



President's Message

Welcome trails community! It seems that Mother Nature doesn't want to give us a break. We went from floods last year to drought and massive fires this year. The Mountain fire took many homes and ranches in Somis and Camarillo, then came the devastating fires, including the Palisades and Eaton fires that destroyed entire communities. Our hearts go out to those who lost family members, homes, livelihoods, pets, and livestock. Then, Angelenos did what we do best...we jumped in and helped. The outpouring of the community was amazing to see. Now, we face rebuilding, and that includes fire-damaged trails. We are amazed at the number of people who have contacted us wanting to help with the rehabilitation. Kudos to our wonderful trails community! Please stay tuned for more information and check out our Trail Maintenance Schedule for updates. It's still very fluid, so check back often. A dear friend of mine had a very positive attitude for life and his motto was "siempre adelante", always forward. Now we are also moving forward.

Since the fall, our trail crews have been tackling multiple trails in an effort to work on each one from end-to-end. This includes La Jolla Valley trails (9 outings), Serrano Canyon (3 outings), and currently Old Cabin and Old Boney (10 outings). Check out the website for more information on upcoming trail work outside of the fire damaged areas. Consider coming out and joining the fun, getting a bit dirty, learning about the trails, and enjoying the company of like-minded trail advocates.



Our annual dinner was a time to celebrate the achievements of the year. Each year, we present the Hank Grateful Award in the memory of Hank Grateful who was devoted to trail preservation and who generously provided funding for the Trails Council. **This year's recipient was Carlyn Taggart.** Carlyn is our food coordinator for the Backbone trek and an avid trail crew member logging hundreds of hours on the trails (ok, she's not very far from that 1000-hour mark!). We love her cheerful attitude and wonderful smile! Congratulations Carlyn!

We continue our relationship with **CSU Channel Islands with our Trail Corps internship program.** We have four dedicated students in the program who are learning how to maintain and build trails. They are out there working very hard and having fun. We also have a student in the nonprofit studies class working with us on the nuts and bolts of running a nonprofit. It's great to have these enthusiastic students working with us.

We are happy to have Neli Navarette as our NPS trail contact. Neli has been with NPS on the trails for as long as I can remember and we're looking forward to working with her. Welcome Neli!

Mark your calendars and register now, you won't want to miss out! Trails Council, the Task Force, and CORBA are gearing up for our annual **Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days, April 4th to 6th.** This will be the 42nd year for the event! It will be held deep in Point Mugu State Park with opportunities to camp or come and work Saturday and/or Sunday. There will be the BBQ Saturday night, with the thank-you gift drawings and a very exciting campfire program. We look forward to seeing you there!

See you on the trails!

Barb Thomas
Barb Thomas, President

42nd Annual Trail Days! April 4th-6th 2025

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS TRAIL DAYS

Our 42nd year!

A fun weekend for individuals, families, and groups to help build and restore local trails

DIRECTIONS AND VEHICLE ESCORT HOURS

From Newbury Park, exit US-101 at Wendy Dr. South 2.7 mi to end of the road. Right onto Potrero Rd. Left at T-junction with S Reino Rd. Left onto Big Sycamore Canyon Rd (restricted NPS service road). Continue to the vehicle escort meeting point.

CAUTION: THIS IS NOT THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO PT MUGU STATE PARK!

ARRIVE

Friday	5:00 pm, 7:00 pm
Saturday	7:30 am, 4:30 pm
Sunday	7:30 am

DEPART

Saturday	3:00 pm, 9:00 pm
Sunday	8:00 am, 2:30 pm

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ACCESS

Cars will be escorted in/out by authorized staff, only at times shown, and only to/from the campground. At all other times the entry gate will be locked. Driving unescorted vehicles within the park is prohibited.



Friday-Sunday
April 4-6, 2025

Point Mugu State Park
near Newbury Park

Flyer designed by Rachel Glegg SMMTF

PHOTO © DENISE POMONIK



www.smmtc.org/traildays

REGISTER ONLINE BY MARCH 27 QUESTIONS? CALL (805) 885-7224

Volunteers can enjoy...

Free camping on Friday and Saturday nights, under the sycamores and oaks in the heart of Point Mugu State Park.

Hot drinks and bagels for breakfast.

Complimentary Saturday night BBQ for volunteers.

