

1004

Sierra Madre to Orchard Camp (Mt. Wilson Trail)

Date: Aug 4, 2010

Leader: Peter Wall

Distance: 7.5 miles

Elevation gain: 2000 feet

Facilities: at Mira Monte Park

Directions:

To reach the trailhead, take the 210 Fwy east to the Baldwin Avenue off ramp in Arcadia. Proceed north on Baldwin to Mira Monte and turn right. Proceed to the Mt. Wilson trail head and park at the Mira Monte Park for easy access to the trailhead and refreshments after the hike.

Hike:

Option 1) The hike is straight up and down the Mt. Wilson trail. It will be warm so bring extra water. Be alert to poison oak on the upper half of the trail and insect/gnat repellent may be in order.

The Orchard Camp was the original "Halfway House" midway between Sierra Madre and Mt. Wilson. It was a construction camp for the Mt. Wilson Trail around 1864 and later the Wilson Trail was used to transport the materials for Harvard's Mt. Wilson Observatory. George Islip and George Aiken planted a grove of fruit and nut trees in the late 1800's. From 1890 until 1940 Orchard Camp remained a Trail resort and was finally abandoned.

Orchard Camp lies .5 miles past Decker Spring in a live oak and canyon oak forest. The oldest core samples of the largest canyon oak places in at 1500 years old. Enjoy the pleasant hike down after lunch, and refreshments will be served at Mira Monte Park.

Option 2) Last Water:

To add another 2 miles round trip to your hike making a total of 9.5 miles and 2855 feet elevation gain you can continue east out of Orchard Camp and climb the canyon slope. Climb steadily and then descend in your final approach to the Last Water creek and the canyon bottom.

Carry a phone and good luck to the rabbits. Special thanks to Rob Forbess, prior leaders Jack Robinson and Mickey Costello and Jim Carlin for this Googled map.