

June 10, 1998 9:30 AM Sharp!

Mill Creek Summit to Pacifico Mountain

12 miles round trip; 2200' elevation gain

Classification: Moderate

Season: May-October

Topo map: Pacifico Mountain

Host: J. Spotts

Hike #423

FEATURES

7124-foot Pacifico Mountain looms high on the northern rampart of the San Gabriels, offering far-reaching panoramas over Antelope Valley and the Mojave Desert. On days when the sky is clear of the usual desert haze, the viewer can make out, on the distant horizon, the sawtooth peaks of the High Sierra and the distinct cone-shaped summit of Telescope Peak overlooking Death Valley.

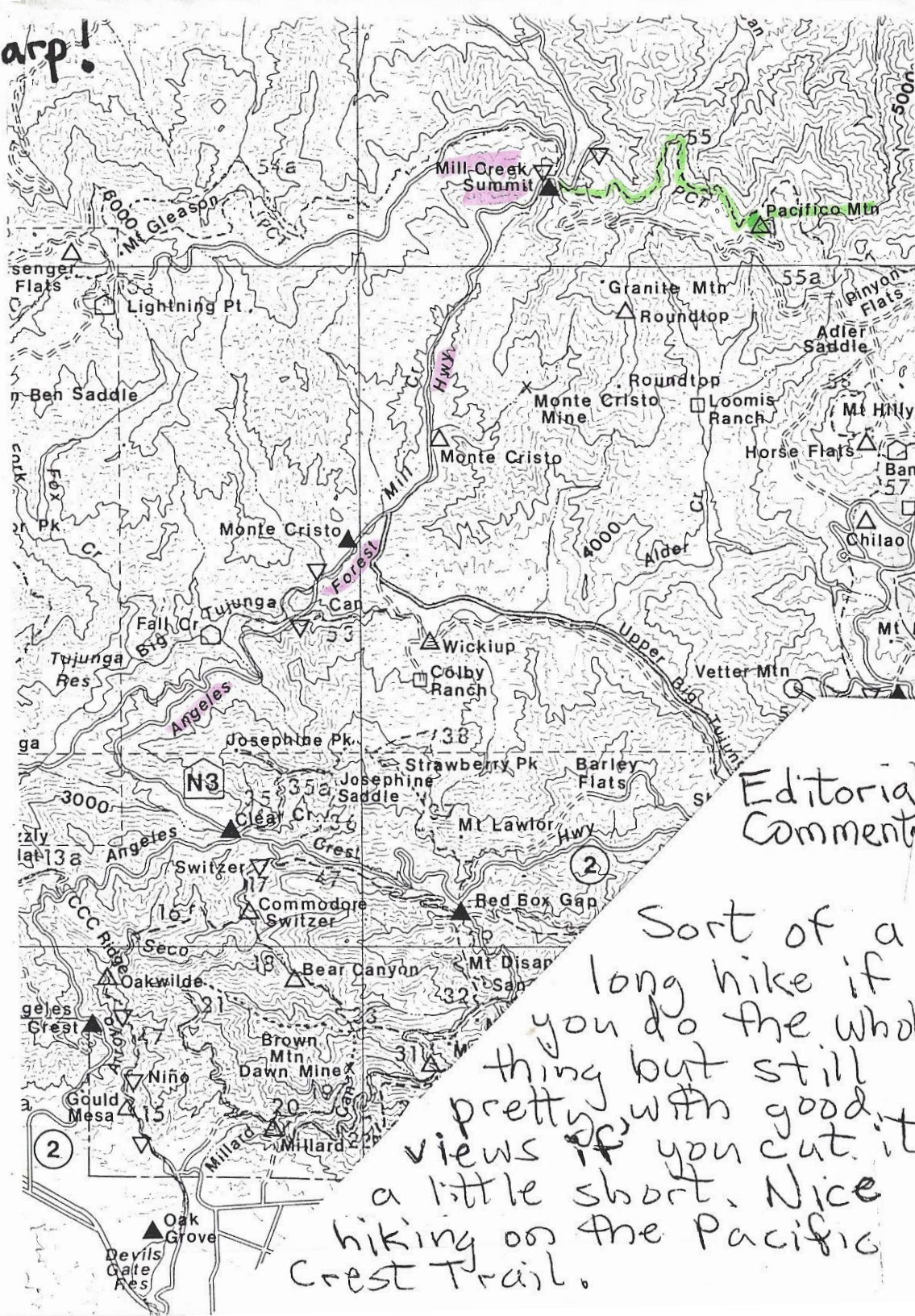
Legend says that Pacifico Mountain and its all-year spring were a hangout of Tiburcio Vasquez and his gang of horse thieves in the 1870s. In fact, the infamous *bandido* supposedly gave it the name "Pacifico" because he could see the Pacific Ocean from the top.

This very pleasant, view-rich trip follows the new, easy-graded Pacific Crest Trail most of the way, then follows a scrambling path 500 feet up the easy west ridge to the summit.

DESCRIPTION

Drive up the Angeles Crest Highway to Clear Creek Junction, then left on the Angeles Forest Highway (L.A. County Road N3) to Mill Creek Summit, 23 miles from La Canada. Park in the clearing on your right, adjacent to the picnic area.

The trailhead is not marked and is difficult to locate amid the clutter of roads, false trails, and buildings. From the northeast (left) end of the parking area, cross the beginning of Forest Road 3N17 and look for a path that climbs, then contours around the mountainside just below and behind the forestry maintenance station. Once you're beyond the station, the trail becomes obvious as it contours, then gently climbs eastward, then northward, through an open forest of big cone spruce and interior live oak, around the head of Tie Canyon. You ascend chaparral-clad slopes to a ridge crest, where expansive views open northward across the Mojave Desert. Then you round the ridge and turn south, intersecting a dirt road. Your trail follows the road ½ mile, then branches left and ascends eastward, then southeast under a cool canopy of spruce, oak and Jeffrey pine. At a forested gap, where the PCT turns northeast, leave the trail and scramble up the open west ridge 500 vertical feet to the summit of Pacifico Mountain.



Editorial Comments:

Sort of a long hike if you do the whole thing but still pretty with good views if you cut it a little short. Nice hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail.