

Serrano Valley, Sycamore Canyon Loop Trip

November 6, 1996

Mike has done it again! Here is a new hike with new trails and new vistas. Serrano Valley is a far lonesome grass covered area of rolling hills below Sandstone Peak. It was once a ranch, now a part of Point Mugu State Park. It is designated as a wilderness area. Entrance and egress are not obvious so there are few visitors. Kathy and I scouted the entire hike. We found the side trip not to take; no we weren't lost, just exploring.

The Drive

Take the Coast Highway north beyond Leo Carrillo State Beach. At Yerba Buena Road turn right. Drive up the canyon 3.3 miles to Cotharin Road. Turn left on Cotharin Road; drive 1.5 miles to Serrano Road. Turn right on Serrano Road. Watch carefully for Serrano Road. Drive about 1.0 mile on Serrano Road to the locked gate. You will observe that they are not obsessive about maintaining Serrano Road. Just before the locked gate there is a place where some of the road has fallen away. Don't sweat it. I saw a van get around it. Just drive carefully. At the end of the road find a place to park beside the road. Car pool as much as possible, parking will be a little tight.

The Hike

This is the kind of hike I usually try to avoid. It is down hill out and uphill back. I did the whole thing and it dang near killed me. Kathy, of course, did it skipping and joyous to the end. I hate that.

We will descend about 200 feet from the trailhead at 960 feet elevation to the valley, where we will lose another 200 feet as we hike through rolling grassland. At the far end of the valley we will enter Serrano Canyon and hike to Sycamore Canyon, elevation 40 feet. We will hike up Sycamore Canyon 1.9 miles to the Old Boney trail, Elevation 160 feet. Old Boney trail is a steady climb of 940 feet to 1100 feet elevation. From this saddle we can see the length of Serrano Valley and the switchback trail out of the valley. This is a long, tough hike. Some of you might want to consider some options.

Option 1

Put your faith in Mike Gessner and do the whole miserable hike.

Option 2

Just hike into the valley. Explore a bit and return to the cars.

Option 3

Hike with the group as far as Sycamore Canyon then turn left and hike down to the beach. Return to the trailhead in a car you have previously parked at the beach. You will be responsible to arrange this shuttle.

Option 4

Say the heck with the whole idea and stay home and fuss about the long drive or the heat or whatever you want to fuss about. Of course you will miss a great outing and the peerless companionship of the OTP hikers. Those who attend the hike will most probably talk about you and laugh a lot.

Hike Statistics

Recommended Maps

Ventura County, AAA

Tom Harrison's Trail Map of the Santa Monica Mountains, West

Distance: 10.6 miles or less depending on option chosen

Cumulative Elevation loss and gain:
Difficulty:

Option 1, approximately 1600 feet
Vigorous, Moderate or Easy, depending on option chosen