

Santa Monica Mountains

National Recreation Area
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior



Peter Strauss Ranch

This oak woodland has always been a captivating source of dreams, visions and memories. Inhabited for thousands of years by the Chumash, it became part of Rancho Las Virgenes after Spanish colonization. The coast live oak used as the marker in the 1881 land grant survey still stands near the fruit orchard. In the early 1900's, the area was homesteaded. The ownership of the land has changed many times, yet this area remains a peaceful refuge. Today, Peter Strauss Ranch belongs to you. Hike, picnic, enjoy an art exhibit or a concert and make some memories of your own!

Dreams

Former owner, Harry Miller moved to California in 1894. In 1907 he built his first car and patented the master carburetor. He was involved with the Indianapolis 500 car races and his "Miller Specials" won

eleven Indy 500's. Harry built the stone ranch house in 1926 along with caretakers house, aviary, and other stone structures such as the "lookout tower" which still stands. His "zoo" contained bear, mountain lion, deer, fox, ducks and exotic species including monkeys and apes. The ranch was a weekend

retreat for Harry and his wife. His residence and automobile factory were in Los Angeles. The depression and his attempt at aircraft-engine development resulted in financial ruin, the loss of the ranch, and an end to his dreams.

Visions

In the mid 1930's Warren Shobert and Arthur Edeson, purchased the property. Using the combination of their last names they opened the ranch to the public as a recreation/retreat called "Shoson." The white entrance arch to the parking area displayed the name of the retreat in bold red letters. Their vision transformed the mountain home of Miller into a playground, "a natural gem of

brehtaking beauty—a fairyland of charm and paradise for children and adults" as stated in their fanciful brochure.

In 1940, after constructing a dam on Triunfo Creek to form a small lake, the resort was renamed "Lake Enchanto." Charles Hinman, a millionaire real estate speculator and lawyer, purchased the property in 1944. After World War II the park became very popular, but perhaps it was the early 1950's that were the best of times. Amusement rides, children's summer camps, parties, picnics, fishing, swimming, boating, dancing, concerts,

overnight cabanas, were all part of the "Enchanto experience."

Due to competition from other amusement parks fewer visitors found their way to "Lake Enchanto." No longer profitable, the park fell into disrepair and closed around 1960.

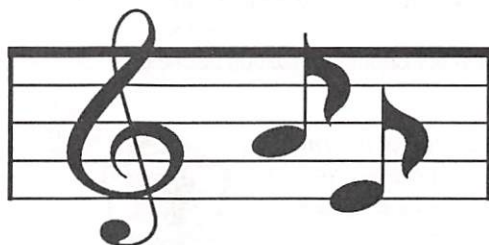


Memories

Peter Strauss first saw this site when filming the television mini-series, "Rich Man, Poor Man," at Malibu Lake in 1976. He purchased the property in 1977 and lived here until 1983. Strauss spent over \$250,000 on landscaping, home improvements, and the removal of unsafe structures left by Hinman.

Due to his sensitivity for the natural environment Strauss sold the ranch to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, a state funded agency. The National Park Service purchased the ranch in 1987. Set aside by Congress in 1978, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves the natural and cultural history of the Santa

Monica Mountains and provides recreational opportunities for the public. Open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the vision of enchantment continues at this site with summer concerts, picnics, art exhibits, weddings and hiking.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

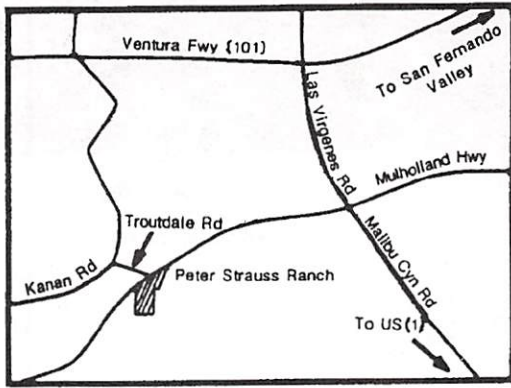
Special Events - Inquire about concerts, art exhibits and special activities.

Patio - Made in 1939 of imported Italian terrazzo tile, with a pointed star to commemorate "Hollywood," the patio was a popular place for "Big Band" concerts & dancing in the 1940's. In the 1950's country singers such as Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, and the Mandrell Sisters performed here for a local television station.

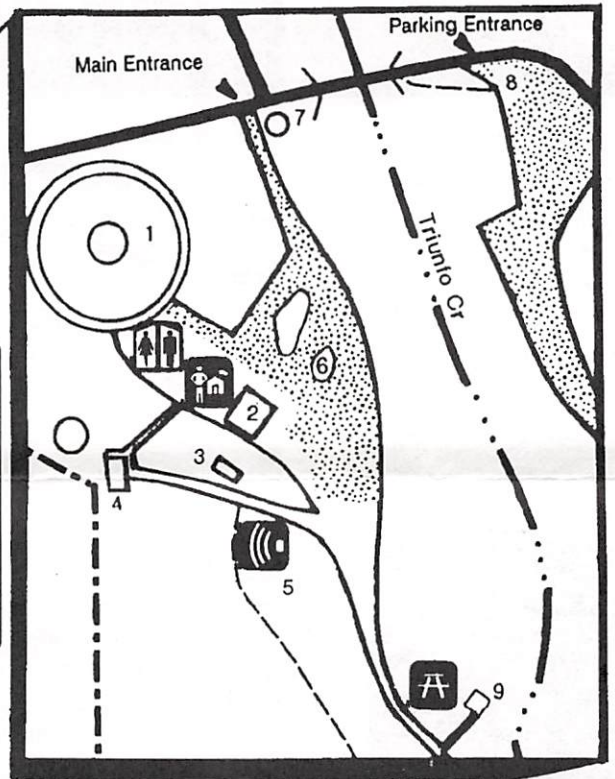
Swimming pool - Built in 1940, this was the largest pool on the west coast at the time. It had a capacity of 650,000 gallons and could accommodate up to 3,000 people.

