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November 2003 Newsletter

How Plants Use Fire

The California chaparral is a plant community composed of small shrubs and bushes that are adapted to fire, meaning that the plants actually need fire as part of their lives, and that the plant species could die out if fire didn't occur. Plants such as Manzanita, California Lilac (*Ceanothus*), Chamise and Toyon have stiff, tough little leaves that are usually quite shiny from a waxy covering that seals the water inside the leaf during the hot summer months. The wax causes the leaves to burn extremely hot in a fire, like little candles. Such waxy-leaf plants are called sclerophyls.



After a fire, it would appear that nothing is left alive. However, there will now be ample space, sunlight and moisture for new seedlings. Not all of the seeds will burn in a fire. Many seeds may have been in the soil for years, seemingly waiting for a fire. They have a special outer coat that doesn't allow water to come in and cause the seed to sprout. The fire causes the outer coat to break up due to either the heat or chemicals from the smoke... maybe both. Rain can now get into the seed, and up it sprouts. The waxy covering on the parent plant's leaves often has another purpose, and that is to burn with great heat so that the less fire-protected seeds of other plants are killed, as they might have taken away water and sunlight from the plant's own seedlings.

Some species of chaparral can sprout from their stumps. These bushes keep a lot of energy in their roots, and after the top of the plant burns off, they simply sprout new leaves and branches. In this way, some plants may survive many fires, and could be hundreds of years old.

And so the plant species continue, and soon the hillside looks like it did before. Animals are attracted to the new sprouts and seedlings, and so life quickly returns. And the plants grow, get old, there is a fire, the plants grow, get old, there is another fire.....and on....and on....



SSMPA General Membership Meeting

Monday, November 17, 2003

WHAT IS A LOBBYIST & WHAT DOES A LOBBYIST DO?

Bob Cline, a partner in the Sacramento government relations firm of Cline & Duplissee, has served on the Rules; Water, Parks & Wildlife, Governmental Organization; Revenue & Taxation; and Finance & Insurance Committees of the CA State Assembly. Currently he is president of the Butte Sink Waterfowl Assn., a non-profit organization that emphasizes creation and maintenance of natural habitat. A former member of the CA State Assembly, Bob is now a Legislative Advocate in our state's capitol.

Bob has agreed to travel to Chatsworth on Monday, November 17th to speak to the Board members of both the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and the Santa Susana Mountain Park Assn. and all other interested parties about lobbying for parks, open space and the natural environment. This knowledge is very important if we want to preserve our natural resources in our hills and mountains.

We are indeed honored to have such an important guest at our meeting. Bob has helped SSMPA in the past, and it will be very interesting to hear him share from his wealth of legislative and lobbying experience.

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday of the months during the months of September through November and January through May. Program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and generally conclude by 9:00 p.m. at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South. Refreshments are served at program meetings.

Members are invited to attend the Board of Directors meetings at the Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center at 7 p.m. each first Monday of the month.



Chatsworth Neighborhood Council ("CNC")

By holding a successful election for a governing board, the CNC has taken its final step toward official standing with the City of LA. On September 20, stakeholders chose 21 Board members from among over 30 candidates. Nearly 500 people voted, the second-to-highest participation level of any neighborhood council in the S.F. Valley. The new Board met on October 1 to select its officers: Marty Woll, President; Diana Dixon-Davis, Vice-President; Linda Ross, Secretary; and Teena Takata, Treasurer. The Board also established its first committees, dealing with land use, equestrian issues, Board rules and a budget. Each of these sub-groups will develop its recommendations to the full Board, and more committees to be formed at the November 5th general meeting. Both Board and committee meetings are open to the public, and agendas will be posted in advance at the Chatsworth (temporary) Library and local parks among other locations. General meetings will continue to take place at 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at Lawrence Middle School, 10100 Variel Avenue in Chatsworth.

The following election results have been certified by the City's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. Elected to initial two-year terms are Bea Berman, Anna Cox, Diana Dixon-Davis, Jerry England, Allen Glazer, Dan Huffman, Linda Ross, Teena Takata, Andre van der Valk, Linda van der Valk, and Marty Woll. Elected to initial one-year terms (to provide for staggered elections in the future) were Robert Dager, Judith Daniels, Jay Davis, Charles Dusheck, Al Goldstein, William Hughes, Timothy Imel, Charles Knolls, Art Schlefstein and Marc Winters.

For more information, visit the CNC Web site at www.chatsworthcouncil.org or call (818) 341-4242.

Carla's Notes

Jan Miller, SSMPA Pres., and Patty Miller, Recording Secretary, had a busy October participating in the Chatsworth Pioneer Days and Calabasas Pumpkin Festival. It's a lot of work schlepping all the booth material, handouts, setting up, and spending hours of their time attending these events, but their hard work pays off. At both community happenings many attendees expressed a great interest in SSMPA, hiking information, and concern for preserving the wildlife and open land space. I noticed at the SSMPA Oct. 20th general meeting that presenter Al Knight drew a larger than normal number of attendees, plus I saw a few new faces of people we talked with at the Pumpkin Festival. Jan reported that petitioning for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park at the entrance of the Pumpkin Festival was amazingly successful. We even had a rep from Sunset Magazine stop at our booth. He appeared genuinely interested in our organization and picked up a number of newsletters. I sold a few t-shirts, handed out lots of newsletters, brochures, talked until I lost my voice, and left the booth at High Noon.

