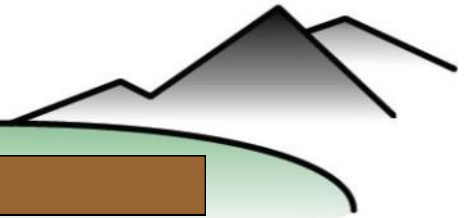


SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAILS COUNCIL



SPRING 2016

SMMTC Website Is Greatly Enhanced

The new, modern format of the Trails Council website (<http://www.smmtc.org>) presents much useful information for trail users and volunteers in easily accessible format. Whether accessed by smart phone or a computer screen, the website is far superior to its past incarnation. Credit for the improved site goes to Trails Council board member



and webmaster George Sherman.

Check the site to find trailheads, identify flowers and learn about coming events such as Trail Days and the Backbone Trek.



PRESIDENT'S VISION

Where is the Heavy Rain We Expected?

We were all braced for a significant El Nino event this year and I was not alone in looking forward to an end to the drought. The rains to date have not met my expectations in the Santa Monica Mountains for an El Nino event like I experienced in the 1997-98 season. The drought has taken its toll on the trail systems and open space in many different ways.

Trails Council volunteers have been very busy removing trees that have fallen due to the drought or fires. Trail users have shared pictures and messages of downed trees through our web site allowing trail crew leaders to address the clean-up efforts.

Additionally we have seen a number of companies step up and join us on our trail work days on Saturday and upon request on a weekday. Companies like Amgen, The North Face and Tom's Shoes and others have brought their employees together to work with us on the trails. Colleges have also participated in these events bringing many students from Cal State Channel Islands and USC. This brings public/corporate responsibility and community involvement to a new level that we can all benefit from. If you work for a company or educational institution with a similar ethic to give back to the trails you enjoy so much, come join us on trail work day. This may be a great opportunity for team building and getting some fresh air and exercise.

The effect of the drought had some negative effects on the trails where we have seen new trails randomly established where they were not intended or planned by land owners. Lack of vegetation has encouraged people to take shortcuts between trails causing additional erosion and trails that crisscross a once pristine landscape. Trails that are unplanned are not maintained and quickly fall into disrepair because they are not constructed thoughtfully to drain water or promote safety. They present a hazard to the trail user because they are more prone to erosion and will not benefit from the maintenance that all trails are in need of over time. Staying on established trails ensures that trail systems will remain safe and maintainable for all to enjoy. The Trails Council has recently partnered with the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA), a local government public entity dedicated to preservation and management of open space and parkland, to come up with solutions to prevent the creation of unsanctioned trails.

We are hopeful that El Nino will eventually meet expectations as we need the water but time is running out for this rainy season. The Trails Council is prepared to assist land agencies in any cleanup efforts if we find the trails are impacted by effects of El Nino. Please take a look at our trail work schedule and make plans to join us.

Happy Trails,

Howard

Coming Events

2016

- 35th Annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days — April 22-24
Danielson Ranch in Pt. Mugu State Park
- Backbone Trek — April 30 - May 7
- Annual Dinner Meeting — October 27
(Dinner & meeting are free and open to the trails community. Location to be announced.)

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 7:00 pm. There are three exceptions: Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday; no meeting in August.

35th Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days!! - 2016

April 22, 23, 24

POINT MUGU STATE PARK

All Volunteers Welcome!

For a day or the weekend!

No trail work experience needed!

There's a fun job for everyone!

Help improve trails and parks for all of us to enjoy!

Celebrate the NPS Centennial in the Santa Monica Mountains!



Trail Days is a weekend for individuals, families, and groups to build new trails and restore old ones. Partners with California State Parks include National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, Santa Monica Mountains Task Force of Sierra Club, Concerned Off Road Bicyclist Association, Building Bridges to the Outdoors Sierra Club, California Native Plant Society, Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association, Malibu Creek Docents, Temescal Canyon Association, Leona Divide 5050 LLC, and Conejo Sierra Club.

DIRECTIONS: Ventura Freeway to Wendy in Newbury Park; South to Potrero Road, turn right; left at Reino, left at NPS service road (1st driveway). Cars will be escorted in and out of the park at times below.

ARRIVE:	Fri.- 5 p.m., 7 p.m.	DEPART:	Sat.- 4 p.m., 9 p.m. (after campfire)
	Sat.- 7:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m.		Sun.- 8 a.m., 2:30 p.m.
	Sun.- 7:30 a.m.		

BRING: LUNCHES, BEVERAGES, SNACKS AND WATER, INSECT REPELLANT.

Tools are provided, but you can bring a pick, shovel, Pulaski, McLeod, pruning saw, or long-handled loppers. (Please, no light-weight tools or chain saws.) **Must See:** Trail Training video and weekly trail maintenance schedule is on www.smmtc.org

DINNER: Sat. Night Barbecue Free FOR VOLUNTEERS. Please RSVP by April 18. Bring appetizers and beverages. Thank-you raffles Sat. night AND Sun. after work!

WEAR: Gloves, hat, long pants, protective clothing, sunscreen, lip balm, and work boots or sturdy shoes.

CAMPING: Bring your gear! BE GREEN, BRING YOUR OWN MUG! Free camping Friday and/or Saturday nights for Trail Days workers at the Danielson Multi-use Area located under the sycamores and oaks in the heart of Point Mugu State Park. Advance camping registration appreciated by April 18.

