

## USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

### Saddle Peak East

2,800'+

Location: Santa Monica Mountains

Maps: Tom Harrison: Trail Map of the Santa Monica Mountains Central

Topo: Malibu Peak 7.5

**Primary Route:** 2.0 miles o/w, 900' gain

#### Driving Directions:

- Exit the 101 freeway in Woodland Hills on Mulholland Drive (south). Drive 0.6 miles to Old Topanga Road, turn right (south). Drive 1.8 miles to Mulholland Hwy and turn right. Drive 5.7 miles to Stunt Road, turn left (east) and drive 2.8 miles to mile post 2.83.
- Or, exit the 101 freeway on Las Virgenes Road, drive 3.5 miles to Mulholland Highway and turn left (east). Continue for 4 more miles to Stunt Road, turn right and look for the trailhead near mile post 2.83.
- Note: This is 1.8 miles after passing the trailhead for Calabasas Peak Primary Route.

#### Hiking Instructions:

- Start at the sign on the connector trail (South side of road) to the Backbone Trail. When you reach the Backbone Trail after 0.2 miles, take the signed trail to the left. The right trail leads to Piuma Road (see below).
- Continue climbing many switchbacks through high chaparral, and after 1.5 miles you pass through fantastic rock formations.
- Soon you reach a T-junction, turn right (South) on the wide trail uphill.
- At a saddle, you see to your right the fenced towers of Saddle Peak West, but turn left to the open and flat peak with great views to the islands, the San Gabriel Mountains and the LA basin.
- Return the way you came, or try a loop trip.

**Primary Route Shortcut:** 0.8 miles o/w, 450' gain

#### Shortcut Driving Directions:

See Primary Route driving directions, above.

After turning onto Stunt Road, drive 4.0 miles (0.1 mile before reaching the intersection with Schueren Road). Park in a turnout on the left (2360'), opposite a signed trail heading uphill through chaparral.

#### Shortcut Hiking Directions:

- Hike up the trail for 0.3 mile to a large water tank.
- Continue about 0.3 mile up the trail to the left of the water tank past a sign pointing to the Backbone Trail, around the north side of the summit, where you will reach the T-junction described in the Primary Route hiking directions.
- Continue to the summit.

## USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

**Alternate Route:** 5 mi o/w, 2000' gain

**Driving Instruction:**

Exit the 101 freeway in Calabasas on Las Virgenes Highway (South) and drive 5.0 miles south to Puma Road (traffic light) and turn left East. Continue for 1.1 more miles and park at either side of the road at mile post 1.07. The Backbone Trail starts at mile post 1.19.

**Hiking Instructions:**

Walk the road uphill for 0.1 mile to the trailhead on the left side (East). The trail soon descends into Dark Canyon, a beautiful shady canyon, where you cross the creek. Then the trail climbs through high chaparral with good views to the North. After 2 miles you cross a meadow and then a saddle, continue another mile to the intersection (sign: Puma Road 3.2, Saddle Peak 1.8) with the trail coming up from Stunt Road. To continue to the peak, see Primary Route. This hike is best hiked as a loop trip (7 mile RT), but a car shuttle is required.

**Notes:**

- The area around the peak belongs to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.
- The hike leads through lush chaparral, with 8 ft high Tree Lupines and many wildflowers. Best in springtime!
- The very flat summit can be defined as the concrete square. It is overgrown with Spanish broom that somewhat interferes with the view.

**Near-by Peaks:** Calabasas Peak

Original: Ralph Turner 2002, edited 2005

References: John McKinney, LA Times 2001