Thank-you gift drawings after work on Saturday and Sunday.

www.smmtc.org/traildays

Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days is supported by California State Parks and National Park Service; sponsored by Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, Santa Monica Mountains Task Force (Sierra Club), Concerned Off Road Bicyclists Association, and many generous members of the community.



The Palisades Fire



Photos - Denise Pomonik

First off, a huge thank you to everyone who signed up for our Trail Work List! We've been holding off on this update while waiting for State Parks to assess damage, we're eager to get back out there and restore our trails. That said, we need to give State Parks some time to assess the damage. At least two bridges were lost in the fire. We've set some placeholder dates for work in Topanga State Park, which we anticipate will start happening after April 12 as recovery efforts move forward.

Trails Closed and/or Damaged

Bienvenida Trail
Bone Canyon Road
East Topanga Fire Road
Garapito Canyon Trail
Garden Land Trail
Goat Peak via High Point and Rivas Ridge Trail
Inspiration Point Loop
Los Leones Canyon trailhead and Los Leones Trail
Murphy Ranch Trail
Paseo Miramar Trail
Pasture Trail
Potrero Canyon Loop at George Wolfberg Park
Rivas Canyon Trail
San Vicente Mountain to Gizmo Peak via Dirt Mulholland Drive and Farmer Ridge Fire Road
Santa Ynez Canyon Trail
Sullivan Canyon Fire Road
Sullivan Ridge Trail - including Old Staples Loop
Temescal Canyon Trail
Temescal Ridge Trail - including Skull Rock
Trailer Canyon Fire Road
West Mandeville Fire Road & West Mandeville Ridge Trail

[LA Times Article on Trails Currently Closed](#)

At our January Board Meeting, **Jason Finlay of California State Parks** reported on the ongoing fire suppression and repair efforts in the Topanga and Malibu Creek areas. Jason confirmed that ***"nearly all of Topanga and Will Rogers State Historic Park trails burned"***, as well as some small sections of Malibu Creek SP, along the Backbone Trail on Fossil Ridge and above Monte Nido. Many MRCA and other agencies' trails were also damaged. Jason also noted that the fire has left the trails with a lot of ash and slough, making it difficult to assess the damage. He mentioned that the suppression repair efforts have been demobilized, and hand crews were now the only remaining resource. Jason also shared that the fire has opened up three roads that were previously trails, and these will need to be restored. He mentioned that **the next steps will be to bring in statewide teams to assess the damage and estimate the cost of repairs.**

When asked about the timeline for volunteer crews to start helping with the repairs, Jason suggested that we might be able to schedule events in late March to early April.



Our crew on Old Boney

This past season, we've had the privilege of hosting trail runners who brought both fitness and skill, helping us accomplish more than we expected!

The aftermath of the Palisades fire continues to reshape the landscape, reminding us that trails are never truly permanent. Erosion and brush clearance keep us busy, but we're committed to restoring safe and accessible paths for all. Take a look at what we've accomplished, and if you're passionate about trails, we'd love to have you join us!

**HOW MANY HOURS DID WE WORK?
MORE THAN 6,000!**

Agency	Events	Volunteers	Labor Hours
NPS	2	17	92
Other	2	7	35
COSCA	4	36	165
CINP	14	89	1,243.50
State Parks	75	766	4,513.00
Totals	97	915	6,048.50




Crew Spotlight

**John
Kross**


John Kross has been an outstanding volunteer for over a decade. Since joining us in 2012, he has been a core member of our crew. Whether shuttling the crew into a remote location or operating a brush cutter for hours on end, John inspired the rest of us with his work ethic and humor. John's commitment to our mission is most evident in the quality of volunteers he has recruited and mentored. As a key member of our trail crew, he dedicates nearly 300 hours each year to maintaining and improving our trails, ensuring they remain safe and enjoyable for all. His hard work and passion continue to make a lasting impact on our community.

More Trail Work News

RUTH FELDON



Volunteer	Total Hours	# Events
Dave Edwards	577	71
Ruth Feldon	574	81
Jon Sheldon	425	71
Carlyn Taggart	334	41
John Reynolds	275	31
John Kross	258	47
Greg Sweel	249	41
George Sherman	237	37
Don Brusselars	207	26
Jerry Mitcham	190	33
Denise Pomonik	150	26
Anne Russell	117	18
Barb Thomas	104	21
Roger Young	82	14
Kirsten Rosselot	64	11
Jon Van Gorder	54	10
Sam Chen	54	8
Qingyian (Ann) Liu	54	8
Totals	4002	97



DAVE EDWARDS

Dave Edwards, Ruth Feldon and Jon Sheldon worked a combined 1,576 hours. Ruth seemed to be everywhere - she volunteered at an astonishing 81 events. Dave's efforts in the Channel Islands and Jon's Signs Project in Point Mugu State Park led to these record amounts of individual volunteer hours.



