

CIEC 9 PEAKS AWARD SUPPLEMENT

POSSIBLE ROUTES FOR THE 9 PEAKS AWARD TRIP

As you plan your trip, be aware of 3 regulations in this wilderness:

1. Camp only in designated campsites.
2. No campfires allowed.
3. A wilderness permit is required. Quotas are in effect. Apply for your permit by mail at least one month in advance. The ranger will supply a complete list of regulations with your permit.

You may design your own route as long as it meets the requirements. We recommend but do not require that you make the trip from east to west. This trip can be done as a loop or shuttle trip. We describe here one possible loop trip.

SOUTH FORK TRAILHEAD LOOP

35 mile loop trip, four full hiking days.

Day 1: Park cards at Forsee Creek Trailhead. Hike cross-country north to Jenks Lake Road. Hike east on road to the locked gate. Hike on the dirt road to meet the South Fork trail in Horse Meadow. Take the South Fork trail to South Fork Meadows, then hike to Dry Lake, 10 miles total. Camp overnight.

Day 2: Hike to the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio, 6 miles, camp overnight.

Day 3: Hike to the summits of Jepson, Little Charlton, Charlton, Alto Diablo, Shields, Anderson. 9 miles total. Camp overnight at Anderson Flat or Trail Fork Springs, depending on current water supplies.

Day 4: Hike to the summits of East and West San Bernardino Peaks and continue down the San Bernardino Peak trail to Manzanita Springs. Take the rustic connector trail to John's Meadow, which starts northeast of the Manzanita Springs junction. (This trail does not appear on most maps. It is narrow, overgrown in spots, and very winding, but fairly easy to follow.) Take the John's Meadow trail to the Forsee Creek trail, and hike north on this trail to return to the Forsee Creek trailhead where you left the car. 10 miles total.

SHUTTLE TRIPS

There are 4 possible approach trails to the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio and 3 possible descent routes. You will need to shuttle cars between trailheads.

You will spend Day 1 and Day 2 making your approach to San Gorgonio, Day 3 hiking to the summits of the next six peaks, and Day 4 hiking to the last 2 summits and then to your car.

APPROACHES

The amount of time you have available for hiking on Day 1 will narrow down your choices, as the hiking distance on Day 1 can vary from 1.2 to 7.5 miles.

Fish Creek to San Gorgonio:

Day 1: Leave Highway 38 at Heart Bar. Drive 8 miles over rough, steep dirt road to Fish Creek Trailhead. Hike 1.7 miles to Fish Creek camp. Camp overnight.

Day 2: Hike to the summit of San Gorgonio, 7.4 miles, camp overnight.

South Fork Meadows to San Gorgonio:

Day 1: Park at the paved South Fork Meadows Trailhead parking lot, off Jenks Lake Road. Take the trail to South Fork Meadows and on to Dry Lake, 6 miles. Camp overnight.

Day 2: Hike to the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio, 6 miles, camp overnight.

Grinnell Ridge Trail to San Gorgonio:

Day 1: Park at the trailhead in the South Fork Campground on Highway 38. Hike 5.2 miles to the South Fork Meadows and proceed 2.2 more miles to Dry Lake. Camp overnight.

Day 2: Hike 6 miles to the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio. Camp overnight.

NOTE: The trail leads to the summit of San Gorgonio, but there may be steep snowfields on the South face of the mountain. If these snowfields are present, do not try to cross them. Instead, leave the trail and climb directly up the loose rock slope to the summit.

Vivian Creek to San Gorgonio:

Day 1: Drive to the Vivian Creek trailhead at the east end of Forest Falls Canyon. As you hike away from the parking lot, stay on the dirt road closest to the riverbed. Cross the riverbed where the sign indicates, straight across, and you will find the trail climbing the bank on the far side. Hike up the trail as far as you can, staying at Vivian Creek (1.2 miles), Halfway Camp (2.5 miles) or High Creek (4.8 miles) and spend the night. All 3 camps have reliable running creek water.

Day 2: Hike to the summit of San Gorgonio to camp overnight. The summit is only 8 miles from the parking lot by the trail, but this is the steepest route to the summit, with 5,500 feet of elevation gain.

Day 3: Finding the remaining Summits

The trail along the ridge between San Gorgonio and San Bernardino Peaks does not go to the summits of all the peaks. You must leave the trail and travel cross-country in most cases. Here we describe how to reach each summit.

Jepson

Take your pack with you. One half mile west of the Vivian Creek Trail junction, leave the trail and start climbing up the Jepson Peak ridge, staying close to the steep drop-off. After you find the summit and sign the register, drop down the side of the peak to the southwest, down a slippery slope of loose scree, until you reach the trail. Continue west on the trail.

Little Charlton and Charlton

Leave your packs on the trail. Leave the trail one quarter mile northwest of Dry Lake View. Climb northwest up the steep slope to the saddle between the 2 peaks. Then, hike the ridge between the peaks to the summit of Little Charlton and sign the register. Hike back to the saddle and up the ridge in the other direction to the summit of Charlton

Peak. Sign the register, and hike back down to the saddle and back down to the trail and your packs.

