

Jan 6th 1999

Reader Alice Weiss

~~0930 time~~

73 Highway 39 to Smith Mountain

HIKE LENGTH: 7 miles round trip; 1900' elevation gain

CLASSIFICATION: Moderate

SEASON: October-June

TOPO MAP: Crystal Lake

Features

5111' Smith Mountain stands tall on the divide separating the North Fork of the San Gabriel River from Bear Creek, smack on the eastern boundary of the rugged San Gabriel Wilderness. From its summit you get a bird's-eye view over the eastern half of the primitive area, with the deep chasm of Bear Creek right below you. Looming close on the northwest skyline are the rocky battlements of Twin Peaks Ridge, one of the last citadels of bighorn sheep in this range. The sheep were once prevalent in the range; now only a few survivors make a last stand in the most isolated parts of the mountains.

The climb is mostly by trail, but the last 800' rise is a steep ridge scramble, partly through brush, to the summit. Wear lug-soled boots.

Description

Drive up Highway 39 to the beginning of the Bear Creek Trail, marked by a metal sign, 17 miles from Azusa, ¼ mile before Coldbrook Camp. Leave your car in the parking area at the trailhead, on the left (west) side of the road.

Walk 3 miles up the well-graded Bear Creek Trail to Smith Saddle at the top of the ridge. From the saddle, leave the trail and scramble left (south) directly up the ridge, following traces of a path beaten by climbers. In some spots you must thrash through light brush. You reach the summit in ½ mile.

After taking in the superb view, return the same way. Watch your footing during the ridge descent. ▲

from 210 Freeway
get off on Hwy 39 - go thru Azusa
and on up Mountain.