

Sitton Peak from Ortega Highway in Orange County

Hike Leader: Bob Singer

Hike Date: March 26, 2014 Starting Time: 9:30 AM

Hike to Pigeon Springs and Four Corners: Easy/Moderate, 2.8 and 3.2 miles one way, 700 ft. elevation gain.

Hike to Sitton Peak: Moderate/Strenuous past Four Corners, 4.8 miles total one way, 1350 ft. elevation gain total.

Direction to trailhead:

(1) From Fullerton area, take the 91 E Freeway to I-15 South (24.1 mi.) to Ortega Highway (CA 74) exit (19.2 mi.). Follow CA74 signs: Right on Central, R on Collier, L on Riverside Drive /CA74 [this sequence is a bit tricky]. Take Ortega Hwy for 8.9 mi (13.6 mi. total for this leg). Parking Lot (San Juan Loop Parking Lot, is on right of road across from Ortega Oaks "Candy Store" at 34040 Ortega Hwy, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530. Parking requires an Adventure Pass (or Golden Age Pass), which can be purchased, if needed, at the store, if open, for \$5/day. Trailhead is across highway from parking lot right past the Candy Store. Restroom is available by the parking area. Refreshments will be served at the parking area.

(2) From Palos Verdes area, take the most convenient way to get on the 91E Freeway to the I-15 S and follow the instructions above. Total trip may be 82 miles. [An alternative is to take the 405 S to the 73 (a toll road) or can just continue on the 405 if desired, to the 5S to the Ortega Highway (CA74) in San Juan Capistrano. Go east on CA74 into the hills for 19.5 mi. Candy store is on right and parking lot is on left. This total trip is 71 mi. but CA 74 is winding and has had accidents from speeding cars. Total time may not be less and will be less safe.]

(3) From San Fernando Valley, take the 210E to the 57S to the CA71S to the 91E to the I15S and continue as in case (1) above. The total trip may be 97 miles. [An alternative is to take the 101S to the 5S to the Ortega Highway (CA74) in San Juan Capistrano. Go east on 74 as in the alternative for (2) above. This total trip may be 90 mi. but see concerns in (2) above.]

Hike alternatives:

1. Easy/a bit moderate (about 5.5 miles round trip): Hike the Bear Canyon Trail and then the old Verdugo Truck Trail from the trailhead to Pigeon Springs. Hike through manzanita area and some oak tree type scenery. Quite pleasant. Turn around and have lunch at pleasant oak-shaded Pigeon Springs. Elev. gain is less than 700 ft.

2. Moderate/a bit easy (about 6.5 miles round trip): Hike the Bear Canyon Trail and Verdugo Truck Trail from the trailhead past Pigeon Springs to Four Corners. Pleasant scenery. Turn around and have lunch at Four Corners. Elev. gain is 700 ft.

3. Moderate/Strenuous (about 9.8 miles round trip): Hike the Bear Canyon Trail from the trailhead past Four Corners. Continue on Bear Canyon Trail which becomes Sitton Peak Trail. Hike for 1.3 miles past Four Corners. Then at a marker/sign, turn right onto a less maintained and sometimes steep trail (reported as up to a 36% [steep] grade), climbing up to Sitton Peak for an additional 0.4 miles. There are many trail-like paths, so people should hike in groups and remember how they got to the peak so they can return safely to the main trail. This portion of the

hike is the one memorialized by our own inveterate Bernie Lipman and we all need to learn from that experience of all of us in the Orange County group. On a clear (not foggy!) day, we get a wonderful panoramic view. Also our radios were able to communicate with Jim Carlin's radio in the Santa Monica Mountains when we were at the peak last year. Oh, what history! Look (no don't) for a lost tooth and more (ask Tom). Elev. gain total is now 1350 feet. Eat at the peak and return. This is a very lovely hike, but it's long and will be time-consuming.

Note: A map will be provided on hiking day. Attached are versions you may wish to download at this time. The hike will be postponed if the weather is uncooperative.

<http://socalhiker.net/hiking-sitton-peak-trail/>