Alto Diablo

Leave your pack by the trail. Alto Diablo summit is only 20 feet above the trail. It is about on half mile past the High Meadow Spring junction. On one side of the trail is a very steep drop-off looking down into a stream canyon. On the other side of the trail is a near-vertical pile of black broken rock. Climb the rockpile and find the summit register.

Shields Peak

Leave your pack by the trail. Shields Peak is a huge pile of broken black rock. The trail travels its length on the north side. Hike the trail alongside the peak and you will find trail climbs to the ridge on the west end of the peak. Leave your pack on the trail at the end of the ridge and scramble east on the ridge until you find the summit register.

Anderson Peak

Leave your pack at Anderson flat. Take the trail one quarter mile past Anderson Flat. Leave the trail and hike southwest up the slope to the summit and sign the register. Hike back to your pack. Camp overnight at Anderson Flat if it has a snowpile for water. Otherwise hike on to Trail Fork Springs and make camp.

Day 4:

San Bernardino Peak East

The peak is next to the trail, after a short hike up a side trail. The trail climbs steadily uphill until it comes to the summit trail, then descends.

San Bernardino Peak West

The peak is reached by a short scramble up the steep slope to the south side of the trail. Many side trails are easily seen leading to it. The trail starts a steep descent after the peak. After you have reached both of these summits, you begin your descent. Choose 1 of the 3 approaches listed below. You would choose according to the distance you are willing to shuttle cars.

DESCENTS

San Bernardino Peak to Camp Angelus:

After completing the last of the 9 peaks, San Bernardino Peak West, continue down the trail past Limber Pine Bench and Manzanita Springs to Camp Angelus, 8.2 miles. This trail drops 4,600 feet in elevation, but is mostly wide, smooth dirt.

San Bernardino Peak to Forest Falls:

After camping overnight at Trail Fork Springs, carry your pack to the junction of the Momyer Creek trail. (The topo map shows the Momyer Creek trail starting one quarter mile east of the San Bernardino East peak, going south to connect with the Alger Creek trail.) Leave your pack near the trail junction and hike to the summits of San Bernardino East and West Peaks. Then, return to your pack and hike down the Momyer Creek trail. This trail crosses steep slippery slopes and has had much damage from rockslides. It is shown on the topo map, but recent reports say this trail is hard to follow and very loose.

The trail meets up with the Alger Creek trail and descends to a parking lot in Forest Falls, two miles west of the Vivian Creek trailhead. Total hiking distance from Trail Fork Springs to San Bernardino East and West Peaks to Forest Falls on the trails described: 11 miles.

San Bernardino Peak to Forsee Creek Trailhead:

Camp overnight at Trail Fork Springs. Day hike from Trail Fork Springs to the summits of San Bernardino East and West peaks, and return to Trail Fork Springs. Total day hike is 5 miles. Then put packs on and hike down the Forsee Creek Trail to the trailhead parking area, a total of 7 miles.

WHEN TO MAKE THE TRIP

In making this decision, you will have to consider the snowpack and water supply. Memorial Day weekend is the earliest weekend you should consider, but is can be difficult in years when there is a deep snowpack. You may find snow as deep as 15 feet on the ridge at this time. In 1992, there was solid snow and ice 10 feet deep above 10,000 feet on Memorial Day weekend, and hikers needed crampons and ice-axes to get through. Mid-June through Labor Day Weekend is reliable. Towards the end of August and during September, you should inquire to the ranger about water supplies at the various springs you may be relying on. The first rainstorm in September or October can bring up to a foot of snow on the ridge. We have come to the conclusion that this wilderness has nine months of winter and three months of summer. Summer begins in mid-June and ends in mid-September. We have found serious winter conditions in this wilderness on May 30 and October 15, so be prepared with appropriate clothing and footwear.

WATER SUPPLIES

Campsites have been placed at all the major water supply points. Some campsites have no water, but may have piles of snow for water supply:

Anderson Flat	no water
Columbine Spring	spring water
Dollar Lake	lake water
Dry Lake/Lodgepole	creek/lake water
Dry Lake View	no water
Fish Creek Camp	creek water
Fish Creek Saddle	no water
Grinnell Ridge	no water
Halfway Camp	creek water
High Creek Camp	creek water
High Meadow Springs	spring water
Jackstraw Springs	spring water
John's Meadow	creek water
Limber Pine Bench	spring water nearby
Red Rock Flat	no water
San Gorgonio Summit	no water (usually has snow)
Shields Flat	no water

Trail Flat no water
Trail Fork Springs spring water
Vivian Creek Camp creek water

REFERENCES

The trails are described fully in San Bernardino Mountain Trails by John W. Robinson, published by Wilderness Press. The map included with the book does not have sufficient detail for use on the trail.

Use USGS 7.5' maps

Forest Falls

San Gorgonio Mtn.

Moonridge

Big Bear Lake

or use 15' map

San Gorgonio Mtn

or use

Trail Map of the San Gorgonio Wilderness by Tom Harrison

Tom Harrison Maps

2 Falmouth Cove

San Rafael, CA 94901-4465

<http://www.tomharrisonmaps.com/online%20order.html>

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Also, consult the San Bernardino National Forest Map.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/forestvisitormaps/sanbernardino/>