

## USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

### Nordhoff Peak

4,485'

Location: Los Padres National Forest, near Ojai  
Maps: Los Padres National Forest Map  
Topo: Ojai 7.5

**Primary Route:** 7.0 miles o/w, 3,500' gain

#### **Driving Instruction:**

From Freeway 101 in Ventura take Hwy. 33 towards Ojai. After driving 13.5 miles you reach an intersection with Hwy 150. Turn right here on Hwy. 150, Ojai Avenue, continue through Ojai, past the Ranger Station, and about 2.5 miles past the above intersection turn left on Gridley Road. Follow Gridley Road to the end and park

#### **Hiking Instructions:**

The signed trail starts to the left and leads through tall chaparral to a road. Turn right and hike among Avocado trees to a 5-way crossing. Follow the signed trail. The trail climbs steadily through now more open chaparral, and after 3 miles you reach Gridley Springs, marked by a watertrough. The well-graded Gridley Trail continues, generally uphill in a North-Western direction for another 3 miles to the intersection with the Nordhoff Ridge Road. Turn left, South-West, on the road for another mile. Soon you see the Lookout Platform on the peak. A short spur road takes you to the summit with a view platform you can climb and a picnic table underneath it. Views are outstanding: the Islands, Topatopa Ridge, Ojai Valley, the Sespe Wilderness and more.

Return the way you came.

Loop trip: When leaving the peak, turn right or West on the Ridge road for about a mile, then turn South on the Pratt Trail. You can follow the signed trail to the trailhead in Ojai, near Signal Street. It is best to have second car here. Otherwise hike back a total of about 3 miles on Signal Road, then Grand Ave and Gridley Road to your car. There are connector trails on private roads, but there are not signed.

**Alternative route:** 6 miles o/w, 1,000' gain, loss 500', gain 900'

#### **Driving Instruction:**

From Freeway 101 in Ventura take Hwy. 33 towards Ojai. After driving 13.4 miles you reach an intersection with Hwy 150. Bear left staying on Hwy 33 heading toward Maricopa. Continue 14.8 miles to the Rose Valley/Piedra Blanca turnoff. Turn right and travel .2 miles to a dirt/gravel road on the right. Park here making sure not to block the gate. National Forest Pass required.

#### **Hiking Instructions:**

Walk around the gate and locate the narrow footpath on the left with the trail marker denoting the Howard Creek Trail. Head down the path and follow the trail as it ascends the north side of the mountain. Check out the great views of the Topa Topa range. At 3.2 miles the Howard Creek Trail ends at the Nordhoff Ridge Road. Look right and locate the lookout. Descend 500 feet on

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this well maintained fire road. It meets the Gridley Trail at 4.6 miles. From this junction it is another 1.2 miles and 900 feet to the junction that leads up to the tower.

References: Ventura County Star-Gary Phelps

Original: Dana Hunter, April 2005

### **Notes:**

Charles Nordhoff was a German-born journalist, who heavily promoted California and especially the Ojai Valley in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He changed the nation's attitude toward California. The town of Ojai was named Nordhoff until the name was changed during WW1.

There is no reliable water on the trail and little shade. The Ranger Station is closed on weekends.

References: John McKinney: LA Times Day Hikes

Original: Gabriele Rau, 2002