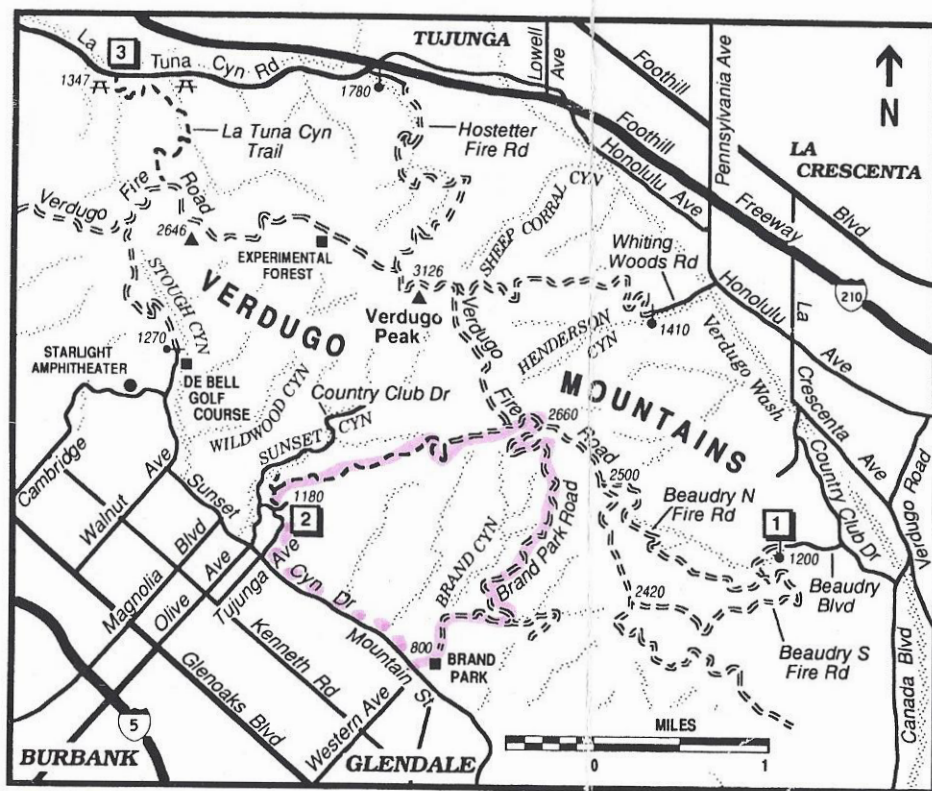


The uphill part of this hike in the Verdugo Mountains is on an unmaintained foot trail which follows an old dirt road and has lots and lots of leg scratching brush, so I advise wearing long pants.

Exit the 5 Freeway at Olive Street in Burbank and head north. Olive street becomes Country Club Drive after passing under an arch at Sunset Canyon Drive. Turn right on Via Montana and park along the road near the intersection of Camino de Villas. We will have a van parked at Brand Park to shuttle those who don't want to walk the 1.6 miles with 400 feet of gain along the city streets to get back to our cars.



Distance	7.8 miles
Total Elevation Gain/Loss	2000'/2000'
Hiking Time	4 hours
Recommended Map	USGS 7.5-min <i>Burbank</i>
Best Times	November through May
Agency	BP
Difficulty	★★★

This is one of the more adventurous trips in this book, even though when you're on it you're almost never out of sight or earshot of the suburbs below. You climb the Verdugo crest by way of an old road—abandoned and washed out in several places, but not ignored by hikers and a few intrepid mountain bikers. The old road is plotted on the currently available (1966, photorevised 1972) *Burbank* topo map. Wear long pants, or else you'll be benignly scourged by the scratchy buckwheat and sage vegetation taking root in the road bed.

Start from the T-intersection of Via Montana and Camino de Villas in the foothills above Burbank. (This can be reached most quickly by driving north on Country Club Drive from the end of Olive Avenue, and turning right at Via Montana.) Across the street from a row of new condos, cross a patch of grass and pick up an old dirt road bed going north. The road contours across a hillside toward some houses in the bottom of Sunset Canyon. At 0.2 mile, turn right where another old road goes sharply up the ridge. Stay on the same for the next 1.7 miles, picking your way past bushes and occasional rock slides. Near the top of this difficult stretch, at a spot with a nice view southwest, look for a rock cairn concealing an informal register (notebook). You can leave a record of your passage there.

At 1.9 miles from the start you come upon a maintained dirt road which goes left a short distance to a water tank, and right to Verdugo Fire Road on the crest. Walk 0.5 mile up to the crest, where you arrive at an

unmarked, four-way junction. Take the middle branch (the road on the right quickly dead-ends). Continue another 0.3 mile to a junction with Brand Park Road, where a wooden bench on the shadeless ridgeline invites you to sit a spell (if it's not too hot) and enjoy the view.

Brand Park Road, a fairly new addition to the fire-road network, is somewhat less scenic than what you've traveled so far. Follow its turns and twists 3.3 miles to the green lawns of Brand Park in the valley below. You'll loop around a small landfill near the bottom and perhaps dodge a couple of garbage trucks.

In a corner of Brand Park stands Glendale's architecturally noted Brand Library, originally a Spanish-Moorish-style mansion built by early 1900s civic booster Leslie Brand. Near the library and for some distance up the canyon behind it are the remnants of the tropical gardens that once graced Brand's estate.

To complete this loop hike, walk along pleasantly shaded Mountain Street (which becomes Sunset Canyon Drive as you pass into the city of Burbank) for 1.2 miles to Tujunga Avenue. Turn right on Tujunga (which later becomes Camino de Villas) and walk 0.4 mile uphill to Villa Montana and your waiting car.