

Little Santa Anita Creek, engineers apparently forgot that  
eroded to erode canyon bottoms; floods are what  
beautiful canyon. Today, thanks to the check  
well organized fashion, lingering in tranquil  
dams in fifteen foot cascades. Over the last  
is, alders and other creekside flora have  
the dams and they now fit much better into

ate cabins and reaches a three-way trail  
Falls, continue straight ahead. You'll cross  
e-cross where the creek veers leftward. Pick  
strewn creek bank a few hundred yards to  
a silver stream fifty feet to a natural rock  
wet rocks near the fall can be extremely  
y off.)

enjoy a picnic back up at the Forest Service  
or return to the trail junction and hike  
the Grove Trail Camp.

**Camp.** Two signed trails lead toward Spruce  
igs high up the canyon wall while the other  
t trail is easier hiking while the right trail  
canyon and is prettier. Either trail is good  
ile.

continue along the spruce-shaded path to  
call it a day here or ascend another mile to  
h locales have plenty of tables and shade.  
If feeling frisky? Hikers in top condition  
to Mount Wilson. Continue on the trail  
oss the creek and you'll find a trail junc-  
eric Sturtevant Camp, now owned by the  
Mount Wilson soon departs Big Santa  
a switchback through thick forest to Mt.  
enjoy a hike from Chantry Flat to Mt.  
turne, with a 4,000 foot gain in elevation.

OTP Hike #0010



## Mount Wilson Trail

Sierra Madre to Orchard Camp

9 miles RT; 2000' gain.

Sierra Madre to Mount Wilson

15 miles RT; 4500' gain.

Season: Nov. to June  
Recommended map: Angeles  
National Forest  
Topo: Mt. Wilson

The Mount Wilson Trail up Little Santa Anita Canyon is the oldest white man's trail into the San Gabriels. It was built in 1864 by Benjamin Wilson, who overhauled a Gabrielino Indian path in order to log the stands of incense cedar and sugar pine on the mountain that now bears his name. The first telescope was carried up this trail to Mount Wilson in 1904. During the "Great Hiking Era," thousands of hikers rode the Red Cars to Sierra Madre, disembarked, and hiked up this path to the popular trail resort at Orchard Camp. Forty thousand hikers and horseback riders passed over the trail in 1911, its peak year.

After the passing of the "Great Hiking Era," the trail was all but abandoned until the late 1950s when rebuilding efforts began. The good folks of Sierra Madre, aided by Boy Scout troops, rebuilt the trail all the way up canyon to its junction with the old Mount Wilson Toll Road. Sierra Madre citizens also prevented county flood control engineers from bulldozing and check-damming Little Santa Anita Canyon. The aroused citizenry established Sierra Madre Historical Wilderness Area to preserve the canyon. This area is patterned after federal Wilderness Areas; that is, the land is to be preserved forever without development or mechanized use.

This hike will take you up Little Santa Anita Canyon, visit Orchard Camp and climb to the top of Mount Wilson. There are many routes up Mount Wilson; this is one of the nicest.

**Directions to trailhead:** From the Foothill Freeway (210) in Arcadia take Baldwin Avenue north. Turn right on Miramonte Avenue. Park on Miramonte Avenue near the junction of Mount Wilson Trail Road, which is on your left. The trail begins 150 yards up this road and is marked by a large wooden sign. After passing some homes, the trail shortly intersects the main trail.

**The Hike:** After trudging 1½ miles up Santa Anita Canyon you reach a junction with a sidetrail, which leads to the nearby canyon bottom. Here you can lean against an old oak, cool your heels in the rushing water, relax and watch the river flow.

Continue back on the ridge trail as it climbs higher and higher above the canyon floor onto sunny, exposed slopes. A hot 3 miles of walking brings you to Decker Spring and another ½ mile to Orchard Camp, a shady glen dotted with oak and spruce trees. When Wilson was building his trail, a construction camp called halfway house was built here. Later homesteaders tried their hand planting apple and cherry trees—hence the name Orchard Camp. During the “Great Hiking Era,” a succession of entrepreneurs utilized Orchard Camp as a trail resort and welcomed thousands of hikers. Hikers traveled through this canyon in the 1920s reported seeing “The Nature Man of Mount Wilson,” a tall, bronzed hermit who looked like he stepped out of the pages of the Old Testament. The nature man carried a stone axe and worked on the trail for his keep. Some say he’s still around, protecting the canyon—though he no longer springs out of the brush and greets every hiker who passes.

