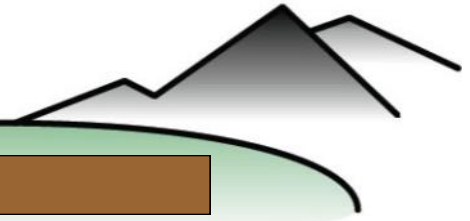


# SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



FALL 2009

## 17 Hikers Complete BBT Trek 2009

A total of seventeen hikers participated in the 8th annual Backbone Trail Trek over a seven-day period, May 2 – 9, 2009 in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. They hiked 65 miles from Point Mugu State Park to Will Rogers State Historic Park.

A staff of six full-time volunteers conducted the hike and several part-time volunteers prepared evening meals.

The Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council and Coastwalk joined forces again this year to plan and execute BBT Trek 2009. As in years past, this was a dynamic and effective team, resulting in a highly successful event.

This year's initial rendezvous and first night's camp took place at the Thornhill-Broome State Beach in Point Mugu State Park. Spending the first night on the beach was a new twist and added another memory to the overall BBT experience. The next day, the hike began at the western terminus of the Backbone Trail in La Jolla Canyon and ended 65 miles later at the eastern terminus in Will Rogers State Historic Park. Participants hiked nine to ten miles each day with a total, cumulative elevation change of over eleven thousand feet. Each evening, trekkers gathered around the "chuck wagon" for hors d'oeuvre and

*Continued on page 2*

## Coming Events

2009

- *Annual Dinner Meeting – October 22*  
(see details on page 4)

### Trails Council Board Meetings

Board Meetings are open to the public and held at Diamond X Ranch, 26412 Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, CA 91302, on the 4th Thursday of the month with three exceptions: in Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday; no meeting in August.

## PRESIDENT'S VISION

THANK YOU to all who have come before us, who now support us, and who will join us to continue our work. The leadership and perseverance of the Trails Council founders established the basis for what has become one of the most outstanding organizations in the Santa Monica Mountains. To this day, we continue as leaders to enhance and preserve the trail system.

Next January we begin our 38<sup>th</sup> year of volunteering, which requires an investment of oneself. People make time for trail work, whether regularly or just once a year at Trail Days. Others bring in new members. Some help with administration by manning a visitor center or kiosk or guiding groups, all of which make a noticeable difference in the visitors' experiences. Financial support is important through membership, grants, and donations. Volunteers wear many different hats.

We offer education in proper tool usage through trail work parties and workshops. At these times people learn how to repair trails damaged by problems of heavy use, erosion, improper use, water crossings, and rainstorms (if we ever have any more). These training activities ensure they use the highest standards for trail building, which then leads to safe infrastructure.

Reconnecting people with the land is vital by engaging visitors, as well as inspiring and encouraging youth, to understand, appreciate and participate in our mission and goals for the trail experience. Our long-standing commitment to trails as a resource validates the public's trust in us. Interacting, teaming and partnering with agencies and the public makes for a win/win situation for all concerned.

People need to have access to their land in perpetuity, a land of which they are part owner. Being responsible for their own land leads to Leave No Trace (LNT) principles: Travel and camp on durable surfaces; dispose of waste properly; leave what you find; minimize campfire impacts; respect wildlife; be considerate of other visitors.

Blending cooperation, volunteerism, activism, and experiences on the land leads people to look inward and perhaps find their other self, a self beyond the urban and material ways, reaching toward the 'high' of replenishing their soul & spirit in Nature.

Helen Keller – "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

*Together, Let Us Continue To Do Something for Our Trails.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth".

favorite drinks while discussing the day's adventures.

Several of this year's participants were repeating the experience from years past. Lee Thompson of Long Beach, Calif. was on his 5<sup>th</sup> trek. At the first evening's camp, Lee presented us with the product of one of his other hobbies – wine making. Several bottles of his excellent Syrah wine facilitated a cheerful camaraderie, which carried over to the following day's hike. Shari Shepherd of Santa Barbara was a three-time veteran.

