

OTP & OTHERS

BEYOND COGSWELL

The hike for March 31, 1999 will be an easy stroll or bike ride up the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. This is the usual mundane outing we have become accustomed to from Mike Gessner. For you, the true adventurer, a bonus excursion is suggested. At the present time this byway has not been scouted. We rely on the information in the hike book. At some time before the hike it is hoped that there will be an opportunity accomplish this scouting mission. The following is an excerpt from the book.

Ride your bike across Cogswell Dam to gain access to the dirt road along the far (north) side. If you have a road bike, secure it at the dam or somehow conceal it and continue on foot. If you have a mountain bike, you can continue riding for another 1.5 miles.

Either way the rapidly deteriorating road at 1.5 miles will force you to scramble down about 80 feet to the wide sand and boulder filled floor of Devil's Canyon. This barren, often bone-dry stretch bears no resemblance to what you will find only a mile up canyon. The first small pools where water sinks below the surface and percolates into the porous substratum will probably be found a short distance ahead.

At 2.3 miles the canyon floor suddenly narrows and you must somehow get past a moat-like pool, about 10 feet deep, squeezed between nearly vertical rock walls. Beyond lies a veritable Shangri-La of crystalline pools and miniature cascades. There is a strong possibility that the only way past is to swim. Take along a waterproof plastic bag to package your clothes and other gear you can't afford to get wet.

The barest hint of an animal trail threads through the canyon ahead. Mostly you'll scramble, boulder hop and wade. This part of the canyon is much like upper Devil's Canyon, except the pools are grander. The best one (at 2.8 miles), about 10 feet deep and bounded by water polished granite and banded metamorphic rock, is a sensational swimming hole. There are lots of alder trees and some sycamores down along the stream; incense cedars and scattered poison oak a little higher above the stream; and hardy bigcone Douglas firs clinging to the slopes.

At about 3.5 miles the canyon floor widens considerably. High and dry campsites can be found in the next mile. At 4.5 miles the canyon narrows again, and just ahead of that, progress comes to a halt because of an unclimbable waterfall. Here the waters of Devil's Canyon funnel through a sheer-walled constriction and drop about 20 vertical feet into a pool about 40 feet wide and 4 feet deep.

Trip data (from Cogswell Dam):

Distance	up to 9 miles, round trip
Elevation gain	1200 feet
Effort	Probably somewhat strenuous

Recommended Maps:

Angeles National Forest	U S Forest Service;
-------------------------	---------------------

Glendora, Azusa
Trail Map of the Angeles High Country

7.5 minute Topographic
Tom Harrison