

Know Your Place:

West Fork Scenic Bikeway to Glenn Camp Campground



Overview

This 12 mile route runs along a paved road open only to non-motorized traffic (except for maintenance and emergency services). Heading West this route is mostly a gradual uphill, while the return trip heading East is a fun coast downhill. The trailhead is usually pretty crowded with families enjoying a dip in the river, but once you make your way West a few miles, the crowds really thin out and you can almost feel like you have the place to yourself. Gets very busy on weekends, so if you have a chance to come by on a weekday, you'll encounter less crowds. Unfortunately, getting to the trailhead will require a vehicle. There is no public transit to get here, and although you can definitely ride up Highway 39 all the way to the trailhead via bike, that may be too much for a family ride with children.

From Interstate 210 in the City of Azusa, take the Highway 39/Azusa Avenue exit and head north. Beyond downtown Azusa, Highway 39 passes the Forest Service's San Gabriel Entrance Station and enters the National Monument. Continue on Highway 39 (a.k.a. San Gabriel Canyon Road) past San Gabriel and Morris Reservoirs. About 7 miles from I-210, continue past a right turn that leads over a bridge to the East Fork Road. Continue

straight on Highway 39 another 1.5 miles, past the OHV area, to where the road crosses the West Fork. There are parking areas just before and just beyond the bridge. The West Fork National Bikeway Trailhead starts on the south side of the bridge and heads up the West Fork. You will need to purchase a \$5 Adventure Pass to park at the gated West Fork Trailhead. You can usually purchase it at the San Gabriel Entrance Station that you pass on the way up Highway 39, but they're currently closed due to the pandemic. You can also purchase an Adventure Pass ahead of time at Big 5 Sporting Goods or other participating businesses. There has been high demand for these passes lately, so we recommend trying to get your pass ahead of time. You can get more information on these passes and where to buy them here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/r5/passes-permits/recreation/>

Ride Logistics

Link to self-guided route: <https://izi.travel/browse/43c9919d-bff5-48b7-9d1d-365f848bf6d0/en>

Link to route only: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/33483812>

Cue sheet:

Leg	Dir	Type	Notes	Total
	→	Sharp Right	Turn sharp right onto Devils Canyon Dam Truck Trail	0.0
6.1	←	Left	Turn left	6.2
0.0	→	Right	Turn right onto Devils Canyon Dam Truck Trail	6.2
6.2	←	Sharp Left	Turn sharp left	12.3

San Gabriel Canyon Gateway Center



While not officially part of our bicycle route, the San Gabriel Canyon Gateway Center is an important point of interest. Currently closed due to the pandemic, the center can usually offer you a restroom, water, someone that can answer your questions, and a place to buy the \$5 Adventure Pass for your car. Located at 1960 N. San Gabriel Canyon Ave in Azusa, you pass the center while heading North up Highway 39. You can always check before you go to see if they'll be open by calling 626-574-1613.

Outside of the center is a native garden with informative signs.



The trailhead

We made it to the trailhead! Once you've parked and displayed your Adventure Pass, make your way South towards the picnic area. There you'll see stairs that lead down to a bridge that crosses the river and takes you to the paved road. You can also get back on Highway 39 to enter the paved trail through the locked gate that faces the highway, but if you want to avoid traffic altogether, the stairs are your only option.

There are restrooms here but they can get pretty disgusting. There's another vault restroom at the end of our route in Glenn Camp that's usually open and in cleaner conditions. There's no running water except for the West Fork. Make sure to bring plenty of water with you.

Just like you are here during the summer, the indigenous community of Asuksangna would make their way up into the mountains as spring gave way to summer. The city of Azusa is named after this original indigenous settlement.

If you can, take some time to lift your water bottle and make a toast all who have cared for these lands, from thousands of years ago to today.

West Fork San Gabriel River

We're now on Devil's Canyon Dam Truck Trail, also known as Forest Route 2N25.

Along with the North and East Forks, the West Fork is part of the headwaters (or the source) of the San Gabriel River. Just to the east of where our route begins, the North Fork joins the West, and together they flow into the San Gabriel Reservoir, where they join the East Fork.

Along our route, this section of the West Fork receives the tributaries (in order from East to West) of Bear Creek, Big Mermaids Canyon, Little Mermaids Canyon and finally Chileno Canyon.

As you start your ride West, keep an eye out to the North to see if you can spot the Bear Creek, Big Mermaids Canyon, Little Mermaids Canyon and Chileno Canyon. These all play a part in feeding the West Fork River.



Glenn camp

This road is a bikeway that goes on for 29 miles. Check out this description for more info on all this has to offer ([link to pdf](#)).

For us tho, this is where our route ends. This is Glenn Camp Campground. This is a no-fee campground (except for the Adventure Pass required to park at the trailhead) and the road you took to get here is designated a National Scenic Bikeway! This campsite is walk or bike in only, although physically challenged groups may obtain a permit to drive to the campground. You can get more information on this camp site and how to get a permit at this link:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recrea/angeles/recrea/?recid=41774>

This would be a great spot to take a break and enjoy the canyon.

If you're so inclined, this can also be a great opportunity to practice some Leave No Trace Principles.

<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/dispose-of-waste-properly/>

This site has a vault toilet - but what to do if you have to pee or poop in the outdoors? The answer for pee is pretty straightforward: water a bush, preferably at least 100 feet (or 40 adult steps) from running water, a hiking trail, or camp. Pooping in the wilderness is a little more involved.

Cat holes are the most widely accepted method of pooping in the outdoors. They should be at least 200 feet (or 70 adult steps) from water, trails and camp. They should be 6-8 inches deep and covered with natural materials when business is done. The idea here is to keep the feces out of water. Over time, the decomposing feces will percolate into the soil before reaching water sources. Avoid areas where water visibly flows, such as sandy washes, even if they are dry at the moment.

Take a 15 minute break to count out 70 adult steps, or 200 feet (if you can measure it). Is the distance more or less than you thought it would be? How hard or easy do you think it would be to find a spot 70 steps away from water, camp, or the trail to dig a cat hole?

Santa Ana Sucker Fish

As you make your way back downhill, think about how annoying it would be if you had to stop and climb over a rockslide every 2 miles on your way back. This is a little bit like what the Santa Ana Sucker Fish has to deal with.



This fish is endemic to Southern California - which means it only exists here. It's our very own special fish. It's considered a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

While dams and reservoirs (such as the Cogswell Dam 1 mile West of Glenn Camp)

help provide Angelenos with what we need to survive, they also damage the habitat of animals such as the Santa Ana Sucker Fish.

Once you're done with your ride, see if you can look up 3 facts about the Santa Ana Sucker Fish. Send your 3 facts to info@la-bike.org or tag us on social media for a chance to win some free goodies. Chance to win ends September 1, 2020.