



Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

Protect • Preserve • Maintain

ESTABLISHED 1969

Fall 2021

What is a vision? Is it what you're hoping for or what someone else mentioned or what you foresee really happening in the future? I hope it's positive. I see the future of the Trails Council in another 20 years, and even another 50 years, still working on trails to keep them safe and in the best condition possible. In 20 years, many of you now reading this newsletter will still be involved with trails and all that they include and offer. Some may not be able to work on them, some may not care anymore, and some will have moved on to other things in life. However, for those of you still involved, I hope that you stay strong about keeping trails open for the public on our public lands. As the population increasingly gets out on the trails, people will realize that they are finding solace, inspiration, Nature that is alive before their eyes, and refreshment of their spiritual soul?



"We, who have a lifelong passion for the mountains and a shared appreciation for its bounty, are hopelessly caught in the love affair," as voiced by Paul Haddad. **"Once you have a love affair with the local topography it would seem impossible to live anywhere without mountains.**

Our mountains are the only ones in the world that divide a city in half, that city being LA. But these mountains also attract millions who come together to enjoy the variety of outdoor opportunities and activities that this land provides. These mountains replenish our souls."

As more people are introduced to the mountains, their access grows by leaps and bounds to include family and friends who otherwise might not know of the one place for their minds and bodies to soar with unbounded joy - in the activities here, in the places where they can be alone if desired, in the time watching nature as the leaves shimmer in a breeze and the trees bend in a wind and the animals walk across the land.

As echoed by John Muir, **"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."**

We are so fortunate to have our lives intertwined with nature. I envision our trails remaining in good, safe condition and being cared for in perpetuity by caring souls.

I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees. Henry David Thoreau

-Ruth Gerson

Favorite trails from the Trails Council Board of Directors: If you haven't tried them, you'll be surprised at how enjoyable many are; and if you are familiar with them, this will further validate your enjoyment. Do you have a favorite trail to tell us about and how you use it? Do you know of trails that may need some maintenance? **Send your comments to us at mail@smmtc.org**

Kris Amantia - Upper Sycamore Canyon & Fossil Trail. My favorite trail is Fossil Trail located in Pt. Mugu State Park. It comes off of Upper Sycamore Canyon near the bottom. It is quite steep as it climbs to the Old Boney Trail.

My second favorite trail is Upper Sycamore Canyon Trail also located in Pt. Mugu State Park. It's a relaxing trail with the creek running alongside and often crossing the trail. I ride both of these trails on my horse.

[Article continues on page 5](#)

Generous Supporter:

Award Winning Luxury,
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THE RANCH
MALIBU™

Save The Date!

October 28, 2021

Our Annual Members dinner is complimentary and it is open to the trails community.

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

Social time 6:00PM
Dinner 6:30PM
Program 7:15PM

Reservations should include your name, how many in the group, table size and your phone number. Contact SMMTC.org by clicking this [web link](#) or phone 818-222-4531.

This is a time when trail enthusiasts and land managers all meet to exchange information beneficial for trails.



Our Annual dinner will be completely outside including the buffet. If there is a preference for sitting with a limited number of people, there can be some tables for less than the usual 8 people per table. When you RSVP and leave

your name and phone, let us know if you prefer a table with just a few people. We can set up tables for 2, 4, 6, and 8 persons. Last date to RSVP is October 25, Monday. Early replies are appreciated so that food planning can be handled better.

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.

California State Parks is requiring proof of vaccination be provided.

Crew size will be limited to 12 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.



Datura wrightii

NATIVE PLANTS PAGE

We get questions from the trail user community. “What plants bloom in late summer and into fall?”

We are fortunate enough to have dozens of plants that bloom during this time of the year. These flowers can be grouped into two categories: year-round bloomers and perennials that have adapted to bloom well after the competition has set seed.

Cliff aster, datura, purple nightshade, bush mallow, telegraph weed are among the flowers you might see blooming in every month of the year.

Tejon milk-aster, scale broom, California brickellbush, sawtooth goldenbush begin blooming as summer starts and often hang on into November.

Currants and gooseberries bloom after the first rains of fall and continue blooming as winter

turns to spring. This last grouping often provides the most beautiful of flowers. An easy way to remember the difference between gooseberries and currants is the presence of spiny stems on gooseberries.

The largest flower to be found is the datura. Each of the nearly 5-inch-long flowers opens and closes within a day. As the flower opens in the evening, high levels of carbon dioxide molecules burst into the air to lure specific pollinators. The sphinx moth can sense the opening of these flowers from a distance - perhaps a mile or more. The long tongue of this moth can reach deep into the flower and slurp up nectar. Contained in the nectar are alkaloids - which may be addicting as well as protective to the moth. The plant serves as host for the larvae of this moth.

Every plant has its own fascinating story of adaptation to our environment. Late blooming plants are no exception. *- George Sherman*

Want to know more about native plants? We have resources on our website for you to learn more about the plants that provide, food, shelter and cover for insects, animals and birds. Need help identifying a plant you saw? Send an email with an image of a plant to mail@smmtc.org and we will do our best to help identify what you found.

