

Wilderness Link

San Geronio Wilderness Association

February 2020

Volume 8, Issue 1

Calendar of Events

These are the major events of the year. For more information about these and other activities, or to sign up for events go to www.sangorgoniowilderness.org.

February

- 25 Board meeting
- 27 Banff Film Festival
- 28 Banff Film Festival

March

- 31 Board meeting/Director elections

April

- 18 Interpretive training
- 25 Trail work training (tentative)
- 28 Board meeting

May

- 2 Nature trails cleanup
- 9 Mentor training
- 16 Orientation
- 23 First Ranger Talk
- 23 Potluck
- 26 Board meeting
- 30 Trail work training

June

- 6 Patrol training Horse Meadows
- 30 Board meeting

July

- 4 Birthday Bash
- 28 Board meeting

August

- 1 Forest Festival/Potluck
- 25 Board meeting

September

- 5 Labor Day potluck
- 6 Final Ranger Talk
- 27 Barton Flats closes
- 29 Board meeting

Banff Film Festival Feb. 27-28

By Bettye Miller

Winter surfing on Lake Michigan, a daddy's daycare aboard a mountain bike in Scotland, and a challenging trek through the entire length of the Grand Canyon are among the short films featured in the Banff Mountain Film

Festival World Tour on Thursday, Feb. 27, and Friday, Feb. 28.



"Danny Daycare" is one of several films in the lineup for the Banff Mountain Film Festival Feb. 27-28.

©Photo by Dave Mackison

Hosted by SGWA and sponsored by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, the film festival begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Fox Event Center, 123 Cajon St., Redlands. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased online at www.sgwa.org or at the door. Please note that this year's film festival will screen on Thursday and Friday nights.

A different program of films will be offered each night.

See Banff on page 3

Front Desk Sleuthing Aids Hikers

By Bettye Miller

Visitors who drop in at the Mill Creek Visitor Center typically come with questions, such as whether their destination requires an Adventure Pass to park, which Forest Service roads are closed, and trail conditions. Answering questions about the latter requires a bit of sleuthing and gathering information from many sources, said Lonnie Yett, the SGWA volunteer who manages the front desk at the Mill Creek Visitor Center.

"Information about the trails comes from a variety of sources: Facebook posts, SGWA forum, trail patrol reports, and direct reports from visitors," Lonnie explained. "Each has its pros and cons, but by taking advantage of every source, I have been able to give timely details to front desk personnel to share with visitors. Encouraging visitors to

See Front Desk on page 5

Send Us Your Photos

It's not too early to start thinking about photos for the 2020 yearbook. We're looking for pictures of volunteers on patrol, doing trail work, performing Infra tasks, working at heritage sites, and engaging with visitors at Ranger Talks and interpretive sites. They can be silly or serious and everything in between.

Please email your favorite pictures to yearbook editor Bettye Miller at gorgoniogal@gmail.com by Sept. 1.



Does your employer match contributions to your favorite nonprofit (i.e., SGWA)? Or does your employer support in other ways nonprofits where their employees volunteer? Are you a member of a hiking club that spends time in the San Gorgonio Wilderness? If so, please contact SGWA Executive Director Val Silva to find out how SGWA might benefit from these programs. sgwa@earthlink.net

Celebrating Wilderness

Gifts to the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association help support our efforts to preserve the wilderness and the forest surrounding it. We are thankful for these supporters whose generosity makes it possible for us to further our mission to serve, protect and educate. This list includes lifetime members and individuals who have contributed to SGWA since December 2018. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one or to honor someone special please contact our office at (909) 382-2906, or visit our website at sgwa.org. Gifts may be mailed to: San Gorgonio Wilderness Association, 34701 Mill Creek Rd., Mentone, CA 92359

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Vincent Van Rooijen
Catherine Walsh
Brian Wolk
Kathryn Wood
Caroline Wright



Director's Desk

Val Silva

During the winter months SGWA rests – sort of – and plans.