Lake Enchanto Dam - The lake was the result of a dam built on Triunfo Creek in 1939. It was a popular spot for fishing, rowing and swimming. The dam was breached in 1966 by severe flooding. Part of the dam structure still exists in the creek bed near the picnic area.

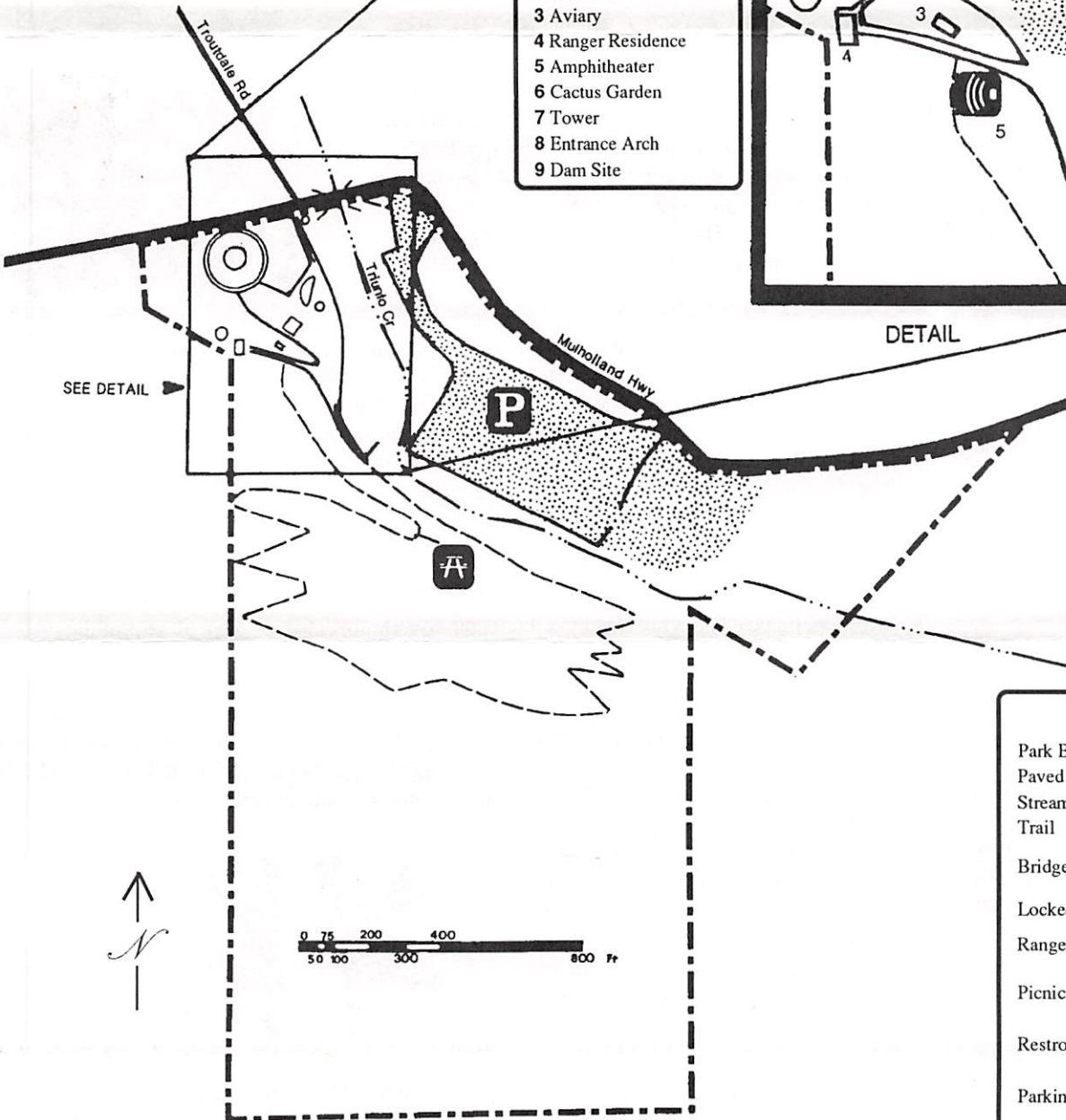
Peter Strauss Ranch Site



LOCATION MAP



DETAIL



- KEY**
- 1 Historic Pool
 - 2 Terrazzo Dance Floor
 - 3 Aviary
 - 4 Ranger Residence
 - 5 Amphitheater
 - 6 Cactus Garden
 - 7 Tower
 - 8 Entrance Arch
 - 9 Dam Site

- LEGEND**
- Park Boundary
 - Paved Road
 - Stream
 - Trail
 - Bridge
 - Locked Gate
 - Ranger Station
 - Picnic Area
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Amphitheater

Peter Strauss Trail - This pleasant trail of .6 miles is well suited for the novice hiker. It traverses chaparral and oak riparian habitats. Late winter and spring are the best times to view native plants in bloom.

- Smoking is not permitted while traveling on trails.
- Building fires is not allowed.
- Watch for and avoid rattlesnakes and poison oak.
- Spring and fall are seasons for ticks. Wear light-colored clothing and check carefully for these tiny insects.
- Pets must be leashed (no longer than six feet) and under control at all times.
- Please respect the private property of our neighbors.
- All natural and historical features are protected by law and may not be collected.
- Trails are closed during and following significant rainfall to protect park resources. Trails will be re-opened when dry enough to sustain public use.

For additional information:
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 National Recreation Area,
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 Agoura Hills, CA 91301
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