

So you want to hike the Palos Verdes Loop

3/95 Update

Here is some advise, directions, and comments on the trail status. The trip will be approximately 26 miles. Some of the terrain is steep and in some places the trail gets overgrown. Wear serious hiking shoes, long pants, long sleeves, and bring gloves (and a plastic baggie that the gloves will fit into). You will need them later. You will find a pair of rose pruners handy too.

The trail goes through some very remote areas. If you hike alone and become injured no one will be able to hear you calling for help. Bring a friend and be sure someone else knows where you are going and when you expect to be back. There are pay phones along the way so you might want to bring along a lot of dimes and have someone standing by to track your progress. Each segment is about a quarter mile. The Loop Trail relay in 1990 took 5 hours (east half vs. west half at the same time). A lot of that was done on horseback, carriage, and off-road bicycle. Hiking the whole thing should take well over 10 hours plus meal and rest stops.

There is no reasonable alternative to the "trail-less" Segments 76 and 77. The advice for logistics is to leave a car parked near Palos Verdes Drive West and Apsley Road (Segments 73/74) then have someone drive you up and drop you off at the intersection of Via del Monte and Paseo del Sol (Segments 78 thru 83).

Start your hike downhill on Paseo del Sol. The end of the street begins a fire road. Follow the fire road down to Via Campesina. At Via Campesina, double back to your left and pick up a little pathway that goes under the bridge and through the forest on the side of Olmsted Canyon (Segments 78-83).

When you get almost to the bottom and meet Malaga Canyon, you have a choice. To follow the Loop Trail "Ideal Route", take the left fork through the fennel, cross the little stream, go by the "Queen Mother" pepper tree, cross the bottom of Malaga Canyon and go straight up the north side to a dirt road. If you would appreciate a restroom and/or drinking fountain, take the right fork through the tunnel of acacias to the facilities for the PV Golf Club "back nine". To continue, you want to go west. Pick your way through the trees at the bottom of the bank in back of the tee behind the restrooms. There is a hint of a benchcut that angles up to the dirt road. Either way you came, turn left onto the dirt road then watch for a small, but well used, trail to fork right. Follow the small trail over Skunk Hill then down into Del campo Valley then up to Paseo del campo. Cross Paseo del campo, cross the little open space to Palos Verdes Drive North, cross the east bound barrel of PV North and turn right down the center Median trail (segments 84 and 85).

Continue east down the center Median, cross to the north side of the street when the center Median stops. Stay on the north side and turn left onto the chip trail just before Via Opata. Follow that into the Palos Verdes Estates Stable (Segments 86 thru 91).

Introduce yourself to the Manager and you will probably be welcome to use their facilities for a "Comfort" and rest stop. There is a pay phone here. Also, ask for directions on how to pick up the back trail (ValMonte Canyon) to Ernie Howlett Park. You have now done thirteen, easy Segments, about an eighth of the trip. How do you feel? Ready to go on?

Take the "Back Trail" down Valmonte Canyon (the "Ideal Route" is on the east side) then come up the trail between Howlett Park and the residential area. Just before you stop going down and start going up, you will cross from the City of Palos Verdes Estates into the City of Rolling Hills Estates. A short side trip into the Park (with white three-rail fence on each side) will bring you to the RHE Tennis Club which has water, restrooms, coke machine, and a pay phone (segments 92 thru 94).

Stay on or come back to the main trail as it doglegs its way closer to and then along Hawthorne Boulevard. Watch on your left and the tunnel will appear. Go through the tunnel and turn left. At the bottom of the hill, follow the trail to the right. (Segments 95 thru 97). You are now on Los Angeles County trail. Stay on the main trail and go essentially straight east. The loop around the landfill has a beautiful view and may be added to the PV Loop if needed to make the 26 mile goal. But, for now, save your energy. You'll need it later (Segments 97 thru 100).

