

1028

Will Rogers State Park and Backbone Trail

Wednesday 3/9/2011, 9:30 AM

Hike leader: John Leete

Directions:

Valley folks can take Topanga Canyon Road to PCH, and then south to Sunset Blvd. About 3 miles up Sunset turn left on Will Rogers State Park Road (there is a traffic light). Alternately, take the 405 freeway to Sunset Blvd, go west about 5 miles, and then right on Will Rogers State Park Road.

Coming from the south, take PCH to Chautauqua Blvd. (there are two right turn lanes on PCH – use the left of these for Chautauqua). Right on Sunset Blvd, then left on Will Rogers State Park Road.

The parking fee is \$11 per car for seniors or you can use a pass from the California State Park Foundation. Park staff has been furloughed due to cutbacks in state funding, so ranch house tours are only available on Thursdays and Fridays. Think of the parking fee as a means of supporting the state park system.

The hike:

The hike starts from the picnic area up a service road to the Inspiration Loop Trail, turn left onto the trail to do the loop clockwise (see map). Just north of inspiration point we will come to the Backbone Trail. Short hikers can continue around the Inspiration loop for a total of about two mile with about 300' elevation gain. The rest go left up the Backbone Trail. (After passing the foot bridge notice an unmarked trail off to the right that goes down into Rustic Canyon. It is steep and heavily eroded. I recommend it only for the heartiest hikers as an alternate return route.) Continue up the Backbone Trail until your heart's content. If you turn back at the 'Old Oak Tree', the hike will be about 5 miles and 1050 ft elevation gain. Find a nice spot for lunch and then return back down to Inspiration Loop Trail. Turn left to complete the Inspiration loop back to the picnic area.

Short hikers may want to explore the stable area along the Bone Canyon, Heart Canyon, or Mitt Canyon trails (see map).