

690

Nicholas Flat

The Drive:

Trail Head Location: Drive up the P C H to Leo Carrillo State Beach near the L. A. - Ventura County line where there is a minimal charge for parking

The Hike:

Trail head: Leo Carrillo State Beach

Distance: 8 miles 1750'gain, 250'loss

Hiking trails in the Santa Monicas that actually connect the mountains to the sea are rare, and to find a trail that unrolls scenes of new discoveries is rare indeed. The hike can be as a roundtrip from either end but I prefer starting on the west slope and work uphill.

This trail was designed by Ron Webster

When we reach a saddle, the saddle splits left to continue north. The trail levels off on the ridge for a few hundred yards then continues up until reaching a gentle part of the trail before it starts leveling off toward the pond. It pays to slow down a bit and my suggestion is to find a tree and some shade. The pond comes as a pleasant surprise. This trail has a beautiful pond on one side, a great meadow on the other and a fork in the trail leads us to an oak resting place. The trail makes a big sweeping curve around the north slope of the mountain, losing altitude all the time. For awhile we pass through a dense growth of Chaparral, mostly Ceanothus. We will vow to come back in March to witness the blooming of the "wild lilac." The ocean comes into view, and we start a long descent down the slope and out onto a broad ridge. The vegetation makes a transition from Chaparral to Coastal Sage Scrub. The canyon to the west is Arroyo Sequit, and the point of land at the ocean is Sequit. The Topanga-Malibu-Sequit Land Grant, first claimed by Jose Bartolome Tapia in 1802 or 1804, took part of the name from Arroyo Sequit. This land grant extended 22 miles along the Malibu coast from Las Flores Canyon to the Los Angeles-Venture County line.

We continue downhill toward the ocean. Another option is to continue south along the ridge to the top of the hill for a special view of the ocean.