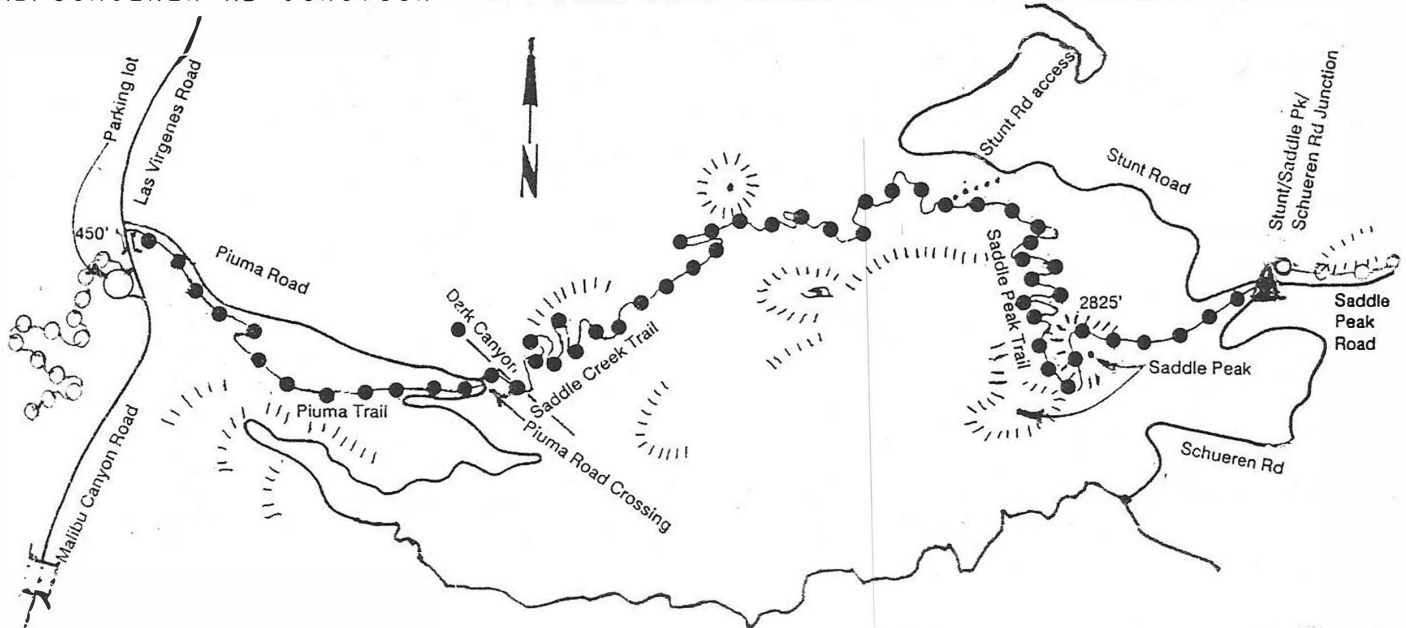


THE SADDLE PEAK-SADDLE CREEK-PIUMA SECTIONS OF THE BACKBONE TRAIL: 7¼ MILES

HIKE GUIDE: ROLAND BASSETT ADVANCE SCOUTS: TOM FRYE & DAVID LILLBACK

WEDNESDAY, 25 MAY 1994 AT 0915 GATHER AT MALIBU CANYON PARKING LOT LOCATED ON THE WESTSIDE OF THE ROAD AS INDICATED ON THE DIAGRAM BELOW JUST SOUTH OF THE BRIDGE OVER MALIBU CREEK. LAS VIRGENES ROAD IS ACCESSIBLE FROM VENTURA FREEWAY. MALIBU CANYON ROAD IS ACCESSIBLE FROM THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY. THE HIKE WILL END AT THIS PARKING LOT. MINI-VANS OR LARGE CAPACITY VEHICLES ARE NEEDED TO TAKE HIKERS TO THE STUNT RD/SADDLE PEAK RD/SCHUEREN RD JUNCTION VIA PIUMA ROAD WHICH OFFERS MANY SCENIC VIEWS.



HIKE START TIME: HOPEFULLY THIS WILL BE ABOUT 1045 AFTER ALL HIKERS ARRIVE.