SMMTC Native Plant Web Links

[Plant Gallery](#) - images & descriptions

[Plant of the Month Archives](#)

[NPS Wildflowers Finder](#)

www.smmflowers.org

Trail Maintenance Report - April to September 2021

In March 2020, our established trail maintenance schedule for the year was suspended because of the COVID-19 shutdown. Our public schedule was posted again in August of 2021 for events beginning September 4, 2021. We look forward to working with you during our fall/winter season.

On the trail, we practiced social distancing rules and changed strategies by working on the same trail - start to finish. We worked Saturdays and repaired trail segments that have needed repairs for the past few years. This added up to **1300 plus volunteer hours.**

Dates & Trail	Events	Hours	Vol#	Work Accomplished
April 2021 Old Boney, Hidden Pond, La Jolla Valley	6	295	45	Finished work - Old Boney & Hidden Pond Trails; began work in La Jolla Valley.
May 2021 La Jolla Valley Trails	2	322	47	Cleared heavily overgrown trails of brush on a variety of trails in La Jolla Valley. In some cases the trail was moved out of ruts and lots of poison oak was cleared.
May 2021 Serrano Canyon	4	276	50	Rebuilt steps leading out of drainage. Tread work, cleaning & installing drains. Worked with Boy Scouts Troop 730.
June 2021 La Jolla Valley Trails	5	285	48	Tread work, brush clearance, cleaning & installing drains, installing steps and correcting extensive erosion problems. Worked with Boy Scout Troop 111.
September 2021 La Jolla Valley Trails	2	120	16	Tread work, brush clearance, cleaning & installing drains, installing steps and correcting extensive erosion problems.

Keeping trails open is an ongoing project year-round. The land agencies can do just so much as they are limited by a small force of personnel that mainly works in offices and/or travels to various areas within their lands. Consequently, most trail maintenance falls upon dedicated volunteers to repair and build the trails in cooperation with the land agencies. Partnerships are the mainstay of trails for the public. There are various trail organizations that are dedicated to ensuring that public trails are kept open and safe for traveling. The Trails Council, as one of the most dedicated trail organizations, has

been building trails and maintaining them for more than 50 years, and we are always looking for volunteers who want to help us on the trails. Volunteers are the backbone of trail partnerships in all organizations. Trails need protection and maintenance from high use, illegal usage, and Mother Nature's occasional excessiveness. Rain and wind storms can wreck havoc on some trails. Hikers, trail runners, equestrians and bikers all enjoy trails, and many of those users want to give back to the trails they enjoy. If every trail user gave one day a year, we can fix and build more trails. **-Ruth Gerson**

Favorite Trails of the Board... Continued

Article continues from Page 1.

Jeffrey Davidson - Forest Trail & Motts Trail

1st favorite trail is the Forest Trail at Malibu Creek State Park. It is a relatively short trail coming off east of the bridge near Logan's Run. It is bordered to the north by Malibu Creek. It is mostly canopied with a view of the creek, lily pads, water fowl and several towering redwood trees, and it terminates at the Century Lake Dam.

Motts Trail

2nd favorite trail is the Motts Trail at Malibu Creek State Park. It is about a half-mile trail parallel to the creek and terminates at the Salvation Army Camp. It too is canopied for the most part with interesting rock formations and remnants of days gone by when there was a cabin. There is also a picnic bench about midway for relaxing. These are trails that I ride my horse on.

Steve Clark - Encinal Canyon Road west, BBT

There are a lot of great trails in the SMMNRA, so it's hard to pick out just one. However, I'm going to pick the Backbone Trail from Encinal Canyon Road west to the Mishe Mokwa trailhead for mountain biking. It has gentle slopes for climbing and descending; it has great views of the coast and sometimes the islands; and in the spring, there can be tons of wildflowers on display.

Ruth Gerson - Deer Leg Trail & Upper Sycamore

My 2 favorite trails where I ride my horse are Deer Leg Trail in MCSP and Upper Sycamore Canyon Trail in Pt. Mugu SP. Deer Leg has many challenging hills for conditioning; is covered with old, wide spreading Oak trees for shade; has a lot of areas where Mallow bushes crowd the trail and reach farther into the hills with pretty flowers; and a hillside where Phacelia happily blooms. Accessing the trail is by taking Yearling Trail that is often covered with Mustard growing 8 ft -10 ft high, creating a tunnel to ride through. The view across Yearling Meadow shows you where coyote, deer, hawks, Blue Herons and white Egrets

browse for a meal. The old Reagan BBQ is just off the trail, where the Reagans entertained their guests when he owned the land before he was governor. There were less trees back then, and a pickup truck brought the supplies and any guests who didn't ride a horse to the site. At the eastern end of Deer Leg Trail is Inspiration Point, an awesome view of Goat Mountain with its background of the distant range of our mountains often peeking above the layers of fog. Looking to the south and west is the ridge of Castro Crest with its twisted rock formations at the end of Bulldog Rd, a 4.5-mile trail up from the MASH site. Continuing along, Deer Leg Trail changes to Lake Vista Trail that overlooks Malibu Lake, and ends shortly afterwards.

