

Hidden Jewel in the Santa Ana Mountains

Sitton Peak with Jeff Shimkus

By Suki Reed, OCHC President, as Published in the Orange County Register November 2010

The OC Hiking Club hike organizer: Jeff Shimkus lives in Dana Point and is an Anaheim fire captain and a paramedic. He is also the secretary of the OC Hiking Club and serves on the board of directors



Ellen Loftin takes a celebratory break on the trail. Loftin is a graduate of the OC Rangers Academy.

Trailhead and directions: The trailhead is on the "Candy Store" side of Highway 74, about 25 yards from the store on the ocean side. From the I-5 proceed east on Highway 74 toward Elsinore for 20 miles until you reach the Ortega Oaks Candy Store. The parking area is across the highway from the store. Carpooling is recommended. Adventure passes are required to be displayed in all parked vehicles. Parking passes can be purchased from the Candy Store for \$5/day or from all major retail stores. Annual Adventure passes are \$35.

Length of the trail and elevation gain: This hike is 9.5 miles round trip. There is an elevation gain of about 1,300 feet.

Sitton Peak is a hidden jewel in the Santa Ana Mountains. The Bear Canyon Trail provides a sampling of the area passing through sage brush and meadows, dipping into Pigeon Springs. The trail climbs through gentle brush and meadow country, visits Pigeon Springs, and leads to Four Corners. At Four Corners you will find the intersection of several major hiking trails. Follow the Sitton Peak Truck Trail up to Sitton Peak trail which junctions to the right for spectacular vistas of Southern California. All of the trails mentioned here are well marked with their names and distances from point to point.

Time it takes to do the hike: 5-6 hours.

How much water and what else to bring on the hike: Wear your favorite hiking boots/shoes; a broad brim hat and sun screen are recommended. Layer clothing based on the weather. Bring at least two liters of water, more if the weather is warm and according to your needs. Bring snacks and a lunch. You can stop for lunch at the summit. Don't forget your camera.

Flora, fauna, bushes, trees you might see along the way: Sage, wild buckwheat, oaks, Manzanita, scrub oak, sycamore.

Continued below...

Animals, reptiles and insects you might encounter: Bobcats, foxes, deer, rattlesnakes, gopher snakes, garter snakes, fence lizards and horned lizards.

Vistas and special sights: Views to the west include the Palos Verdes Peninsula to the Coronado Islands and Palomar Mountain. Views to the north include Santiago Peak and Modjeska Peak. View to the east includes San Geronio and San Jacinto.

Possible dangers along the way: Sparse Poison Oak, rattlesnakes, mountain lions (rare).

Best time of year to do the hike: Late fall, winter and also spring when the wildflowers are in bloom. Wildflowers include; California poppies, mariposa lilies, lupine and wild buckwheat.

Something notable about the hike: After the hike, we usually go to Hell's Kitchen, a little road house two miles up the road from the trailhead for lunch.

What people say about the hike: "What an awesome hike with amazing new and old friends." -- Michael Kenney, Santa Ana.

"Spectacular day with great friends. Thank you Jeff--you are a gift! " -- Mary Phillips, Rancho Santa Margarita.

"Perfect weather and a perfect hike! Thanks so much for allowing me to be an honorary member of the Sitton Peak gang!" -- Daniel Haus, a graduate student at UCI studying neurobiology. He resides in Irvine, originally from Minnesota.

The first wealth is health ~ Emerson



Did you know 90% of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease?

February is American Heart Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Heart Disease is the #1 cause of death in the US for both men and women.

About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event. Many chronic illnesses are entirely preventable simply by making changes to our lifestyle. So, make healthy choices and hike on!

**For more information, visit:
<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>**

Saturday Morning

~Miguel Angel Armenta, OCHC Member

The sun is returning from a night down below
birds are calling from the many trees by my window
mostly crows I'm afraid
but It's a fine Sunday morning today

Rollled out of bed and hit my big toe on the carpeted floor
but I'm OK
I had worn my wool socks to bed
and my hiking pants
and my hat
have an early hike planned for this day

My wife hates it when I do that but
oh, well
it's always a great start for my day

REI SPECIAL FOR OCHC MEMBERS ONLY!

Learning to backpack for the first time? OC Hiking Club Members receive 25% off the cost of cost of first time equipment rental at REI.

*Members must provide a printout of the OC Hiking Club event posting at the time of rental.



