

Hike #105



Hills-for-People Trail M. MIKE BUENNER

Ranch Road to McDermont Spring

← 4 miles RT: 400' gain. →

Ranch Road to Carbon Canyon Regional Park

7½ miles one way; 800' loss from McDermont Spring.

Season: All year.
Topo: Prado Dam,
Yorba Linda

12-11-91

@ 0930

Chino Hills State Park, located in Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, preserves some much needed "breathing room" in this fast-growing area. Nearly three million people live within sight of the Chino Hills and over nine million people live within a 40-mile radius of the park!

The park is the state's most expensive ever, with over \$47 million spent by the time it opened for full time use in 1986. Right now, Chino Hills is a park-in-the-making. Few signs or facilities have been installed. Development plans call for 35 miles of hiking trails and 62 miles of riding trails.

The 10,000-acre park is located near the northern end what geologists call the Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province. The Chino Hills are part of the group of hills that include the Puente Hills (See Hike #25) to the northwest. These hills form a roughly triangular area of approximately 35 square miles of valleys, canyons, hills, and steep slopes.

Extensive grasslands blanket the slopes. The hills are covered with wild oats, rye, black mustard and wild radish. On south-facing slopes is the soft-leaved shrub community, dominated by aromatic herbs, including California sagebrush, white sage, purple sage and black sage.

High temperatures, often combined with heavy smog, suggest that a summer visit can be something of an ordeal. The park is much more pleasurable in the cooler months, and especially delightful in spring.

Hills-for-People Trail was named for the conservation group that was instrumental in establishing Chino Hills State Park. The trail follows a creek to the head of Telegraph Canyon. The creek is lined with oak, sycamore and the somewhat rare California black walnut.

Currently the park trail system for the most part is a complicated system of old dirt ranch roads, so hikers are advised to stop at the ranger station for a good look at the large topographic map that locates trails.

NOTE: WE WILL MEET AT THE "CHINO HILLS STATE PARK" SIGN. THEN, WE'LL DRIVE TO THE TRAIL HEAD.

THE STATE PARK FOLKS HAVE TOLD ME THERE IS NOW A PAVED, CLEARLY DEFINED, ROAD TO THE PARK. NO NEW PATHFINDER

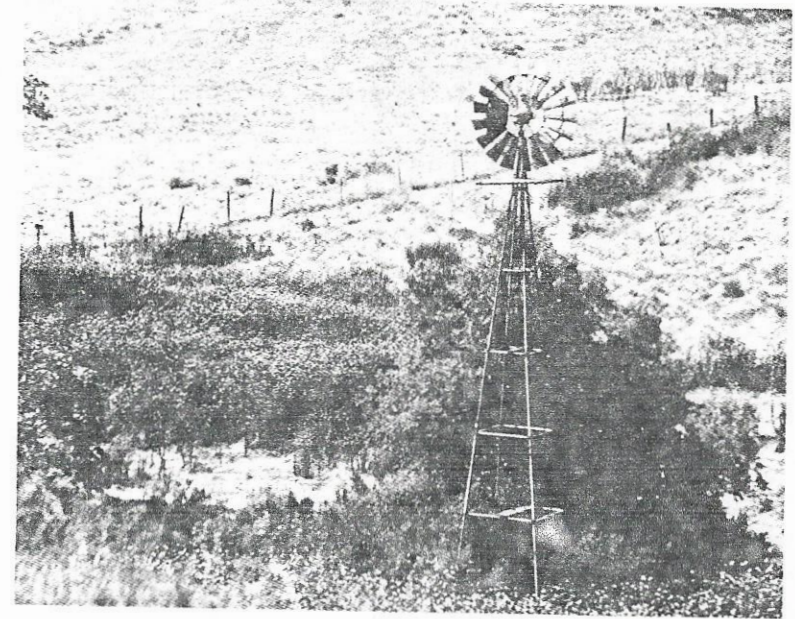
Directions to trailhead: Despite its location so close to the metropolis, Chino Hills State Park can be a bit tricky to find. The park is located ~~east~~ **WEST** of Highway 71 between the Riverside Freeway (91) and the Pomona Freeway (60). Traveling south on 71 and 60, visitors should turn right on Los Serranos Road and then make a quick left onto Pomona-Rincon Road. (Visitors heading north on 71 from 91 will spot, before reaching Los Serranos Road, a left turn lane leading directly to Pomona-Rincon Road.) A half mile of travel along Pomona-Rincon Road brings you to a ~~brickyard with a mailbox marked "15838 Rolling M Ranch."~~ **SIGN.** Take the dirt road next to the brickyard for 2 miles to the park entrance. ~~Continue on the main park road and~~ follow signs to the park office and ranger station. The road forks just before the ranger station. To the right is the ranger station and trailer housing the temporary Visitors Center. Bear left 1/2-mile on the dirt road to a vehicle barrier and trailhead parking. The signed trailhead is located a short distance past the vehicle barrier on the right of the road.

The park is open daily 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.

The Hike: Hills-for-People Trail descends to a small creek and follows the creek up canyon. Shading the trail—and shielding the hiker from a view of the many electrical transmission lines that cross the park—are oaks, sycamores and walnuts. Of particular interest is the walnut, a small tree, 15-30 feet tall. Often the tree has several dark brown trunks, which gives it a brushy appearance. This native tree's sturdy rootstock has aided commercial walnut production in the state.

The trail, which can be quite slippery and muddy after a rain, passes a small (seasonal) waterfall. The slopes just above the creekbed are carpeted with lush grasses and miners lettuce.

Along the trail is found evidence of the park's ranching heritage, including lengths of barbed wire fence and old cattle troughs. Sometimes



FOR ME!

a trespassing cow will wander down the trail from a nearby ranch. For more than a century this land was used exclusively for cattle ranching.

Near its end, the trail ascends out of the creekbed to the head of Telegraph Canyon and intersects a dirt road. McDermont Spring is just down the road. One unique aspect of the state park is the livestock ponds, which were constructed during the area's ranching era. Some of these ponds still exist, and hold water year-round during most years. McDermont Spring—along with Windmill and Panorama ponds—provide water for wildlife, and habitat for aquatic plant life.

Return the same way or loop back to the trailhead on the dirt road.

Option: To Carbon Canyon Regional Park. Telegraph Canyon Trail (a dirt park road closed to public vehicular traffic) stays close to the canyon bottom and its creek. It's a gentle descent under the shade of oak and walnut trees. The walnuts are particularly numerous along the first mile of travel and the hiker not inclined to hike the length of Telegraph Canyon might consider exploring this stretch before returning to the trailhead.

The route passes an old windmill and farther down the canyon, remains of a shepherd's camp. Near the bottom of the canyon the walnuts thin out. A lemon grove, owned by the state park but leased to a farmer, is at a point where the dirt road intersects Carbon Canyon Road. Walk along the broad shoulder of the latter road 1/2-mile to Carbon Canyon Regional Park.

