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## Stoddard Peak

Distance: 6.0 miles round trip

Total Elevation Gain/Loss: 1100 feet

Hiking Time: 3 hours

Optional Map: USGS 7.5-min Mt. Baldy

Best Times: October through May

October 13, 2010

Stoddard Peak's 4624 foot height places it above most of the shaggy, chaparral-covered foothill country, but well below the stony gaze of the western ramparts of the Cucamonga Wilderness. When dusted or spotted with snow, the peak becomes a dichotomous perch between the white-mantled world above and sun-warmed slopes and canyons below. The hike to the top involves mostly road-walking, with a short, rugged stretch near the peak itself.

Start hiking at the intersection of the dead-end Mountain Avenue, mile 11 on Mt. Baldy Road (1.3 miles south of Mt. Baldy village). Don't take the old, paved, canyon-bottom road to the south, but rather head east on the dirt road that descends past a small hydro-power plant. Cross San Antonio Canyon's stream and continue curving south, then east on the dirt road as it contours into Barrett Canyon. After passing some picturesque cabins and yapping dogs, you arrive at a locked vehicle gate 0.8 mile. Bypass it and keep following the road. You climb amid dense oak forest, contour along a sunny slope, curl around steep Cascade Canyon, and then climb gradually to a saddle (2.6 miles), where the road begins to descend into the Stoddard Canyon drainage. The gently sloping area adjoining on the east, Stoddard Flat, is suitable for trail camping.

From the saddle, a faint path leads west up through tall brush, and then turns south along the top of a sunny ridge. Proceed 0.4 mile on this path, passing over two false summits, to the true summit of Stoddard Peak as marked on the Mt. Baldy topo map. The second false summit you pass over is actually slightly higher than Stoddard Peak (contrary to the contour lines as printed on the topo map).

The ridge falls sharply beyond Stoddard Peak so there's no need to go on; the view is the best from here. Looking down into San Antonio Canyon, you can see disconnected segments of the old canyon-bottom road, pummeled by floods and slides. Old Baldy, its snow-cap gleaming in winter, dominates the view to the north. To the south, beyond San Antonio Dam (and its dry flood-control reservoir), spread the Pomona valley and the Chino Hills. If it's clear enough to see the ocean horizon, you can often see sprawling Santa Catalina Island, plus the low dome of San Clemente Island a little to the left.