When you first see the tunnel under Crenshaw, you have reached our beginning. Hopefully, you just noticed a bright green Loop Trail sign. If not, go back and find it. Give it a pat and a push back straight up if it needs it. It has been a "temporary sample" for a few years, now. Here begins segment #1; because the construction of the tunnel under Crenshaw and the dedication of this trail was the beginning of the preservation of public trails in Palos Verdes. (Trails in PVE, Miraleste and Rolling Hills had already been dedicated as "private".) The Concept of the Palos Verdes Loop Trail was in the County's 1957 Regional Recreation Plan. Why the Concept was not continued any further is either in some dusty, microfilm archive or just plain lost. Pause for a moment and thank Rosemary DiSanto for noticing it when she was looking for something else and for bringing it to the attention of the Peninsula Trails committee. While you're standing there, thank Jacki Bacharach for creating the committee that gave Rosemary an interested group to share the discovery with (it was great while it lasted) and thank E.W. "Farmer G" Grimes for suggesting the tunnel to the County in the first place. Go through the tunnel and go straight and you will see another Loop Trail sign. Give this sign a pat, too.

Continue southeast until you come to Rolling Hills Road. Turn right, up the hill to the crosswalk and turn left across the street (Segments 2 thru 4).

Or, if you have already eaten your lunch and realize that you Might like to have another, later, go up the west side of Rolling Hills Road and stock up at Kelly's Corner. At least try his ice cream.

Back to the crosswalk. Go east and go straight, well, sort of. Cross hill and dale and the Dapplegray bridge. The Rolling Hills Country Club golf course will come and go and come again. You will eventually come to Palos Verdes Drive East (Narbonne Ave), turn right and the trail is along the roadside by Dapplegray Park to the big intersection of PV East and PV North. Push the buttons and cross whichever way to get to the diagonal corner and the reservoir (Segments 5 thru 10).

You have done 32 easy segments. Almost one third. How do you feel? The "wild side" and the best parts are yet to come.

To continue the "ideal route", follow the big trail east along Palos Verdes Drive North. If you want to shave off about a mile and a couple of steep climbs, go to the trail along Palos Verdes Drive East. If you do the "real thing", the big trail goes along the whole front of the Covenant Church then takes a sharp right along the side and then you have no choice until you get back to PV Drive East. Then left, up the hill and follow the roadside to Deadman's Curve (Segments 11-16).

A little way up from the entrance to Larga Vista, you will cross from the City of Rolling Hills Estates to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. Actually, the roadway (including 20 feet on your side of the pavement) is in RPV. Someday, someone will get around to cutting back the non-native vegetation so that there is a trail on the bench cut below street grade (Segment 17).

When you reach the barrier that now keeps the cars that take Deadman's Curve too fast from landing in the swimming pool below, RPV is on both sides of the street. This is where tricky stuff begins.

When the barricade ends, cross the private drive and you will be next to a telephone pole. Stop and take a look up the hill about 90 degrees to the left of the Drive. Notice a narrow swath (actually it is about 100 feet wide) of undeveloped space which jumps from ridge to ridge off to the south. This is Narbonne Right of Way (ROW). Once upon a time there was a plan for Narbonne Ave to continue to the Miraleste Plaza and for PV Drive east to remain a sleepy little residential street. So much for plans. PV East now carries 110% of the traffic it was designed

for and Narbonne is a sleepy little trail, part of the way to Miraleste. For some unknown reason, when the City of Rancho Palos Verdes incorporated, it didn't clearly inherit this ROW along with all the rest. The County acquired this ROW a bit at a time just like we acquire trail easements now. Each portion has its own legal history/future. Fork left at the telephone pole. The old trail dropped straight into the canyon on the far side of the ROW. Mike Schwartz created the switchbacks as his Eagle Project in the early 80's. Get across this unnamed canyon to Sunnyside Ridge Road whatever way looks best (Segment 18).

Cross Sunnyside Ridge Road and you will find yourself facing a disked field. The most used path is along the back fences on the right. When the fences start bending more to the right, you will see a big canyon off in front of you. Cross the field to the canyon and stop for a moment to enjoy the view. This is a potential park site. The City Attorney's advice to City Council is that the City should act on the assumption that this part of the ROW is theirs. Unfortunately, park improvements are not a first priority, right now. Look across the canyon and see where the strip of open space continues. Pick up the "rabbit trail" that heads up stream and angles gently down the canyon side. Before you get to the bottom, put your gloves on. This is Dodson Canyon and it is full of climbing roses (with thorns) and poison oak. Don't wipe your brow. Don't wipe your nose. After your gloves have touched this plant, don't let them touch your clothes or skin (Segment 19).

When you have carefully crossed the streambed at the bottom of the canyon, you will be on the part of the ROW that the County and the City have agreed to sell and split the proceeds. Dedication of the Loop Trail is a condition of the sale. If you haven't been snipping along with your rose pruners so far, this is the place to start. Tread carefully. There is a design for a way to make it up the hill with just one switchback. But, until this lot is developed, we have to live with temporary steps etc. which suffer from the heavy rains. You should end up on the left side of the strip and come out onto Rockinghorse Road (Segment 20).

Here you will see one of our "serious obstructions". There is a 10 foot wide water course easement along the left side of the house in front of you. All you can do now is peek through the ivy covered chain link fence. This part of the ROW was developed while the Loop Trail concept lay forgotten. There are a variety of solutions that are being pursued. In the meantime, turn right and walk up the street. The first available left turn down Golden Spur Lane (Segment 21 bypass).

Just past #6, look for a break in the landscaping which is an overgrown dirt road leading down and around the back of the house. This will bring you into an avocado orchard. Don't pick anything. If you come across Mr. English, the owner, introduce yourself and explain why you are there. He may show you to the bridge or he may ask you to leave. If he asks you to leave, ask for directions to get out his driveway then go up Rockinghorse Road, left along PV Drive

East to the bus stop. If you are on your own, follow the orchard road keeping the canyon on your left. You will come to a little wooden bridge which was Mr. English's son's Eagle Project (Segment 22).

The bridge is old, and where the floor boards touched the dirt, they have rotted. Use at your own risk and tread very carefully. You are now off the "ideal route". If you look up the canyon you will see the "ideal route" is completely overgrown with poison oak. follow what is left of the Louise Trail to Colt Road. Then right, up the hill, to PV Drive East, turn right again and go along the roadside to the bus stop across from the library. (Segment 23 bypass).

You can take your gloves off now and put them carefully into your plastic bag. Look across the drive and you will see a little trail sign to the right of the library driveway. You can either go up the driveway or dodge right toward the horse corral and follow the little path. If you come through during library hours, you might want to stop in to wash your face and hands just in case you did touch some poison oak. There may still be a pay phone there too. Just above the cut in little parking area there is a pathway that angles across the field and meets the trail from the corrals. go up the little canyon to the sign at the Rolling Hills City line. Even though the sign is in front of you, you are now in the city of Rolling Hills on the perimeter easement (Segment 24).

The "ideal route" turn left (Segment 25) but, just beyond the beginning of the Miraleste School, a couple of residents have appropriated the easement by putting tall, chain link gates across it instead of fencing their pastures along their side of the easement. Even if you were inclined to climb over the gates, the brush in the bottom of Miraleste Canyon on Segment 26 is essentially impassable at this point in time. There is a way around. Climb over or through the white rail fence. Follow the school kids' pathway up the right side of the ravine. The "anti-horse" gate at the other end is easy to get through. You are now on Outrider Road in Rolling Hills. Turn left, south, and go to the end of the road. The cul de sac bends a little to the west. Straight south is a three rail white fence. Follow it until you see the trail take about a 5' drop to the right (Segments 25 & 26 bypass).

Drop down and follow the bench cut around a little old stable. At the upper end of the broken down barbed wire fence search for a little pathway that goes up the hill and winds its way up and up and up, veering left to Crest Road, (Segments 27 & 28).

Choose how you cross Crest Road and the entrance to the Rancho Palos Verdes Estates carefully. You want to end up going down Crest on a "jogging path" on the south (right) side of the street. After you pass the RPV Estates "exit", watch on our right for an opening in the fence

with a "gauntlet". This is a series of horizontal rails accross the trail which deter motorcycles and horses can step over (Segment 29).

Go through the gauntlet and pick your way up the field. Take a break and enjoy the vista point amenities that have been provided by the RPV Estates Homeowners Association. (i.e. Find the hitching rail). Go west around the hillside. There is no way to predict how the weed abatement disking will have changed the access. But, you want to keep the big, white radar ball by your right shoulder. Watch for the bench cut that keeps going west below the tall chain link fence. When the fence turns up the hill, look down Que Viento Canyon (Segment 30).

Follow the bench cut across the top of the canyon and then pick your way down the west side. Stay way below the homes on our right and follow the contour around the point (Segment 31).

Watch for a little pathway which crosses the top of the next canyon. Then, watch for the trail to turn down the ridge. Go down, and when you meet the main trail, continue down (Segment 32).

