

Wilderness Link

San Gorgonio Wilderness Association

August 2023

Volume 11, Issue 3

Calendar of Events

These are the major events planned for 2023. Some dates may change as circumstances evolve. Check your email and the volunteer calendar at www.sgwa.org for updates.

August

- 4 Great American Outdoors Day (fee-free day)
- 19 Forest Festival

September

- 1 Last Ranger Talk
- 23 National Public Lands Day (fee-free day)
- 24 Barton Flats VC closes

October

- 14 Awards Potluck
Close Tulakes

November

- 28 Officer elections

December

- 2 Holiday party

Celebrate the Forest Aug. 19

If you've wanted to try your hand at using a two-person crosscut saw, learn about the history of Serrano Indians in the San Bernardino Mountains, or ask a state game warden about fishing laws, the SGWA's annual Forest Festival on Aug. 19 will provide a chance to experience all of these, and more.

The family-friendly Forest Festival, which is free, introduces visitors to opportunities to enjoy and protect the forest with hands-on activities, informational booths, and a visit from Smokey Bear.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Barton Flats Visitor Center, located on State Highway 38 about seven miles east of Angelus Oaks. Snacks and beverages will be available, and live music by SGWA volunteers will be presented beginning at 11 a.m.

See Forest Festival on Page 2

Once Upon a Time Hikers Went Ice Skating on Dollar Lake

By Walter Roth

The winter of 2022-23 brought us more snow than we've seen in years, but the winter of 1968-1969 was a record year, too. There were many avalanches and the snow stayed late in the season. Even in June at the 10,000-foot level on the San Bernardino Peak trail the snow was still over 10 feet deep in places with only a few open patches of dirt.

The snow on exposed ridges in many places was covered with sun cups. These are a peculiar feature where the snow melts unevenly in a texture resembling a gigantic egg carton. The cups can be up to 2 feet

See Ice Skating on Page 3



Visitors at the 2021 Forest Festival learn about the U.S. Forest Service's heritage program and the San Bernardino National Forest. Photo by Domenic Wager

Forest Festival

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Visitors will have opportunities to use a crosscut saw to create a “tree cookie,” which will then be branded with U.S. Forest Service and Smokey Bear logos; pan for gold; operate remote-controlled OHV Jeeps; explore their creative side with nature crafts; learn what it takes to serve on a search-and-rescue team; hear what various outdoor and conservation groups do to protect our natural resources; check out a Junior Forester program developed as a Gold Award project by a local Girl Scout; and visit with members of the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association, who patrol and maintain trails in the San Gorgonio and Cucamonga wilderness areas, and provide interpretive programs.

Smokey Bear will make appearances throughout the day, and SGWA volunteers will lead nature walks around the visitor center.

To volunteer, sign up on the SGWA Volunteer Calendar.

2023 Board of Directors

President – Rex Philpot

Vice President – Bettye Miller

Treasurer – Curt Lindemer

Secretary – Dee McCoy

Directors – Kent Johnson, Rocio Nuñez, Andrew Sauer, Roxanne Smith, Ana Soltero, Paul Valiukis, Nelva Valladares, Bob Williams

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 January 2020. 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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Daniel Callies
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Memberships via Banff Film Festival

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Hikers from the Sierra Club spend an afternoon ice skating on Dollar Lake in the winter of 1968-69. Photo courtesy of Walter Roth

Ice Skating

Continued from Page 1

To walk you climb up out of one then slide down into the next. This is something rarely seen in our mountains where the snow usually melts away quickly.

Something else rarely seen happened at Dollar Lake that winter. Old-timers may remember that in those pre-drought days the lake was reliably full of water and was a real lake. Every winter it froze.

But that winter, in addition to the unusually deep snowfall, an avalanche slid off of Charlton Peak and landed in the lake, partially filling it with a huge amount of snow and giving it a deep freeze. A few small trees that had been ripped from the mountainside were sticking out of the ice on the lake at crazy angles.

That winter I did an overnight backpack at Dollar Lake. The campground was right at the lake in those days.

After a chilly night the next morning I explored the ice. The weather was bright and sunny, but cold. I walked out on the ice timidly at first, fearing I might fall through, until I noticed how incredibly thick it was.

I could look down and dimly see an assortment of rocks, some the size of bread loaves and bowling balls embedded maybe 1 or 2 feet below the surface

of the ice. I wondered if the lake was actually frozen solid!

In midmorning about half a dozen people showed up at the lake with brooms! I have never before or since seen a group of people hiking in the wilderness carrying brooms.

I asked them what they were up to and they said they were part of a Sierra Club outing and that there was a group coming up behind them that was going to ice skate.

They began sweeping, removing the snow to give the skaters a smoother surface. Then a while later the skaters arrived. They skated around and around for hours.

When the afternoon shadows began to creep across the lake they gathered up their brooms, skates and packs and left.

Over the years I have seen plenty of winter hikers, snowshoers and skiers, but I wonder if anyone ever ice skated Dollar Lake before or after this very special time.



Director's Desk Val Silva

Wow! It's August already. It's been a wonderful summer. The snow this past winter has replenished the streams and watered the trees and wildflowers. It's been nice to see all the water.

Of course the snow also brought down many trees that were burned in past fires, including a few avalanches. SGWA trail crews have been busy clearing trails – they have removed over 480 trees from the trails so far.

