

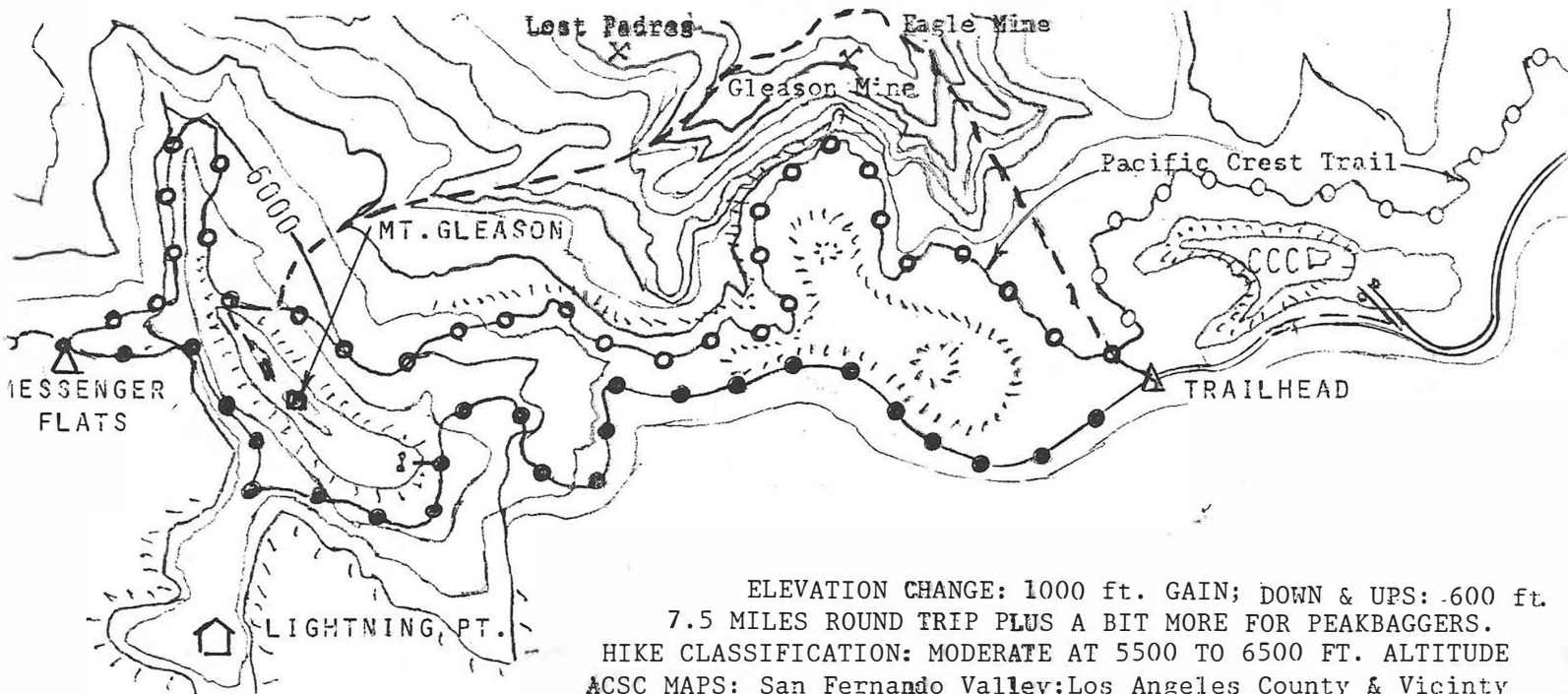
OTP Hike #237

THE MESSENGER FLATS-MOUNT GLEASON SECTION OF THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL: 7.5 MI.

HIKE GUIDE; DAVID LILLBACK

DATE: 20 JULY 1994 MEET:0845 START HIKE: 0900

DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD: ALLOW 40 MINUTES TRAVEL TIME FROM LA CAÑADA AT I-210. TAKE ANGELES CREST HIGHWAY TO CLEAR CREEK JUNCTION FOR ANGELES FOREST HIGHWAY. SIGN POINTS TO PALMDALE; BUT TODAY ONLY TO MILL CREEK SUMMIT. TURN RIGHT INTO PICNIC PARKING. STRETCH YOUR LEGS. YOU HAVE TRAVELLED 23 MILES FROM LA CAÑADA. NORTH ACROSS THE HIGHWAY IS MT. GLEASON ROAD [SIGNED MESSENGER FLATS 12]. USE CARE TRAVELLING THIS NARROW ROAD TO A JUNCTION WHERE THE PAVED ROAD LEADS TO THE YOUTH CORRECTIONAL CAMP (A STATE PRISON). BUT YOU DRIVE LEFT ONTO THE DIRT ROAD AND DOWN 1/2 MILE TO WHERE IT BOTTOMS OUT. PARK IN THE CLEARING ON RIGHT.



