

Rustic Canyon Stairways via Sullivan Canyon Fire Road.

(We have done this hike before, but from Queensferry Road via Sullivan Canyon)

December 15, 2010

Distance: 5 mi. RT

Elevation gain: 800 ft.

Leader: Jim Carlin

History: Rustic Canyon runs north-west from Santa Monica Canyon near the coast to Mulholland almost to Reseda Blvd. The portion we will hike is on the ridge opposite Will Roger's Estate. We will pass Boy Scout Camp Josepho, named after Anatol Josepho, the guy that invented the instant photo booth, and who donated the land. We will also pass by the crumbling buildings of the old Murphy Ranch (1930's), which was then used by an isolationist German group during World War II, and then morphed into a utopian artist's colony. Perhaps the most amazing hike features are the hidden stairways that apparently served the ranchers attending their crops and orchards planted on the steep hillsides. There are three stairways - we will climb only two of them. (Note for those of you with knee problems - we will only climb stairs).

Directions to Trailhead: From PCH take Sunset east 0.7 mile PAST Will Roger's Ranch entry road to Amalfi Dr. There is a traffic light at Sunset and Amalfi Dr. Go north (left) on Amalfi approximately 1 mile – always taking the left option at Pavia and Sorrento Streets. Amalfi dead-ends at Capri Dr. at a wide intersection. Park on the street observing No Parking signs.

From the 405 freeway, go west on Sunset 5.5 miles to Amalfi Dr., turn right and proceed per above to the intersection with Capri Dr.

The Hike: We proceed up Casale Road which soon turns to a dirt road. After about 0.2 miles, we will come to a yellow gate across the Sullivan Canyon Fire Road providing entry to the Rustic Canyon State Park, and Camp Josepho. We follow this road for 2.5 miles, then look for a trail off to the left at a sign on the left that identifies the service road for the camp.

Follow this trail as it slowly descends into Rustic Canyon, always choosing to go down into the canyon at the many choices presented. Eventually, we reach the canyon floor where we work our way to the stream and only then do we turn left. Do not be tempted to turn left and follow a welcoming road because this will cause you to miss the first stairway! Keep going down to the stream.

As we walk along the stream bed (expertly avoiding poison oak), we pass some of the old ranch buildings; first an old barn, then various out-buildings. Next, the much graffiti decorated generator station, an old dam type structure, and finally, the two story building now crumbling into a rust pile. This is the terminus of our Rustic Canyon walk.

Just south of the two story ruin (it may no longer be two stories) we look on our left for the first stairway. This one has 170 steps nearly straight up the side of the canyon wall. At its top, we

come to another road (actually part of the access to the Murphy Ranch) where we turn right and walk a short distance until we see another trail leading off on our left. This trail (if it is the proper one) brings us to the foot of another stairway after about 50 feet. The major concern now is to get to the top of this stairway - 513 steps, and access to the Sullivan Fire Road we were on before. At the top would be a good place to catch our breath and eat our lunch.

The way back is to turn right and follow the road back to the trailhead.

Refreshments will be served at the Amalfi-Capri trailhead.