

OC Astronomers

Irvine Lake - Bob Swenson Field Alternative

Black Star Canyon Star Party

General Information Updated 4-Sept-2017

General

This is an alternative location for an OC Astronomers Black Star Canyon Star Party. It is located 1 ¾ miles from our usual viewing area at the Black Star Canyon Staging area, but has a very different approach from the roads. This area provides a large open field for our setup, will allow us to have our vehicles near our equipment and allows for more vehicles in the area, as well as moving us further away from active streets.

Bob Swenson Field is an area of OC Parks land used by the Orange County Modelers Association for flying model aircraft. It has a special surface runway, parking and other facilities for the OC Modelers.

Location:

5305 Santiago Canyon Road

Follow Blue Diamond Road to the end.

Field GPS Coordinates: 33deg 46'18.07 N, 117 deg 41'52.79 W

Here is a picture from Google Earth including both viewing areas.



Figure 1 - Traditional and Alternate Site Locations

If coming from the North, Chapman Blvd. heading East in Orange turns into Santiago Canyon Road, and coming from the South, El Toro Road North Turns into Santiago Canyon Road.

Take Santiago Canyon Road to Haul Road, which has no street sign and is located just east of Irvine Lake. If coming in from Orange this will be a left turn, if coming in from Lake Forest this is a right turn. Do not try to enter at the White Sign for Irvine Lake. The correct road is about 1000 yards southeast of the Irvine Lake RV storage gate.



Figure 2 - Haul Road turn from Santiago Canyon Rd. Note green sign with blue lettering for OAK CANYON.

After turning onto Haul Road, you will turn left onto Blue Diamond Road and continue to the end of the pavement. The distance from the turn to the gate at the end of pavement is 1 mile. You will pass some signs that might be confusing, but just continue on.

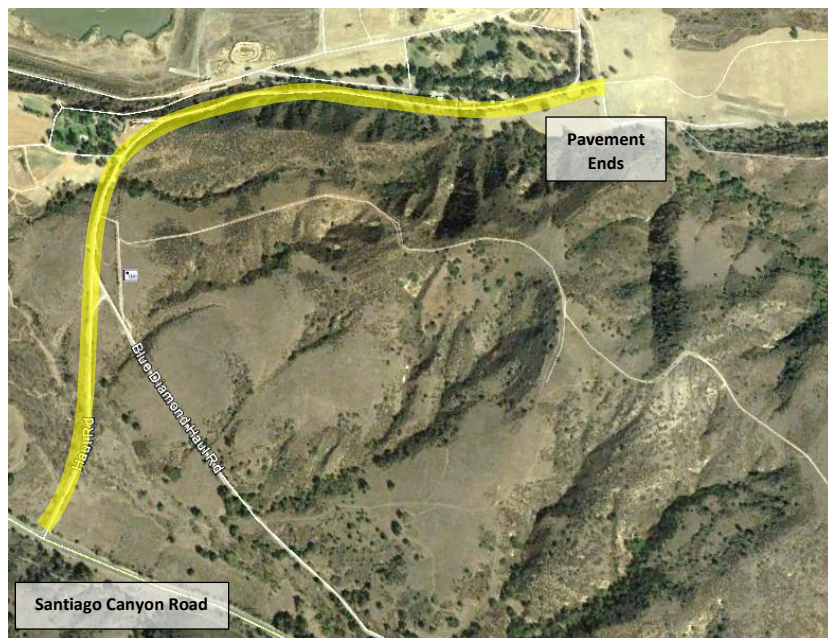


Figure 3 - Highlighted Route from Santiago Canyon

For OCA Events the Orange County Parks Rangers will have a lock Labeled "OCA" on the Yellow Gate. The combo will be the month and date of the event. NOTE: Tumblers line up on the top line of the lock, not the middle, and the lock may take a good jerk to open. There is no OCA Lock on the second white gate at the end of the pavement, either a ranger or authorized OCA member will open that gate for the entire event.



Figure 4- Parking Setup Area

If the OC Modelers are still flying when we get to the site, please stage in the area marked “Early”; (And enjoy the airshow) Later we can use the table and parking area. Please stay off the Runway and Taxiways at all times.



Figure 5- Bob Swenson Field (Credit: OC Modelers)

OC Parks Site Rules:

There are no pets or smoking allowed in this area.

OC Modelers have a porta-potty which will be open for our use.

Please make sure you pick up any waste before you leave the area.

There are no power outlets at the site, and no overnight stays are allowed.

Parking:

The primary reason we are trying this location is the availability of parking. We will use the Modeler’s parking area near the picnic tables, and may have a group on the north side of the runway. Please no vehicles or tripods on the runway, as we do not want to damage the surface in any way.

As this is a trial of the area, we will be flexible on our setup layout once we arrive. A final decision will be based on the best view of the night sky, but we must stay together as a group and not enter any of the brush areas.

As all astronomers greatly value their night vision, if you are arriving after dark, or leaving early please limit the use your car’s headlights in this area. If you might leave early please park with your headlights directed out of the area. If possible use a flashlight with a red LED or red filter to respect the area.

Hazards:

Wildlife warning – This is a wild area and is known to have rattlesnakes, coyotes, and very rarely mountain lions. We don't expect any issues with the wildlife, but please remain vigilant.

Insects – We have seen significant insect activity at this site in the past. Please bring clothing and repellent as needed.

Gate Opening Times:

The gate will generally be opened at least 30 minutes before sunset to allow everyone to park and begin setting up their equipment before it gets too dark. OC Modelers will be wrapping up flight operations around sunset.

Weather:

Although Irvine Lake is just minutes away from most of Orange County, it frequently has its own microclimates. Generally the volume of rain will be double that of Santa Ana, and normally it is immune from coastal fog. This location is generally a couple of degrees cooler than Black Star Canyon because of cooling from the lake. It is always a good idea to check the weather, and equip accordingly.

OC Astronomers recommends you always plan for chilly or cold weather year round. Also remember to bring liquids, as there are no water facilities at the site.

Special Thank You –

I need to forward a special thank you to both the OC Park Rangers who have been incredibly supportive in helping us gain access to this area, especially John Gump who has been instrumental in coordination to allow us access to the area.

Also a very special thank you to the OC Modelers who are open to letting us share their area for the evening. I feel our hobbies have a lot more in common than meets the eye. (Outdoor access, Skills and Learning, time and expense...)

Useful Links:

Orange County Modelers Directions: <http://www.flyocma.com/Directions.htm>

Local Weather: <https://www.wunderground.com/cgi-bin/findweather/getForecast?query=92676>

Clear Sky Chart: <http://www.cleardarksky.com/c/OCASilCAkey.html?1>

7/16/2017 – Initial Release – SM

8/6/2017 – Updated with parking area detail from OC Parks – SM

4/9/2017 – Updated for Sept Event - SM