We do have trail work going on both on the San Gorgonio Wilderness and the Cucamonga Wilderness. In fact, the Cucamonga Wilderness received a facelift with new signs, tree removal and tread work that was sorely needed. It's better weather in the Cucamonga Wilderness this time of year.

On San Gorgonio trail crews are working below the snow level and removing trees and fixing trail washouts. Of course, we also keep the front desk open at Mill Creek Ranger Station, thanks to a few dedicated volunteers, giving information, issuing permits, etc. But it is still slower than normal.

A few hearty souls with winter weather experience are patrolling the wilderness. Brrrrr.

We are all excited for spring. We are scheduling Orientation Day on May 16 for all volunteers, and trail work orientation on May 30. In addition, volunteers are working on their interpretive programs for Greyback and Barton Flats Visitor Center. Keep an eye on the sgwa.org calendar for upcoming events.

Whew! Come on, Spring!

The Wilderness Link is published quarterly by the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association.

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Submit story ideas and photos to sgwa@earthlink.net or gorgoniogal@gmail.com

Banff

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The Banff Mountain Film Festival, a program of Banff Centre, is the largest and one of the most prestigious mountain festivals in the world. At the conclusion of the film festival in Banff, Canada, a selection of films that won awards and were audience favorites are selected for the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour. With stops planned in about 550 communities and more than 40 countries around the world, the tour features a collection of the most inspiring action, environmental, and adventure films from the festival.

Hosting the festival raises money and recruits new members for SGWA.

Here is the list of scheduled films.

Thursday, Feb. 27

Good Morning – Skier Richard Permin follows the same mundane morning routine every morning: Get out of bed, click on the skis, and ride down the snow-covered rooftops of Avoriaz in the French Alps.

Surfer Dan – Who needs to seek adventure on the opposite side of the world when you can surf in icy Lake Michigan?

Safe Haven -- Founded on the belief that everyone is welcome, the Memphis Rox climbing gym challenges stereotypes and is at the center of the Tennessee city's revitalization.

Into the Canyon (Tour Edit) -- When filmmaker/photographer Pete McBride and writer Kevin Fedarko set out on a 1,200 km journey on foot through the entire length of the Grand Canyon the challenge becomes far more than they bargained for.

Siblings – This short coming-of-age film celebrates childhood and the relationship between siblings.

Electric Greg – Mountain endurance athlete Greg Hill came to realize that the way he was approaching the mountains was only making the problem of climate change worse. So he changed his approach and set out to climb 100 peaks without burning any fossil fuels. But will it make a difference?

Thabang – In the last few years Thabang Madiba has become everyone's favorite trail runner in South Africa.

Chasing Monsters – Experience the adrenaline-fueled moments of filming America's wildest tornadoes with photographer Nick Moir.

Life of Pie – When Jen Zeuner and Anne Keller moved to the high desert town of Fruita, Colorado, almost 20 years ago, it was not on the map as far as mountain biking was concerned. They were on the fringe and a bit ostracized, but now are at the heart and soul of the community.

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Hors Piste – This humorous, animated short follows two of the best mountain rescue workers as they prepare for their new mission.

Friday, Feb. 28

Charge – Four top freeskiers and a world champion drone pilot are dropped at Chatter Creek, British Columbia, for one week. Their instructions: Charge as hard as you can every day.

The Motivator – Filmmaker Aaron Hitchins turns his camera on the person who has motivated him to lead a life connected to the outdoors: his mother, Maureen.

Camel Finds Water -- Trevor Gordon found the hull of an abandoned fishing boat in a field, brought it home and spent a summer returning it to a sea-worthy state. Then, he took it on its maiden voyage to British Columbia in search of waves.

Home (Tour Edit) -- Between 2011 and 2015 UK adventurer Sarah Outen traversed the globe by bike, kayak and rowing boat, travelling over 32,000 km. The solo trip took its toll.

Return to Earth (Tour Edit) – Unsung shredders and up-and-coming young mountain bikers prove that when we lose track of time, we can make the most of it.

