

**This Newsletter is
Dedicated to the
Memory of
Ron Schafer**

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL

FALL 2010



Ron Schafer, Angeles District Superintendent, California State Parks, died on September 15. Story on page 2

Coming Events

2010

- Annual Meeting – October 28 (Thursday)

2011

- Trail Days – April 29, 30 and May 1
- Backbone Trek – May 7-14

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. Meetings start at 7:30 pm

For details on the Annual Meeting in October, please see notes on page 4.

PRESIDENT'S VISION Volunteers

Volunteers are worth their weight in gold. In 2009 on Public Lands Day in the nation, volunteers racked up some impressive numbers:

- 1,320 miles of trails built & maintained
- 100,000 trees, shrubs & plants planted
- 20,000 lbs of invasive plants removed
- 900,000 lbs. of trash eliminated
- \$14 million contributed

The value of a volunteer's hour during 2009 was \$20.85. The valuation of volunteer time provides a way to measure the impact that millions of individuals make each hour that they decide to make a difference. Approximately 61 million Americans gave 8 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$16.2 billion in 2008. These figures were calculated by IS – Independent Sector out of Washington, D.C. So you see, one person does make a difference, especially if you count this 1 and that 1 and another 1. All the ones are added together to reach the millions. Are you a "one"?

Trail Volunteers make every day a public lands day with the enormous amount of trail work that they contribute. Their passion for maintaining trails is evidenced by their tireless and consistent work, whether after natural forces that changed the landscape or after humans who have wreaked havoc. Safe trails are our major goal.

Your participation as a member of the Trails Council is vital for the organization's health. That participation can be as a dues member who is a "one" for support. Or you might also be a financial donor, a "one" who is able to give extra funds toward helping us with a major equipment purchase. Or you could be a "one" who is out on the trail with tools moving dirt and rocks, cutting back overgrown branches, taking out invasive plants, and putting in lots of sweat equity. In addition to the regular trail volunteers, we have trail crew leaders who give an extraordinary amount of time and effort.

Volunteers are the salt of the land, giving it useful and improved places for life's activities. Your volunteering is greatly appreciated by the land agency stewards, by the general public, and by the Trails Council.

Ruth

Angeles District Superintendent Schafer Taken by Stroke

Ron Schafer, Angeles District Superintendent, California State Parks, died on September 15 from complications of a stroke suffered on Sunday, September 12th. Director of State Parks Ruth Coleman said, "There was tremendous passion in all Ron did in life. He leaves behind a legacy of park protection and a deep sense of respect that will live on for many people in years to come."

Woody Smeck, Superintendent of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, said, "His great enthusiasm, energy, and relentless pursuit of excellence have left an indelible mark on the public lands in Southern California. His loss will be deeply felt and mourned by those who care about our state park system, including many National Park rangers who worked so closely with him."

Only 53 years old, Schafer oversaw 18 state park units in the Greater Los Angeles Area, including 12 units within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. His numerous accomplishments include:

- Managing efforts to open up new state parks in the urban core of Los Angeles where the need for parks is most acute.
- Despite deep budget cuts, increasing access to parks and programs through a variety of creative partnerships.
- Most recently, working with the National Park Service and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy on development of a new inter-agency visitor center to increase awareness of park facilities and the unique natural and cultural history of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Schafer believed that urban populations should have immediate access to parklands and focused intensely on building multi-stakeholder partnerships that would create and protect open areas in Los Angeles County.

Craig Sap has been appointed interim superintendent for the Angeles District, California State Parks.

New State Parks Trail Coordinator Appointed

Dale Skinner has been appointed Trail Coordinator for the Angeles District, California State Parks. "We are pleased to have Dale Skinner as State Park Trails Coordinator for the Angeles District. His recent appointment will be a big help in improving our trails," said Ruth Gerson, SMMTC President.

Aided by an assistant, Skinner will build and maintain trails and coordinate the work of volunteers.

Skinner has been employed by State Parks for over 12 years, gaining experience as a heavy equipment operator and other duties.



Trails Council Funds Equipment Purchase For State Parks

A new utility vehicle is being funded by the Trails Council for State Parks in the Santa Monica Mountains to haul heavy tools and supplies to work sites, especially to sites far from trailheads. Funding for the approximately \$10,000 purchase was approved by the Trails Council board on September 23.



With Trails Council funding, State Parks will be buying a John Deere Gator utility vehicle similar to the one shown here.

SMMTC Website Features New Trail Maintenance Calendar

New for 2010-2011 is an interactive calendar for the Trails Council's important volunteer effort to help keep trails in the Santa Monica Mountains in good condition. Take a look at www.smmtc.org/trailwork/



NPS Hires New Roads & Trails Supervisor

Bruce Lindsay has been hired to fill the position of Roads & Trails Supervisor for the National Park Service in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. His responsibility is to supervise a six-person trail crew consisting of a work leader, an engineering equipment operator and four skilled workers.

