

*Update, June, 2021: PLEASE NOTE:
Currently the last mile, from Lake Henry down the canyon, is very overgrown.
Please plan accordingly.*

MATAGUAY 5-MILE LOOP TRAIL ROUTE FROM THE PEPPER BRIDGE CLOCKWISE AROUND CAMP

This describes a 5-mile loop through camp that can be done today.

This hike starts at the **Pepper Bridge Trail** at the inlet end of Lake Henry. Walk towards the ranges and turn right. Follow the trail along the range fence that goes up the hill to the shotgun range. Continue on the trail that goes over the highpoint and down past the Lake Henry spillway (0.2). From here on down the canyon the trail hasn't been recently cleared, so it may be hard to find in places. From the spillway continue on down the canyon to a side wash crossing at burned tree (0.3). Now our route drifts right for 200' down to a creek side boulder. This was where the trail crossed in the past. Instead, continue about another 100' to a new rock crossing. Unfortunately last winter's storms have eroded the path down to this crossing, so you may have to scamper down the bank to cross the creek and climb up to a sandy area where the **Indian Rock/ Parker Lake dividing wash** runs into the Matagual Creek (0.1) (0.6 miles).

Turn up this wash to a 2' diameter oak. Go counterclockwise around this tree to find a use trail that takes you up onto the north bank of the wash. Turn right and follow it up the canyon about 150' to a burned snag near the creek bottom (0.1). Switchback around this tree and drop into the wash bottom and follow the use path from near this snag steeply up the opposite slope to a flat near an old stove stand. (Unfortunately this snag has fallen onto the path, so you will have to search for a way around it until it is cut out.)

From the top of the bank near the old stove, go south through a clearing to a boulder and turn left to find the remains of an old road. Follow this road up through two campsites to the paved road at 2 phone pole stumps (0.2). Turn right and go 150 yards up the road. At a break in the yellow rope on the left look for an orange arrow on a tree. Here the path is lined with slats as it climbs to a large stump. There you turn half right and follow the path to the north side of **Silva Lodge** (0.2) (1.1 miles). Here a new multi-trail junction has been developed. To the left a wide trail goes to the Lake Henry Parking lot; to the right a trail drops to Silva Deck and the trading post; a 60 degree right would put you on the Spine Trail, which goes to the Coyote Campsite.

Instead take a 20-degree turn to the right and follow that trail uphill. At the next trail junction take the right branch as it curves around the slope. Keep to the left at an undeveloped trail junction in the Manzanita thicket (this is where the North Side Trail will eventually continue beneath the stage and climb to the road). Climb up to the **Baden Powell Campfire circle**. Climb up the steps to the **Dining Hall**. (0.1) (You should be able to get water and use restrooms here.)

From the Dining Hall, go to the telephone pole at right rear of the building. Find the Blackfoot/Slant Bridge trail here. It is marked with a Slant Bridge symbol and an arrow pointing the direction of the trail. Follow it above the campfire bowl to the paved road (0.1). Cross the road and follow this trail across the dirt road that goes to Pawnee and past a trail (which descends to the right to the Blackfoot Fort Bridge). Continue slightly uphill to stay above the Blackfoot dirt road and then contour to another junction just short of the Hopi Campsite. The Slant Bridge Trail jogs right and descends to the Nature Den (0.3). Instead, continue straight ahead to the dirt road curve below the Hopi Campsite. Look for the 5ML marker on a tree on the right side of this road. You are now on a route that is also used by the 3ML trail.

Follow the dirt road, as it climbs above the **Nature Den** to the **Crow Campsite** (0.1). Leave the dirt road (You shouldn't be hiking along roads again until you get to the Barn area on your down canyon trip.) and turn up (left) here. Drift to the right as you walk up about 170' to the North-Side Trail. It descends, right, across a major gully. Then it contours to the junction of the future North Side Trail and the Nature trail. (0.1) Take the right branch and follow the nature trail as it drops to the **Mataguay Connector Trail** (MCT) and follows it to the **Barn Bridge Trail Jct.** (0.3). You have traveled 0.9 miles from Silva Lodge and will return to this point on your way back to your starting point. Don't cross the bridge.

