



Roam-O-Rama

Woodson Mountain

By [Jerry Schadt](#) | Published Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2008



The boulder-frosted summit of Woodson Mountain (aka Mount Woodson) has many routes of approach, though none this particular winter/spring season is as interesting as the west-side approach from Lake Poway. The October 2007 Witch Creek Fire thoroughly incinerated the brushy slopes east of the lake, and those slopes are likely to sport significant, and maybe spectacular, color from postfire wildflowers from February through April.

If you choose to hike all the way to Woodson's summit and back, an effort involving nearly seven miles and cumulative elevation gain of 2300 feet, then bring food and plenty of water to sustain you.

Start your hike at the main parking area for Lake Poway Recreation Area, which may charge admission for those who are not citizens of the city of Poway.

Descend to a grassy picnic area on southwest shore of Lake Poway, and follow either of two wide trails southeast (they soon join together). After skirting the south shore and dipping to cross Warren Canyon, you come to a trail junction at 0.8 mile. Turn right on the signed Mount Woodson Trail and climb east on a steep grade through hillsides that only a few months ago were totally black, but now are showing signs of botanical rebirth.

At 1.1 miles (from the start), a small pond lies on the left. At the next signed junction, 1.8 miles, turn left, upslope, on the "new" Mount Woodson Trail. (East of here, the more primitive "old" Mount Woodson Trail goes up the same slope, and the poorly maintained Warren Canyon Trail follows a severely undulating course east toward Highway 67.)

Using the new Mount Woodson Trail, you ascend on sunbathed, south-facing slopes, curving around large granitic boulders. The ever-widening view across the lowlands to the south and west duly compensates for the sweaty effort.

At 2.4 miles the trail reaches Woodson's sharply defined summit ridge. To the left you can scramble up some granite slabs to enjoy a great vista to the west. Ahead lies the descending Fry-Koegel Trail. You swing to the right (east), though, and follow the continuation of the Mount Woodson Trail along the summit ridge, heading toward the antenna towers on Woodson Mountain's summit a little over a mile away. As you approach the

summit, don't miss the remarkable, razor-sharp boulder flake on the left, just shy of where you reach the end of a paved service road. Press ahead another 0.2 mile to reach Woodson's highest point.

This article contains information about a publicly owned recreation or wilderness area. Trails and pathways are not necessarily marked. Conditions can change rapidly. Hikers should be properly equipped and have safety and navigational skills. The Reader and Jerry Schad assume no responsibility for any adverse experience.

WEST SIDE WOODSON MOUNTAIN

Hike through gardens of boulders and postfire wildflowers on the trail from Lake Poway to Woodson Mountain.

Distance from downtown San Diego: 28 miles

Length: 1 mile round-trip

Difficulty: Moderately strenuous