



Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Protect • Preserve • Maintain

ESTABLISHED 1969

FALL 2024

President's Message

Fall is upon us, after our early September heatwave, we're all hoping for cooler temperatures! Our trail crews have had a busy spring and early summer, tackling rain-damaged trails throughout the Santa Monica Mountains. We're gearing up for our fall/winter workdays and the [Trail Maintenance Schedule](#) is posted on the website. We'll be working on trails in Pt. Mugu State Park, Topanga Canyon State Park, Leo Carillo, Malibu Creek State Park, Rancho Sierra Vista, and the Conejo Open Space. We welcome all to join us on one or more workdays on trails in your area; it's a very rewarding way to give back to the parks! Check back often if you've picked a favorite trail to work on in case there are changes. Have you found a trail that needs attention or something amiss? You can contact us at mail@smmtc.org with trail issues and we can get the information to the appropriate agency.

We welcome new board member Robert Bittner, a Los Angeles native living in the South Bay Region. Robert has hiked the California mountains and beyond since his teen years, along with constructing, maintaining and repairing trails and campsites. He is retired from a design and management career in aerospace. In addition to his commitment to the trail community, his diverse activities include community activism, golf rules official, cyclist, start-up advisor, risk aversion specialist, recipe creator, and writer. Robert is leading our community outreach effort at the December 8, 2024 CicLAvia event along Ventura Blvd.

Jody Lyle was selected as NPS Superintendent of our Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). Jody was previously Chief of Staff, then deputy Superintendent here. Jody has a rich career spanning more than 30 years, including roles in education, public affairs, community relations, park law enforcement and fire management. Jody has worked at many national parks in California, and also in Yellowstone and Cane River Creole National Historical Park in Louisiana. She even did a stint in communications in Washington D.C. We are so grateful to have a superintendent with such a rich and diverse background here at the helm in the SMMNRA.

Save the Dates in 2025! Because Passover and Easter fall in April, the 2025 Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days is **EARLY: April 4 - 6**. More information on the event will be posted on

the website later. The 2024 Trail Days was a huge success, with an unprecedented number of volunteers. If you've ever thought you'd like to hike the Backbone Trail from end-to-end, put our annual Backbone Trek on your must-do list! We take about 25 hikers with experienced leaders, on moderate to difficult hikes in a week. Hike with only a daypack because gear is moved to campsites for you and meals are provided.

Tentative dates for 2025 are May 3rd to 10th. Check our website this winter for more information, including when registration opens.



Part of our mission is education, including teaching people how to work on trails, having fun educational activities for young children during Trail Days, and helping scouts with their badges. This year we have expanded our educational outreach. I am very pleased that the Trails Council has established the Linda Palmer Memorial Scholarship to help college students in their environmental studies! [We awarded our very first scholarship this summer](#) to a very deserving student. We're looking forward to a productive year, with trail work, education, and outreach.

See you on the trails!

Barb Thomas
Barb Thomas, President

YOU'RE INVITED

Dinner & meeting are free and open to the trails community. RSVP at smmtc.org or 805-885-7224

Calamigos Ranch, 327 Latigo Cyn Rd, located at the intersection of Kanan Rd and Mulholland Hwy.

| | |
|--------|--|
| 6:00PM | Social Hour-Visit with NPS, State Parks, MRCA, local officials and representatives from other government & trail organizations |
| 6:45PM | Dinner |
| 7:30PM | Meeting |

OCTOBER 24TH 2024 ANNUAL DINNER

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace (LNT), take only pictures and leave only footprints. These admirable concepts for visitors to our public wild lands should be familiar to everyone. Sadly, they are not. As a nation, we turned a corner in 1965 when Lady Bird Johnson promoted the Highway Beautification Act. This program was not immediately successful, but eventually the idea of indiscriminate littering became anathema to most Americans. LNT builds on that concept.

We salute those of you who take pride in being “stewards of the land”. Let’s work together to bring more people onto our side by showing the value of LNT and how easy it can be to incorporate into our activities.

Here are a few tips:

1. Plan Ahead and Be Prepared

Paper maps are usable when cell coverage is nil.

2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

The tread of our trails contain lots of clay. Rain makes the clay sticky and could damage your shoes, bike or horse. If you are leaving deep prints, you are damaging the trail.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

Sometimes you just have to go, why not carry a couple of pet waste bags in your pack and take home the TP?

4. Leave What You Find

It is ok to pick up plastic bottles, money and cans - consider bringing a bag to carry this loot back to civilization.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

Where permitted - use established fire rings. Buy firewood where you burn it (*avoids bringing in invasive insects & seeds*).

6. Respect Wildlife

Learn to be a better observer. Seeing animals, snakes and birds makes your adventure seem “wilder”. They are not pets and may or may not want to be seen.