"We welcome NPS Roads & Trails Supervisor Bruce Lindsay. He arrives with good experience," said Ruth Gerson, SMMTC President. Lindsay previously worked for the U.S. Forest Service, Road Engineering Division. In his former job he worked in forest road construction and maintenance, facilitating forest logging operations, campground construction, forest access roads, construction of portions of the Pacific Crest Trail system and general engineering of all other assets and facilities in National Forest public lands.

In SMMNRA his R&T crew will maintain the Backbone Trail in Corral Canyon, Latigo and Newton and do brushing and maintenance from Kanan to Zuma Ridge and the eastern section of Saddle Peak Trail.

They will also do weed abatement in the Cheseboro parking area, Modelo Trail, Zuma Canyon and Zuma Ridge Trails and repair trails in Solstice Canyon. Yellow jackets will be eradicated at several locations.

In addition to trail work, most of the NPS paved roads will receive a slurry seal in early 2011. The dirt road in Circle X Ranch will be graded.

Lindsay asks Trails Council crew leaders to report to him or work leader Mike Zenan (805-370-2354 or 805-370-2352) any situation they come across in the performance of their trail projects that require the assistance of the NPS trail crew (chainsaw work, soil or rock slides, yellow jacket nests, etc.).



Contracts Let For Visitor Center In King Gillette Ranch

National Park Service announced in July it has awarded a \$6.8-million contract under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, to Big-D Construction and affiliated AJC Architects to rehabilitate an existing building at King Gillette Ranch for a new Visitor Center to replace the one in Thousand Oaks.

A second contract under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, has been let to Color-Ad Signs and Exhibits and its design firm Krister Olmon Inc. for exhibits in the new Santa Monica Mountains Visitor Center. That contract amounts to \$1.45-million. The two companies specialize in exhibit design and fabrication services and are based in Manassas, Va., and Los Angeles.

The new center is a joint effort of the National Park Service, California State Parks, and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to assist visitors to the Santa Monica Mountains.



20 Hikers Complete BBT Trek 2010

A total of 20 hikers participated in the 9th annual Backbone Trail Trek May 1-8, 2010. They hiked 65 miles from Pt. Mugu State Park to Will Rogers State Historic Park . Six full time volunteers supported the event daily and several more part time volunteers prepared the evening meals.

The initial rendezvous and first night's camp took place on a balmy evening at Thornhill-Broome State Beach in Pt. Mugu. It seemed appropriate to spend the first night on the beach as the following days would have breathtaking views of the ocean, but the camping would all be inland. At the first evening's campfire it was great for them to renew old friendships and create new ones. The camaraderie was enhanced by bottles of wine generously donated by one of the hikers who is also a wine maker. Several of the participants were repeating the hiking experience from years past.

Hikers covered nine or 10 miles a day. During the week the elevation changes, up and down, etc., totaling over 11,000 ft. Several out-of-the area hikers expressed surprise and delight at the diversity of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The spring rains treated all to an abundance of wildflowers. There was a count of 142 different blooming species during that week. The weather was near perfect with cool hiking days and balmy evenings. Cheerful and congenial hikers supported by dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers made this event a success.



On the 2010 Backbone Trail Trek, twenty hikers with the leader and two sweeps stop for a trailhead photo.

Trails Council on the Web

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

www.smmtc.org

3,253 Trail Work Hours Volunteered

SMMTC's September 2009 through July 2010 trail-work season consisted Saturdays during the period plus one Wednesday per month and extra days as volunteered by other groups. State Parks received the largest number of hours. The remainder was spread among NPS and other agencies.

The result of this effort is many trail miles restored to good condition. Included in the totals were trips to Santa Cruz Island.

The tireless crews started earlier and finished later than last season, working to make better and safer trails.

Agency	Man-Hours	Length in Feet	Volunteer-Days
Conejo Valley	13		5
COSCA	125	3,900	25
LA County	72	8,500	18
NPS	918	50,610	196
NPS - Channel Islands	440	40,829	22
State Parks	1,686	102,793	294
Total	3,253	206,632	560

Save the Date: 4th Thursday of October

ANNUAL MEETING

The Trails Council Annual Dinner Meeting will be held

Thursday, October 28, 2010

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 social hour begins at 6 p.m., followed by a complimentary dinner hosted by the Trails Council at 7 and meeting at 7:45.

Please RSVP by Monday, October 25 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 home is at Wolf Creek Ranch, 3450 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.



PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2011

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

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).

2011 – Backbone Trail Trek – 2011

May 7-14

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