

# OTP HIKE FOR Oct. 1, 1997

Start Promptly  
at 9:30 AM  
Host: J. Spotts

Hike #393

## Red Box to Mt. Wilson via Rattlesnake Trail

### FEATURES

There is a question whether the Rattlesnake Trail got its name because of reptiles encountered on the footpath or because of the many snakelike twists and turns of the trail. Both reasons have a basis in fact. The West Fork has always been the lair of the rattlesnake, although these reptiles haven't posed a serious problem in recent years. And the Rattlesnake Trail itself takes the most tortuous and coiling route up and around Strayns Canyon from the West Fork of the San Gabriel River to Mt. Wilson.

In spite of its switchbacks and roundabout route, the Rattlesnake Trail is one of the most enjoyable ways to climb Mt. Wilson. Going up a north-facing slope (the other Mt. Wilson trails approach from the south or east), the path runs through lush forest all the way—oak lower down, then magnificent big-cone spruce, with stately Jeffrey and sugar pines higher up. This is the way to climb Mt. Wilson if the day is hot. You cross Strayns Creek several times enroute; in spring the trickling water is ice cold and refreshing.

### DESCRIPTION

Drive up the Angeles Crest Highway to Red Box, 14 miles from La Canada. From Red Box we will go east on the Gabriellano Trail along the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. After approx. 2.1 mi & a drop of about 1000 ft. we will reach a turn-off on the left to Valley Forge Camp Gnd. Some people may want to take this turn-off and go to V.F.C.G. (another  $\approx \frac{1}{4}$  mi.). They can then return to Red Box after lunch.

The rest of us will continue on the Gab. trail towards West Fork.

About 1.7 miles past the turn-off to Valley Forge C.G., we will meet the turn-off to the Rattlesnake Tr. We will turn right onto the old Rattlesnake Trail. Your path climbs through an oak forest above Strayns Creek, then crosses the creek and ascends a low ridge. You cross a small tributary creek and climb steadily through a magnificent forest of big-cone spruce and incense cedar along the west slope of Strayns Canyon. The well-graded trail fords Strayns Creek, switchbacks high up the east slope, and contours over to the creek again. You ford Strayns Creek for the last time, then switchback up the west slope to a junction with the Mt. Wilson Road  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile west of the summit, where the pavement splits and becomes one-way. Hopefully, we will have enough energy left to go on to the summit.

If it all works out, there will be transportation waiting for us at the top to return us to Red Box.

### Totals:

- Red Box to V.F.C.G.  $\approx$  2.3 miles and drop of  $\approx$  1000 ft. (4.6 mi,  $\approx$  1000 ft. climb for rnd. trip)
- Red Box to turn-off to Rattlesnake Tr  $\approx$  3.8 miles and drop of  $\approx$  1100 ft.
- Turn-off to the Mt. Wilson road  $\approx$  2.8 miles and gain of  $\approx$  2200 ft.

Totals  $\approx$  6.6 mi and climb of 2200 ft.

