

# Mountaintop Adventures

## Arrowhead

Clean air, blue skies, mountain lakes, challenging trails, and beautiful views of the valley below are some of the surprises awaiting visitors to the San Bernardino Mountains. During the spring and fall, clouds cover the valley floor, and the mountains are bathed in sunlight. The lush green forest slopes are like islands rising above the sea of civilization.

Most of the mountaintop is public land. The Forest Service is the largest land manager, but there are also state and county parks. Over forty thousand people make their home here, and the resorts of Arrowhead and Big Bear attract thousands of visitors. There are also deer, bighorn sheep, mountain lions, coyotes, bald eagles and hawks. Most of the trout in the streams are planted, but in a few remote areas native trout swim in the cold, fresh creeks.

Maps describing 22 adventures on the mountaintop, are available for \$1.50 each at the Big Bear Discovery Center. Guides to mountain bike trails, off-highway vehicle roads and hiking trails are also available.

### Adventure #3: Rim of the World Scenic Byway

This 110-mile route traverses the entire mountain range, from Cajon Pass to San Geronio Pass. You will experience a diverse and remarkable landscape while viewing the highest mountains in Southern California. The highway is part of the National Scenic Byway System, so watch for signs along the way. Interpretive panels at Heaps Peak, Meadow's Edge Picnic Area (Big Bear) and Barton Flats Visitor Center (summer only) tell the story of the early inhabitants in the mountains as well as the wildlife you can find today.

**Directions:** Take Highway 138 East exit from I-15 in Cajon Pass (elevation 2,940 feet). Follow the highway until it meets Highway 18 just past Crestline. Follow Highway 18 along the rim of the mountains to Big Bear Lake. Begin following Highway 38 on the north side of the lake, crossing the lake at the east end. The Byway begins climbing with Highway 38 over Onyx summit (8,443 feet) and then drops into Barton Flats, a



Children's  
Forest

forested flatland  
above the Santa  
Ana River.

Continue downhill through Mill Creek Canyon to the forest boundary near Mill Creek Ranger Station (2,750 ft). Access to I-10 is close by via Yucaipa or Redlands.

**Distance and time:** The round trip from San Bernardino is about 175 miles. Plan to spend all day enjoying the sights. You can access the Byway via Hwys 18 (Waterman Canyon) and 330 (City Creek) for shorter trips.

**Seasons:** The highways are open all year, but snow can fall almost any month! Be sure to check mountain weather before beginning your trip. Some of the best views are during early mornings in winter. At other times smog in the valleys can obscure the views.

**Points of Interest:** Silverwood Lake, Heaps Peak Arboretum, Keller Peak Look-Out, Children's Forest Visitor Center, Big Bear Discovery Center, Big Bear Lake, Onyx Summit (with views of the San Geronio Wilderness), views of Santa Ana River Valley, and Mill Creek Canyon.