Take a Hike! Explore OC

As published in the OCDE Wellness newsletter, February 2011



A great way to exercise, make friends, and enjoy the natural beauty of many O.C. locales, is to join the O.C. Hiking and Backpacking Club. The club has over 6,500 members who participate in up to 100 hikes and events every month. Sponsors include Disneyland, REI, and O.C. Parks and Recreation. Membership is free; however, members are required to sign a waiver before participating.

Jim von Tungeln, a teacher for Alternative Education, is one of the club organizers who leads a fun and scenic group hike especially suitable for those new to hiking. The hike runs through one of the most beautiful canyons in Orange County, with a clear view of the Sand Canyon reservoir and the green fields of Strawberry Farms Golf course. A hiker can enjoy panoramic and picturesque views of the hills, and perhaps a wild deer or two as the group proceeds to its destination at Turtle Rock Community Park.

After a short break, the group makes its return journey along the same route. The less than two hour hike has a distance of 5.5 miles round trip, with an elevation gain/loss of approximately 566 feet. The multi-use trail is a combination of paved trail and hard packed dirt.

This hike takes place every other Monday evening with a meetup time of 6:00 p.m. The starting and ending point is in front of Natraj's Tandoori at 6751 Quail Hill Parkway, Quail Hill Village Center, located in Irvine, 92618. The phone number for Natraj's is 949-509-1800. To find Jim, "Look for a tall guy in front of Natraj's Tandoori."

For your hike, bring water, a snack, and anything else you need to be comfortable and safe. It is a good idea to bring a flashlight. It can also get cold, so layers of clothes are important. Good walking shoes are highly recommended. Well behaved dogs are also welcome.

To RSVP for this hike, please visit:
<http://www.meetup.com/OC-HIKING-com/#calendar>

Taking Teens to the Top!

- Bell Canyon Hike -

OCHC Hike Organizer Mitch shares photos from his monthly outing with local teens.



For more information about upcoming Taking Teens to the Top! events, check out the OCHC calendar
<http://www.meetup.com/OC-HIKING-com/calendar/>

My World in Balance

By Christina Casad, OCHC Member

Why do I walk?

Aside from the need to get some fresh air or exercise the dog, there's something else that pulls me out of the house even when I might not always feel up to a walk. It's difficult to explain to people who don't love the outdoors but it's as if Nature is calling.

For motivation, I remind myself that once I get moving, I'll feel better than I did before I ventured out. I always do. Inevitably I look around and admire the trees towering above me, enormous clouds floating overhead, a beautiful flower-filled landscape all around me, and then it hits me! Gratitude and appreciation suddenly take the place of negative thoughts or concerns of the day and I regain perspective - my world is back in balance.

I've learned that when I'm called by Nature, it's best to listen and get outdoors!



Indian Canyons hikes/ Fern Canyon/Vandeventer trail with Rod
January 22, 2011

- Trail Tip -

A large trash bag can be a pack cover in case of rain; a poncho (cut a hole for your face near a corner, the point of the corner covers your head); a pack liner for stream crossings; you can make a pillow from leaves; you can pick up trash, too.

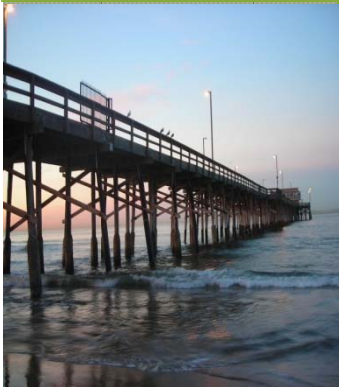
– OCHC Office

Did you know we have Hike Brochures available for our most popular hikes?

Check them out:

http://www.oc-hiking.com/orange_county_hikes.htm

Suki Reed in the OC Register!



Suki Reed, President of OC Hiking Club, is a writer for the Orange County Register. Past articles include topics such as hiking for stress relief, camera tips, and favorite local hiking spots. Look for her articles on the back page of the Outdoor Section every Monday. Past articles can be found at:

<http://www.ocregister.com/fi/search?q=suki+reed>

OCHC Business Directory

Reach more customers **AND** get a tax deduction! The OC Hiking Club is creating a Member Business Directory where you can promote your business or organization to more than 6,000 local customers. Contact Kate at sponsorship @oc-hiking.com for more information.

Sponsor Kids in Need of Nature!

Is your company looking to make a difference in the life of a child? Corporate sponsorships are needed for the OC Hiking Club's Kids in Need of Nature program. Contact Kate at sponsorship @oc-hiking.com for more information. All donations are tax deductible.

Special Thanks To Our Business Partners:



A BIG thank you to OC Parks for their generous sponsorship of the MileMarker newsletter!