PATCHES: Trail Days patches are available. \$3.00 each. Patches are also available from previous years.

INFORMATION: Rain (unless torrential) does not cancel. Return registration to: SMMTC, TRAIL DAYS, P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376. REGISTER ON LINE AT www.smmtc.org SMMTC (818) 222-4531 or Barb Thomas 805-509-3426.



REGISTRATION

Name _____ Day Phone (_____) _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Camping: Fri Sat Group Name/Troop # _____ Age Level of Troop _____
HOW MANY IN GROUP/TROOP? _____ BARBECUE: HOW MANY FOR DINNER? _____
Patches Ordered _____ @ \$3.00 = _____ Number of years participated _____

Trail Maintenance Report

From September 1, 2015, through February 29, 2016, a total of 414 volunteers performed 2,358.5 hours of trail maintenance in the Santa Monica Mountains and nearby areas.

Agency	# of Events	Volunteers	Labor Hours	Feet	Miles
COSCA	2	17	73	2,120	0.4
MRCA	1	20	69	1,500	0.28
NPS	9	86	501	24,400	4.62
SMMTC	1	4	23	0	0
State Parks	26	287	1,692.50	71,228	13.49
Totals	39	414	2,358.50	99,248	18.8

COSCA - Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency
 MRCA - Mountains Recreation and Conservation Agency
 NPS - National Park Service
 State Parks - California State Parks



Wait List for 2016 Backbone Trek

On February 1st when registration opened for the 15th annual Backbone Trek, we were flooded with 35 applications. Now 28 registrants have been accepted for the hike. We have 11 hikers on the wait list and registration is now closed. Thanks to Ed Stauss' press release, we are still getting calls from interested parties, forming a wait list for next year.

All campsites have been reserved. We will be camping on the beach at Thornhill Broome campground the first night. We have a full staff of committed volunteers and other plans are moving along well.

Here are two interesting news items: As you know, this is a special year in the SMMNRA as 2016 is the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.

Most importantly, the National Park Superintendent, David Szymanski, has promised that the Backbone Trail will be **completed** by this July. Work is currently in process on one of the two incomplete sections and final purchase negotiations for the other section are in process.



Join Other Hikers in a Meetup Group

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area includes more than 500 miles of trails for recreationalists, bird watchers, explorers and really everyone to enjoy. The Trails Council has started a group for hikers to learn about these trails, their history, and the lands they traverse. We have used Meetup.com to create this group because of the ease it provides for creating events and for people to sign up to them. There are already dozens of Meetup hiking groups in the area, large and small, but ours is different because it has a foundation of learning during the hike.

Some of the ongoing series of hikes are "Hidden Gems" where we explore less well-known trails including "Newer Trails" (built in the last 10 years). The Conejo Open Space Challenge for three months in the spring, is a series of hikes with a goal which offers good diversity in the trails experience, exposing the hiker to different views, flora and fauna. We will also use the group to alert people of upcoming trail building and restoration events. We hope to find some new trail work enthusiasts who were unaware of the need for volunteers to help with trail work.

If you would like to join, or just learn more about the events we've had, visit us at http://www.meetup.com/SMMTC_HIKES/. There is no charge to join the group or to come on our hikes.



Save the Date!!

The 35th Annual
 Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days
 April 22 - 24, 2016

Backbone Trail Trek
15th year
April 30 - May 7, 2016

FIND US ON

Meet-up

http://www.meetup.com/SMMTC_HIKES/

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TrailWorkSMMTC>

Milt McAuley Has a Peak and May Have a Trail

Peak 2049 has been officially renamed by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as McAuley Peak. The rocky summit along the Backbone Trail in Malibu Creek State Park honors local conservationist Milton "Milt" McAuley, who passed away in 2008 at the age of 89, having served on the board of the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council from 1989 to 2004

In addition to leading hikes for many years, he wrote several books including hiking guides and about wildflowers, calling attention to the need to protect the trails and flora. On March 5, State Parks held a ceremony at Tapia Park in honor of Milt and the renaming of the peak. His widow, Maxine, and many family members and friends attended. Several legislators gave certificates to Maxine; the Trails Council presented her with a large wooden carved plaque.

The Trails Council has requested State Parks to build a trail to the top of the peak. The request also suggested that the Backbone Trail could be rerouted from Mesa Peak Motorway closer to the new trail. As the BBT was intended to traverse the mountain peaks, this would be in line with that theme and provide 360 degree views. Decision by State Parks for the trail is pending.



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WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU?

A paper copy of this newsletter *OR* an electronic copy?

Please let us know by emailing to mail@smmtc.org

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Dues are on a rolling 12-month basis. Membership dues will be effective the first of the month following receipt; membership will be effective for 12 months. 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.

<http://smmtc.org/membership/>

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 consecutive annual payments of \$120. SMMTC

CONTACTS

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Mail: P.O. Box 345

Agoura Hills, CA 91376

Phone: 818-222-4531

E-mail: mail@smmtc.org

Internet: www.smmtc.org

Howard Cohen, President

howard@gravityh.com — 805-732-9137

Ed Stauss, Newsletter Editor

edstauss@yahoo.com — 818-883-7843

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