



## BIG PINES AREA HIKES

East / Moderate / Strenuous

### EASY

**Big Pines Interpretive Trail** - 1/2 mile Walk along the hillside behind Big Pines Ranger Station. Learn about some of the native plants and trees in the area. Trailhead up the rock stairs behind Big Pines Ranger Station.

**Table Mountain Interpretive Trail** - 1/2 mile Learn some of the trees of the area as well as some highlights of the surrounding mountains. Pick up a trail brochure at Big Pines Ranger Station or at the trail box. Trailhead on the south side of the entrance to Table Mountain Campground.

**Lightning Ridge Nature Trail** - 1/2 mile Interpretive trail highlighting some of the area's flora and fauna, as well as some of its natural history. Pick up a trail brochure at Big Pines Ranger Station. Trailhead behind restroom building at Inspiration Point and goes down to the right.

**Grassy Hollow Loop Trail** - 1 Mile - Walk along a section of the 2000+ Mile Pacific Crest Trail thru southern California old growth forest. See part of the 1997 Narrows Fire and its various stages of regrowth, as well as various wildflowers in summer. Trailhead- Across from the Grassy Hollow Visitor Center on the north side of the picnic area, take trail north to intersection of paved service road, return .50 to Visitor Center.

### MODERATE

**Big Horn Mine** - 3 miles RT - (500 ft elevation gain/loss +/-) See some of the remnants of the once most prosperous gold mine in these mountains. Excellent views of the Sheep Mountain Wilderness and Mt. Baldy, the San Gabriel's highest peak. Trailhead 5 miles west of Big Pines on the south side of Vincent Gap parking area. Trail begins behind the gate along the old mining road. Stay straight on the road/trail until it ends. Caution: DO NOT attempt to enter the mine or its infrastructure as it's extremely unstable and dangerous, as well as illegal.

**Table Mountain Loop Trail** - 2 miles RT- (500 ft +/-) Trail follows the entire perimeter of the Table Mtn Campground. Enjoy views of the Mojave Desert, the North Slope, and Blue Ridge. Trailhead on north side of the entrance to Table Mountain Campground.

**Blue Ridge Trail** - 4 miles RT (1,100ft +/-) Big Pines to the top of Blue Ridge where it intersects the Pacific Crest Trail at Blue Ridge Campground. Periodic Views of Swarthout Valley through moderately dense coniferous Forest. Trailhead is across from Big Pines Ranger Station near the exit for Mountain High Ski Area

**Inspiration Point to Jackson Flat Campground** - 4 miles RT (500 ft +/-) Walk along the PCT from Lightning Ridge, past Grassy Hollow Visitor Center, and up to the top of Jackson Flat Campground. Enjoy numerous vistas of the highest peaks in the San Gabriels, Jackson Lake and the Mojave Desert. Trailhead is 2 Miles West of Big Pines at Inspiration Pt. Trail begins behind the restroom building and up to the left (northwest), upon reaching the highest point 21 miles at Jackson Flat Campground, you can either return the way you came, or walk a short distance south through the campground to the paved access road, then back down to the Visitor Center and PCT. For a 15 mile shorter version, you can also begin at Grassy Hollow Visitor Center.

### STRENUOUS

**Mt. Baden-Powell** - 8 Miles RT (2,800 ft +/-) One of the more popular hikes on the Angeles National Forest, which is named for the founder of the Boy Scout Movement. 41 switchbacks will take you to the summit of one of the higher peaks of the San Gabriels where you will get 360 degree views of the LA Basin and



### YELLOW YARROW

Golden Yarrow is a flowering plant in the daisy family which is also known by the common name yellow yarrow.



### CALIFORNIA MULE DEER

Generally, the California mule deer likes to roam a hill terrain, especially an oak woodland habitat. It typically takes over 90% of its diet from shrubs and leaves and the balance from grasses.

Mojave Desert. Near the tree line at 9,000 ft, see some of the oldest living trees on earth, in the 1000 yr old+ Limber Pine. Trailhead- 2 miles west of Grassy Hollow at Vincent Gap parking lot.

**Pine Mountain** - Mt. Baldy (N. Devil's Backbone Trail) 4-8 miles RT (2,000ft +/-) Likely the most difficult hiking trail in the area. The trail climbs along razorback ridges and up a few moderate semi-technical climbing stretches about 2 miles to the summit of Pine Mountain to continue to Baldy, keep heading Southeast another strenuous 2 miles up and down over Dawson Peak to Mt. Baldy, the highest peak in the San Gabriels. Walk through lodgepole forest and then along barren ridgelines with outstanding views. Be on the lookout for Bighorn Sheep. **Trailhead** - travel 1 mile east of Grassy Hollow to Inspiration Pt. Turn Left on 3N06 (East Blue Ridge Road) and go approximately 8 miles to a small turnout on the south side of the road. Note: Road is closed in winter, and this trail is often not recommended until after Memorial Day due to snow and ice. Once open, this dirt road is usually OK for most passenger vehicles.

