

OTP & OTHERS

BEAR CREEK TRAIL

The hike for Wednesday, October 20, 1993 will be into the edge of the San Gabriel Wilderness along Bear Creek and ending at the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. The beginning and end of this hike are six miles apart so a car shuttle will be arranged. The hike includes four miles of rock hopping and a few stream crossings. Those who are interested in a shorter hike can turn back after three miles at Smith Saddle, resulting in a six mile round trip. Peak baggers can take a one mile round trip side jaunt at Smith Saddle to the top of Smith Mountain.

From the I-210 freeway, in Azusa, turn north on Azusa Avenue, SR-39. We will meet 11.5 miles up San Gabriel Canyon from Azusa in the parking lot at the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. We will leave some cars at this parking lot and we will share rides in the other cars to the trailhead about six miles up the canyon. We will park in the parking area on the west (left) side of the road about 1/4 mile before Coldbrook Campground. A metal sign marks the Bear Creek Trail.

Jim Spotts has had extensive experience with this trail, especially the part along Bear Creek. Perhaps we can encourage him to provide color commentary. We will hike three miles west, gaining 970 feet of elevation to Smith Saddle. For the peak baggers, an indistinct trail leads south about 1/2 mile, and 800 foot elevation gain to Smith Mountain. From Smith Saddle we will continue three more miles, and 1650 foot elevation loss to Bear Creek. For another side trip, there is a waterfall 1/4 mile (north) up Bear Creek. There is no trail, just rock hopping up the creek. From the trail we will proceed four miles (south) down Bear Creek over a sometimes obscure trail, losing 960 foot elevation. There are several stream crossings and some rock hopping but the trail is quite passable. Those traveling this part of the trip should wear shoes that they are willing to get wet. It would also be convenient to have dry shoes in your car for the trip home. At the end of Bear Creek we come to the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. It is a one mile stroll on a paved road to the parking lot and the post hike festivities. This hike provides a bit more adventure and interest than some but falls far short of a death march.

Plan to arrive at the West Fork parking area about 8:45 AM. We will leave for the trailhead at 9:00 AM sharp. Those who desire some "grace time" should leave a few minutes early. If you are late and we have already left you may drive to the trailhead and attempt to catch up with us, or you may hike up the West Fork and then Bear Creek to meet us coming out.

Trip data:

Distance:	11 mi.
Elevation gain:	970 ft
Elevation loss:	2675 ft
Effort:	Moderate/Strenuous
Leader:	Mike Gessner

Recommended Maps:

Angeles National Forest	US Forest Service
Crystal Lake	7.5 Min Topo
Glendora	7.5 Min Topo
Waterman Mtn	7.5 Min Topo
LA County & Vicinity	Auto Club