



0% intro APR for 12 months*
5% Cashback Bonus in popular categories
Up to 1% Cashback Bonus on all other purchases



 Apply Now
*Click below for details

Los Angeles Times

Real Estate



You are here: LAT Home > Articles > 2008 > June > 01 > Real Estate

Archive for Sunday, June 01, 2008

NEIGHBORLY ADVICE: FRANKLIN CANYON

Hiking into Hollywood's backyard

L.A.'s Franklin Canyon boasts history, hiking trails and high-end homes with views.

By Diane Wedner

June 01, 2008 *in print edition K-2*

FRANKLIN CANYON – just off Mulholland Drive and extending south almost to Beverly Hills – includes 605 acres of recreational parkland surrounded by high-end homes with views. It has two reservoirs, five miles of hiking trails, seven species of hawks, the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom and the Sooky Goldman Nature Center.

Beginnings

Who says oil and water don't mix? The two resources are tied inextricably to Los Angeles' history, transforming the small town a century ago into a major metropolis. Two of the major players in that drama converged, albeit tangentially, in Franklin Canyon.

Oil speculator Edward L. Doheny discovered black gold in Los Angeles in 1892, sparking a population boom. In 1912, the prosperous family purchased a 400-acre parcel of land in the newly minted Beverly Hills, including acreage in Franklin Canyon. The Dohenys' Spanish-style house in lower Franklin Canyon was built in 1935 and used as a summer retreat.

Although oil was plentiful in early 20th century L.A., water was not. Responding to the demand for it, engineer William Mulholland and the **Los Angeles Department of Water and Power** began construction of the reservoirs in Franklin Canyon in 1914 to distribute water from the Owens Valley to the growing, thirsty region.

Hollywood came knocking on Franklin Canyon's door in the 1930s. The movie industry arranged with the DWP to use the lush landscape for filming. Claudette Colbert's famous hitchhiking scene in "It Happened One Night" was filmed there in 1935. It's also the site of Opie's (**Ron Howard**) fishing hole in "The Andy Griffith Show." Scenes from "Bonanza," "Lassie," "Combat!" and "Star Trek" also were filmed there.

The National Park Service purchased the Franklin Canyon Ranch as part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in 1981, the year the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom began providing free educational programs to the public and schools.

What it's about

Those who live on the fringe of the canyon – especially near Mulholland Drive – can step outdoors, hike a short distance and find sweeping vistas of oak trees and sycamores and the upper reservoir, also known as Franklin

Canyon Lake. When it was taken out of service as a reservoir, the lake area was preserved for conservation and educational purposes. The lower reservoir is still in use by the DWP. There are birds galore. The park offers guided beginners' hikes, botanical drawing workshops and educational programs.

Homeowners living adjacent to the canyon have their pick of the city's best shopping and entertainment venues, minutes away, said longtime resident Steve Frankel, a Coldwell Banker Previews International agent. Canyon dwellers, he added, also grab some real estate cachet from the high-priced mansions in adjacent Beverly Ridge (\$15 million to \$25 million) and Beverly Park (\$30 million to \$50 million), which overlook the canyon.

Insider's viewpoint

When Jeb Johenning's mother died in 1983, he and his wife, Susan, decided to keep his mom's house in Franklin Canyon rather than sell it, because "we couldn't imagine anywhere else we'd prefer to live." They raised their two children there and took frequent advantage of the huge park, practically in their backyard.

"We have a dog, which we walk up to the park and lake, and we go on hikes," Johenning said. "I have a mountain bike and use it too. It's a great recreational area."

Housing stock

There are about 700 single-family homes in the immediate Franklin Canyon area.

Recently, three were listed for sale, including a 6,682-square-foot home with five bedrooms and 6 1/2 bathrooms for \$4,975,000, and a 2,632-square-foot house with four bedrooms and three bathrooms for \$2,095,000.

Report card

Most Franklin Canyon-area students attend the Los Angeles Unified School District's Warner Elementary School, which scored 942 out of a possible 1,000 on the 2007 Academic Performance Index Base Report. They may move on to Emerson Middle School, which scored 758, then University Senior High School, which scored 638.

diane.wedner@latimes.com

Sources: DataQuick Information Systems; cde.ca.gov; laist.com; lamountains.com/parks.asp?; laurelcanyon.org/; afaeryhunt.com/images/; jodavidsmeyer.com/combat/personnel/franklin_history. ; DWP.

More articles by Diane Wedner

More articles from the Real Estate section

California and the world. Get the Times from \$1.35 a week
