



Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Protect • Preserve • Maintain

Fall 2020

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Female Blue Dasher - *Pachydiplax longipennis*
Chaparral Honeysuckle - *Lonicera subspicata*

PRESIDENT'S VISION



What do you miss most during this challenging year? Hugs, visiting with family and friends, eating out, not having to wear a mask, not having to stay so far away from friends and strangers, comfortable routines, parties & casual get togethers, just getting out of the house, being in familiar places, and other issues?

I personally doubt it will be the “new normal” forever, and I feel that eventually life will return to more of the old normal to which we are accustomed and have always enjoyed.

I am an optimist for living life. I hope you are, too. That attitude will save you a lot of anxiety, stress and depression; and it will help you forge ahead to handle whatever else life

throws your way. The rhythm of our prior lives will return one day.

With shops, cafes, salons and many businesses closed one week or a month, and then open another week and then closed again, our schedules have been scrambled.

Now there are new temporary schedules - working jobs from home, discussions via Zoom instead of meetings in person, much more computer/ faxing/ texting, more time with kids at home, maybe teaching kids and also being frustrated as to how to teach them, coordinating their activities to include physical and emotional times, figuring how to plan a family vacation, learning a new hobby or avocation, and a host of other innovative ways to handle our present way of living.

When feeling overwhelmed, ask for assistance; and don't feel that you have to know how to handle everything. You are human. Everyone has different physical, mental and emotional limits regarding what they are able to do or handle. You are alive – take life on its terms and make the best of whatever it gives you – remember the old saying that when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

September 26 was National Public Lands Day – perhaps you enjoyed YOUR public lands by taking a walk in one of our many parks, riding your horse with a friend on a trail, biking with a buddy, looking at wildflowers, or just getting outside and enjoying being able to do so.

Ruth

-Ruth Gerson



IN MEMORIAM - BILL DININO

The Trails Council mourns the loss of one of its crew leaders and most enthusiastic trail workers, Bill Dinino, who passed on July 7 in hospice care at age 59.

Bill's widow Karen recalls, "Bill so loved hiking and doing trail work. He dreamed of doing so much more trail work, of trips to the Channel Islands, of more hikes with beautiful people and beautiful scenery." Bill helped build and then went on to adopt the Wishbone Trail at Westlake Community Park, where his family honored his memory after his death.

SMMTC board member George Sherman observes, “We immediately recognized Bill's leadership abilities as a crew leader — he complimented your skills and asked questions about the task you were doing”. We bonded over shared trail work, a shared vision of how trails make life better and more than a few shared trail experiences. Bill quickly became someone we could depend on to work week after week; he was our 2017/2018 Rookie of the Year — he worked 22 events and racked up 137 hours. During Bill's time with us, he contributed more than 250 hours working on the trails. Despite setbacks from his illness, Bill continued working with us, living life to the fullest and bringing along willing compatriots in that quest.”

Bill participated in the 2017 and 2018 Trails Council annual Backbone Treks, which involves a small group hiking the entire 70-mile Backbone Trail over the course of five days. In 2018, Bill's sister Robin joined him on the Trek. Bill's sisters Robin and Diane are committed to participating in a future Trek.

Bill's sense of humor, enthusiasm and trail savvy will be missed by all who had the pleasure of working with him during his years as a Trails Council volunteer and hiker. In addition to his wife and sisters, Bill is survived by his three children, Grayson, Emily, and Brent.



EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT SET TO MAKE 'HERSTORY'

Three years ago, when Sasha Rubeiz found out that the 103-year-old old Boy Scouts of America had made a major policy change and would begin admitting girls to the organization, the 17-year-old was thrilled.

"I got pretty excited when my mom told me," she recalls. Rubeiz, who loves hiking, had long envied her younger brother Michael's Scouting adventures and hadn't found that same kind of focus on outdoor skills during her seven years as a Girl Scout.

So, last February, she joined Troop 642 in Calabasas, the same troop her brother has belonged to since Cub Scouts. In early October, Rubeiz completed the Trails Council's first female-led Eagle Scout project. Rubeiz planned the event, which involved writing a proposal, plotting out the time needed, and recruiting fellow Scouts to help. (Rubeiz's 15-year-old brother also completed an Eagle Scout project with the Trails Council: His team improved the Backbone trailhead at Latigo Canyon.)

Supervised by veteran crew leaders Jerry Mitcham and Barry Dydyk, Rubeiz's crew assembled and installed 8 picnic tables at the Danielson group campground at Pt. Mugu State Park.