Circle of the Sun – Steep mountains, the ocean, the sun, and the aurora borealis. One rotation of the sun high in the Arctic on skis equals one day of magic.

A Nordic Skater —This is the first film in the world about Nordic skating, a Scandinavian-style, cross-country ice skating on frozen lakes and fjords.

The Imaginary Line – In an act of political solidarity, a team from Mexico and the United States assemble to establish a slackline that crosses the border. In a world that is constantly tearing us apart, they come together to cross an imaginary line and tell a different story.

The Flip -- On a bridge near Puebla, Mexico, French skydiver and base jumper Remi Angeli faces his biggest challenge yet. He wants to try a "gainer" – like a back flip, but in free fall – for the first time. This maneuver requires precise physical control and steady nerves. In theory Remi has both, but in practice, it's a completely different story.

REEL ROCK 13: Up To Speed – When climbing was announced as part of the 2020 Olympics, it was a monumental occasion for the sport. But many climbers were shocked to learn that one of three combined events required to compete for a medal is speed climbing. Zachary Barr looks into this little-known and seldom-practiced sub-discipline of the sport, and the role it will play in shaping climbing's future.

Danny Daycare – Danny MacAskill takes on child care the only way he knows how – by going for a wee bike ride around Scotland.

♦ ♦ ♦



are underwriting much of the cost of the Banff Mountain Film Festival this year.

A special **thank you** to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, who

Volunteer Profile Roxanne Smith

By Bettye Miller

As retirement neared, Roxanne Smith began looking for an activity to fill her days. Forty years working for the Auto Club of Southern California, much of that time as a travel agent, fueled her sense of adventure and love of the



outdoors. Hiking seemed a natural pursuit, and the San Geronio Wilderness beckoned.

Five years later, Roxanne has completed two years as an SGWA volunteer and is a familiar face at the Front Desk of the Mill Creek Visitor Center, where she helps families and hikers choose forest destinations that best suit their desires. Her experience creating the Auto Club help desk for travel agents and work on the IT help desk is proving helpful with SGWA administrative tasks as well.

"I like working with the public," she said. "The Auto Club is very customer-service-oriented, and that experience helps a lot at the Front Desk. Most people who come in here are happy because they want to go camping or hiking. I love suggesting trails and campgrounds, and share my photos with them. If I don't know the answer to a question, I will find out."

Roxanne also enjoys trail patrols, particularly on the John's Meadow Trail. She carries a small pruning saw, just the right size for removing large branches from the trail. "If I'm on patrol and see things I can fix, I fix them," she said.

Among her first impressions of SGWA were how friendly the organization is and how much work volunteers do for the Forest Service, she said.

"We are the only people who keep the trails clean and clear trees off the trails. The number of people in this organization who give of their time and muscle is phenomenal," she said. "It takes a special kind of person to do this. I like that everybody gets recognized for their efforts, and that all suggestions are considered. I really appreciate that."

Front Desk

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share their experience with us also has been a key tool.”

Lonnie produces weekly reports to share with volunteers who staff the front desk so they can update visitors. These reports typically include current trail conditions, which in the winter include recommendations about the need for micro spikes or snowshoes; weather forecasts; notes about wilderness rescues; and schedules for other visitor centers in the San Bernardino National Forest.

Here are excerpts from reports compiled since Jan. 1:

Jan. 3: A report from Vivian Creek trail today said that snowshoes were necessary. The hiker reported soft snow on the trail and his group only got up to High Creek before they turned around. They also said that water was still running near Halfway camp and is accessible.

John Howell’s report from last Saturday on South Fork said the snow was knee deep that morning right from the trailhead. He spoke with some skiers up around Poopout Hill and they reported waist deep powder between South Fork Meadow and Dry Lake. Jenks Lake road has been plowed, but had significant ice Saturday morning.

There is no access for snow play at Big Falls due to the snow and ice on the road at the end of Valley of the Falls. Please encourage visitors not to go in there – there is no place for them to park. Barton Flats and Big Bear are better options.

