

1013

Mishe Mokwa - Backbone Trail, Sandstone Peak Loop

October 27, 2010

Hike Leader Shirley Feinblatt

Distance: 6 miles RT.

Elevation gain: 1100 ft.

Directions to Trailhead: From the Valley, take Mulholland Drive to Little Sycamore Canyon Road meeting up with Yerba Buena Road. Go to the Backbone Trailhead parking lot on the right. It would be past the VC7.0 sign. Coming up PCH go up Yerba Buena Road. Approximately 1 mile past Circle X Ranch, turn left into the Backbone Trailhead parking lot. You could also take the 101 to Las Posas Road and go south to Yerba Buena Road. The only bathroom available is at Circle X Ranch.

The Hike: Take the Backbone Trail (a fire road) uphill to the north. At 0.3 miles, leave the road and take the signed Mishe Mokwa Connector Trail straight ahead. Continue 0.2 miles to a junction with the Mishe Mokwa Trail and take the left fork. The trail contours along Boney Mountain on the western edge of Carlisle Canyon.

At 1.4 miles, Balanced Rock can be seen on the opposite side of the canyon. Descend into the canyon shaded by laurel, oak and sycamore trees to Split Rock and the picnic area. Take the trail across the stream, heading out of the canyon to another stream crossing by sculptured volcanic rocks. Parallel the stream (very little water) to a signed junction. Take the left fork -- the Backbone Trail -- curving uphill towards Inspiration Point. A short side path leads up to the overlook. Might be a good lunch spot since this is the only place there are rocks to sit down on.

Continue east on the Backbone Trail to another junction. This side trail switchbacks up to the 360-degree views at Sandstone Peak. Sandstone Peak is the highest point in the Santa Monica Mountains. It overlooks the Pacific Ocean, the Channel Islands, and the surrounding mountains. From the junction, it is 0.8 miles downhill back to the Mishe Mokwa Junction, completing the loop. Alternative hikes: To Split Rock & back 3.5 miles or The Grotto Trail 3.5 miles.

Extra hiking: Out to the Tripeaks area & back adding another mile. It's marked on the Backbone Trail. Refreshments back at the parking lot.

GPS Data:

RT = 6.3 mi. Elevation gain = 1050 ft. October 20, 2010