

IN SEARCH OF SONOMA MOUNTAIN
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single track to the top, running along the park boundary fence for the last couple hundred yards.

On the other side of the fence is the newly acquired property and the summit, an open meadow with no trails. While there are no signs against trespassing, the fence seems to discourage further travel. Since it has been bent and stepped on, it is obvious that people keep hiking.

It is about another quarter mile to the summit, marked with a small pyramid of rocks. Getting there necessitates cutting through thick fields of thistle, grasses and flowers, and passing to the left of a fenced microwave relay tower and over the paved access road.

Once on top, the western side of the mountain comes into view, along with west Marin, Mt. Tam. and possibly even the distant ocean. Not on this day. At the top the light sprinkles I had experienced on the trail up turned into serious rain, and the visibility was reduced to just a few indistinct miles. Due to the weather, the reader can not enjoy the vistas vicariously via my photos. The curious will just have to spend a day hiking, preferably on a very clear day.

The weather was a bit kinder on the way down, allowing photos between showers. Fortunately, the downpour that lasted the rest of the day started just as I got back in the car.

An eight and a half mile hike requires a post hike treat, and while Sonoma is noted for wine, only a good beer satisfies sweaty, tired hikers. Fortunately, Sonoma County's newest microbrewery opened near the end of April. Tim Goeppinger's Sonoma Springs Brewing Co. at 750 W. Napa St. in Sonoma is the perfect place to shake off the dust or mud of the trail.



A view of Sonoma Valley.
Photo by Meade Fischer

GETTING THERE

SONOMA MOUNTAIN

From San Francisco and the south, take Highway 101 to the Route 37 in Novato, and go east to the Route 121 (Sonoma exit). When Route 121 turns east, continue north on Arnold Drive for 11 miles to Glen Ellen. Arnold Drive makes a hard right in Glen Ellen, so go to the left, which is London Ranch Road, and the park is at the end of the road.

From the north and Santa Rosa, take Highway 12 south to Arnold Dr. and into Glen Ellen.

Meade Fischer is a Santa Cruz County writer, artist and environmental activist. More info at: www.baymoon.com/~eclecticpress <<http://www.baymoon.com/%7Eeclecticpress>>



Trail above Lake
Photo by Meade Fischer