HIKE DESCRIPTION: DUE TO THE FIRE OF LAST YEAR, THE SUMAC, CHAPARRAL AND TREES HAVE ALL BEEN BLACKENED; BUT NEW GROWTH HAS STARTED TO BRING BACK THE GREEN AND THE FLOWERS. SOME OF HOUSES THAT WERE DESTROYED ARE IN THE PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION. IT WILL PROBABLY BE SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE NATURE RESTORES THIS REMOTE AREA WHICH IS HOME TO MULE DEER, FOX, COYOTE AND MOUNTAIN LION. WHEN THE TRAIL WAS SCOUTED, THE SCOUTS DID SEE DEER DASHING THROUGH A CANYON. TRAILHEAD IS NOT SIGNED SINCE THE TRAIL IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. SMALL FLAGS INDICATE THE ROUTE. FOR THE FIRST THIRD OF A MILE, THE TRAIL PASSES PRIVATE PROPERTY ON EITHER FLANK. THERE ARE FLOWERED BANKS WHICH SURVIVED THE FIRE; BUT ONLY THE HOUSE CONCRETE AND POOL REMAIN. THE TRAIL CLIMBS TO THE SADDLE IN LESS THAN A MILE. THE HIGHER PEAK BRISTLES WITH RELAY TOWERS. PEAK-BAGGERS WILL HAVE TO CLIMB THE LOWER PEAK AS WELL TO CLAIM SADDLE PEAK. NOW DOWNHILL AS THE TRAIL DESCENDS NORTHWARD DROPPING AMONG TOWERING SANDSTONE BOULDERS AND PASSING BY VERTICAL HONEYCOMBED SANDSTONE WALLS. IT CONTINUES WEST THROUGH BLACKENED OAKS AND SUMAC, CIRCLING BENEATH A WALL. IN ABOUT ONE & A THIRD MILE, THE TRAIL'S RIGHT FORK LEADS TO STUNT ROAD AT THE COLD CREEK PRESERVE, WHICH IS ENTIRELY DESTROYED. THE LEFT FORK IS THE SADDLE CREEK TRAIL WHICH PARALLELS STUNT ROAD FOR AWHILE AND THEN WIGGLES WESTWARD AWAY FROM THE SEASONAL CREEK. BENDING SOUTH-WESTLY, THE TRAIL REACHES A ROCKY OVERLOOK - THE PERFECT PLACE FOR LUNCH WHEN THERE IS A BREEZE. NESTLED IN THE VALLEY BELOW IS THE MONTE NIDO COMMUNITY (THE ACTUAL LOCATION OF THE SADDLE PEAK RESTAURANT - ONE CAN SEE THE PEAKS FROM THE RESTAURANT'S GARDEN). WESTWARD BEYOND THE COMMUNITY, THE GOAT BUTTES, CASTRO PEAK AND BONEY MOUNTAIN FORM AN IMPRESSIVE SKYLINE. TO THE NORTH ARE THE SNOWY TOPA TOPAS AND THE GREENING CALABASAS DEVELOPMENT. NORMALLY THIS AREA IS FULL OF GREEN CHAPARRAL AND TREES; BUT THE ROCKY UPTHURSTS HAVE AN INSPIRING EFFECT.

AFTER LUNCH, VALIANT HIKERS WILL USE SWITCHBACKS AS THE TRAIL DROPS 800 FEET IN LESS THAN A MILE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DARK CANYON TO CROSS A STREAM. THEN THE TRAIL CLIMBS TO PIUMA ROAD CROSSING INTO AN AREA SAVED FROM THE FIRE. HUGGING THE COOL, NORTH-FACING SLOPES, THE TRAIL PASSES UNDER BAY TREES AND OAKS. ANOTHER CROSSING OF COLD CREEK AND TRAIL GOES UP AND FOLLOWS PIUMA ROAD TO THE BRIDGE OVER MALIBU CREEK. USE THE BRIDGE BEFORE CROSSING OVER TO THE PARKING LOT. FROM SADDLE PEAK THE ELEVATION LOSS TO MALIBU CANYON IS 2375 FEET. REFRESHMENT TIME^ ! THE RESTROOM IS NOW AVAILABLE; BUT THE WATER IS QUESTIONABLE. HOWEVER, BEER & SOFT DRINKS ARE O.K. THEN THE DRIVERS OF THE VEHICLES LEFT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN NEED TO HIKE BACK UP! O.K.?