7. Be Considerate of Others

Courtesy is a two way street. Most of us are out on the trails for the same reason you are. They may even be friends you have not met yet.

Looking For an Opportunity to Volunteer?

The Trails Council and Santa Monica Mountains Task Force (SMMTF) invite you to join us at CicLAvia - December 8th on Sherman Way (Between Shoup and Reseda). We'll be there to share information about local trails and engage with the community.

CicLAvia is an event where five or so miles of contiguous roadway are blocked off from vehicles so that the public can congregate and enjoy unimpeded movement along the route. It's a festive day of human and low-powered movement. Along the way, people will find popups and offerings from food venues and shops to information providers, like local government and public utility companies.

Our effort will be twofold, and we will need volunteers to work one of three, three-hour shifts. The first will be to support law enforcement traffic control at one of six vehicle crossing points. We will halt the participants with provided barrier tape and signs during that process, and will be given brightly colored t-shirts to wear. The second need is for people to staff our popup and talk about the SMMTC and SMMTF.



Vehicle crossing:

5 people: 8:30am - 11:30am
5 people: 11:00am - 2:00pm
5 people: 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Information pop-up:

2 people: 8:00am - 11:00am
2 people: 10:30am - 1:30pm
2 people: 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Email rsdinc86@gmail.com for more information.

Trail Days 2024

The **2024 Trail Days event**, which is a collaboration between the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association and the Santa Monica Mountains Task Force of the Sierra Club was a huge success. In all, we had over 200 volunteers that worked the trails on Saturday and Sunday. We worked rerouting trails due to water damage, recreating drainages and reopening trails that were super overgrown.

We have many companies that donate items for Trail Days and these are listed on our website. **Giant Bicycle** provided much needed lip balm and hair ties. It was very exciting to see Arc'teryx who provided swag for the volunteers which included hats, packs and cross body bags (mine went to Hawaii with me!). In addition, **Arc'teryx** provided a yummy lunch on Sunday and several packs and duffels as grand prizes for the thank you drawing on both Saturday and Sunday. **Rivian** provided delicious muffins and a beautiful surfboard as a grand prize for the Saturday drawing and **Kuat** provided a bike tailgate cover. We thank **The Ranch Malibu** for their monetary contribution which allowed us to serve Dearmore BBQ's delicious tri-tip and BBQ chicken dinner with vegetarian options on Saturday night and thanks to **Western Bagel** for their donation of the bagels for breakfast.

In addition to the three groups that collaborated on this event, we had assistance from the National Park Service and the State Parks placing signage, escorting volunteers in and out of the campground and out to the trails as well as providing tools and crew to assist volunteers on the trails. We would also like to thank the remarkable Jason Finley from California State Parks for all of his help scouting trails, defining reroutes and helping make trail days the success it was. A big shout out to Miroslava Munguia Ramos from NPS for an amazing naturalist presentation for the children that

captured their imaginations and kept them excited about the wildlife in the Santa Monica mountains!

During the event Mary Hubbard created professional videos specific to each sponsor group for us to use to promote trail work and trail days. She did an amazing job. Please check out the [video](#) - you may see yourself in action!

Most importantly, as the event coordinator I am so grateful for and want to thank every crew leader that put in time scouting trails, transporting tools, organizing their crews, teaching people how to work on trails and after a long, long week and weekend, helping with all the cleanup. I want to thank my campground coordinators and registration folks who kept us organized and on track. All of you are the very best and the "backbone" of this event.

Drum roll please! Here are the totals (including prep time):

287 volunteers plus at least 20 park staff and the Pt. Mugu State Park maintenance crew, 1412 volunteer hours, 4.03 miles of trails maintained.

Amazing!! Thanks to each one of you who put in a hard weekend of work helping to keep our trails open and giving back to our trail community. Congratulations to each of you on the work that you've done; we could not do it without you!

Next year trail days will be held the first weekend of April. It's earlier than usual because of various holidays happening in April. See you in 2025!

- Barb Thomas



George, [cutting the mustard](#) to temporarily reclaim this trail while pondering which is better: gas or electric power hedge cutters.

Photo: Denise Pomonik



It's time to shine the spotlight on modest George Sherman, Vice President and Webmaster of SMMTC. He's been a board member since 2005, a crew leader since 2013, and awarded the Hank Grateful Award in 2015. George is also the social media guru, editor of the semi-annual newsletter and annual crew highlights, heads up both the Trails and Ideas committees for the board, maintains the website's crew reports and statistics, and updates and supplies the photos for the website's Plant of the Month pages. George is constantly changing and improving the website to keep it fresh and engaging. He does it all!

