Strawberry Peak OTP Hike

AUG.31 2005, 9:30 AM
John Morton Hike

Trailhead Directions

Meet at the Red Box parking lot at the Mt. Wilson road turn off. This is at mileage paddle 38.38 on the Angeles Crest Highway about 14 miles from I-210. Be sure to be there in plenty of time for a 9:30 departure. There are restroom facilities at the parking area.

Features

Strawberry Peak's 6164' summit beats by a smidgen 6161' San Gabriel Peak, thus claiming the honor of being the highest peak in the Front Range. Although its profile appears rounded as seen from most places, in reality its flanks fall away sharply on three sides, leaving only one relatively easy route to the top, which we will take.

The Hike

From Red Box, we walk east along the left shoulder of Angeles Crest Highway to an abandoned fire road slanting left up the hillside. Continue up the eroded bed of that road for 0.6 mile to reach a trail on the left. From there the trail switchbacks up through chaparral taking us northwest to a saddle due south of Mt. Lawlor's summit. We continue from there on a gradually uphill trail to the saddle at 2.2 miles on the northwest shoulder of Mt. Lawlor. At this point we have gained about 550 feet elevation and will stop for a cookie break.

At the saddle the macho hikers leave the main trail and take an old firebreak slanting left along an undulating, chaparral covered ridge. We work our way north and finally west to Strawberry's shaggy-looking summit. Scattered Coulter pines and bigcone Douglas firs struggle for existence near the summit.

For those who want a more leisurely hike, keep on the trail for as long as you wish. Strawberry Spring is another 1.1 miles but down 410 feet elevation. I doubt if there is any water at the spring at this time of year.

Total distance to the peak is about 7.0 miles round trip with an elevation gain of about 1800 feet.