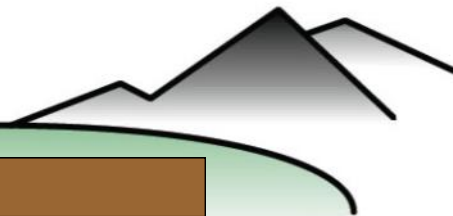


SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



FALL 2012



David Szymanski is New SMMNRA Superintendent

David Szymanski will be the new superintendent of SMMNRA, replacing Woody Smeck, who recently transferred to Yosemite National Park after serving as the park's superintendent for ten years.

"David is an excellent leader, manager and supervisor," said Pacific West Regional Director Chris Lehnertz. "David excels in maintaining and developing sophisticated partnerships with all entities,

Continued on page 2

Coming Events

2012

- *Annual Dinner Meeting—October 25*

2013

- *Backbone Trek— May 4-11*

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 at 7:30 pm. There are three exceptions: 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 page 4.

PRESIDENT'S VISION

Trails For Today and Tomorrow

This is the 40th year that the Trails Council has been in business maintaining the trails in these mountains. I think that's a pretty good record, and I am proud to be part of the team. Each of you members should also be proud.

As you know, the lands here are managed by different agencies that work together as land stewards for a common goal. That thread of collaboration is very important in defining the breadth of our work and the quality of our partnerships to protect the trails. Collaborating provides an understanding of complex, cross-boundary problems; it provides a clear comprehension of the values at stake by allowing stakeholders to speak their concerns; and it promotes problem solving rather than independent procedural decisions.

The public lands belong to each of you, and the land agencies are the stewards who help care for our lands. They have the knowledge and resources to manage the balance needed for maintaining public access and enjoyment of the lands as well as for protecting the wildlife and plants.

There are tangible and intangible benefits of being on the trails and being within the wild and natural landscape. It is vital that we introduce youth and young adults to trail experiences so the future of trails is made secure. Trail experiences vary immensely and provide experiential opportunities. Both urban and rural visitors, young and old, will value that the trails have been preserved for them and for future generations. Helping them become a volunteer will increase their connection to the trails and their lands.

Add to your bucket list to take 4 new people on the trail during the next 12 months. Get them hooked on nature and the good life.

Ruth

Continuation from page 1

which will be instrumental in continuing to shape the future of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area."

Szymanski, 44, previously served as the superintendent of Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, headquartered in Omaha. Before that he was at Everglades National Park and Voyageurs National Park. His duties as superintendent begin in the fall of 2012.



More Productive Trail Work with Spike Camps

To a team of trail maintenance workers on sections of the Backbone Trail, a Spike camp is a welcome place to stay overnight and rest for the next day's work assignments along the often hot and dusty trail. The temporary camps allow trail workers to remain near their work, saving many hours and much energy that would be needed to hike in and out between the trailhead and the work site. The camps can hold a wide compliment of trail tools as well as tents, clothing, food, etc.

The Angeles District's Trail Maintenance Coordinator, Dale Skinner, has staged three Spike camps along the ridge tops of Topanga State Park over the past summer and is currently working with Trails Council's support to stage a similar camp on the edge of the Boney Mountain State Wilderness to reach remote sections of area trails that are typically too far for groups of volunteer trail workers to reach in a single day. As with the other Spikes, Dale hopes to see high production and much greater efficiencies when his workers team with selected SMMTC volunteers to reach neglected trails in the heart of this local wilderness area. Later this fall, two more camps are scheduled along the Backbone corridor.

The term "Spike Camp" came into widespread use in the mid to late 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps to describe small work groups who travelled far from their base camp (carrying supplies by mule or by horse) to work on a distant project. The current Spike camps of 7 to 8 days duration dramatically improve productivity.



Two New Restrooms on BBT

New restrooms have been installed at two trailheads along the Backbone Trail. One is in Circle X Ranch at the Sandstone Peak Trailhead. The other is in Zuma/Trancas Canyons at the Kanan Road Trailhead, north of Tunnel #1.



Trail Maintenance Report

From September, 2011 through June, 2011, during 67 work-days, a total of 3,606 volunteer hours of maintenance were performed on trails in the Santa Monica Mountains and nearby areas.