Continue up the canyon past a horse trail (which goes left), to a junction where the 3ML trail (0.2). That trail goes to the right on a grade that is flat. The 5 ML Trail goes left at this junction, staying on the MCT (You will return to this junction by the other trail.). Our trail climbs steeply to the place where the future 5ML trail will come in from the left. Continue on a gentler grade and cross an old road to the dump. Soon you will pass the HALTT Lateral trail (0.2) (Which comes in from the right). There are some other horse trails that leaves our route as it climbs up to a fence. The MCT continues up through a gate (0.4), to a sign for the **South Side Trail**, which points to a trail going across a culvert (0.14). (Here the MCT continues left uphill to connect with the Pacific Crest Trail or the HALTT Loop Trail.)

Our route turns across the culvert and follows it to a fence. Crawl through it and climb up to the **road at the back gate** (0.14) (3.1 Miles). Cross this road and follow the trail that parallels the fence and then switchbacks to climbs around a rise to a drift fence gate. When you go through the drift fence gate, be sure to close it. The trail climbs to an old roadbed (0.1) and the junction with a future trail to Volcan Mountain. Follow the road grade around the hill (enjoying the view of Lake Henshaw) to a trail that branches right from it. Follow this trail downhill (It is over grown and is somewhat hard to follow) as it switches back to a big gate (be sure to latch this gate when you have passed through it). Just past the Treanor Water Tank a Trail comes up from the tank (0.3). Continue left and descend to a path that climbs to **Treanor's Grave** (0.1).

Your route continue down the trail below (right of) the Treanor's Grave site to a trail going north from **Upper Lake** (0.2). Turn right and follow this trail under the COPE course **zipline**. (Some times the COPE program temporarily closes the trail. If this is the

case, wait clear of the zipline for the person who is using it to make their descent. Then ask the COPE course tower controller for permission to pass under the zipline.) As you pass the zipline, take the left trail; it drops across the back of camp road and drops down to cross a canyon. Then it contours to the MCT (0.3).

Here we turn left and follow the MCT down to the **Barn Bridge Trail** (0.2) (4.3 miles). Crosses the Barn Bridge and follow the old road up. At the top of the hill, go right to the **Old Commissary** (Now called “ComSci”) (0.1). (Here you can usually get water in the warmer months and the restrooms are sometimes open.)

(If you plan to do an Orienteering Course back to the Fort this is a good place to start from as you can have scouts work their way around the **Mountain Man Meadow** or you can work your way across the creek to the Nature Den and then down to the Fort.)

To pick up the temporary route walk 100’ down the dirt road to the **Slant Bridge/Spine Trail**. It can be found just to the right of the paved road at the sharp curve and is marked with an arrow). Follow this trail as it descends through the woods past the MMM junction and the future MCT trail crossing to the trail to the **Slant Bridge** (0.15). From this junction continue straight ahead down to the lower end of a rockwall. Just past the rockwall make a sharp switchback to the right and follow a pipeline down to planks that provide a temporary route across Matagual Creek.

From the creek, go north over a slight rise and follow a trail through the woods to the SE corner of the **Blackfoot pool**. Go around the creek side of this pool and drop down to the **Blackfoot Fort Bridge** (0.2). Cross this bridge; go clockwise around the **Blackfoot Fort** to the front gate.

Cross the paved road and walk down an old road for 100’ to a point where the OA path goes left. Turn right and cross two washes, then climb to the **Kumeyaay campsite** restroom (0.1). From it the access road drops 100 yards down to a junction with another road near a pond. Turn left and follow this road over a high point. When it gets to a low point, leave the road and continue to contour to the **Pepper Bridge Trail** (0.2). (5.1 miles)

2 September 2017