The Trails Council has had a longtime relationship with several Scout troops. Says Mitcham, "Over the last ten years, we have helped with about 20 Eagle Scout projects. The synergy of our two organizations results in significant

support to the National Park Service and California State Parks in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. It's a win-win-win." Adds Dydyk, "For me, the best part of an Eagle project is to watch scouts develop their leadership skills, to see their confidence increase in giving direction and acquiring new skills."

Rubeiz, who is a senior patrol leader, says her Scouting experience so far has been very positive and that she's pleased to have completed a project that will benefit the outdoors community. "I feel like I've grown a lot in the last year and half," she says.

- Anne M. Russell

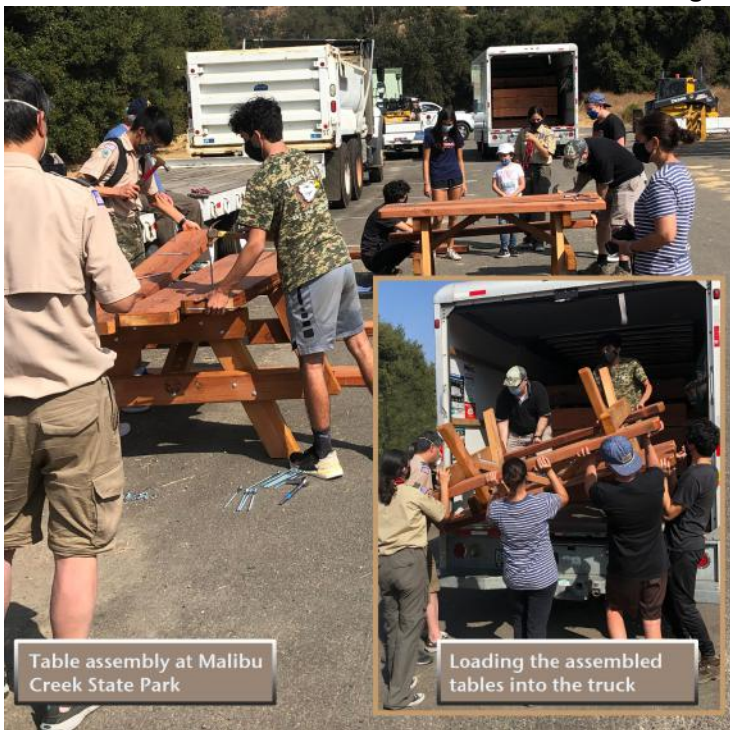


Table assembly at Malibu Creek State Park

Loading the assembled tables into the truck

Five tables were installed last year by Scout Troop 111 of Ventura. A total of 24 tables, purchased with a \$15,000 grant from the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), are now in place.

"For me, the best part of an Eagle project is to watch scouts develop their leadership skills..."
- Barry Dydyk

New Chief of Staff at NPS

Jody Lyle, a 27-year-veteran of the National Park Service, is coming to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area from Yellowstone National Park. In the second-ranking leadership position at the park, she will manage a portfolio that includes administration, budget, partnerships, legislative affairs, and communications, as well as coordinate projects across the park. Born and raised in Southern California, Jody has served for the last five years on Yellowstone's Senior Leadership Team as the Chief of Strategic communications.



Do I need to wear a mask outside?

The American Hiking Society recommends that you always bring a mask with you, but when you need to wear it depends on what you're doing. Your risk of infection (or spreading it) depends on many factors, but, simplified, it depends on the time you spend in contact with the infected person and the viral load delivered (e.g., a cough spreads more than just breathing). You are highly unlikely to catch the virus from simply walking, running, or biking past someone at a 6 foot distance (even if the person gets closer to you for a second) - you're not in contact with the person for long enough. people and aren't stopping to chat with folks. Read more at the [AHA](#) web site.

SMMTC Workplace COVID-19 Prevention Plan

COVID-19 continues to be a public health threat in our community. Strict adherence to prevention procedures can greatly reduce the spread of the virus, thereby protecting our volunteers as individuals and our community as a whole. Therefore, the following Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council (SMMTC) specific COVID-19 prevention specific workplace plan is established. All volunteers should keep in mind that it is everyone's responsibility to take action to protect themselves as well as others on our projects.

The primary work of the SMMTC volunteers is trail maintenance with a small number of related projects. This work is performed outdoors on National and State Park properties as well as other publicly owned open space areas. The physical location of our workplace may change from week to week but this plan is applicable to all work sites.

