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TRAILS OF THE ANGELES

31 Eaton Saddle to Mt. Lowe Trail Camp, Mt. Lowe Fire Road back to Eaton Saddle

6 miles round trip; 700' elevation loss and gain

Classification: Moderate

Season: November-June

Topo map: Mt. Wilson

FEATURES

This loop trip takes you completely around Mt. Lowe and visits secluded Mt. Lowe Trail Camp, once the location of famed Mt. Lowe Tavern (see Trip 23). Most of the hike is via easy-graded fire road but about two miles are on the historic, oak-shaded Mt. Lowe "East" Trail, recently reworked into good condition. You are rewarded enroute with superb vistas down into Eaton, Bear, and Grand canyons and, if the atmosphere is clear, down the south slope of the front range to the sprawling San Gabriel Valley.

DESCRIPTION

Drive up the Angeles Crest Highway 14 miles from La Canada to Red Box. Turn right on the Mt. Wilson Road 2½ miles to Eaton Saddle.

Walk past the locked gate and follow the Mt. Lowe fire road to Markham Saddle, then turn left on the Mt. Lowe East Trail to the saddle between Mts. Markham and Lowe (see Trip 30 for details). Continue on the trail through a shady oak forest around the east shoulder of Mt. Lowe, then down around the south slope via switchbacks to a badly eroded fire break. The trail crosses the fire break and continues zigzagging down to the Mt. Lowe fire road. Follow it south 100 yards to a junction with the Inspiration Point spur road, then right about 300 yards to Mt. Lowe Trail Camp. Here, under oak and spruce, there are tables, stoves, rest rooms, and a spring-fed drinking fountain. The stone foundation adjacent to the camp is all that remains of old Mt. Lowe Tavern, once the scene of much merry-making.

To return, retrace your steps up the fire road to the Inspiration Point junction. Go left and follow the road

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northwest around Mt. Lowe's long west ridge, then east back across Markham Saddle and San Gabriel Peak's white cliffs to Eaton Saddle.

An option is to return via the Old Mount Lowe "West" Trail, recently reworked and put into fine condition by the JPL Hiking Club. You will be delighted to come across several of the old view tubes—iron pipes aimed at landmarks below—placed along the trail some sixty years ago. About 300 yards up the Mt. Lowe fire road from the Inspiration Point spur road—almost directly north of and above Mt. Lowe Trail Camp—the trail zigzags up the west slope of a ravine, then contours around the hillside to your left, paralleling the fire road about 200 feet above it. (The trail you see climbing to the right, also reworked by the JPL Hiking Club, connects with the Mount Lowe "East" Trail.) You contour and climb westward ½ mile, passing several of the old view tubes, then round the ridge and ascend steadily east, with two switchbacks near the top, to Mt. Lowe's bare summit. From the summit, descend the beaten path back to the Mount Lowe "East" Trail (see Trip 30), then walk left to Markham Saddle and via the fire road back to Eaton Saddle.

