with land managers and legislators. To keep pace with today's world, we must also monitor the legislative funding to ensure we have safe, usable trails.

All it takes is time and awareness in order to be sensitive to ourselves and to the land. Let's all do our part in maintaining the health of the public lands that we own and enjoy; and let's keep ourselves in good health so as to continue enjoying these lands. Take friends and family on the trails so they also learn to enjoy what we already savor.

How great that we are so tied to the land that our own health is improved just by being on the trails and by helping the trails stay in good condition. Trails play a major part in the interconnection of people's lives. Good Trails are the best measures for healthy people and lands.

Ruth

Coming Events

SMMTC Annual Meeting — 27 October 2005

See page 3 for details

State Parks Trails Conference (Agoura Hills) —
5-7 May 2006

Backbone Trek — 6-13 May 2006

Contact: Annie Salerno

818-705-9192

anniesalerno@yahoo.com

Trail Management Plan Being Developed

The National Park Service, California State Parks, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy are preparing an interagency regional trail management plan (TMP) that will establish the overall direction of future development and completion of the SMMNRA trail network over the next ten to fifteen years. Initial public input was solicited during a series of meetings in late September 2005.

Based on conditions for park natural, cultural and recreational resources, the TMP will pre-scribe policies to streamline interagency management of the trail network throughout the national recreation area. The TMP will also include a trail policy map depicting the planned trail network. The TMP will discuss proposed locations for trails and trailheads; trail construction, management, and operation guidelines; and allowable uses. An Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report will accompany the TMP to provide a detailed analysis of potential environmental impacts of the proposed plan.

Information: Parkplanning.nps.gov
and select "Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area."

Public comments may be submitted to the above web site or by phone (805-370-2301) until 21 October.



2006 Trails Conference Slated for Agoura

The 21st annual California Trails and Greenways Conference, conducted by California State Parks, will take place at the Renaissance Hotel in Agoura Hills on 5-7 May 2006. The conference objectives are to discuss trail advocacy, planning, funding and construction, easing of user conflicts, volunteer management, natural and cultural resource management and other trail related issues. In addition to conference sessions, events will occur on the trails, such as an equestrian trail ride and actual trail maintenance.



Pt. Mugu Map Correction

The 2005 Tom Harrison map of Pt. Mugu State Park contains an elevation error. At the junction of Big Sycamore Canyon Trail with Serrano Canyon Trail, the map shows the elevation as 901 feet. The correct elevation at that point is 91 feet. Harrison said he will make the correction in the next edition.



Controlled Burns Help Prevent Wildfires

The National Park Service in cooperation with the Ventura County Fire Department and land management partners is conducting a program of prescribed fires (or controlled burns) in the fall of 2005 in parts of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area. On 18 August, a successful burn was completed in Cheeseboro Canyon. When weather conditions permit, another prescribed burn will be performed at Rancho Sierra Vista.

The objective of these projects is to help control the spread of wildland fire by removing vegetation in strategic locations. This will provide greater firefighter safety by reducing flame lengths and heat intensity. Another objective is removal of non-native grasses, allowing for the future effective treatment on post-burn resprouting.

Numerous precautions are taken to protect firefighters and the public during these operations. Weather conditions must be within acceptable parameters. No burning will take place on the weekend, due to heavy visitor usage in the park.

Fire Information Officer Marty O'Toole said they prefer a gentle east or northeast wind for the Rancho Sierra Vista burn to keep smoke away from populated areas. They also prefer Wednesdays for convenience of available control resources. He said the Sierra Vista site could be an important choke point to stop any wildfires that might originate north of the area.

There are no trouble-free methods of controlling excess vegetation. Alternate techniques are mowing or placement of goats, although these methods also have limitations and practical difficulties.

Prior to any burn, notices will be placed at all trailheads and trails will be physically inspected. Potential trail users may check the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area home page <http://www.nps.gov/samo/> for notices of anticipated burns under the label "Closures" near the top of the page.

Should you have any concerns about these projects, please contact Fire Information Officer Marty O'Toole at marty_o'toole@nps.gov or at (805) 370-2364.



**Please don't
trash our
parks.**



TRAIL NEWS (Continued from page 1)

Franklin encourages all interested persons to respond to the call for public input on trails management for the Santa Monica Mountains (see story on page 2). Comments and suggestions may be submitted until October 21 via the following web site: <http://www.nps.gov/samo/trails> Comments can also be submitted to SMMNRA, 401 W. Hillcrest, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 or by phone to 805-370-2301.