Continue down, following the main trail that goes around the "quarry bowl". When the trail splits, either up into the bowl or down, go down to Forrestal Drive (Segment 33). Actually, if you have never been there, it is worth a short diversion to walk up and experience "the bowl". Turn right on either side of the unused street. The "hill" (slag heap) in front of you has been approved for residential development. As a condition of that development , the City is requiring that the cliff face be cut back. Enjoy its majesty while you can. Turn left at the first paved street (Segment 34).

On most maps, this is Intrepid Drive. The homes ahead and below you are on Admirable, Dauntless etc. Somebody had a thing for WWII big boats. The plans keep calling Intrepid other names. Well, cutting down the slag and building homes will change the look of the neighborhood. Anyway, the plan is to construct a formal trail between the street and the soccer fields (Segment 35).

Just before you get to the end of Intrepid Drive, turn right onto a dirt road and then follow the switchback to the left. Follow the dirt road down into Klondike Canyon and cross the land bridge (Segment 36).

On the other side, go up. And I do mean up. And up. When you reach the dirt highway, go down, left, (Segment 37).

This was graded to be the end of Portuguese Bend Road. When you start going up again, you are on what was supposed to be Crenshaw Boulevard. No one ever accepted the blame, but

the Portuguese Bend landslide put an end to these "public works". Now, the water company maintains the best "big trail" anyone could ever want. Carry on and when the "road" takes a sharp bend to the right, watch for the trail that continues straight west out of the middle of the bend (Segments 38 & 39).

Welcome to Heaven's Gate. This is Kelvin Canyon (as in Kelvin Vanderlip, #2 son of the Frank Vanderlip and husband of Ellen Vanderlip). Once upon a time a horse named Heaven Scent took a misstep and disappeared into the lemonadeberry bushes. Her rider managed a bailout up hill and went for help. Many Portuguese Bend residents turned out with first aid and chain saws, Long after dark, Heaven walked out with only a couple of scratches. We should all be so lucky. We should also remember that these canyons are deeper than they look. Come up the "chute" (Segment 40).

Continue west across the terrace. This is what the Vanderlips call "Peacock Flats." How about "Pheasant Flats?" Before the City of Rolling Hills began raising and releasing pheasants, this is where they were last seen. Modern geography has established the open spaces in the Crenshaw east switchback as "Peacock Flats", (Will peahens ever get any credit?) Watch for a trail downhill then a trail up hill. Take the trail up hill. If you miss the trail up hill, you will come to the steep side of Altamira Canyon with Elin Vanderlip's chain link fence on your left. Turn right up the canyon. If you found the trail up the hill, you are on the Rattlesnake Trail. Watch for a trail down to your left. If you find yourself on a narrow bench cut going up, you have gone too far. Turn back and take the first little trail to your right off into the sage and then through the fennel. Either way, you will find yourself at a crossroads on the east side of Altamira Canyon. If you cross the streambed and start up a steep switchback, you are on Zote's Cutacross, turn back. On the east side, drop downstream into the canyon (Segment 41).

Welcome to the YOCUM Ford. A "ford" is the wide, shallow place that you look for when you want to cross a little river (as in "climb every Mountain, ford every stream"). The LA County Flood Control engineers designed a way for us to put a ford where we want one. Myke Yokum set the dam on this one as his Eagle Scout project. Scout Parents Inc, and several more Eagles 2 B will finish rerouting the trail above the dam and down the west side of the canyon when Mother Nature gives us a break. In the meantime, use the trail with extreme caution (Segment 42).

After you have picked your way down the west wall of Altamira Canyon, the right turn up Vanderlip Canyon is obvious. (If you follow the stream bed and reach a paved road, turn right.) Welcome to the Yokota Ford. This is our first ford and that boulder was nowhere in sight when it was built as Travis Yokota's Eagle Project. Water pressure is an amazing force. Scott Mesic's Eagle Project fixed the south side before this year's rains and the Sierra Club hikers have kept the lemonadeberry bush trimmed back. Come up out of the canyon and take the

downhill fork. Follow the main trail when it bends to the right. (Use your rose pruners to cut the mustard. Those who follow will appreciate it.) (Segment 43)

Stay on the Main trail keeping the homes on your left and the open space on your right. This is the Vanderlip Trail, (segments 44 & 45).

