



HIKE FOR 17 JULY 91.  
 START 9:30 HIKE MASTER BOB PLANT

## HIKE 40

TOPANGA MEADOWS

Hike #84

|            |                                |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| Maps:      | Topanga, topo                  |
| Distance:  | 4 miles                        |
| Elevation: | 850' gain and loss             |
| Terrain:   | Road and trail<br>(some steep) |
| Time:      | 1-3/4 hours                    |
| Trailhead: | Old Topanga Cyn Rd.            |

Topanga Meadows presents an opportunity to explore. There are many trails in the area — some that are known to have been used by the Indians for centuries. Exploring the several streams leading down to Old Topanga Canyon Stream is interesting, and the meadows lend themselves to independent investigation. This hike can take an hour, or it can last all day, depending on how much you want to see. You need to recognize Poison Oak when you see it as there's a lot of it here.

The trailhead is one-third mile north of Highway 27 on Old Topanga Canyon Road, a few hundred feet beyond the bridge. Park on the west side of the road and walk down to the stream and cross it to the trail on the other side. The Backbone Trail will go through here in the future; the land has been acquired, the general route of the trail established, and we should expect to see the trail in a few years, so modify this hike at that time.

For now turn right at the west bank of the stream and follow the trail as it goes through a California Rose briar patch and makes a sweeping left turn as it heads up to an intermittent side stream. The trail crosses one of the streams coming down from the west; a cement apron has been built here to control erosion, as the trail once was a road. Another trail comes down from a meadow to the right. Continue ahead on the trail as it leaves the stream and turns right going steeply uphill along the edge of a meadow. Upon reaching an old road, (now a trail) continue ahead (east). Our trail is almost level for a few hundred yards as we turn left and enter a Southern Oak Woodland. Old Topanga Creek is on the right but out of sight. This section of the hike gives us an opportunity to see

wildflowers and ferns that grow in oak groves. Spring is the best time for viewing but some plants will be in bloom at all times of the year. Look for Milkmaids, Crimson Pitcher Sage, Sweet Cicely, Miner's Lettuce, California Buttercup, and more. We continue the loop of this segment and gain some elevation. Several trails will lead us west, uphill, all of which will lead us up to the ridge. The route shown on the map is well used. We turn west and go uphill on the edge of a large sloping meadow. Just before cresting out we see an oak grove on the left that has sandstone rocks that invite a rest stop, or a lunch stop. Farther west along the grassy ridge look for Golden Stars and Mariposa Lilies in the spring.

Continue along the crest until reaching a dirt road, turn left and walk downhill. After passing a planked retaining wall look for a trail on the right — a shady, delightful lane. After a few hundred yards the trail crosses the stream and is indistinct. We may elect to return at this point. For those who have an urge to explore, keep going and turn left where a side stream joins our stream. The indistinct trail is on the right side of the side stream and goes to the top of a small waterfall, and beyond. Look closely at the sandstone boulders in the stream — some of them are imbedded with fossil seashells.

After returning and going up the other fork — gaining some altitude — we approach what is now an impenetrable bushwhack through Chaparral. It is only 200 feet more to the top of a 50 foot cascade, or we can down climb to the stream and go to the base of the cascade. If we do we will find Polypody ferns, Goldback ferns, Maidenhair ferns, and Coastal Wood ferns. An indistinct and brushy trail goes up from the top of the cascade to the road above. It may be 200 yards.

We go downstream back to the shady, delightful lane and turn right on a dirt road, go a short distance and turn left. This trail is also shaded and we are able to see the stream down in the canyon on our right. After a left sweep around a sandstone cliff a right fork in the trail takes us downhill steeply. Two more right turns and we are on the trail back to the trailhead.

Take this hike in the spring and see a beautiful display of flowers. Look for Humboldt Lilies, Chocolate Lilies, Monkey Flowers, Chinese Houses, Blue-eyed Grass, Roses, Paint-brushes, Golden Stars, and more.

