

Hike: Stunt High Trail to Topanga Lookout and back through Cold Creek Canyon Preserve

Date: April 30

Leader: Shirley Feinblatt

Directions: 101 Freeway to Valley Circle/Mulholland exit. Go south and continue past commercial area to traffic light, VALMAR. Turn right and continue up to Mulholland Highway. Turn right. Go 3.6 miles; turn left on Stunt Road (after Dry-Cold Creek Canyon Road.) and go 1 mile. Watch for mileage paddle 1.00 and you've arrived. Parking is on the right. From PCH turn on Las Virgenes, then right on Mulholland and right on Stunt Road.

Primary Hike: 7.4 miles, 1335 feet elevation. Hike goes up Stunt High Trail to Topanga Lookout, then back and thru Cold Creek Preserve. We found poison oak on the Stunt High Trail, so be warned!

Description: From the parking spot, a trail drops down to stream level. An Andy Gump provides the only restroom facility. Continue straight along the trail. After coming out into the open, a large trail turns sharply to the left and works its way uphill. There's a marker, but it's faded out. A short distance up the hill the trail forks. The trail to the right leads to Stunt Ranch and is closed to the public. The Lower Stunt High Trail branches to the left and ends at the parking area for Stunt Ranch. We walk 50 yards up Stunt Road to the Upper Stunt High Trail which is across the road at Paddle **1.94**. Then we hike 0.9 miles up the trail to Stunt Road. The upper gate to the Cold Creek Canyon Preserve is 0.5 miles further up the road. Some hikers might want to start down into the Preserve while others may want to complete the hike up to the Topanga Look Out. It was once used by the Fire Dept. to spot fires. The road outlines the top of the Cold Creek Watershed. The views are spectacular. A road circles around the lookout and leads out to an area purchased by the Mountains Restoration Trust to protect the ridge and Cold Creek Canyon Preserve. The bottom gate is locked. The combination is **8058**. Refreshments will be served in the parking lot, 0.2 miles down the road from the bottom gate.

The canyon was once part of a ranch homesteaded in the early years of the 20th century. It later served as a ranch/retreat for the Murphy family. In 1970, the Murphy's donated their family ranch to the Nature Conservancy with the stipulation that Cold Creek be forever preserved in its natural state.

Winter rains swell the creek creating small waterfalls. A hundred species of birds have been sighted within the preserve. Springtime provides lots of wildflowers.

Note: The Mountains Restoration Trust accepts donations and volunteers. Membership is also available. 818-591-1701.