When you reach a flat, chipped parking area, you have arrived at the Portuguese Bend Pony Club. Straight ahead, tucked in the trees, are the restrooms and the cook shack. The water may or may not be on. The restrooms may or may not be working. The picnic tables may or may not be sound. The little rectangular field edged by telephone poles on the western edge is their dressage agenda. Follow the bluffside back north until you find a dirt road that drops off to the west. At the bottom of the canyon the fork to the left will take you to PV Drive South and Annie's Flower Stand. Take the steep climb to the right. This is the Sunshine Trail as in NO SHADE. If you are low on water, take a side trip down to Annie's and Abalone Cove Beach for a little R&R, (Segment 46).

Once you are back on The Sunshine Trail, go west. Keep the homes below you and the ridge above you. When the trail bends sharply to the left and then the the right and there is a little trail going straight, instead of taking the bend to the right, go straight. If you are on the correct trail, it will gently bend to the right through a little grove of eucalyptus trees. Follow the bench cut down into McCarrell Canyon. When you have gone about as far as you can go, take the sharp turn to your left. Cross the bottom of the canyon just above the Edison facility, (Segments 47 & 48).

Go across the crushed rock toward PV Drive South and watch for the best way through the tumbleweeds up to the big bush. This "trail" is one of the "conditions" of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) granted to the Tramonto Residential Project. Keep going west with the peeler post fence next to you on the left. When you get home, write a letter to the Mayor of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes about how much you appreciate the trail and ask what you can do to clear the weeds and install barrier free curb cuts. (Segments 49 & 50).

At the end of the fence, you can scramble down to the highway. An easier way is to just walk out on Tramonto Drive. Walk carefully across the frontage of the salvation army Facility. Watch for bulldozers. The continuation of the trail is also a condition of the CUP for the Salvation army's plans for a new conference center. (Segments 51 & 52).

Ease over onto the dirt farm road. Then follow the line of telephone poles in a really sharp right turn up the hill. Turn back to the left above the farmhouse and climb to the top of the hill. Welcome to the sports field of the future. If the City of RPV doesn't get their estimates together, LA County will get to keep all those Prop. A dollars. Who knows. The Peninsula Polo

Club may still get its act together. Anyway, when you reach the plateau, go west, (Segment 53).

Keep going west along the northern edge of the RPV City Hall parking lot. When you can look down over the "Federal Recreation Area". choose your best route down to Palos Verdes Drive West. (Segment 54).

The "Ideal Route" suggests a bridge and or tunnel across the drive and continues down to the Pt. Vicente Interpretive Center. Since there is no reliable hole in the fence to go north from there, you Might as well take in the Golden Cove Shopping Center and cross with the light at Hawthorne Blvd. (Yes, it is the same Hawthorne Blvd. you crossed half a Loop ago.) The worst/best is over. Other than a Mile of really nice California Coastal Trail, the rest is flat, groomed, suburban pathway with 50's architecture. ET, call home.

But then. Maybe you could use an easy trail about now. Slip through the gate across from the end of Hawthorne Blvd. stroll to the bluff top, check out the view and turn north, enjoy. (Segments 56-59).

When a fence blocks your way, you have a choice. The not necessarily ideal, but legal route indicates a right turn up the wash back to PV Drive West. Use the bike path to Margarita Drive. Then, cross to the center median. Or, carefully hidden in the bushes is a "public access" gate onto Margarita Drive. Follow the coastal via's and vacant lots or PV Drive and you will come to Lunada Bay, (Segments 60-69).

Enjoy the amenities at the Lunada Bay commercial center and find the fountain in the middle of Palos Verdes Drive West. Carefully, cross to the center of the median north of the fountain and follow the "yellow DG pathway" north to Via Apsley. Wouldn't it be nice if the City of Palos Verdes Estates had put curb cuts in those nice new curbs? (Segments 70-73).

You are now back to your car. For now, the only way to do Segments 74 and 75 is to walk up the fire road, turn around and walk back down. Your choice.

Please share your suggestions, problems, and good times. The Loop Trail is always changing through acts of nature and acts of humans. Pass the word for those who follow. Write to me at 6 Limetree Lane, Portuguese Bend, CA 90275.

Thank you for your interest.

ERDES
RAIL

ROUTE
the Hill