Upper Sycamore Canyon Trail is a wonderful mix of shrubs and trees growing happily with water from the nearby creek, which crosses the trail about 6 times. The trail has a variety of huge boulders, a few rocky edges, lots of shade, many glimpses of the creek below, the rock wall the Trails Council built, a shale draw, and birds chirping all the time. As it gently slopes down to meet the asphalt road from Rancho Sierra Vista, the Fossil Trail comes off it just before the bottom. Upper Sycamore Canyon Trail is only open to horses and hikers, so it is very relaxing.

Anne Russell - Lake Eleanor Trail

I really like the Lake Eleanor Trail. It overlooks three bodies of water (2 lakes and a reservoir) and has a stunning view of the Sentinels rock formation across Westlake Blvd. There are also some endemic plants you don't see that many other places, like the beautiful shrub redshanks (*Adenostoma sparsifolium*). And after a wet spring, there are dozens of different kinds of wildflowers, including lupines and poppies. Despite being considered easy, it's a decent short hike that's located right in the middle of a Westlake... *Article continues on Page 6*

Favorite Trails of the Board...Continued

Anne Russell - Lake Eleanor Trail [story continues...]

neighborhood (via Highgate Road) and it's not heavily used, so sometimes I have it to myself. The 2 lakes are Westlake Lake and Lake Eleanor, and the reservoir belongs to the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District. They're all quite beautiful from above. The trail parallels Westlake Blvd here. You start from the top of Highgate Rd, accessed via Triunfo Canyon Rd.

Mike Epler – Ray Miller Trail

When asked what is my favorite trail in the Santa Monica Mountains, my answer can only be that it depends on my state of mind! There are so many to choose from. If I have the time, it would be Ray Miller Trail - you can't beat the ocean views, the workout of the 2.7 miles up and the fun run back down. For more miles and workout, I like connecting with other trails along the Overlook Fire Road to add in a loop for a long run that could include any of the following: Guadaluca Trail, Hell Hill, Wood Canyon Vista, and/or Fireline Trail. They all add great views of Boney Mountain and Sycamore Canyon in our beloved Point Mugu State Park.

John Kross - Mishe Mokwa - Sandstone Peak

Judging by the number of people that go on this loop, I am not the only one that enjoys this trail. Going up the Mishe Mokwa trail to Split Rock, you have great views of Balanced Rock and the Echo Cliffs. Often, you see rock climbers going up the Echo Cliffs. When you get to Split Rock, you can either take a 1/2 mile detour to Balanced Rock or continue on to Sandstone Peak. Once you get to Sandstone Peak, descend via the Sandstone Peak trail.

Nicholas Flats - Willow Creek loop

Beginning at Leo Carrillo, you will get a good workout whether you choose to go up the Willow Creek trail or the Nicholas Flats trail - up

one and down the other - 6 miles to get your blood flowing. Where these trails join at the top, take the trail that takes you up to the knoll to enjoy the fabulous views. When you get to Nicholas Flats, see if you can find the Chumash mortar holes on the rock.

Zuma Canyon loop

This loop is also a good workout. After a couple of tough climbs, you will be rewarded by amazing views of the canyons and the ocean. Start at the end of Bonsall Dr. in Malibu for a nice 4-mile loop.

Sheryl Phelps - Malibu S.P. Connector Trails

My favorite trails riding my horse are part of a loop of connecting trails through Malibu Creek State Park. Starting at Paramount Ranch, I take the trail that parallels Cornell Rd. After crossing Mulholland and Cornell Rd, the loop starts in the parking lot of Reagan Ranch. Picking up the Yearling Trail, I soon take Deer Leg Trail off of Yearling as that offers shade, oak trees, mallow flowering bushes and hilly paths. After Inspiration Point, I take Lookout Trail down to Craggs Rd. and especially enjoy seeing Goat Mountain and the hills in the background that compose part of the Santa Monica Mountains. Cruising along Craggs Rd, I go up Cage Creek Trail, a short twisting trail with 2 rock outcroppings that my horse goes over easily, and then I'm back up to taking Deer Leg Trail and riding west. This trail changes its name to Lake Vista Trail and has more ups and downs until it ends at the Reagan Ranch parking lot where I started. Crossing Mulholland and going back onto Paramount Ranch, I take Media Trail into the parking lot and there's my trailer to load my horse and head home. It's always a beautiful ride with vistas and smells that stay with me a long time.

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Membership By Snail Mail

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.

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Individual Membership

- Annual - \$35 Family - \$60
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 Donation →

Business Membership

- Supporter - \$100
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Thank you for your continued support.

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

Upcoming Events

Annual Dinner Meeting — Thursday, Oct 28th

6pm social, 6:30pm dinner 7:15 Program
(complimentary dinner for trails community.)

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. 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.

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

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