Shari never seemed to tire of hiking, and she hiked other nearby trails in the evenings while everyone else was relaxing. It was estimated that she did a total of eighty-six miles during the week. There were also four 2<sup>nd</sup> time trekkers. Two-year veteran, 'Zan' Blendell of Santa Monica, thrilled us with a headstand on the "Chicken Ridge Bridge." Everyone was especially impressed by first time trekker, Laurie Webb of Pomona, Calif., who chose the Backbone Trek as her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday gift. We all felt privileged that she chose to spend this special day with us on the Backbone Trail.

Several of the out-of-area hikers expressed surprise and delight at the diversity of the Santa Monica Mountains. The group was treated with an abundance of wildflowers; hiker-leader Burt Elliott counted a total of 157 blooming species during the week. First time trekker, Richard Armerding of Newbury Park, Calif., an avid birder, sighted (or heard) 43 bird species during the week. The weather co-operated most days with low overcast, making for cool hiking. Of course, there were a couple of typical Santa Monica Mountains "scorchers" too. The worse of which hit us on Wednesday's hike on the fully exposed, Mesa Peak Motorway. Everyone was overjoyed when our thoughtful van drivers met us with plenty of cool drinks



*Trekkers rest at BBT trailhead.*

One of the highlights of the trek occurred on Tuesday evening, with an "all you can eat" BBQ dinner at the popular Calamigos Ranch. The fabulous meal was accompanied with a show of "Yaqui magic" by Frank Padilla, Jr. The trek concluded on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> as the somewhat tired but proud hikers marched into Will Rogers State Historic Park.

This year's success is attributed to having seventeen cheerful and congenial hikers supported by several dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers. Many are looking forward to BBT Trek 2010.

Jerry Mitcham



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[www.smmtc.org](http://www.smmtc.org)  
Then select the REI automatic donation link  
Every \$100 worth of shopping through our  
website's REI link, sends \$7 to SMMTC.



## Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days, April 24-26, 2009

About 140 volunteers came for a day or a weekend to help improve trails during the 28th annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days on April 24-26, 2009. The rare opportunity of camping under the sycamores and oaks at Danielson Ranch in the heart of Point Mugu State Park was free to volunteers on Friday and Saturday nights. They also enjoyed a free barbeque dinner on Saturday. Trail users had the opportunity to build and restore trails that they and others enjoy.

Held once a year, Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days is organized by a committee of citizens who love trails. The event is partnered by California State Parks, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, California Native Plant Society, Concerned Off-road Bicyclist Association, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association, Temescal Canyon Association, Crenshaw Eco Club and Conejo Sierra Club.

The Saturday crews worked on many trails, including Coyote, Upper Sycamore, Blue Canyon, Chamberlain, and Old Boney trails. On Sunday the remaining crews worked on segments of the Blue Canyon and Boney Trails.

Experience in trail building is not needed, and there were jobs for everyone no matter their ability. Along with trail work, a special crew worked to restore native plants. People brought their own lunch, snacks and water. Tools and Saturday dinner was provided.

During last year's Trail Days, which was co-sponsored by the Trails Council, six trail miles were repaired with 142 volunteers providing 650 labor hours.

For more information click on [www.smmtc.org/pix\\_Trail\\_Days\\_2009.php](http://www.smmtc.org/pix_Trail_Days_2009.php)

### National Trails Day, June 6, 2009:

#### Volunteers Rebuild Sandstone Peak Steps

SMMTC volunteers partnered with a Sierra Club Task Force played an important role as crew-leaders and workers rebuilding the steps leading to the top of Sandstone Peak in Circle X Ranch. The project for the 2009 National Trails Day on Saturday, June 6 replaced old, badly damaged and eroded steps.