Jan. 17: I had two reports from Dry Lake last weekend which both agreed that there is deep snow up above South Fork Meadow. John Howell did an overnight patrol and estimated 3 feet of snow at Dry Lake camp. Visitors posted on the SGWA forum and advised changing from spikes to snowshoes by the time you get to the meadows. They also reported the upper two parking areas at the trailhead lot were iced over but the lower ones were clear.

Another visitor posted on the forum about his hike up to Jackstraw earlier this week. He reported needing spikes right from the start of the trail and then needing snowshoes for the unconsolidated powder by the time he got to about 8500 feet elevation.

Jan. 31: San Bernardino and Forsee Creek trailhead roads may be getting closer to being passable by vehicles, but I recommend extreme caution by anyone trying this. I have gotten into the habit of telling people lately about these roads: “I

recommend you only try it with 4-wheel drive and the phone number of a tow company in the mountains that will come and get you if you get stuck.” Humorous, but I am not kidding about this.

Jan. 24: Hiker reported going up Forsee Creek trail trying to get to Shields Peak and

found snow that was hip deep in places. Snow should be melting in Angelus Oaks, but I still recommend hikers use caution trying to go into either San Bernardino or Forsee Creek trails.

Feb. 7: A serious example of the danger on the mountain happened last weekend when an experienced hiker, wearing crampons and using an ice axe, slid on ice and hurt himself during the slide. Luckily, he knew how to use the ice axe and was able to arrest the slide before he got hurt worse. He was able to contact SAR using a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) since he was unable to walk very far due to his injury. The Sheriff’s helicopter was able to locate him a short distance away in the Dry Lake area and he was airlifted to a local hospital. A link to the story can be found here: <http://nixle.us/BLK4Q> I have it printed out and posted on the front desk as well.

Looking at the wilderness from the webcams tells me the southern exposed terrain is mostly melted up to about 8500 feet elevation (looking in the foreground of the view.) Still some ice in the shaded areas.

Feb. 14: A hiker went into Vivian Creek last week and posted his trip on YouTube. The road still had enough ice to keep the road closed Got some great shots of ice on Vivian Creek trail. It is patchy between Vivian Camp and Halfway and more significant as you get closer to High Creek. The video makes it really clear that crampons and an ice axe are needed – serious icy conditions on steep slopes.



Lonnie Yett uses photos like this one John Howell shot at Lodgepole in January to illustrate back country conditions for hikers who visit the Mill Creek Visitor Center.



President's Corner Betty Miller

It's winter, which means that your Board of Directors is busy making plans for the 2020 season. We had a productive planning retreat in January, which included a vigorous discussion about aligning our program priorities with our stated mission to protect the San Gorgonio Wilderness, serve the public, and educate forest visitors about the importance of wilderness.

As part of this discussion we decided to discontinue our sponsorship of the Fish Festival. This is disappointing for all of us, but on-going difficulties in accessing Jenks Lake for this event in recent years has meant partnering with The Wildlands Conservancy in Oak Glen. The Conservancy presents an excellent naturalist program and Rotary International in Anaheim continues to feed the children and pay for buses. While Oak Glen is

beautiful, it is not in the geographic area that is the reason SGWA exists. We wish the Conservancy and Anaheim Rotary Club continued success in presenting this event.

The board also began what will be a yearlong effort to plan for SGWA's future. We will be examining our strengths, our values, and opportunities for growth – including fund raising and promoting the organization.

SGWA's organizational culture is different from many nonprofits. We're very busy, and a bit laid back; passionate about our mission and our love of wilderness without taking ourselves too seriously. We're friendly and we're always looking for new friends to join us. We have rules we must follow for safety and legal reasons, but we're not regimented.

New volunteers sometimes ask if there are consequences for not putting in oodles of hours. There aren't. We all have seasons in our lives when we can commit more time than at others. Our aim is to continue SGWA's mission and to have as much fun as possible doing it.

Welcome to another fabulous season!

SGWA

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