Orchard Camp is a nice place to picnic. You might want to call it a day here and return the same way. Otherwise, fill your canteen and plunge on.

**Option: Orchard Camp to Mount Wilson.** The trail continues through thick chaparral up Santa Anita Canyon to its head. It contours on the shelf-like trail, heads east on a firebreak and crosses over a steep manzanita-covered ridge. At the intersection with Winter Creek Trail, turn left (west) and ascend steeply to Mount Wilson Toll Road, 2 miles from Orchard Camp. Turn right on the Toll Road and follow it 1 mile as it ascends through well-spaced spruce to Mount Wilson Road, just outside Skyline Park.



## Devil's Canyon Trail

Chilao to Devil's Canyon Trail Camp

7 miles RT; 1500' loss.

Chilao to Devil's Canyon Waterfall

11 miles RT; 2,300' loss.

Los Angeles residents, while inching change, may be comforted by knowing America has a Wilderness Area so close to primeval canyons of the San Gabriel Valley. You're only eighteen as-the-crow-flies from 36,137-acre wilderness is rough and rugged, contained in two canyons, Devil's and Canyon slopes and pine and fir reach from this is color country: the laurels glow, fluff up, the camothus blossoms blue and

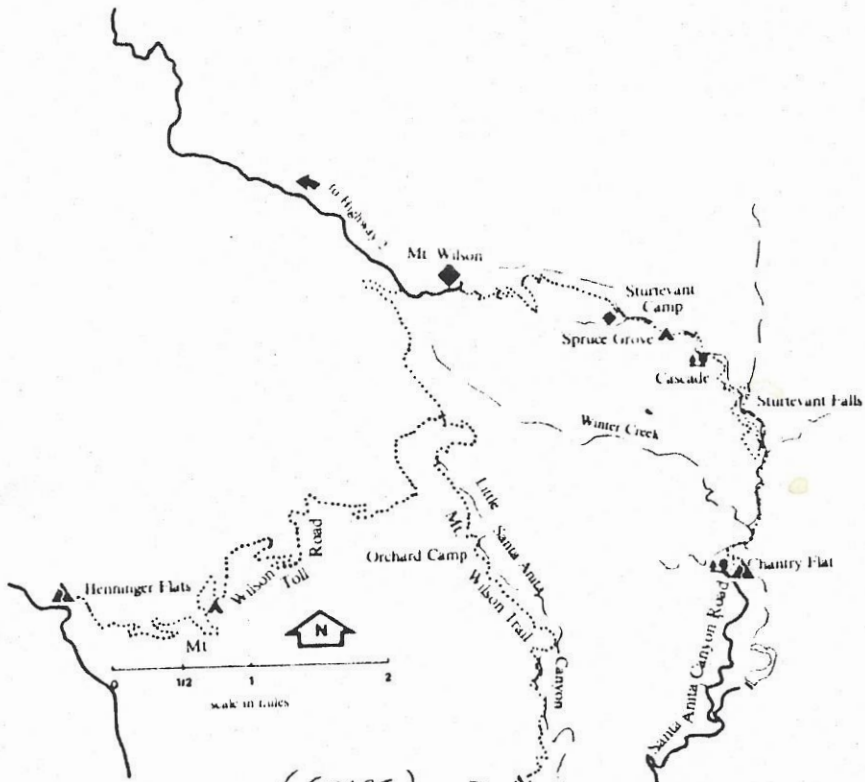
The Wilderness Area is surrounded north and west by Highway 2, on the east campers crowd the ridges, skiers peer down despite its accessibility, most people view down from the brink of Devil's Canyon though the walk back up, scare off

Devil's Canyon Trail, from Chilao pleasant path in the Wilderness. It takes the canyon, past willow-shaded pools and make the Big City seem hundreds of

**Directions to trailhead:** From Los Angeles Crest Highway (Highway 2), Upper Chilao Campground. There's a of the highway. Leave your car here usually below the snowline, is across the

**The Hike:** Remind yourself, as you descending steeply into the canyon, the come last. Pace yourself accordingly. The pine and spruce on the shady slopes to After two miles, the trail meets a pleas

2/21/90 @ 0930 HRS



(START HERE) →



*The San Gabriels would be as high as the Himalayas and Hollywood a seaside Nepal if the mountains were not being worn down as fast as they grow.*

—JEROME WYCKOFF