**Throop Peak 4.5 miles RT** - a moderate walk, but at high elevation through mature Sugar Pine and Lodgepole forest to one of the best panoramas in the San Gabriel's. **Trailhead** - travel approximately 6 miles west of Grassy hollow on Hwy 2 to Dawson Saddle. Trail begins 100 ft east of Dawson Saddle, on south side of road. 2 miles in at the jet of the Pacific Crest trail, head west for about 100 yards to the faint unsigned trail on the right which ascends a steep 1/4 mile to the summit of Throop Peak. Note: trail open only when Hwy. 2 is open in summer.



### RACCOON

Raccoons are round, furry, bush tail creatures with a black mask that covers their eye area. These animals may look cute and cuddly but they can be aggressive when approached.



### WESTERN FENCE LIZARD

Western fence lizards are medium-sized lizards that can be up to 8.4 inches long. Their back and limbs are covered in darker gray, tan, or brown scales with darker waves or blotches. Their underside is white or yellow, although adult males have large bright blue patches surrounded by black on their belly and throat.



### MOUNTAIN BUSH LUPINE

A native shrub which tends to grow at elevations from 3300-9800 ft.



### GRAY SQUIRREL

Grey squirrels live in hollow trees or in nests built of twigs and branches. The squirrels line their nests with grass or moss. Including their tail, they can measure up to 24" long.





## TABLE MOUNTAIN NATURE TRAIL

Trail Length: 0.5 Mile, Walking Time: Approx. 30 min.

Welcome to the Table Mountain Nature Trail in the Angeles National Forest. Many forms of life make up a forest where plants and animals live together. Their survival depends upon interaction with each other. We invite you to observe and experience some of these interactions by taking this 30-minute walk through your Angeles National Forest. Numbered posts along the trail refer to the story in this handout. Please do not smoke along the trail. To help protect the ecological balance of the forest, please do not remove any items from the area and stay on the trail at all times.

### 1. JEFFREY PINE

Many things affect the vigor and health of forest trees. This Jeffrey pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*) has a lightning scar. Once scarred, insects may easily enter the tree through the scar and attack the damaged tree. Insects destroy the living tissue just under the cambium layer, interrupting the flow of nutrients and fluids, and eventually can kill the tree. Many people don't realize that old age can also weaken trees and make them more susceptible to insects and damage by the elements. So generally speaking, a younger forest is a healthier forest.

### 2. CANYON OAK

Notice how some plants can grow and survive on almost solid rock. This canyon oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) forced its roots into the breaks of the granite and found moisture and nutrients essential for the tree's survival. Other less hardy trees which need more moisture or deeper soil would never survive in this location.

### 3. BLUE RIDGE

Early pioneers named the skyline ridge you see across the canyon "Blue Ridge." Notice the even-aged appearance of the trees, a result of logging that occurred in this area a number of years ago. Blue Ridge offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, and various winter sports. It is an integral part of the watershed and serves as a home for wildlife.

### 4. PLANT SUCCESSION

(Looking south, across from the number post.) Here in this

open area, you can observe a step in the process of "plant succession." This is the order in which one plant type replaces another plant type over a period of time as conditions of moisture, sunlight, and soil change. Notice the young pine trees among the oak trees. Gradually the pines will take over this area. As this occurs, the pines will receive most of the sunlight, moisture, and space, slowly crowding out and killing the oaks.

### 5. A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

From a young stand of pine trees, each struggling for survival - competing for sunlight, moisture, and soil nutrients, only a couple reached maturity, like this nearby large fellow. Trees weaken because of competition and become susceptible to destruction by insects or the elements.

### 6. DECOMPOSITION

Within this secluded glen of black oaks you can observe the decomposition of leaves, twigs, and other organic material which cover the forest floor. Soil formation results from a breaking down of organic material by soil organisms, insects, and the weathering processes. This decomposition is necessary because it returns nutrients to the soil that was used when the vegetation was alive and growing. Note: The blackened trees you see along the trail are the result of numerous wildfires.