SGWA volunteers also have seen an increase in visitors in the wilderness enjoying the snow and water. They have contacted 830 hikers so far. Visitors appreciate the information and support given by volunteers patrolling in the wilderness, working at the front desk at Mill Creek, presenting programs at Greyback Amphitheater and helping at the Forest Falls picnic area.

Volunteers are enjoying all the activity and really make a difference to the public.

Volunteer Profile

Marlene Linsalato

By Bettye Miller

Not many people can say they've played the role of Smokey Bear.

Marlene Linsalato is one of them. And it's something she looks forward to every summer.

"It's neat to see how happy the kids are," she said of her Saturday evening appearances during Ranger Talks at Greyback Amphitheater. "It feels good to know that you're going to be in a family's photo album for years."

Marlene, who began volunteering with SGWA in 2016, served in the U.S. Marine Corps for four years and Reserves for three years. She volunteers at Riverside National Cemetery where she has participated in more than 3,000 funerals as part of the rifle honor guard or folding American flags to present to family members at the end of each service.

Assisting in these services honors veterans and their families; volunteering with SGWA is a way to help protect the forest she loves.

"Growing up in Illinois there were woods, but the terrain was pretty flat," she said. "I remember as a kid my family would take two weeks every year to visit national parks. I'm amazed that now I live within 30 minutes of these beautiful mountains, where I enjoy spending time."

Helping with Saturday-night Ranger Talks as Smokey or Smokey's handler supports the interpretive aspect of SGWA's three-pronged mission to Protect, Serve and Educate.

"These programs are really good. I enjoy learning about the wilderness, bats, owls, and a lot more. If more people knew about them they'd enjoy them, too," she said. "I don't like it when the season ends."

SGWA volunteers play an important role in protecting the San Gorgonio Wilderness and the forest in general, whether it's engaging the public in interpretive programs, patrolling wilderness trails, or maintaining those trails, she believes.

"People give their time freely because this is something they believe in," Marlene said. "It is enjoyable to volunteer alongside outdoors people with the same interests and values, who treasure our beautiful mountains and forest."



Playing the role of Smokey is a special honor, Marlene added, one that she anticipates at the beginning of every season.

"I was here for Smokey's 75th birthday," she said. "I plan to be here for the 80th next year."

Wanted: Photos for SGWA Yearbook

As you volunteer on the trail and in interpretive activities please remember to take photos and share them with us for possible use in the yearbook and various publicity opportunities. Please send them to gorgoniogal@gmail.com by Sept. 5.

Free Online LNT Course

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is offering a free, online Leave No Trace course.

"Leave No Trace 101" is an introduction to Leave No Trace and what all of us can do to protect the planet, from the backcountry to our own backyards.

Topics covered include what Leave No Trace, why it's important, and the seven principles: plan ahead and prepare; travel and camp on durable surfaces; dispose of waste properly; leave what you find; minimize campfire impacts; respect wildlife; and be considerate of others.

Sign up for the course at <https://learn.lnt.org/courses/101>.

National Public Lands Day Returns Sept. 23

National Public Lands Day, the nation's largest one-day volunteer event, will be held Sept. 23.

In addition to promoting stewardship of our environment, the event is a fee-free day at national parks and public lands.



National Public Lands Day was established in 1994 and is held annually on the fourth Saturday of September. It is a signature event of the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), which was chartered by Congress in 1990 to partner with the Environmental Protection Agency to advance environmental literacy nationwide.

For more information go to www.neefusa.org.



South Fork Trail is passable again after our trail crew spent several days clearing dozens of fallen trees and avalanche debris. Photos by Nelva Valladares



SGWA's trail crew clears trees blocking the stream and trail access on Aspen Grove Trail in June. Photos by Shawn Sisler

Did You Know?

It takes anywhere from weeks to millennia for various items to decompose.

For example:

- Cigarette butts – 18 months to 10 years
- Monofilament fishing line – 600 years
- Plastic bags – 10 to 1,000 years
- 6-pack holders – 450 years
- Tires – 2,000 years
- Plastic bottles – 450 years
- Aluminum cans – 80-100 years
- Vegetables – 5 days-1 month
- Paper – 2-6 weeks
- Source: Arizona Daily Star

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

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Contributors this issue:

Rex Philpot, Walter Roth, Val Silva, Shawn Sisler, and Nelva Valladares

Submit story ideas and photos to

sgwa@earthlink.net or gorgoniogal@gmail.com



Happy birthday, Smokey! Smokey Bear turns 80 next year on Aug. 9. Stay tuned for details about how to celebrate America's most famous bear.



President's Corner

Rex Philpot

Both Dry and Dollar Lake have had water this year and the springs throughout the wilderness are flowing. We have many great trails to explore and peaks to bag. Come enjoy the fresh cool air and commune with nature. Take a few days to enjoy one of our great trail camps. This wilderness is the gem of southern California.

I want to thank all our volunteers for giving their time to care for our wilderness this summer. SGWA volunteers, you are awesome.

I leave you with a quote from John Muir:

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of Autumn."

Don't forget to come out for our annual Forest Festival at Barton Flats on Saturday, Aug. 19. Enjoy a great time in the cool mountain air and bring the family. Fun times for all ages.

SGWA

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