

RECREATION



DAVID BOHRER / Los Angeles Times

From left—Ruthie Gerson, Linda Palmer and Kim Fuess joined Marcia Harmon, not pictured, for a historic ride through the Santa Monica Mountains.

Women Make History Atop Spine of the Santa Monicas

■ **Equestrian:** Foursome traverses the Backbone Trail, solving problems never faced by their Spanish predecessors.

By JEFF MEYERS
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A footnote in Los Angeles history: Four Valley-area equestrians recently became the first to ride the length of the Backbone Trail, taking four days to travel 75 miles through the Santa Monica Mountains.

While it might seem to be a simple undertaking—convenience stores on Kanan Dume Road carry salve for those unexpected saddle sores—the women encountered problems that the early Spanish *caballeros* did not.

Such as, what to feed their horses and do with the manure. And where to sleep if the local campground doesn't take reservations or allow horses. Or how to get through a locked gate.

■ FOLLOWING THE INDIAN TRAILS: C10

The Spanish just took off into the wilderness, let their horses graze at night and never worried about the environmental impact of anything left behind.

But any overnight journey into the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area these days requires a permit from the state Department of Parks and Recreation.

Equestrians need special permission to keep a horse overnight at Malibu Creek State Park. And they also are bound by state regulations that prevent horses from grazing and ban litter in parks.

"Riding modern-day trails is no small feat because you need logistic support," said Dan Preece, the ranger who runs the

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