

# SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

*Dedicated to the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills*

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Incorporated Nov. 30, 1971

Founded Nov. 20, 1970

Email: [mail@ssmpa.com](mailto:mail@ssmpa.com)

Website: [ssmpa.com](http://ssmpa.com)

Winter, 1st QUARTER, 2014 Newsletter

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## **SSMPA COMMUNITY MEETINGS: 7:00 pm**

*(Community Meetings are Free to SSMPA Members and Public.)*

**Rockpointe Clubhouse: 22300 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311**

*(On the south side, one block before entrance to Chatsworth Park South)*

### **Monday, January 20, 2014**

#### **Cleanup: Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL)**

**Presenters:** Panel of speakers led by **John Luker**

The SSMPA panel will explore many alternatives to a "cleanup to background": proven, conventional alternatives that have been successful in restoring radiologically and chemically contaminated sites in California and elsewhere in the US.

Relative risk assessments of several clean up scenarios will be explored.

**Extreme background cleanup ...  
80,000 truckloads through our community  
versus**

**a rational, technical approach**

Which is safer for YOU?

Which is better for the environment?



### **Monday, February 17, 2014**

#### **Coyotes Amongst Us**

**Presenter:** [Mike Kuhn](#),

Exec. Chair [Rancho Simi Trail Blazers](#)

Mike Kuhn, an avid hiker for decades, often hiking in the evening hours, will present his knowledge and personal observations about the resourceful coyotes. He notes that: "Despite the fact that coyotes have faced more lethal force than any other predator, they have been

highly successful and have rapidly expanded their range. They have become denizens in our cities." Mike will present technical data on results of radio-collared studies. He will cover his personal encounters to illustrate coyote society, and causes of their death in our area, diet, predation on cats and dogs, and attacks on humans.



Carla Bollinger

### **Monday, March 17, 2014**

#### **Mountain Lions in the Wildlife Corridor**

**Presenter:** TBD: Will be updated on SSMPA e-mail announcements and website.

Mountain lions that live in Southern California must navigate urban sprawl: freeways / roads, loss of habitat from housing and industrial sprawl, and rodent poison anti-coagulants that cause non-target wildlife to become ill and/or die.



photo: National Geographic, Jim & Jamie Dutcher

**SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains and surrounding open space.**

## 2013: A Review of SSMPA Board Activities and Accomplishments

**Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL) cleanup and preservation of cultural-archaeological sites, test stands, and wildlife corridor:** Lead: John Luker, and Bob Dager, Teena Takata, Diana Davis-Dixon and Carla Bollinger actively participated in many community meetings (DTSC-sponsored Public Participation Groups PPG, Community Advisory Group CAG, NASA Section 106), sponsored community hikes/tours at the SSFL, secured support of Simi Hills petition from over 700 individuals and attended 13 local councils and organizations for National Park Service's acquisition of federally-owned properties at the SSFL, kept 18 elected officials informed of community support for preservation of SSFL as open space / parkland, and led the community in critiquing NASA's cleanup plan as presented in their Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**Rim of the Valley Wildlife Corridor (ROV):** Attended meetings and provided comments for the expansion of the NPS service area of the Santa Monica Mountains to strategic land areas in the Simi Hills-Santa Susana Mountains-San Gabriel Mountains-Angeles National Forest-Los Padres Forest to preserve the open space/habitat for our local residents and migratory wildlife, crawling, walking and flying.

**Chatsworth Park South (CPS):** Lead: Tom Nachtrab works with DTSC, CD12, and City Recreation & Parks to move forward after a long 7+ years of closure for a proposed cleanup of lead from a Skeet Ranch owned by Roy Rogers over 50 years ago. The park was closed in 2008 and Nachtrab reports there is, at last, a City of Los Angeles comprehensive plan for cleaning up CPS. DTSC approved the plan but the City needs to find \$6+ million to fund the performance of the work. If these conditions are met, CPS might open summer of 2015.

**Chatsworth Nature Preserve (CNP):** Lead: Carla Bollinger: The CNP is owned/managed by the Department of Water & Power. A Coalition was formed with members of SSMPA, Audubon Society, CA Native Plant, Lake Manor residents, and others to work with DWP to use best practices of stewardship of the CNP. CD12 hosted a DWP community stakeholders' meeting in July. The community meeting allowed stakeholders to learn about DWP's plan to shrink the size of the Ecology Pond and presented other suggestions to maintain the size and health of the ecology pond for our wildlife.

**Land Use:** Members have met with and submitted comments to our regional representatives, LA City and County planning department, and state and national organizations to protest urban sprawl developments, Hidden Creeks Estates in Brown's Canyon-Santa Susana Mountains, Woolsey Canyon Estates-Simi Hills, Eagle's Nest-Simi Hills, and other locations that are environmentally destructive to sensitive wildlife corridors, riparian woodlands, blue streams and seasonal wetlands.