Planning: In order to more effectively manage the COVID-19 prevention protocols, the following procedure shall be used:

Due to frequently changing regulatory requirements, a long term trail maintenance schedule will not be published.

Trail maintenance events will not be publicized on the SMMTC website. Rather, volunteers will be notified directly of upcoming events.

Crew size will be limited to 12 volunteers.

Volunteers will be limited to our trained and experienced crew leaders and a few of our more experienced, regular volunteers.

All volunteers will be trained in these procedures.

Specific Work Procedures

Drive to the meeting place alone, or only with family members.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to all volunteers. For this plan, PPE is defined as face masks and disposable, latex gloves. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own, leather work gloves. Latex and SMMTC provided work gloves will be disposed of after use.

Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own tools.

Occasionally, it will be necessary to carpool from the meeting place to the trailhead. In these situations, all volunteers in the vehicle should wear a mask and windows in the vehicle should be kept partially open to increase ventilation. These carpool trips should be kept as short as possible.

Masks may be removed while working on the trail as long as a six foot distance between volunteers is maintained.

Maintain a six foot distance from passing trail users. If conversation or prolonged close contact with a passerby is established, a face mask should be donned.

All shared (SMMTC) tools will be disinfected after each project.

Cleanup supplies (soap, water, hand sanitizer) will be provided to all volunteers at the completion of the event.



California buckwheat - Eriogonum fasciculatum
Common buckeye - Junonia coenia

Do you see and experience more by going faster, or is it possible that you could see and experience more by going at a slower pace?

Miles Per Hour Or Hours Per Mile?

Spending time on our trails has been a needed outlet even when the specter of a pandemic was not looming over our everyday activities. Trails have been more crowded than I remember. Social distancing is hit-and-miss. Courtesy to others is not always the default. Mask up, mask down, no mask, who yields? Do you move off the trail or thank those who extend courtesy to you? **Things are so different on the trails, or are they?**

One thing that has not changed are the native plants and the pollinators (birds, bees, butterflies, moths, etc) who visit them. Winter rains bring about the largest number of blooming plants - so much so that most people assume flowers only grow in the spring. The abundance of flowers requires massive quantities of migratory pollinators that follow the wave of spring from Mexico to Canada working alongside the pollinators that live here year round.

Spring flowers fade, migratory pollinators move north but **local pollinators need to get through summer, fall and winter.** As a result there are a variety of flowers that are blooming long after spring has faded. Every few weeks bring a fresh group of plants in bloom. Other plants, specifically the shrubs along the trail, produce fruits for the sole purpose of dispersing their seed and with any luck to create another generation of the species.

As you are enjoying the trails, local flora and fauna carry

on an existence geared towards producing the next generation of its species - a cycle of seed production, pollination, dispersal and germination that repeats. Modern civilization has reduced the requirement that we be in sync with the changes at the trail's edge. Our need for recreating outdoors has not changed. **Being oblivious to the continual change of plants along the trail has an advantage** — you can move faster, go farther, have more in-depth conversations with your hiking partners or even get lost in your thoughts.

I used to determine the quality of my experience on our trails in terms of miles covered and miles per hour. **Observing plants and pollinators has led to a reversal — hours per mile.** Do you see and experience more by going faster, or is it possible that you could see and experience more by going at a slower pace? As the days of summer roll on, at a slower pace, you may notice the Fish's Milkwort in bloom at the creek crossing or the deep-red Coffeeberry fruits up the trail.

Our normal travel speeds require more focus on movement and the trail ahead, and as a result these plants are just a blur and missed. Changing things up by making an observational visit is a significant way to enhance your next trail experience. Learning the names of plants you encounter is like putting on a pair of glasses, bringing into focus something that was a blur. **As you change your trail habits responding to the pandemic,** why not enhance your trail experience by taking time to observe and learn more about the natural world at your feet?

- George Sherman



Fish's Milkwort - *Polygala cornuta* var. *fishiae*

Trail Report Maintenance Report For The Spring of 2020

In March of this year, our established trail maintenance schedule for the spring was suspended due to the COVID-19 shutdown.

As April rolled around, the trail crew members were beginning to suffer from cabin fever. Fortunately, we were then contacted by Mike Zenan of NPS, to see if we might be interested in doing a limited amount of trail work. Over the next two weeks, working with the NPS staff, we developed a set of COVID-19 protocols for our trail crew which would allow us to get back to work on limited scale. The main concern addressed by these protocols was social distancing.

