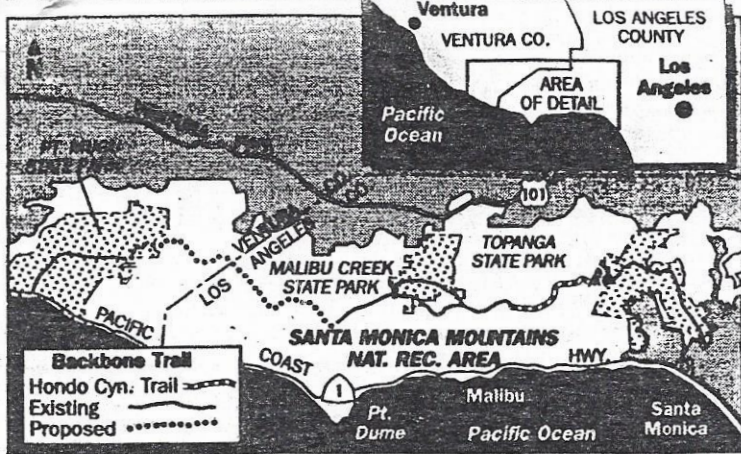


A Little More Backbone



Backbone Trail

WHERE: Hondo Canyon, Topanga State Park.

DISTANCE: From Saddle Peak Road to Topanga Canyon is a bit over five miles one way with 1,200-foot elevation loss.

TERRAIN: Dramatic ridges, deep canyon.

HIGHLIGHTS: Newest, perhaps finest segment of Backbone Trail.

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DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate.

PRECAUTIONS: Sparse parking along Old Topanga Canyon Road.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Mountain Parks Information; tel. (800) 533-PARK

Los Angeles Times

fire hydrant on Stunt Road and snake miles of plastic pipe through thick brush in order to irrigate.

The path climbs briefly along the south canyon wall, then descends to what looks to be the scene of a minor avalanche but is really the work of the great quake of '94.

Past a burned-out cabin, the path crosses lush Topanga Meadows, where signs keep you on the Backbone and steer you away from a complication of horse paths that cross the meadow. Winter rains can make meadow trails mighty mucky; expect a couple pounds of mud to glom onto your hiking boots.

Soon after crossing the meadow, the trail leads across the usually shallow waters of the creek flowing next to Old Topanga Road. If you parked your car on Old Topanga Canyon Road, your hike is over.

The hike: Begin at the yellow fire gate on the north side of Stunt Road. Walk 100 yards and look right for a sign (an arrow) that directs you onto the footpath. As you follow the ridge top east, to your right is Flores Canyon.

The ridge top you're following has long been known informally as Fossil Ridge and if you look sharply at the rocks, you'll see why. A quarter-mile from the trail head, embedded in rock, are what appear to be a trio of giant clam fossils (at least to us non-scientists).

After a half-mile descent from atop the canyon, you'll reach the site of a former mega-marijuana garden, destroyed by authorities a couple years ago. It was a difficult operation to discover: No trail led to this remote and sun-drenched spot, and the crop was hidden from aerial view by camouflage netting. The pot-growers managed to tap a

Hike #406

Hondo Canyon Hike ~~1/26/97~~ ¹⁻²¹⁻⁹⁸

9:30 Dick Battin

Backbone trail from Old Topanga Rd. thru Hondo Canyon to Saddle Peak Rd. and return. 10 mile rnd. trip, 1200 ft. gain & 1200 ft. loss. (MAPS SHOW ONLY 7 MILES)

Note: The hike will be done in reverse of the hike described on the left and will be round trip. Anyone can make the hike shorter by turning around earlier.

Go north .35 miles on Old Topanga from intersection with Topanga (HWY 27). You will pass over bridge with white concrete sides. Notice Backbone trail marker on left just past bridge. Park.

