

Mishe Mockwa Backbone Sandstone Peak

November 12, 2014

Leader: Shirley Feinblatt

GPS Data: RT = 6.3 mi. Elevation gain = 1050 ft.

Directions to Trailhead: From the Valley, take Mulholland Drive west to Decker Canyon Road, turn left. In about 1 mile, Mulholland Drive resumes - turn right. About 0.8 mile further on Mulholland, veers right onto Little Sycamore Canyon Road which becomes Yerba Buena Road. Continue westerly to the Backbone Trailhead parking lot on the right (Sign: "Sandstone Peak Trailhead"). It would be past the VC7.0 sign. Perhaps a longer, but less curvey route would be to come down to PCH, turn right and continue as below.

Coming west on PCH, turn right at Yerba Buena Road and go north about 5 miles. If needed, stop at Circle X Ranch (the only bathrooms available). Approximately 1 mile further north past Circle X Ranch, turn left into the Backbone Trailhead parking lot.

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 Mockwa Connector Trail straight ahead. Continue 0.2 miles to a junction with the Mishe Mockwa 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.

For extra mileage, explore the Tri-peaks area. It's marked on the Backbone Trail.

[Google Earth photo - Mishe Mokwa/Backbone Trails - Sandstone Peak](#)