

Hike: Devils Canyon in Chatsworth
Hike Date: July 27, 2005
Start Time: 9:30 AM
Sponsor: Gene Clark

Directions to Trailhead: Turn off the 118 freeway in Chatsworth at Topanga Canyon Blvd and go north to end of Topanga Canyon (about ¼ block north of the freeway). Turn left on Poema Place and in about 1/4th block (first street) turn right on a blacktop road and go about 1/4th block up a small hill and park on the flat dirt area at the top of the hill (no trailhead signs). This is private property, but we have parked here without problems on at least two fairly recent occasions. Alternate parking would be at the bottom of the hill on Poema Place. There are no restrooms at the trailhead.

The main hike: From the parking area on top of the hill go north down a dirt road into Devils Canyon and continue northbound. There are numerous stream crossings as the trail is in or adjacent to the streambed. The last time I hiked here there was enough water – although shallow – to likely get your shoes a little wet with the multiple stream crossings. Although there will likely be less water at hike time it still might be a good idea to bring a dry pair of shoes and socks. Trekking or other poles were helpful also. It is about 2 miles up the canyon to the dam (there was water running over the dam). From there you can continue up the canyon as far as you like and return the same way. Elevation gain is around 200 to 400 feet depending on how far you go.

Other possible options from the dam are as follows:

- 1) Ybarra Canyon: At the dam make a right turn (east) up Ybarra Canyon, which eventually leads to Browns Canyon Road near the 2nd parking lot from the entrance to the new Michael Antonovitch Regional Park along Browns Canyon Road. When I hiked this recently from the dam, the first part was quite overgrown (more like bushwhacking) although there is some semblance of a trail and the worst part doesn't last very long. You can't go very far wrong if you stay close to the stream that runs down Ybarra Canyon. There is one not so easy stream crossing (at least where I crossed) because of banks on both sides 2 or 3 feet high and from a low place on one side you need to walk along beside the stream a short distance to be able to easily get up the bank on the other side. After a short while the trail turns into an old single lane dirt road with considerable shade and pleasant surroundings. About a mile along the trail there are some no trespassing signs, but I believe they just have not been taken down, as I think this is part of the new park acquisition of the Jocelyn Ranch by the Nature Conservancy, but I haven't been able to find any property maps yet. It's about 2 miles to Brown's Canyon road. However, I couldn't go the last ¼ mile to Brown's Canyon Road because of a gate across the intersecting Ybarra Canyon road (asphalt at that point) supposedly due to a wildlife refuge in the canyon bottom nearby. All I could see there were a couple of horses although I guess

there could be more animals nearby. I assume there will eventually be better access from Brown's Canyon Road Parking Lot into Ybarra Canyon.

2) Blind Canyon: Continue north along Devils Canyon north of the dam for about ¼ to ½ mile and take the left fork at the Y where Devils Canyon bends to the right. and Blind Canyon goes to the left. You can go as far as the end (ends in high walls), about 1 ½ to 2 miles, and turn around. I have found fossil shells here in the past with a few large specimens. There is one way out of the canyon perhaps a ½ mile up the canyon by scrambling over some large rocks on the left (west) side of the canyon. I have only done this once a few years ago and I would only recommend this to the most adventures of the group. This is the 2nd group of rocks up Blind Canyon. It comes out to intersect the Johnson Motorway (Jeanne's) hike awhile back and you could go back down the Johnson Motorway and walk down Poem Place back to the trailhead. There is also a short cut back down into Devils canyon that goes through a narrow corridor between some expensive houses.

3) Devils Canyon to Browns Canyon Road: Continue on the Devils Canyon Trail (and perhaps another intermediate road or trail) to Brown's Canyon Road and arrange for a car shuttle back to the trailhead. Cell phones may help as communication backup to radios or arrange a prior pickup. The new Michael Antonivitch Regional Park up Brown's Canyon road is supposed to give access to Ybarra and I believe Devil's Canyon, but although there are at least 3 parking lots no official trails seem to exist yet. The lower parking lot on the left just inside the entrance gives access to some fire roads. The second one about a ¼ mile further up on the right has space for at least 3-dozen cars and is near the upper entrance to Ybarra Canyon. There is a third parking lot quite a bit further up (past the old Nike Base and CCC Camp) near where the blacktop part of Brown's Canyon Road turns to dirt. This is where the dedication of the new Michael Antonovitch Regional Park (acquisition of the Jocklyn Ranch property by the Conservancy) was held which Tom and I attended on Aug. 12, 2004, and to which there is probably a connection to Devil's Canyon although I've not been able to verify this. Elevation gain may be around 1400 feet? At the least there is a great view from there. This site was used for movie scenes and a big tree there was reportedly insured for one million dollars.

Refreshments: At the trailhead. There is no shade.