We continue to reach out to a variety of groups that love and utilize our trails. Are you an active trail user who belongs to a group that might be interested in working with us? Email or call us. We can all benefit from our shared labor!



Board Member News

After ten years of dedicated service, John Kross has stepped down from the board. Throughout his tenure, John was an invaluable advisor, listener and could be counted on to take on new responsibilities.

Beyond his hands-on efforts, John played a key role in organizing the Backbone Trek and worked closely with COSCA to coordinate large-scale work events, first aid training, and crew leader development. His leadership and dedication have left a lasting impact on our board and our trail crew.

Additionally, we bid farewell to Melody Reilly - due to work and family commitments.

If you or someone you know is interested in stepping up to help guide our efforts, please reach out—we'd love to hear from you!

Trail Talk: Volunteer Insights

It's been a dramatic few weeks in the Santa Monica Mountains; with wildfires breaking out in almost every direction followed by heavy wind and rainfalls. A reminder of the importance of our work in maintaining and preserving the trails. Despite the challenges, our volunteers remain enthusiastic and dedicated. As we explore the Santa Monica Mountains, it's easy to take for granted the hard work and dedication of our trail volunteers.

Why Trail Work Matters!



So why do our volunteers dedicate their time and energy to trail work? For many, it's about giving back to the community and ensuring that our trails remain safe and accessible. As **Jerry Mitcham** notes, "Trail work is one of the ways any individual can do his/her part to protect our beautiful 'wild places'."

QUOTES ASSEMBLED BY DENISE POMONIK.

A Sense of Pride and Accomplishment

For our volunteers, trail work is not just about physical labor; it's also about the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes from seeing a trail transformed. "The feeling of accomplishment after a hard day's work is incredibly rewarding" states **Peter Sullivan**.

"...a sense of pride and a feel-good feeling. I feel so lucky to have this in my life." says **Denise Pomonik**.

Favorite Trails

Our volunteers have worked on numerous trails throughout the Santa Monica Mountains, each with its unique character and charm. Favorites include the Backbone Trail, Garapito Trail, and trails in Point Mugu State Park.

"...seeing a nicely cleared and restored trail after it is completed." says **Greg Sweel**.

Designed by Tomasa Figueroa Angel

Looking for a Volunteer Opportunity?

The Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) preserves, protects, and manages open space resources in the Conejo Valley.

Wildwood serves as the location for Trails Education Days (TED). This year close to 950 Conejo Valley Unified School District fourth-graders learned about local natural resources and wildlife. In small groups, they take a guided hike into the canyon then rotate through interactive exhibits and educational presentations by experts in various fields related to conservation and ecology. If you are interested in volunteering at this year's event, to be held April 28-May 1, please fill out a volunteer application and list [Trails Education Days](#) under areas of interest.



Registration Opens February 1

Hiking the Backbone Trail End to End on Your Bucket List?

We offer a guided 7 day experience for \$600! Our 67 mile trek along the Santa Monica Mountain's Backbone Trail takes place May 3rd to 10th.

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!

Board of Directors

Barb Thomas, President

George Sherman, Vice President

Peter Sullivan, Treasurer

Vacant, Secretary

Robert Bittner

Don Brusselars

Vacant

Denise Pomonik

Roger Young

Ruth Gerson, President Emerita

Upcoming Events

42nd Annual Trail Days — April 4th to April 6th

Backbone Trek — May 3rd to May 10th

Annual Dinner Meeting — October 23rd

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.

Generous Supporter:

Award Winning Luxury,
Fitness & Wellness
Retreat

THE RANCH
MALIBU™

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.

CONTACT US

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Address:	P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills CA 91376
Phone:	805-885-7224
Email:	mail@smmtc.org
Web Site:	www.smmtc.org
	Barb Thomas, President
	George Sherman, Newsletter Editor
	E-mail: mail@smmtc.org

REVISED: MAR 11, 2025

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