**LA County Trails Planning:** Lead: Teena Takata: SSMPA was pleasantly surprised to learn that LA County in the Santa Susana Mountains Trails Master Plan Project has expanded their trails planning area to cover virtually all of the Oat Mountain area from Rocky Peak east to Santa Clarita.

**Event Participation:** Lead: Bob Dager: Bob went to so many events in spring, 2013, he kept his car packed with displays and brochures! Events SSMPA attended: Earth Day in the CNP, Earth Day at CSUN, Sierra Canyon School celebration of Chatsworth's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday, Homestead Acre's Garden Festival and Pioneer Days, Day of the Horses, Stagecoach Trail Hikes, SSFL tours, field studies with the SW Herpetologists and Audubon Society in the CNP, Woodland Hills Chamber of Commerce sponsored "Music in the Park" with presentation by John Luker re: SSFL Cleanup.

**Strategic alliances/partnerships with other organizations to protect our wildlife corridors/open space, archaeology-culture and local history:** Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains, SFV Audubon Society, LA/SFV Sierra Club, South West Herpetologists, CA Native Plant Society, National Park Service, California State Parks, CalPark Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity, Chatsworth Historical Society, Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council, Chatsworth Neighborhood Council, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA), California Fish & Wildlife, California Wildlife Center, Moorpark College Archaeological Dept., U.S. Geological Survey-Western Ecological Research Center, Friends of the Los Angeles River, and Friends of the Santa Clarita River, and Los Angeles – Ventura Cultural Research Alliance (LanVen).

**Issues & Positions:** SSMPA went public with issues, positions, and action items on our revamped website [ssmpa.com](http://ssmpa.com)

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### *Welcome new board member Sarah Stone!*

Sarah joined the SSMPA Board Members fall, 2013. She is an artist who has lived in Box Canyon for over 20 years, and is also a habitat gardening enthusiast and wildlife activist. Her artwork can be viewed at [www.sarah-stone-art.com](http://www.sarah-stone-art.com)

#### 2013/2014 SSMPA Board Members

**Teena Takata**, President

**Vanessa Watters**, Recording Secretary

**Warren Stone**, Member-at-Large

**Tom Nachtrab**, Member-at-Large

**John Luker**, Vice President

**Carla Bollinger**, Program Chair/newsletter Editor/PR

**Robert "Bob" Dager**, Member-at-Large

**Albert Knight**, Anthropologist, Member Emeritus

**Diana Dixon-Davis**, Treasurer

**Donna Nachtrab**, Member-at-Large

**Sarah Stone**, Member-at-Large

## HOOTERS IN CHATSWORTH NATURE PRESERVE (CNP)

Arthur Langton, SFV Audubon Society and retired mid-school teacher (28 yrs.) reports on owls from previous field studies and reports in the CNP.

Owls were not seen in the December, 2013, CNP Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Art: Sarah Stone

[www.sarah-stone-art.com](http://www.sarah-stone-art.com)



**Burrowing Owls:** A diurnal owl dependent on burrows of ground squirrels, badgers, etc. They feed on large insects, small mammals, reptiles, and birds. Mentioned previously in the CBC of late 1950s through 1970s, as well as in George Fishler's unpublished memorandum to the DWP (1975) as a resident species; one sighting, 2/8/1982, also of a single bird 12/3-4, and 12/20/94 by Wanda Dameron, Arthur and Irene Langton. No confirmed or recorded sightings since. Most recent local sightings have been in Pacoima Wash (1 bird in 2010). CNP Status: Probably extirpated due to changing land use from agricultural to residential and commercial, habit fragmentation, disruption of wildlife corridors, possible fatalities due to use of rodenticides, lack of burrow digging mammals.

**Short-eared Owls:** One CNP sighting, CBC 1964, none since. A once common winter visitor to Southern California up to the 1960's, it is now scarce to extirpated throughout most of its former range.

**Long-eared Owls:** Rarely seen or recorded due, in part, to its secretive nature and ability to change shape and remain perfectly motionless when approached. Habitat includes dense, old growth chaparral and live oak thickets in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mts. and throughout much of Santa Monica Mountains. CNP sightings are few, widely spaced, and accidental and include: 3/13/94, 2006, response to tape night of CBC 2007, and CBC 2012.

**Western Screech Owl:** Listed by Thomas Howell (1978) in unpublished memorandum to the DWP as likely to be found, but no recorded observations, perhaps due to a lack of evening or nighttime surveys inside the CNP in late winter or early spring. Residents of Lake View Manor claim to hear species at night.

