

619 Blue Gorge & Upper Rustic Canyon*

Carlin Hike for July 3rd.

Reference: Hike of the same name in Milt McAuley's "Hiking Trails of the Santa Monica Mountains."

9:30 AM

Approximately 6.5 Miles (using Vicky's new pedometer)

Estimated 600 ft elevation change, up and down – INVERTED Hike – we walk up to get out.

Because Mulholland Drive has now been gated to prevent through auto traffic, we will be forced to use a different approach to the Blue Gorge, one that will be easier but a bit longer than the original hike. We will not have the opportunity to bushwhack down a steep embankment, nor climb out at the end of the hike some 650 ft in a half mile. However, we will have to put up with bramble vines, overgrowth, uncertain footing and POISON OAK, so long pants and sleeves are recommended.

Trail Head: The southern end of Reseda Blvd which ends in a parking lot. Go past the Braemar Country Club and golf course and park below the turn-around circle.

The Hike: We walk up the extension of Reseda to Mulholland and turn east (left), walking along Mulholland 0.4 mile to power pole #12509M. We then take the Rustic Canyon trail, across from the pole, 1 mile down and some 400 ft to the bottom of Rustic Canyon. We walk south-east along the heavily shaded canyon stream bed for perhaps another 1 ½ miles to the entrance to the Blue Gorge (actually the east fork of Rustic Creek) along a track that is dry stream bed and occasional trail, both strewn with good sized rocks (NOT boulders) and Sycamore leaves – which makes walking a bit tricky. The ½ trek up the east fork presents a similar path except much narrower and more overgrown, eventually becoming wet with visible water, thorny vines, and lots of evidence of Santa Monica Slate – the blue rock of Blue Gorge, which was deposited some 150 million years ago when this area was under water.

The canyon narrows to perhaps 15 ft., then a 3 ft. waterfall, then suddenly a dark blue-gray 30 ft. high rock wall appears ahead, another waterfall (actually now just a gurgle) and then a narrow 15 ft. long flat area and another 5 ft. waterfall. Moss and ferns grow from the walls. Bees buzz in and out of the narrow space, and in one place, limestone has percolated down and left a light textured pattern deposit on the canyon walls.

After gorging ourselves in the gorge, we return the way we came. Refreshments at the top of Reseda, where we will celebrate our independence.

Caution: This hike is more difficult than the stats indicate.

*This hike was first hiked on 9 Feb 1994. The choice to repeat it is based on the need to acquaint OTP & Others Hiking and Debating Society newcomers to some of the older classical hikes.