### 7. MT. BADEN POWELL

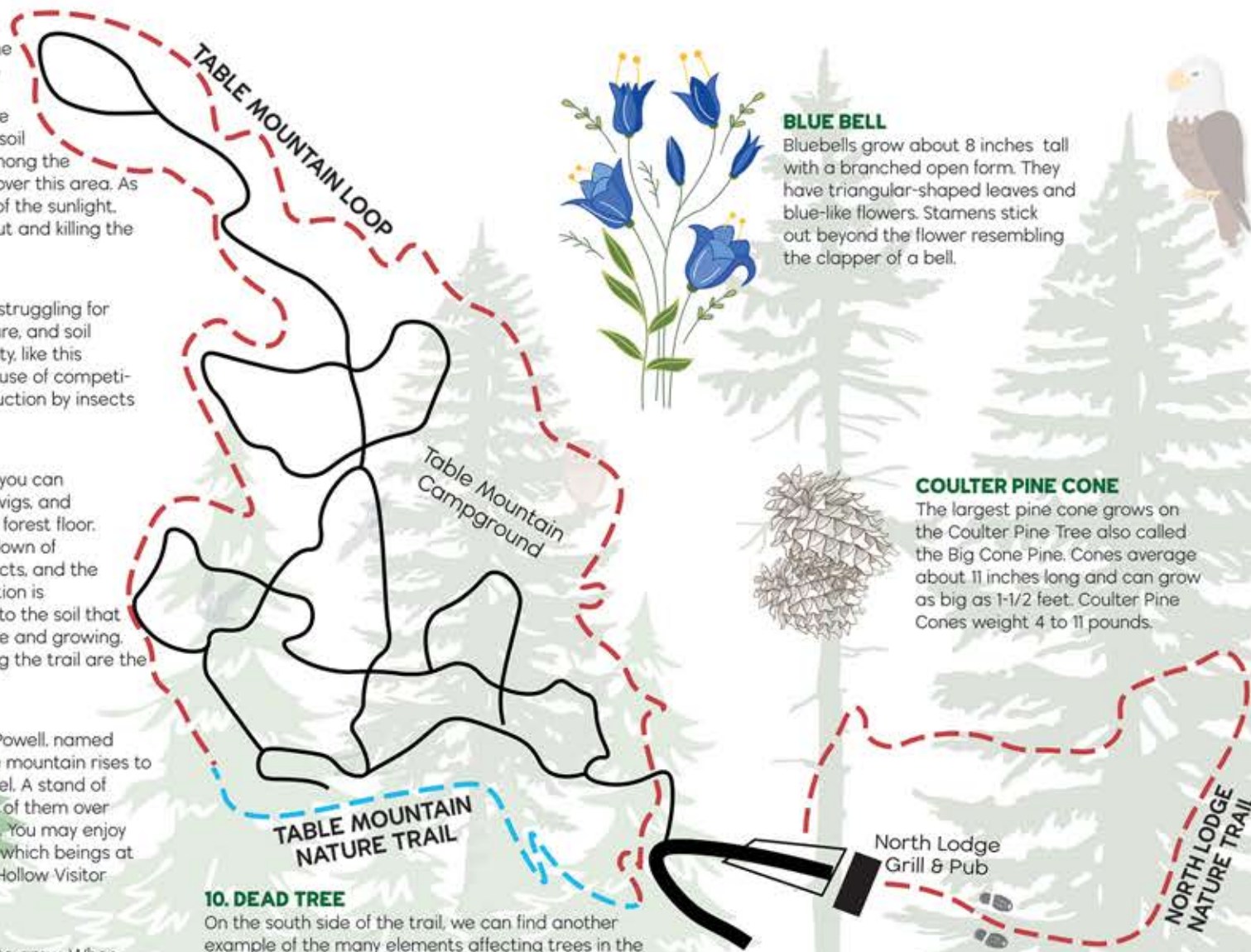
In the distance you can see Mt. Baden Powell, named after the founder of the Boy Scouts. The mountain rises to an elevation of 9,400 feet above sea level. A stand of ancient limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), some of them over 2,000 years old, grows near the summit. You may enjoy taking the four-mile trail to the summit which begins at Vincent Gap, 2.6 miles past the Grassy Hollow Visitor Center, on the Angeles Crest Highway.

### 8. BIGGER AND STRONGER

You know plants need sunlight in order to grow. When large plants shade out smaller plants, their growth may be slowed. The ground beneath this large pine does not receive enough sunlight to encourage the growth of shrubs and higher plant forms. Also, the extensive root system of the tree collects much of the available moisture and soil nutrients.

### 9. TREES AND WATER

The branches and leaves of trees and other vegetation slow the fall of raindrops. The roots help bind and hold the soil in place. Thus, plants provide us with cleaner and clearer water by gradually filtering moisture from rainfall and melting snow into the water table of the earth rather than running off rapidly, causing excessive erosion or earth movement.



### BLUE BELL

Bluebells grow about 8 inches tall with a branched open form. They have triangular-shaped leaves and blue-like flowers. Stamens stick out beyond the flower resembling the clapper of a bell.

### COULTERS PINE CONE

The largest pine cone grows on the Coulter Pine Tree also called the Big Cone Pine. Cones average about 11 inches long and can grow as big as 1-1/2 feet. Coulter Pine Cones weigh 4 to 11 pounds.

### 10. DEAD TREE

On the south side of the trail, we can find another example of the many elements affecting trees in the forest. Drought and beetles affect our trees. These dead trees, once strong and healthy, finally succumbed to the ravages of fire.

### 11. CAT FACE

Fire often destroys living forests. The fire scar, also known as "cat face," is the dark remnants of the trunk at the bottom of the downed tree on the south side of the trail. (You'll have to backtrack on the trail to see the lower trunk.) Many times trees can survive with large visible scars at the base, but insects may gain entrance through such a scar. At sign #11, you can see galleries of the engraver beetle which invaded the heartwood of the tree. These insects eventually killed the tree which had survived the fire.

### 12. MARKER (OPPOSITE NUMBER POST)

A surveyor from the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department placed this marker here when they administered the Big Pines area in the 1930's. It serves as a reference point for maps used in management of the area.

This is the end of the Table Mountain Nature Trail. You may return to the starting point by going back the way you came or by walking up toward the picnic table where you will see the road up through the campground. Go right if you wish to return to the entrance of the campground.