

3-18-92
Lecho Torres
OTP Hike #0117

94

TRAILS OF THE ANGELES

35 Josephine Fire Road to Josephine Peak

6 miles round trip; 1900' elevation gain

Classification: Moderate

Season: All year

Topo map: Condor Peak

FEATURES

5558' Josephine Peak, the high point of the prominent spur extending two miles west from Strawberry Peak, offers superb views of the Big Tujunga watershed. A well-graded fire road climbs 3 miles from the Angeles Forest Highway to the fire lookout on the summit. This makes for a pleasant stroll when the weather is mild. Don't try it on a hot day: except for a few forested spots near the top, the route is devoid of shade. An option, if you are in top physical condition, is to climb both Josephine and Strawberry peaks by this approach, descending either the same way or via Colby Canyon (see Trip 36).

The origin of the name "Josephine" is obscure. As early as 1889 there was a Josephine Gold Mine in the upper Big Tujunga. Several authorities believe the peak was named for the wife of J. B. Lippencott, USGS surveyor who used the summit as a triangulation point while mapping the mountains in 1894. Another source claims it was named for the daughter of Phil Begue, one of the early forest rangers in the range. The fire lookout, erected in 1937, burned down in the 1976 Big Tujunga fire. It will not be replaced.

DESCRIPTION

From La Canada, drive up the Angeles Crest Highway 10 miles to the junction with the Angeles Forest Highway, opposite the Clear Creek Ranger Station. Park off the highway alongside the ranger station.

The Josephine fire road begins on the east side of the Angeles Forest Highway about 50 yards north of the junction. Walk past the locked gate up the road. The route climbs the ridge dividing Colby Canyon from Clear Creek and zigzags to the crest of Josephine's east ridge, 2 miles. Here is a junction—right (east) to Josephine Saddle and Strawberry Peak (see Trip 36) and left (west) to Josephine Peak. Go left, following the road through oaks and spruces

One Hundred Hikes

95

on the north side of the ridge, to the concrete foundation of the summit lookout.

Return by the same route or, if you can arrange a 1-mile carshuttle, descend to Josephine Saddle and down the old Colby Canyon Trail to the Angeles Crest Highway (see Trip 36). Don't take trailless shortcuts that may look tempting; the chaparral is thick and thorny.

On the ridge up Strawberry Peak

Dick Worsfold

