

**August 25-- Eagles Roost to Little Rock Creek**

Leader: Lecho Torres

Hike Length: 6 miles round trip; 1100' elevation loss and gain

Classification: Moderate

Topo Map: Waterman Mountain

Drive up the Angeles Crest Highway to Eagles Roost Picnic Area, just before you reach a brown highway-maintenance shed, 39 miles from La Canada. Park in the clearing.

Some of the most magnificent canyon country in the San Gabriel Mountains lies on the desert slopes of the range. Nowhere is this more evident than in the uppermost reaches of Little Rock Creek, close under Kratka Ridge and Mt. Williamson's southwest shoulder. The terrain is rugged and colorful-sheer crags of whitish rock stand in stark contrast to wrinkled slopes of reddish-brown and gray. Jeffrey, sugar and Coulter Pines, white firs, incense cedars, and oaks crowd canyon recesses and dot open ridges. The delightful stream fed by springs, high in the granite folds of Mt. Williamson, runs all year.

This trip leaves the Angeles Crest Highway opposite Eagles Roost Picnic Area and descends the old Rattlesnake Trail (not as ominous as it sounds) into the upper reaches of Little Rock Creek. Once you leave the highway, you drop into recesses as magnificently wild as any in the range. If you like primitive canyon country relatively undisturbed by the presence of humans, this hike should be a rewarding experience.

Cross the highway and descend west on the unmarked fire road into the head of Little Rock Creek. After 1/2 mile the fire road narrows into a regular trail, and then continues dropping to the canyon bottom, 1/2 mile farther. Here, amid a darkened forest, alongside the cold waters of the creek, you will be tempted to pause.

A 200-yard side trip upstream brings you to a sparkling pool beneath a miniature waterfall. Back on the main route, follow the trail as it contours along the north slope of the gorge, heading downstream (west). For the next two miles, you round rocky points, with the creek far below, and pass through sheltered recesses. Finally you drop down alongside the creek and reach a junction with the Burkhart Trail.

Here you have several options. You can return up the Rattlesnake Trail, the way you came. You can turn left (southwest) and ascend the trail to Buckhorn Campground. This makes a very pleasant circle trip and requires a 4-mile car shuttle between Eagles Roost and Buckhorn. Or you can turn right (north) and ascend the Burkhart trail to Pleasant View Ridge, then return.

Experienced hikers have descended trailless Little Rock Creek from the Burkhart Trail all the way to the lower Little Rock Creek boulder-hopping miles. Two warnings if you want to try this: don't do it alone; and don't do it when the stream is high.