

CARLIN HIKE FOR 18 JUNE 1997**Oak Springs Trail to Gold Creek, Oak Spring, Fascination Spring(dry)**

7 miles round trip; 2000' elevation gain. Classification: Moderate

Season: November-May (Extended by popular demand to June)

Topo map: Sunland

FEATURES

In the gentle hills above Little Tujunga Canyon are two delightful springs, little oak-sheltered oases nestled in hills covered with chaparral. Oak Spring lies in a shallow recess near the head of Oak Spring Canyon, just over the ridge from Gold Creek. Fascination Spring-one can only guess how it got this intriguing name-is hidden in a narrow crease on the south slope of the mountains, 2000' above the Sunland-Tujunga Valley. You start from Gold Creek, Little Tujunga's major tributary. As the name suggests, Gold Creek was once the scene of feverish mining activity. Most storied were the so called "Little Nugget" placers, gold being recovered right from the creek bed. The gold is gone now, and this is ranch country. A good trail leads south from Gold Creek and climbs into the gentle hill country of Yerba Buena Ridge. A mile and a half up is Oak Spring, hidden in a small draw so that you don't see it until you're almost there. Then you climb over Yerba Buena Ridge and drop abruptly down to Fascination Spring. The two springs are shaded by oaks; the rest of the trip is through open chaparral.

GATHERING AREA

This will be a shuttle hike. Take the 210 to Osborne St. in Pacoima and follow the signs (north) to the Little Tujunga Forest Station. Osborne St. soon becomes Little Tujunga Rd. Drive 2.5 miles from the 210 PAST the Ranger Station just past paddle 17.26 where there is a junction of a road heading west to shooting ranges, a road heading east to horse ranches and a large sign stating "Entering Los Angeles Nat'l Forest". Park along east side of Little Tujunga Rd., south of the road heading east.

TRAILHEAD

Proceed further north on Little Tujunga Rd. to Gold Creek Road and follow it 1 mile east to the new Forest Service trailhead. Park in the oak-shaded clearing adjacent to the trailhead. Proceed via Oak Springs trail across Gold Creek and up the chaparral-coated south slope to a junction with the old trail, 1/4 mile. Follow the old trail as it makes one long switchback, then climbs south up the chaparral-covered hillside. Vistas open up over the wrinkled Gold Creek basin. The ranch you see down to the north used to be the Paradise Ranch, scene of many a Cecil B. DeMille film extravaganza. Now it is the Hathaway Facility for children with special education needs. Below to the east are the stone quarries where 770,000 tons of granite rock were removed for Hansen Dam in 1938-40. In 1 1/4miles you cross a divide and drop down to lush Oak Spring-water except in the driest months. If it's a sunny day, the shade here is welcome. Walk down along the creek about 100 yards and pick up a trail that contours around the slope (south) through dense chaparral up to the Yerba Buena Ridge fire road, 1 1/2 miles from Oak Spring. Here you have a spectacular panorama southward over the Tujunga and San Fernando valleys. Walk 100 yards down the road, then look for the trail dropping south down the steep mountainside. Fascination Spring is a mile down this trail (900'elevation loss), nestled in a small gully. Continue down the mountain eventually reaching the Yerba Buena Ridge fire road again. Walk down the road to a saddle, turn right and look for the beginning of the Doc Larson Trail. Follow this trail until reaching the cars parked at Little Tujunga Rd.