New Trailhead into former Ahmanson Ranch

A new trailhead now provides convenient access for San Fernando Valley residents to the rolling hills of the former Ahmanson Ranch. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy opened the gate on 2 July 2005 at the west end of Victory Boulevard to access what is now known as the Upper Las Virgenes Open Space Preserve.

The trailhead, which includes 60 parking spaces and a restroom, allows hikers, bikers and horse riders to access miles of trails adjacent to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The conservancy purchased the 2,983-acre ranch approximately two years ago to preserve the land and prevent development.

Frank Padilla, Jr., to retire

State Park Fire and Trails Superintendent Frank Padilla, Jr. will be retiring later this year and will be greatly missed. For many years, he has been an extremely strong asset, showing great care for State Park trails. 

- Install or Repair Screens
- Support Community-Based Mosquito Control Programs
- Roll down your sleeves to cover exposed skin and avoid mosquito bites, especially in evening and early morning.

Lyme disease is caused by a bacterium transmitted to humans by the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash. If left untreated, infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system. Lyme disease is diagnosed based on symptoms, physical findings (e.g., rash), and the possibility of exposure to infected ticks; laboratory testing is helpful in the later stages of disease. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics.

Steps to prevent Lyme disease include using insect repellent, removing ticks promptly, landscaping, and integrated pest management. The ticks that transmit Lyme disease can occasionally transmit other tick-borne diseases.

Application of insect repellents containing DEET (n,n-diethyl-m-toluamide) to clothes and exposed skin, and permethrin (which kills ticks on contact) to clothes, should also help reduce the risk of tick attachment. DEET can be used safely on children and adults but should be applied according to Environmental Protection Agency guidelines to reduce the possibility of toxicity.

Since transmission of *B. burgdorferi* from an infected tick is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment, check for ticks daily. Embedded ticks should be removed by using fine-tipped tweezers. Cleanse the area with an antiseptic. 

Stay Healthy on the Trail

The National Park Service, in a 16 August 2005 press release, suggested the use of the Center For Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov) to learn more about West Nile Virus, Hantavirus, and Lyme Disease. From the CDC website:

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) is a deadly disease transmitted by infected rodents through urine, droppings, or saliva. Humans can contract the disease when they breathe in aerosolized virus. HPS was first recognized in 1993 and has since been identified throughout the United States. Although rare, HPS is potentially deadly. Rodent control in and around the home remains the primary strategy for preventing hantavirus infection.

West Nile virus activity peaks in August and September. As of September 6, 2005, 268 cases were reported in California. Enjoy the outdoors, but remember:

- Use Mosquito Repellent
- Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Sites

ANNUAL MEETING

The Trails Council Annual Meeting will be held on

October 27, 2005

at the home of hosts Ruth and Grant Gerson, providing an opportunity to meet people who share an interest in trails. Members and trail enthusiasts are invited to bring their spouse and friends.

The social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 and meeting at 7:45.

Please RSVP by Monday, 24 October, to facilitate meal planning. Call Ruth at 818-991-1236 and leave your name, telephone number and how many are in your group. The Gerson's home, Wolf Creek Ranch, is at 3450 Cornell Road, Agoura.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2006. Dues are on a calendar year basis, January through December. Please make your check payable to SMMTC and mail it to P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376. *Thank you for your continued support.*

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____ Check to have newsletter sent by e-mail

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Dues schedule for 2006:

- Associate \$35
- Life Member \$350*
- Business \$100
- Corporate Level 1 ... \$250
- Corporate Level 2 ... \$500
- Donation \$_____

* Life membership may be paid in three annual payments of \$150, \$100 and \$100
SMMTC is a tax exempt, non-profit organization under IRS code 501 (c) (3)



The ParkLink shuttle operates weekends and holidays all year. Amenities include bike racks, cooler and stroller space and wheelchair lifts. For schedule and other information, call 888-734-2323 or click on www.nps.gov/samo/shuttle/index.htm

Trails Council on the Web

This paper won't self-update, but our website will. Please check

www.smmtc.org

for the latest news and information on the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council.

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The Trails Council newsletter is published twice a year, in the spring and fall.

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