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Monrovia Canyon Park to
Sawpit Canyon, Deer Park**HIKE LENGTH:** 6 miles round trip; 1100' elevation gain**CLASSIFICATION:** Moderate**SEASON:** All year**TOPO MAP:** Mt. Wilson, Azusa

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Features Hike # / Thursday May 27th

Beautiful Sawpit Canyon drains the southern slopes of Monrovia Peak. For fifty years it has been off limits to the public, ostensibly to protect the city of Monrovia's water source. Thanks to a cooperative effort by the city's Community Services Department, the California Conservation Corps and numerous volunteer trail builders, the canyon is once again open to hikers.

This very pleasant trip begins at the lower end of Monrovia Canyon Park, follows the fire road up around Sawpit Canyon Reservoir, and then ascends the new Overturff Trail to a little oak-shaded flat tucked into the south ramparts of Monrovia Peak known as Deer Park. The shady recess was discovered by Monrovia building contractor Ben Overturff about 1905. He built a stone cabin there, and for many years, from 1911 to the 1938 flood, Deer Park Lodge was a popular trail resort. Only the foundations remain today, under a canopy of majestic canyon oaks with a delightful all-year stream nearby.

You must pay a small admission fee—\$1 per vehicle on weekdays, \$2 on weekends—to enter Monrovia Canyon Park. The Overturff Trail is open every day except Tuesday and Wednesday, when the Monrovia Police Department uses its Sawpit Canyon Shooting Range.

Description

Leave the Foothill Freeway (Interstate 210) at Myrtle Avenue in Monrovia. Drive north on Myrtle, through town, 2 miles to Scenic Drive. Turn right and follow the latter, with short jogs right, then left, curving north as Scenic Drive becomes Canyon Blvd., to Monrovia Canyon Park entrance station. Pay your fee and park in the lower parking area opposite the signed trailhead.

Walk up the Sawpit Canyon fire road, passing Sawpit Dam, built by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District in 1929, and, farther up, Trask Boy Scout Camp, both to your left. The road becomes unpaved just past the dam. After a mile, the road curves left and you reach the lower end of the Overturff Trail on your left, marked by a sign and two low stone pillars.

Follow the trail as it descends to Sawpit Creek, crosses it, and climbs to the Razorback, a sharp divide separating Sycamore and Sawpit canyons. You follow the crest of the Razorback a short distance, then climb the chaparral-covered slope to The Gap, a break in the ridge. Beyond, your pathway descends, contours, and gently climbs beneath a shady canopy of oak and bay laurel. You reach Twin Springs Creek, where flowing water from one of the springs has formed a natural bridge. Just across the creek you pass a junction with a lateral trail that drops down to Sawpit Canyon fire road. You take the main trail straight ahead, climb over a low ridge, cross Deer Park Creek, and reach a second junction. Go left and climb 100 yards to Deer Park. Only the foundations remain of the once-popular lodge, shaded by tall oaks. It's a nice picnic spot.

Return the way you came, or drop down either of the two short lateral trails to Sawpit Canyon fire road and follow the latter back to your car. ▲