Not only is George active on the board, he is a committed and enthusiastic trail worker. George spends many hours on the trail and focuses on the most strenuous and dirtiest of tasks. George volunteers to lift the heaviest objects, saws the thickest limbs, cuts off the thorniest branches and removes the biggest stumps. George is a one man band – he carries a Trail Boss (which consists of a collapsible handle with multiple heads/tools), various sized saws, and a hard rake. You can always count on George to have the right tool!

George is an excellent mentor and crew leader on the trail. He shares his trail skills generously and patiently.

George also has an extensive knowledge of native plants. He is a walking, living encyclopedia of interesting and arcane facts. Time spent outdoors with him is enriched by his observations.

- Ruth Feldon

Crew Spotlight



King Snake Photo Denise Pomonik

Signs Project Update



Jon Sheldon

Jon Sheldon and company have now completed the installation of **82** directional signs in Point Mugu State Park. Nearing the finish for Phase 3 of the project, Phase 4 is in the discussion phase.

Donation - CSUCI Foundation

Recently, the Trails Council donated over four thousand dollars to the California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) Foundation for the express purpose of funding two student interns for the CSUCI Trail Corps.

The Trails Council entered into a formal agreement with the CSUCI Center for Community Engagement in 2021 and joined their Service-Learning program. Under this program, the CSUCI Trail Corps was established. The Trail Corps is a group of two to five student interns who work alongside our trail crew throughout the year. The funds for this program are normally supplied by the State of California. For the coming year, due to the State budget shortfalls, the funds for this program will be severely restricted, limiting the funding for the student interns. To help make up for this shortfall and bolster the program, the Trails Council has donated funds.

Through this program we have been able to introduce several young people to the beauty and diversity of our mountains. We have had the opportunity to teach them about the environment, the meaning and value of volunteerism, community service and hopefully establish a work ethic. Most importantly, maybe we have planted the seed of “land stewardship”.

The Trails Council has also greatly benefited from this program. Their attendance always breathes a little additional energy and enthusiasm into our events. It’s interesting and valuable for us (mostly retirement age) to hear of their current life experiences, challenges, goals and outlook on the future. And, of course the value of their physical labor is tremendously valuable. Over the course of

the last three years, the Trail Corps has contributed several hundred hours of labor to our trail maintenance program.

The CSUCI Trail Corps program has proven its value and deserves our support. This donation is a prime example of how the Trails Council uses membership fees and other donations to advance our mission and goals.

-Jerry Mitcham

Update: Our donation is being put to good use. Four student interns have been recruited for the 2024/2025 Trail Corps program!



Jerry, Luna, Haley, Angela

Linda Palmer Memorial Scholarship Fund

Linda Palmer was a Los Angeles County native, equestrian and ardent activist for open space.

She helped design and promote the Los Angeles County's Trail Plan for the Santa Monica Mountains, an arduous task. Working with others, that effort resulted in the many public trails that give us places for physical, mental and emotional respite.

Linda designed and helped build the Upper Stunt High Trail in Calabasas. She literally crawled on her belly under and through the brush to decide on the route; and then she tied surveyor's tape for others to follow with tools to open the trail. She had to be very careful and very alert because there were snakes in the bushes above her. She often remarked that there was usually at least one tick on her most of the time.

She was appointed to the Santa Monica Mountains Advisory Committee in 1980; and she served with dedication and good advice, always researching problems to figure out how best to resolve them. With a few years off, she served for a total of 24 years in that position.

In 1984, she coordinated the feasibility study for the Los Angeles County portion of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. In 1993-94, she co-chaired the Anza Trail Plan Task Force to assist the National Park Service with the specific trail plan through Los Angeles County.

Linda was President of the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council for fourteen years, 1981 through 1994; and then she was vice president 1998-2010. She was the first Trail Crew Leader for the volunteer trail maintenance crews and trained many crew leaders. She was the keeper of the records and the tools for the Trails Council and she and husband Bob personally paid the telephone bill for many, many years. Linda organized the Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days for years and delighted in teaching the young children about trails, nature, and the environment. In a nutshell – she was the embodiment of the Trails Council.

Linda was the catalyst who coordinated various trail projects. She established the Adopt-A-Trail program for the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council; she encouraged workshops for training trail crews; and she supported utilizing people assigned for public service by the courts to work on trails.

Continued on next page...

Linda @Tevis Cup



Linda Palmer Memorial Scholarship Fund - Continued

Linda often took people horseback riding who were in responsible positions in agencies, organizations and politics to show them important lands and trails that needed to be acquired. Many of them voted to buy the lands after riding with Linda to see how beautiful the lands were and how important it was to save them from development.

Linda was passionate about protecting trails and ensuring their legacy for future generations to enjoy. She was knowledgeable, a mentor for many, and an inspiration and role model for all.