ELEVATION CHANGE: 1000 ft. GAIN; DOWN & UPS: 600 ft.
7.5 MILES ROUND TRIP PLUS A BIT MORE FOR PEAKBAGGERS.
HIKE CLASSIFICATION: MODERATE AT 5500 TO 6500 FT. ALTITUDE
ACSC MAPS: San Fernando Valley; Los Angeles County & Vicinity

HIKE DESCRIPTION: START THE HIKE FOLLOWING THE ACCESS ROAD WINDING UP THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN TO RELAY STATION. THE SIGN POINTS DOWN LEFT FOR LIGHTNING POINT AND MESSENGER FLATS CAMPGROUNDS. FOLLOW THE DIRT ROAD TO A THREE-WAY JUNCTION. TAKE ROAD ON THE RIGHT WHICH WILL LEAD TO MESSENGER FLATS. LOOK FOR THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL MARKER ON THE RIGHT. AFTER THE PAUSE THAT REFRESHES AND POSSIBLY LUNCH, TAKE THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL NORTH TO CLIMB TO THE TOP OF MOUNT GLEASON. THE TRAIL TURNS EAST THROUGH THE PINE TREES AND THEN TURNS NORTH THROUGH THE CHAPARRAL-CLAD WEST SLOPE OF THE MOUNTAIN. AFTER THE TRAIL MAKES A U-TURN TO CLIMB SOUTHWARD YOU COME TO A TRAIL JUNCTION. PEAK-BAGGERS SHOULD GO RIGHT, FOLLOWING THE SIDE TRAIL UP THE SUMMIT RIDGE, THEN SOUTHEAST ALONG THE RIDGE OVER SEVERAL HUMMOCKS TO THE TOP OF MT. GLEASON, 6532 ft - MAYBE MORE AFTER THE EARTHQUAKES. THE AIR FORCE ONCE HAD RADAR DOME ON THIS MOST WESTERN PEAK OF THE SAN GABRIELS. DESCEND THE SUMMIT TRAIL BACK TO THE PCT. THIS IS THE POINT WHERE THE BUSHWACKERS COULD VENTURE DOWN TO EXAMINE THE FOREMAN'S CABIN OF THE GLEASON MINES. DESCEND NORTHWARD, WITHOUT TRAIL, INTO THE HEAD OF GLEASON CANYON'S WEST FORK, AS SHOWN ON THE DIAGRAM BY DASHED LINES. IN A SHORT 1/4 MILE, AFTER DROPPING ABOUT 600 FEET, YOU WILL PICK UP A VERY STEEP OLD MINING ROAD. EVIDENCE OF PAST DIGGINGS ARE ALL AROUND, BUT MORE ON THE NORTH-WEST SLOPE OF THE CANYON YOU SEE AHEAD AS YOU ARE DESCENDING. FOLLOW THE MINING ROAD DOWN TO THE FOREMAN'S CABIN. CONTINUE DOWN THE ROAD TO GLEASON CREEK IN THE FLOOR OF THE MAIN CANYON, THEN CROSS THE CREEK AND CLIMB STEEPLY UP THE ROAD SOUTHWARD TO THE TRAILHEAD. MEANWHILE THE OTHERS ARE WALKING ON THE SOFT PINE NEEDLE-STREWN PACIFIC CREST TRAIL. FIRST THE JEFFREY PINES, THEN INCENSE CEDAR, BIG-CONE SPRUCE, BLACK OAK, AND THEN A CANOPY OF INTERIOR LIVE OAK AS THE SHIMMERING MOJAVE DESERT PEEKS THROUGH THE FOLIAGE. OCCASIONALLY, THE SONGS OF THE MANY BIRDS ARE HEARD, AND - IF WE ARE FORTUNATE - DEER, FOX, BEAR AND MOUNTAIN LION MAY BE SPOTTED. BUT SUDDENLY WE SPOT THE CARS AND THE HIKE IS OVER. Should we wait for the others? NAH! LET'S HAVE SOME REFRESHMENTS. NOTE: THERE ARE NO FACILITIES HERE. WE WILL DRIVE BACK TO MILL CREEK SUMMIT FOR A MORE COMFORTABLE PLACE. THERE ARE TABLES & BENCHES, AND A LITTLE CLOSER TO HOME.