Carla Henry



Banjo Minstrel and Jan Miller, Pres., SSMPA at October Calabasas Pumpkin Festival
(photo by Carla Henry)

Rim of the Valley Bridle Trail

The City of LA, Dept. of Recreation & Parks, is accepting applications to form a Volunteer Neighborhood Oversight Committee (V.N.O.C.) to seek community input in the master planning of Proposition K funded capital improvement projects along the Rim of the Valley Bridle Trail. For more information or to receive an application, please call Laura Bauernfeind, Sr. Park Maintenance Supervisor, at (818) 756-8189.

A Special Request for Stonehurst

Stonehurst is a wonderful stone house community from the 1920s that has natural climate control (from stone), sunken gardens and eye-opening beauty. It is bounded by Sunland Blvd., Stonehurst St., Wentworth Ave. and Chivers Ave.

On October 24, 2003, the LA City Council passed Resolution 03-2311 (Greuel-Cardenas) which requires that "the Dept. of City Planning be instructed to initiate proceedings CD2 (to) establish a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone...for the Stonehurst Community...."

The PLUM (Planning and Land Use Management Committee) will now initiate a feasibility study, which will cost money. The Little Landers Historic Society has recognized the importance of preserving Stonehurst. The society has created a 501(c) (3) account so that those who support the idea of a historic district can contribute (donations are tax deductible). Even a small donation can help! Make checks payable to the Little Landers Historic Society. Under "memo" write "for Stonehurst HPOZ." Send your check to Fundraising Committee, c/o Albert Knight, 1731 Riverside Dr., Glendale, CA 91201.

Al is working on the final revision of his manuscript Stonehurst, A Stone House Neighborhood, which will be available soon from the Little Landers Historical Society in Bolton Hall. More information about Stonehurst can be found on the CSUN website under "stone houses."

The following are preliminary reports of wildfire damage in the Chatsworth area. Perhaps others, hiking through the areas, have additional observations? Send reports to SSMPA@yahoogroups.com or to News. Ed., P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

A friend and I went for a hike in Devil Canyon on Sunday [11/2] afternoon. We were curious as to what remained in there from the Simi Valley Fire. To our delight, most of the canyon still looks good, especially the oaks. The fire hopped across the canyon in different areas and mostly burned the underbrush leaving the oaks. Kudos to the firefighters for saving the area! *Joanne Woodruff*

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It looks like about 70% of Joughin Ranch burned--the entire westerly and lower portion. Brown's Canyon burned through the conservancy land at the old quarry from the west to Brown's Canyon, no other fire real near the street, and nothing crosses Brown's Canyon, until you get up to Joughin, then all looks wiped out to the west of the access road, with some areas where the fire went east of the access road. As you look back toward the south at Joughin from viewpoints, you see much fire damage through almost all of Deerlake Highlands (all the plateau area), across Ybarra, parts of Devil Canyon and over to Simi. There are huge grading swipes set up as fire breaks at Joughin Ranch. We drove by Corriganville Park; a sign on the gate says "Closed due to Fire". The fire burned right up to the backs of the houses as you approach Corriganville Park, but was very limited south of the 118. More observation is needed there. *Teena Takata*

Unique Gathering Set for November 17-20

Noted philanthropist and conservationist David Rockefeller Jr. will be the opening speaker for an unprecedented gathering of federal land managers and the partners who share public lands stewardship work across America. Rockefeller will address the 2,000 people attending Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship, on November 18, the first day of the three-day conference at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The conference will bring together 800 reps of the seven major federal land managing agencies and an estimated 1,200 people from partners such as state and local park systems, non-profit associations and visitor service businesses. Mr. Rockefeller will address land management issues in Alaska, in national parks around the country and the *critical role non-profit organizations in the stewardship of nationally important natural and cultural resources*.

Ray Suarez will speak on Wednesday, November 19. Mr. Suarez, a senior correspondent on The NewsHour on public television, is well known for his writing and reporting about social demographics, changes in urban and suburban living patterns and the environment. His remarks will focus on how communities can protect not only nationally recognized public lands, but local parks, historic places and open spaces that are important to neighborhoods, cultures and communities.

The conference will provide more than 250 educational sessions for participants. The widely varied sessions will provide information and discussion opportunities about successful partnerships, what makes them work and what challenges lie ahead for organizations joining forces to be stewards of public lands and resources. The federal participants will be from the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and five bureaus from the Department of the Interior: the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Additional information, including registration details, is available on the conference website at www.partnerships2003.org.

Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership: Beverly Adair, Anna Combs, Georganna Beuerman, Charles Litman, Susan Bradshaw, Leona Ward and the Bashaar Family. Welcome New Members: Frederic LaGrange, Laura K. Graff and Renee & Stephen Bernal. New Life Member: Holly Huff. Thanks for your donation: Virginia DeBroux.



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

invites you to JOIN / RENEW (circle one).

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contribution lend your support. Make your check payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

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The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National Forest, to the Santa Monica Mountains; as habitats for plants and animals native to the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills; as locales of unique geologic formations; as sites of ethnological, archaeological and historical interests; to provide passive recreational opportunities and environmental education opportunities; and, to support the acquisition of new public parks, open space and conservation easements, the expansion of existing parks, participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs, and support said programs. To find out how you can participate, contact Jan Miller at (818) 702-0854.

STAGE COACH TRAIL HIKE SCHEDULE

Sunday, 11/16 & 12/21: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9:00 am for a 4 mi (700⁺ gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Park South to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, lugsoles are preferred, bring water & snack. Leader: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850.

A Sierra Club (Santa Susana Mountains Task Force) Outing. All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you wish to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, go to:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact Outings Dept. at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.



Subscribers & Members: We appreciate you! Please note the renewal date on your label. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help SSMPA meet the costs of producing this newsletter. *Susan Gerke, Newsletter Editor*



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Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
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