## 1,404 Trail Work Hours Volunteered

SMMTC's October 2008 through June 2009 trail-work season consisted of 54 work days — every Saturday during the period plus one Wednesday per month and extra days as volunteered by other groups. Of the 1,404 volunteer hours, over half was in State Parks. The other half was spread among NPS and other agencies.

The result of this effort is 26 trail miles restored to good condition. Portions of the Backbone Trail were maintained in all of the local state parks. Included in the totals were three trips to Santa Cruz Island.

### Trail Work Statistics

	Miles	People	Hours
State Parks	831	1,348	83,920
National Parks	372	20	17,700
Conejo Open Space	133	100	6,300
LA County Parks	59	12	5,000
City Of Malibu	9	50	700
Totals	1,404	1,530	700

### Santa Monica Mountains to be Featured on TV

Natural attributes and trails of the Santa Monica Mountains will be seen in a 2.5-hour special over KCET Channel 28 on Sunday, October 11, 2009, starting at 3 pm. The program will consist of five half-hour episodes, each one focusing on a particular area of the mountain range. Milt McAuley, often called "the father of the Backbone Trail," will be seen in the 5<sup>th</sup> episode.

The featured areas are

- 1: Leo Carrillo Tide Pools and Tree People
- 2: Secret Trail and Escondido Falls
- 3: Upper Las Virgenes and Solstice canyons
- 4: Stunt High Trail and Satwiwa
- 5: Upper Zuma Canyon and Malibu Creek SP

### Trails Council on the Web

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

[www.smmtc.org](http://www.smmtc.org)

## SMMNRA Visitor Center Funds Received

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding in the amount of \$7,284,000 has been received toward development of SMMNRA's Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch.

Public comments and environmental compliance are being incorporated into the King Gillette Ranch Design Concept Plan. The final draft concept will be released for an additional 30-day public comment period.



## ANNUAL MEETING

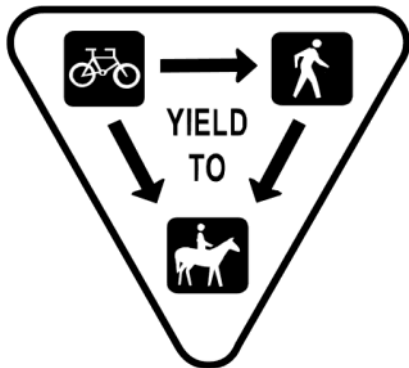
The Trails Council Annual Dinner Meeting will be held

**Thursday, October 22, 2009**

at the home of 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 complimentary dinner is hosted by the Trails Council.

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

Please RSVP by Monday, October 19, to facilitate meal planning. Call Ruth at 818-991-1236 and leave your name, phone number and how many are in your group. The Gerson's home, Wolf Creek Ranch, is at 3450 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ruth Gerson President	Linda Palmer Vice President
Georgia Farinella Secretary	Michelle Kemmer Treasurer

### DIRECTORS

Liz Baumann	Lylene Sheets
Howard Cohen	George Sherman
Mike Crowley	Ed Stauss
Ted DePass	Barb Thomas
Cynthia Maxwell	Jeanne Wallace
Jerry Mitcham	

## PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2010

Payments in October and later are credited to the following year. Dues are on a calendar year basis. Please make your check payable to SMMTC and mail it to P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376 or you may use your credit card with PayPal, [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)

*Thank you for your continued support.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check to have newsletter sent by e-mail

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Individual Memberships

Annual Membership — \$35

Life Membership — \$360\*

Business Memberships

Supporter — \$100

Patron — \$250

Benefactor — \$500

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Life membership may be paid in three annual payments of \$120.

SMMTC is a tax exempt, non-profit organization under IRS code 501 (c) (3)

## Let's Fix Trail Problems

Please report issues and situations that need attention such as signage repair, vandalism, trails overgrown, eroded, or dangerous and other issues. Call 818-222-4531 or email to [mail@smmtc.org](mailto:mail@smmtc.org).



## CONTACTS

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