**Great Horned Owl:** Once a common resident and breeder within the CNP, particularly in a pot unofficially named, "owl hollow", south of the highest hill on the property. For years throughout the 1990's, Great Horns could be seen/counted (5/1/99). A listening survey at night around the CNP periphery with occasional playing of owl calls during the winter and early spring might give some idea of present abundance of this and other owl species. For Great Horns roosting and foraging areas may be miles apart. The CNP eucalyptus grove is not accessible at night. A powerful flyer, Great Horns feed on a variety of small to medium sized mammals including skunks, squirrels, cats, bats, and other like-sized mammals. An early nester, starts mating rituals after the start of the new year.

**Barn Owl:** Pandemic, found throughout the temperate and tropical regions of the world. Nesting sites include palm trees, house eaves, abandon buildings, and are far more common than people realize. They are often heard calling at night in residential areas south of the CNP especially during the summer. Call is un-owl-like, but any large white single bird seen flying overhead at night is likely to be a Barn Owl in search for urban rats, gophers, bats, and other small to medium sized mammals. Possible breeder in the CNP; sightings include several in the spring of 1993, a single owl hunting for dinner at dusk 12/13/97, and 9/13/98.

- Arthur Langton

## SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAINS

Craggy sandstone cliffs,  
cleaved by cracks,  
corroded by rain,  
contoured by wind,  
overlook the valley,  
where broken blocks  
lie scattered, like  
giant puzzle pieces.

Poem by: Erica Stux



## HIKES

**Welcome Walks:** Interpretive hikes in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park (SSPSHP): Facebook: [Friends of the Santa Susana Mountains](#).

**SSPSHP Volunteer Hikes:** Contact: Jennifer Dandurand, park interpretive specialist, Los Encinos SHP: 818.784.4849; [jdandurand@parks.ca.gov](mailto:jdandurand@parks.ca.gov)

**Ranch Simi Trail Blazers:** [www.simitrailblazers.com](http://www.simitrailblazers.com) **Sierra Club:** [www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfvg/](http://www.angeles.sierraclub.org/sfvg/) Meetings, hikes

**SFV Audubon:** [www.sfvaudubon.org](http://www.sfvaudubon.org) Meetings and Bird Walks for families

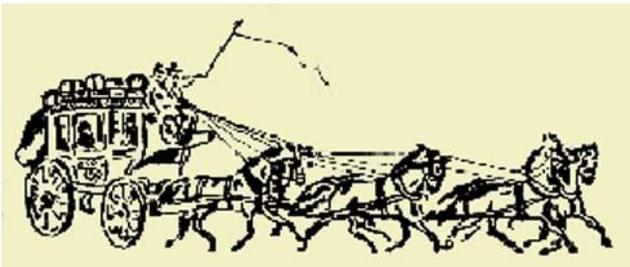
**Hiking and Event Updates:** [ssmpa.com](http://ssmpa.com)



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA)  
P. O. Box 4831  
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Mail label here

**MISSED THE SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE? It's not too late ...**



**MEMBERSHIP is due for all annual members in September. Please fill in the membership renewal form below and submit your renewal. If you do not receive your newsletter via e-mail and must receive by snail mail, please send an additional \$10.00. If you have moved, please be sure to let us know your new address.**

*Your membership (new and renewal) and donations help SSMPA efforts and continued success in providing free community meetings; advocacy for open space/nature preserves; keeping or reopening local parks; acquiring easement land parcels to protect native plants and habitat, wildlife corridors and park space; environmental educational opportunities; preservation of Chatsworth and surrounding area's local history, cultural, and archaeological sites.*

**SSMPA MEMBERSHIP IS A VOICE IN YOUR COMMUNITY!**

**YOU CAN NOW USE YOUR CREDIT CARD OR PAYPAL ACCOUNT: Go to our website: [ssmpa.com](http://ssmpa.com)**

Sign up for a LIFE MEMBERSHIP and/or a DONATION of \$50.00 and receive a FREE Chumash designed [T-Shirt](#) (image on [ssmpa.com/membership](http://ssmpa.com/membership) ) Let us know your size when you mail in your check.

We greatly appreciate your Life Membership and/or special donations: Vicki Ahlers, Cynthia Fichtner, Diane Fike, Jim Gorman, Jack & Gloria Perrodin, Colin & Loretta Shields, Ann & Ray Vincent, and Joan Weaver. And, thank you, everyone, who sent in your new or renewed membership.

THANK YOU for your membership, new or renewal, and/or donations:

- PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL OR NEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY**  
( ) \$20.00 for individuals ( ) \$25.00 for a family ( ) \$30.00 for a business or organization  
( ) \$150.00 for Individual Life Membership ( ) \$200.00 for a Family Life Membership

**Make your check payable to SSMPA** and mail to: SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

**Be sure to fill in the following information ....**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Special interests or skills \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT: Please send today your e-mail address or changes to your e-mail address to: [mail@ssmpa.com](mailto:mail@ssmpa.com).**  
*Your e-mail address is used exclusively for SSMPA newsletter and community announcements.*