

FROM MULHOLLAND

Hondo Canyon Hike 3/8/95 9:30

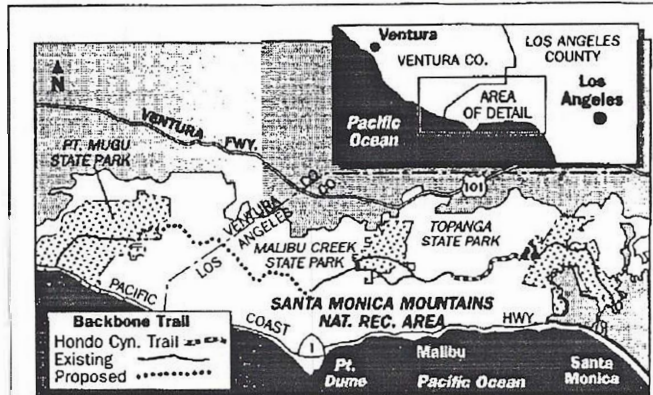
Shuttle - Start Saddle Peak Rd. End Topanga Rd.

George Thomas Hike

It's a short downhill hike. We should leave the trail head by 9:45.

The shuttle will be in place at the Topanga School Road. The distance for the shuttle is about 6 miles each way.

I will not be at the 3/1/95 hike. Jim's disaster gave me mucho Poisen Oak. Under Doctors care. Please call me if you need help to arrange car pools. I expect to be at the Saddle Peak Trail Head early.



Backbone Trail

WHERE: Hondo Canyon, Topanga State Park.
DISTANCE: From Saddle Peak Road to Topanga Canyon is a bit over five miles one way with 1,200-foot elevation loss.
TERRAIN: Dramatic ridges deep canyon.
HIGHLIGHTS: Newest, perhaps finest segment of Backbone Trail.

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DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate.
PRECAUTIONS: Sparse parking along Old Topanga Canyon Road.
FOR MORE INFORMATION: Mountain Parks Information; tel. (800) 533-PARK

Los Angeles Times

To reach the Saddle Peak Road trail head: From the intersection of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Old Topanga Road, proceed 5½ miles up the latter road to Mulholland Highway. Turn left and drive 4½ miles to Stunt Road, turn left, and continue four more miles to a junction with Schueren Road. Park off Stunt Road (which assumes a new name—Saddle Peak Road and continues east) in one of the wide dirt turnouts.

The hike: Begin at the yellow fire gate on the north side of Stunt Road. Walk 100 yards and look right for a sign (an arrow) that directs you onto the footpath. As you follow the ridge top east, to your right is Flores Canyon.

The ridge top you're following has long been known informally as Fossil Ridge and if you look sharply at the rocks, you'll see why. A quarter-mile from the trail head, embedded in rock, are what appear to be a trio of giant clam fossils (at least to us non-scientists).

After a half-mile descent from atop the canyon, you'll reach the site of a former mega-marijuana garden, destroyed by authorities a couple years ago. It was a difficult operation to discover: No trail led to this remote and sun-drenched spot, and the crop was hidden from aerial view by camouflage netting. The pot growers managed to tap a

fire hydrant on Stunt Road and snake miles of plastic pipe through thick brush in order to irrigate.

The path climbs briefly along the south canyon wall, then descends to what looks to be the scene of a minor avalanche but is really the work of the great quake of '94.

Past a burned-out cabin, the path crosses lush Topanga Meadows, where signs keep you on the Backbone and steer you away from a complication of horse paths that cross the meadow. Winter rains can make meadow trails mighty mucky; expect a couple pounds of mud to glom onto your hiking boots.

Soon after crossing the meadow, the trail leads across the usually shallow waters of the creek flowing next to Old Topanga Road. If you parked your car on Old Topanga Canyon Road, your hike is over.

Those hikers continuing to the Dead Horse Trail head in Topanga State Park will cross Old Topanga Road and join the moderately steep path (signed "Horse Trail") that climbs a low hill, passes a water tank and descends to Topanga Elementary School. Walk past the school, down Topanga School Road to Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

Cross the boulevard and walk 200 yards up Topanga Canyon Boulevard to Entrada Road, turn right and ascend briefly to the trail head in Topanga State Park.

The Hondo Canyon hike can be a five-mile one-way, mostly downhill jaunt from Saddle Peak Road to Topanga State Park or a 10-mile round-trip walk.

Directions to trail head: From U.S. 101 in Woodland Hills, exit on Topanga Canyon Boulevard and proceed south, winding a few hilly miles into the canyon. Turn left at the signed entrance to Topanga State Park on Entrada Road. A short distance up Entrada, turn left into a state park parking lot. (Don't continue driving up Entrada to the main entrance of the state park.)

Another trail head can be reached by driving down Topanga Canyon Boulevard one-quarter mile past the state park entrance on Old Topanga Canyon Road, turning right, and proceeding another quarter-mile to "horse trail" (also the Backbone Trail) that departs from Old Topanga Canyon Road.

Mag 13.00
Tue Feb 28 17:42:03 1995

Scale 1:62,500 (at center)

1 Miles

2 KM

LEGEND

-  Population Center
-  State Route
-  Geo Feature
-  Town, Small City
-  Hill
-  Street, Road
-  Street, Road
-  Major Street/Road
-  State Route
-  River
-  Open Water
-  Contour

