

# Long Canyon Trail

**The Trail:** The trail begins at the parking lot southwest of the intersection of Wood Ranch Parkway and Long Canyon Road and extends to the south 0.7 miles to the top of the ridge. The trail offers spectacular views of Long Canyon, Bard Reservoir and the mountains to the north. From the east end of the trail, hikers can connect to other trails: Down the Oak Canyon Trail to Long Canyon Road or to the top of the ridge to the east to the Montgomery Canyon Trail 2.1 miles, also, back to Long Canyon Road and return 1.6 miles back to the parking lot along Long Canyon Road.

Oak Canyon is labeled *Cañada de la Leha* on the 1887-1888 Stow and Power map (See the front and back lining of *Simi Valley - A Journey Through Time [1997]*). *Leha* is not a *word* in Spanish. We can surmise that the name of the canyon in Spanish was rendered as *leña* and that the Anglo-American draftsman misinterpreted someone's handwritten Spanish name for the canyon. *Leña* in Spanish refers to "firewood." Firewood from the coast in the canyon would have been highly valued at the Simi Adobe. The wood of the coast live oak burns hot and produces wonderful coals. The trails discussed herein were all within *El Rancho Simí*.

**Geology:** The trail begins in gray clayey siltstone and tan sandstone of Eocene/Oligocene age. One stretch of the trail about two thirds of the way up passes through a conglomerate zone in a sandstone matrix. On the ridge top moving to the east you will encounter sandstone with molluscan fossils of Paleocene age. This portion of your hike is Paleocene age. As you hike up the trail you can see a massive sandstone outcropping where hundreds of tons of the rock overhang collapsed one day. Residents in the homes in Long Canyon and to the west within the Wood Ranch development described a very loud sound. Many thought that there had been an earthquake. Fortunately, no property damage was involved. The views from the trail of the sandstone outcroppings are spectacular.

**Plant Life:** The north-facing slopes of the hills were burned in a wildfire in 2018, so much of the ground is covered by weedy annual grasses, which are native to the Mediterranean basin. The native plant association that is slowly reestablishing itself is coastal sage scrub.

Plants observed while walking the trail (February 12, 2020) from bottom up were western sycamores, bind weed, morning glory, California sagebrush, purple nightshade, black and field mustards, horehound, prickly pear, white, black and purple sages, wild cucumber, blue dicks, coast golden bush, California and wand buckwheats, red maids, blue elderberry, soap plant, bush mallow, cliff-aster, laurel sumac, common fiddleneck, wishbone bush, milk thistle, fern-leaf phacelia, deer weed, giant rye, chaparral yucca,

large flowered popcor, and bush lupine. Oak Canyon, not surprisingly, contains an oak woodland near the stream. At its southern end are arroyo willows and mule fat. Some poison oak is found near the road in the lower canyon. Laurel sumac contains the same toxin as poison oak so be cautious when handling the plant.

**Animal Life:** Some of the animals in the area interact with the adjacent homes. Mammals that do so include raccoons, voles, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, ringtail cats (which are active for as little as two hours a night - so are rarely seen by people), dusky wood rats, striped skunks, bats and mule deer, among many others. Reptiles include southern Pacific rattlesnakes, Great Basin fence lizards, two-striped garter snakes, California king snakes, striped racers, and gopher snakes, among other. Birds include turkey vultures, red-tailed hawks, black phoebes, poorwills, California quail, mourning doves, scrub jays, Brewer's blackbirds, scrub jays, great horned, burrowing, and barn owls, mockingbirds, roadrunners, common flickers, crows, ravens, and California towhees, among many others.

While mountain lions are present in the hills around Simi Valley, encounters are unlikely, but you should always be alert. It is best that you do not hike alone, and that you keep small children close at hand. Rattlesnakes may be encountered — Stay on the trail and avoid them when they are encountered — Be observant and never try to handle them. Do not handle any wildlife, including bats, even if they appear to be injured or sick. Remember, you are visitors to their homes.

**Mike Kuhn,  
Executive Chair,  
Rancho Simi Trail Blazers**

*Please see **Trail Safety Tips** at this trail's main page for more info.*