“I have a strong need for open space. It nurtures us all. It is our responsibility to bequeath it to our children. I feel that trails give access to the open space. When I ride my horse, Baraka, in the mountains, I feel privileged. I have benefited from the work of others, and I owe it to them to give something back. Perhaps the peace we feel in the natural world is because we see water, plants, trees and wildlife. We know we could survive here no matter the state of the economic world. This is our heritage and the network of life that supports us.”

-Linda Palmer

The Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council established the Linda Palmer Memorial Scholarship Fund to assist students in their pursuit of environmental education.

The scholarship honors Linda’s passion for teaching people about the outdoors and making everyone feel welcome.

The first recipient of this fund was **Christopher Ramirez**, a student intern at CSUCI Trail Corps. In August 2024, he was chosen due to his admirable character – diligent, enthusiastic, self-confident, adaptable, reliable and communicative. His integrity and concern for others was evident as he worked alongside various crew members. Christopher is an excellent example of the Volunteerism Spirit that is the essence of the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council mission.

-Ruth Gerson



Ruth Gerson and Christopher Ramirez

Channel Islands Report



| Location | Date | Hours |
|--------------------|---------|---------------|
| Del Norte Trails | 8/28/24 | 88.00 |
| San Miguel Island | 8/22/24 | 99.00 |
| Del Norte Trails | 8/6/24 | 120.00 |
| Del Norte Trails | 7/25/24 | 76.00 |
| Prisoners Harbor | 7/15/24 | 54.00 |
| Del Norte Trails | 7/2/24 | 138.00 |
| Nature Conservancy | 6/5/24 | 133.00 |
| Eagle Ridge | 3/22/24 | 32.00 |
| Channel Islands | 3/8/24 | 147.00 |
| Prisoners Harbor | 2/16/24 | 31.50 |
| Prisoners Harbor | 1/26/24 | 35.00 |
| Prisoners Harbor | 1/16/24 | 35.00 |
| Total Hours | | 988.50 |

Cindy, John K, Barry, Don, Ruth, Dave, Anne

With Dave Edwards leading the way, we contributed nearly a 1,000 hours of labor supporting NPS and the Nature Conservancy at Channel Islands National Park. Highlights included:

- Stair case on San Miguel Island - [YouTube](#)
- Building Tent Pads at Prisoners Harbor
- Pit Vault Toilet Installation at Del Norte
- Plenty of brush and Fennel removal
- Building fence, watering oaks

Members of our trail crew who took part:

| Crew Member | Hours | Crew Member | Hours |
|--------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Dave Edwards | 183.5 | Don Brusselars | 43.0 |
| Ruth Feldon | 138.5 | Barb Thomas | 12.5 |
| John Reynolds | 104.5 | John Kross | 10.5 |
| Juan Carlo Mendoza | 103.5 | Christopher Ramirez | 10.0 |
| Carlyn Taggart | 99.0 | Kirsten Rosselot | 7.5 |
| Anne Russell | 54.0 | Solomon Adams | 7.0 |
| Cindy Kimmick | 54.0 | Greg Sweel | 3.5 |



Juan Carlo



John R, Ruth, Carlyn, Dave

Board of Directors

Barb Thomas, **President**

George Sherman, **Vice President**

Peter Sullivan, **Treasurer**

Melody Reilly, **Secretary**

Robert Bittner

Don Brusselars

John Kross

Denise Pomonik

Roger Young

Ruth Gerson, **President Emerita**

Individual Membership

Annual - \$35 Family - \$60

Lifetime - \$360 Can also be paid over 3 consecutive years @ \$120 per year

Business Membership

Supporter - \$100

Patron - \$250

Benefactor - \$500

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____



Dues are on a rolling 12-month basis. Membership dues are effective the first of the month following receipt of funds; membership will be effective for 12 months. Please make your check payable to SMMTC and mail it to P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376. Memberships can also be purchased on our website using Paypal.

Make a Donation?

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

Thank you for your continued support!

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OUR STORY

Since 1969, the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council has been the only organization devoted to representing all trail user groups in the Santa Monica Mountains. We are a volunteer nonprofit organization, dedicated to establishing, preserving and maintaining the public trail system throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent areas through education, advocacy and partnership with public and private sectors.

We coordinate with various government agencies to enhance and preserve the trail system. We assist in negotiations with property owners regarding trail alignments. We promote public awareness and build, monitor and maintain trails.

Upcoming Events

Annual Dinner Meeting — October 24th 2024

41st Annual Trail Days — April 4th to April 6th 2025

Backbone Trek — May 3rd to May 10th 2025

Board Meetings (Currently held via Zoom)

Board Meetings are open to the public and are on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. There are 4 exceptions: No meeting in August; April meet on the 2nd Thursday; Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday.

CONTACT US

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

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|-----------|--|
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REVISED: SEP 25, 2024

Our newsletter is published twice a year, in spring and fall.