

Bob Bernard
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Hiking: Malibu

The Trail Less Traveled

By JOHN MCKINNEY

Malibu Creek State Park has a trail everyone takes and a trail nobody takes.

The well-worn path, Crags Road, is everyone's idea of a family hike—a mellow ramble alongside Malibu Creek through the heart of the Santa Monica Mountains. The path rarely taken, Lost Cabin Trail, is as obscure as its name suggests.

Directions to trail head: From Pacific Coast Highway, turn inland on Malibu Canyon Road and proceed 6½ miles to the park entrance, one-fourth mile south of Mulholland Highway. If you're coming from the San Fernando Valley, exit the Ventura Freeway (U.S. 101) on Las Virgenes Road and continue four miles to the park entrance. There is a \$5 state park day-use fee.

So wide pool!

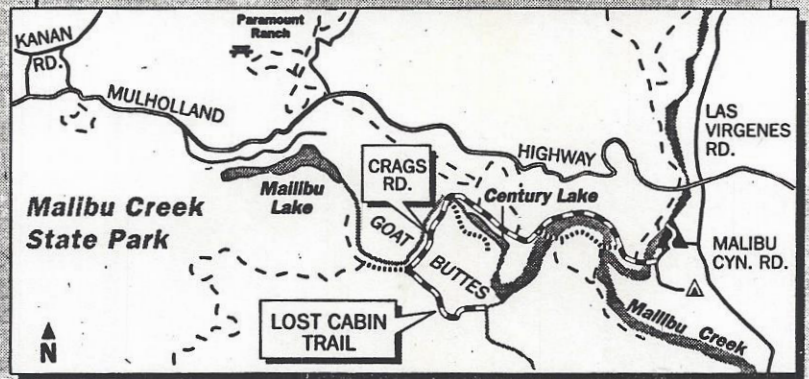
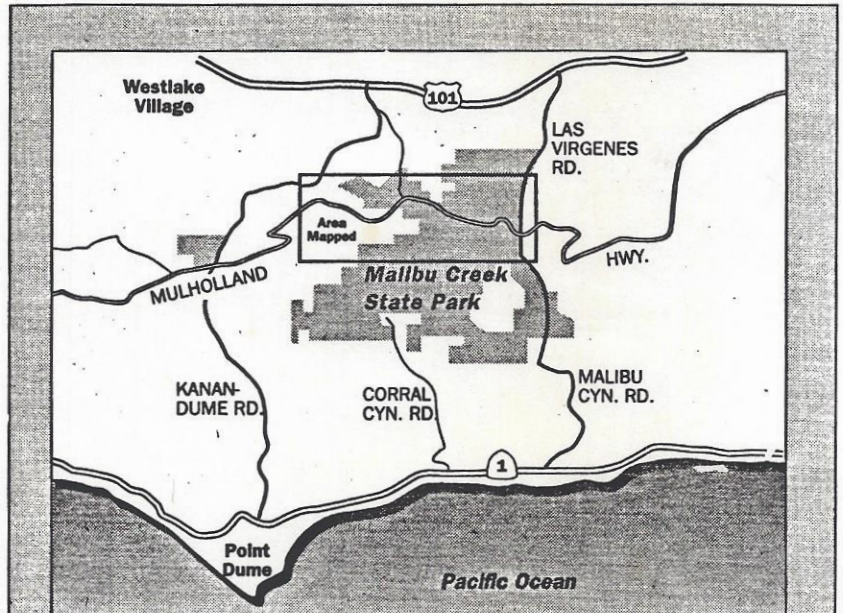
The hike: From the parking area, follow the wide fire road. You'll cross Malibu Creek. The road soon forks into a high road and a low road. Go right and walk along the oak-shaded high road, which makes a long, lazy left arc as it follows the north bank of Malibu Creek. You'll reach an intersection and turn left on a short road that crosses a bridge over Malibu Creek.

You'll spot the Gorge Trail. For an interesting side trip, follow it upstream a short distance to the gorge, one of the most dramatic sights in the Santa Monica Mountains. Malibu Creek makes a hair-pin turn through 400-foot volcanic rock cliffs and cascades into aptly named Rock Pool.

Continue on the high road and bear left toward Century Lake. As the road ascends you'll be treated to a fine view of Las Virgenes Valley. When you gain the crest of the hill, you'll look down on Century Lake.

You can call it a day here and hike back via the park visitor center.

Lost Cabin Trail-bound hikers will continue on the fire road past Century Lake toward the location



Crags Road, Lost Cabin Trail

WHERE: Malibu Creek State Park.

DISTANCE: From parking area to Century Lake is 4 miles. Lost Cabin Creek is 6 miles round trip.

TERRAIN: Rolling hills, dramatic gorge of Malibu Creek.

HIGHLIGHTS: Heart of the park and a more obscure area.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: Easy to moderate.

PRECAUTIONS: Beware of poison oak along Malibu Creek.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Malibu Creek State Park, 28754 Mulholland Highway, Agoura, Calif. 91301; tel. (818) 880-0367.

HELENE WEBB / Los Angeles Times

of the now-removed set for the "MASH" television series. The prominent Goat Buttes tower above Malibu Creek.

A bit more than half a mile past

Century Lake, look left for an old road (Lost Cabin Trail) that climbs a low divide. The road soon drops to the banks of Lost Cabin Creek, a tributary of Malibu Creek.