An average of 58 volunteers worked on the trails each month.

| Site | Hours |
|-----------------|-------|
| Channel Islands | 343 |
| State Parks | 2819 |
| NPS | 315 |
| COSCA | 129 |
| Total | 3606 |

NOTES:
COSCA (Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency),
NPS (National Park Service)



Promote the Trails Council at Special Events

We are looking for a volunteer or volunteers who would like to assist the Trails Council at public events as our Outreach Coordinator. The public events are usually on weekends. We have a table and an Easy-up shade cover for the volunteers.

There are Trails Council brochures to pass out to the general public to inform them about us and how we repair and maintain the trails in the Santa Monica Mountains. The type of events are the Pumpkin Festival, the Bluegrass Festival, some beach events, and miscellaneous others. It would be fine if two people wanted to do it together. We understand that it is not always possible to attend every single event. Please contact Ruth if you are interested in helping.



Funding Available to Complete Public Access over BBT

National Park Service has received a grant from Los Angeles County Supervisor Yaroslavsky's Lands for Trails program which might soon allow the two remaining gaps of public ownership on the Backbone Trail to be opened to the public. There should now be sufficient funding to purchase the last private segments: one on the Etz Meloy Motorway and the other in Trancas Canyon, west of Zuma Ridge Motorway. Trail users are cautioned that those two segments are still not officially open, although there is reason to hope the Backbone Trail may become fully open within six months to a year.





The 2012 Trekkers take a break at the Kanan Road trailhead, the Trek's halfway point.

2012 BBT Trek — A Sellout!

The annual Backbone Trek was conducted May 5–12, 2012. Much interest in the event was evident early in the season by the number of calls and inquiries prior to the opening of registration. This excitement was confirmed once registration began. We set event records by filling registration in record time (less than two weeks) and by the record number of registrants (30). There were three cancellations, leaving us with 27 hikers. This was the earliest sell out and the largest group of hikers ever.

The 27 hikers rendezvoused with the seven full time volunteer staff at La Jolla Group Camp on Saturday afternoon. It was an enthusiastic group, bubbling with eagerness to begin the trek the next day. The group included 10 repeat hikers so many friendships were renewed between hikers and volunteers.

The Trek began on Sunday morning at the Ray Miller trailhead. Dave Edwards, hike leader, led the group for hikes of 9 to 12 miles a day for the following seven days. There were many sore legs and blistered feet, but all 27 hikers completed the Trek the following Saturday, at Will Rogers Historic State Park with no serious injuries and no regrets.

It is safe to say all participants felt a great sense of accomplishment upon completion. Other than two uncomfortably warm days, we were fortunate to have beautiful, near perfect weather the entire week. Although we had below normal rainfall in the spring, some late rain meant that we saw many flowers and counted over 150 blooming species, which is about normal for the Trek. We were also entertained by sightings of various wildlife, including deer, raccoons, coyote, rattlesnake and a wide variety of birds.

As has become tradition on the Trek, we were treated to superb meals in camp every evening. Food coordinator Annie Salerno and her food volunteers deserve our many thanks for the excellent meals.

Special kudos go to Carlyn Tagert. She not only hiked the entire Trek, but prepared one of the evening meals in advance and had it delivered by her husband Lloyd.

The popularity of this event continues to grow from year to year. The success of this event would not be possible without the contributions of SMMTC volunteers. Over 20 volunteers contributed to a successful 2012 BBTrek. Many thanks to all of you!



Annie Salerno to Coordinate 2013 BBTrek

The 2013 Backbone Trek is tentatively scheduled for the dates of May 4-11, 2013. Mark these dates on your calendar. Due to the enthusiastic turnout this year, we expect to fill the event early in 2013. Registration begins in February, watch the web site at <http://www.smmtc.org/bbtrek/>.

Annie Salerno, BBTrek coordinator for 2013, can be reached at 805-657-2984 for additional information.

WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU?

- ◆ A paper copy of this newsletter delivered by mail
- OR**
- ◆ An electronic copy that comes to your computer
- Please let us know by emailing to mail@smmtc.org

Save the Date: 4th Thursday of October

ANNUAL MEETING

The Trails Council Annual Dinner Meeting will be held

Thursday, October 25, 2012

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 pm, followed by a complimentary dinner hosted by the Trails Council at 7 pm and the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Please RSVP by Monday, October 22 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 situations that need attention such as signage repair, vandalism, overgrown trails, erosion, dangerous conditions and other issues. Call 818-222-4531 or email to mail@smmtc.org.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2013

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 PO 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).

2013 — Backbone Trail Trek — 2013 May 4-11

CONTACTS

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