Main features of our plan:

1. Use only our trained and experienced crew leaders and no community volunteers.
2. We would work with very small crews (2-4 volunteers).

On the trail we practiced social distancing rules. To compensate for the small crews, we held 2 - 4 events per week. During this initial period, we had to work around various park/trails closures, which restricted which trails we could work on and the days we were permitted to work. Initially, we worked only on NPS trails in Ventura County. Despite all these restrictions, we managed to accomplish a significant amount of work: **752 volunteer hours!**

Dates & Trail	Events	Vol#	Hours	Work Accomplished
April 21 thru May 23 Mishe Mokwa and Tri-Peaks Trail	17	2-4	310	Tread work, cleaning & installing drains, installing steps and correcting extensive erosion problems.
Late May Scenic Trail, Point Mugu State Park	2	2-4	86	Cleared the badly overgrown trail from top to bottom - just in time for Sycamore Canyon Campground reopening.
Late May Fireline Trail, Point Mugu State Park	2	2-4	126	Opened up a badly overgrown trail
June NPS BBT Segment, @ Latigo	2	2-4	96	Opened up a badly overgrown trail
Late June Serrano Canyon Trail, Point Mugu State Park	2	2-4	132	Nearly finished this trail - COVID cases were beginning to surge. We completed in October.

Post Summer Work

Dates & Trail	Events	Vol#	Hours	Work Accomplished
October 3 - 10 Serrano Canyon, Point Mugu State Park	2	9	54	Completed brushing all the way to Serrano Valley
October 17-24 Upper Sycamore Trail, Point Mugu State Park	2	18	132	Cleared brush on this trail from the bridge to Danielson Fire Road crossing.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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LYLE SHEETS

GEORGE SHERMAN

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 specific trail alignments. We promote public awareness and build, monitor and maintain trails.

Renew

Membership By Snail Mail

Join

Dues are on a rolling 12-month basis. Membership dues are 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 P.O. Box 345, Agoura Hills, CA 91376 or you may use your credit card with PayPal. @<http://smmtc.org/membership/>

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Check to have newsletter sent by e-mail

Individual Membership

Annual - \$35

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

Donation →

Business Membership

Supporter - \$100

Patron - \$250

Benefactor - \$500

Thank you for your continued support.

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

Upcoming Events - On Hold

- **40th Annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days**
April 23 — April 25th, 2021 Pt. Mugu State Park
- **Backbone Trek — May 1, - May 8th, 2021**
Registration begins February 1st, 2021
- **Annual Dinner Meeting — Thursday, Oct 21st**
6pm social, 6:45pm Complimentary dinner for trails community.

Board Meetings

Board Meetings are open to the public and are on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. They are held at Diamond X Ranch, 26412 Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, CA 91302. There are 4 exceptions: No meeting in August; April meet on the 3rd Thursday; Nov & Dec, meet on 1st Thursday.

CONTACT US

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

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REVISED:

Nov 5, 2020

Ruth Gerson, President

E-mail: ruthgerson@aol.com

Sheryl Phelps, Newsletter Editor

E-mail: intoriding@yahoo.com

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

Until Further Notice:
Board Meetings – **Canceled**
Annual Dinner – **Canceled**
Trail Work Events – **Paused**



Photo: George Sherman

Fire Poppy – Papaver californicum

Trailside Suggestions:

Our trails are busier than ever!
Wear a mask when nearing others.
Step aside to maintain distance, be the better person – we are all outside to stay healthy, have fun and get away from the pandemic that plagues us everyday.
Thank those that step aside for you.
Courtesy goes along way to remind us that we are all in this together!



Bill Dinino and his family.
An ordinary moment in time captured on a day that will turn out to have been memorable. So many great moments happen on trails!

About This Image of a Dragonfly:

Handheld, Canon EOS6D, 100mm Macro Lens with Ring Flash. Manual exposure F16 ISO 100 1/90. Manual focus. This female Dragonfly was a willing subject and allowed me to approach fairly close - 18 inches. The flash was set to provide illumination for the subject but not enough for the background. This allowed for the subject to be isolated. Look carefully and you can see the hairs on the back of her neck and legs. The transparent wings refracted the light from the flash to create the effect of dozens of colorful forms. A dragonfly has four wings - in this image, three wings are clearly visible but one wing is angled such that we can only infer its existence.

