

Bear Canyon OTP Hike July 16, 1997, 9:30 AM

Trailhead Directions

Meet at Eaton Saddle, which is about 2.5 miles up the Mt. Wilson Road from Red Box (remember to stop at the restroom at Red Box). This is a one way hike, so we will leave the cars at Eaton Saddle and after the hike and refreshments at Switzer Parking, the Forbess Van, which will be at Switzer, will take the drivers back to Eaton Saddle to pick up the cars. The distance by car between these points is 6.5 miles and will take about 13 minutes each way.

Summary

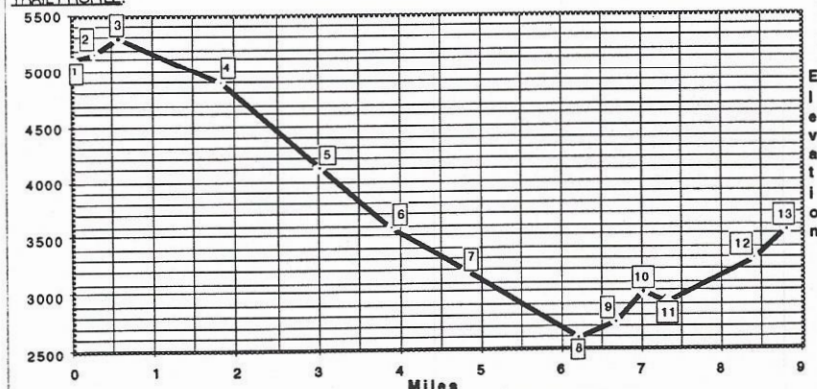
The hike is 8.8 miles, but mostly down hill with lots of shade, 1,250 feet up and 2,800 feet down. There is **lots of poison oak, so wear long pants**. The water level in the stream is low, so the boulder hopping and stream crossings aren't too difficult.

The Hike

From Eaton Saddle, we take the Mt. Lowe fire road west to Markham Saddle. Continue southwest and west without leaving the fire road until reaching a 180° bend to the left atop the long west ridge coming down from Mt. Lowe's summit. Leave the road there and continue on a trail westward along the same ridge. After a few downhill switchbacks, we arrive at Tom Sloan Saddle where we will have a cookie break. We go north, descending switchbacks through chaparral and other brush which keeps partially blocking the trail until we reach Bear Canyon's stream. From here we go down canyon, boulder hopping and picking our way through overgrown poison oak (it's all over, so wear long pants) on the poorly defined trail. We will have lunch on picnic tables at the Bear Canyon Trail Camp. After lunch we continue downstream on a better trail, but with numerous stream crossings, until we reach Arroyo Seco. Most of the rest of the way is uphill. The trail continues along the stream until we go up switchbacks out of the canyon and join the Gabrielino Trail from Oakwilde. After a brief downhill section to Commodore Switzer Trail Camp we continue up until finally arriving at Switzer Picnic Area. Unfortunately, we then have to hike up the road to the parking area above, since the Forest Service is not opening the gate to the Picnic area on week days yet.

LOCATION: Bear Camp from Eaton Saddle to Switzer via Sloan Saddle

TRAIL PROFILE:



Trail Location	Elevation			Miles			Hiking Time*	
	at points	between points	between marks	Cum. gain	between points	between marks	Cum. between points	Cum.
1 Eaton Saddle Trailhead	5110			0	0.00		0:00	
2 Tunnel	5170	60		0.25	0.25	0:09	0:09	
3 Markham Saddle	5300	130	190	1.90	0.30	0:55	0:12	0:22
4 Start of Bear Canyon trail - Leave Road	4910	-390		1.90	1.25	1:40	0:30	0:52
5 Tom Sloan Saddle - Go down Bear Cr. tr.	4130	-780		1.90	1.20	3:00	0:28	1:21
6 Bear Creek crossing - site of old cabin	3600	-530		1.90	0.90	3:30	0:21	1:42
7 Bear Canyon trail camp	3200	-400		1.90	0.90	4:40	0:21	2:04
8 Join Arroyo Seco - end of Bear Creek	2600	-600	-2700	1.90	1.40	5:55	0:33	2:37
9 Leave Stream - take trail up	2750	150		340	0.45	6:45	0:18	2:55
10 Junction Oakwilde trail - continue north	3020	270		610	0.35	7:00	0:18	3:14
11 Pass Commodore Switzer Camp	2920	-100		610	0.30	7:30	0:07	3:21
12 Switzer Picnic area - go up road	3300	380		990	1.10	8:40	0:44	4:06
13 Trailhead - parking lot at Highway	3560	260	1060	1250	0.40	2:608.80	0:19	4:25

* Hiking Time assumes 2 MPH plus 1 hour per 2000 feet elevation gain uphill and 2.5 MPH downhill

