

Troop 212, Spring Backpack Trip, May 14-15, 2016

The May backpacking adventure will take us to the San Jacinto Mountains. This trip is designed for beginning backpackers with an additional hike with minimal gear to summit Mt. San Jacinto encouraged for all scouts: the view from the summit is spectacular! Our journey will begin on Saturday, early morning, with a two-hour drive to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. We will park there and board the tram (see additional cost detailed below). Mt. San Jacinto sits above the Palm Springs area. The tram climbs 5873 feet from the desert to the mountain forest to an elevation of 8,516 feet. Once disembarking the tram and taking 15 minutes to acclimate to the new altitude, we will hike three miles to Tamarack Valley, our base camp at an elevation of 9040 feet. The hike to Tamarack Valley is three miles with an elevation gain of 740 feet. The backcountry campsite is furnished with outhouses. However, as a California State Wilderness Park, no fires are allowed. Water is available at a stream NEAR camp. You may wish to bring extra empty water bottles for cooking. Of course, each backpacker should carry a minimum of two liters of water from the tram.

After setting up our tents, removing non-essentials from our packs and eating a quick sack lunch, we will summit Mt. San Jacinto, up to 8.2 miles round trip. This hike could prove to put your map and compass skills to a real-live test!

Saturday evening and Sunday morning will be in camp. Sometime late Sunday morning, as determined by your SPL, we will return to the tram and the waiting cars far below. Sunday lunch will be our typical fast-food stop en-route to the church.

For this trip, troop packs will be handed out at the Monday meeting, May 9th, along with collection of money and permission slips (must use the NEW permission slip. On Thursday, May 12, our standard mandatory final "bag check" will be held at the church at 7pm, room location to be determined. At this time, we will distribute the backpacking food for Saturday supper, and Sunday breakfast, stoves, fuel, tents, and maps thereby enabling hikers to finish loading their packs before we depart early (and rapidly) Saturday morning...Each backpacker will be responsible for his/her own Saturday lunch.

Daytime temperatures are expected to be in the 40s -50's but it will be below freezing at night. Any remaining snow will be slushy during the day so be certain that your boots are waterproofed and you carry extra dry socks for tent use. Be prepared for sun, snow, wet, cold and FUN!

Important Days and Costs:

\$20 / \$10 covers 1 trail dinner and trail breakfast + \$10 for gas. **Please bring \$30 cash/check (drivers \$20) to the troop meeting on Monday, May 9th, with the standard (new) permission slip,** which can be found on the website. Troop packs will be checked out at this meeting.

TRAM FARE TO BE PAID BY EACH BACKPACKER ON SATURDAY DIRECTLY TO THE TRAM OPERATOR. The published prices are for ROUNDTRIP: Adult (13+) = \$24.95; Child (3-12) = \$16.95; Senior (65+) = \$22.95. Additional Tram information can be found at <http://www.pstramway.com>.

Thursday, May 12th at 7:00 PM – our standard mandatory final "bag check" will be held at the church at 7pm, room location to be determined, where we will also distribute the backpacking food, stoves, fuel, maps and tents, enabling hikers to finish loading their packs for final weigh-in.

Saturday, May 14th at 5:00 AM – Church parking lot. Please arrive promptly before departure for a quick visual pack inspection and vehicle loading. We intend to take 8:00 AM tram up the mountain for a full day of fun. We will leave the church parking lot no later than 5:15. PLEASE DO NOT HOLD THE GROUP BY BEING LATE. (A scout is Courteous!)

Sunday, May 15th¹, at 3:00 – 4:00 PM, back at Church Parking Lot. Please do not depart for home until all troop gear has been accounted for and your SPL has dismissed you.

Equipment:

As a minimum, the following items should be packed in a backpack (NO black duffel bags):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate clothing (Day mid-50's/Night-20's)<input type="checkbox"/> Brim Hat and warm hat for nighttime<input type="checkbox"/> Pocket Knife<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight (small is best)<input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen and Chapstick<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit<input type="checkbox"/> Compass<input type="checkbox"/> Hiking boots, extra socks<input type="checkbox"/> Boot spikes/crampons<input type="checkbox"/> Trek/ski poles (spiky)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ground Cloth<input type="checkbox"/> Poncho/Rain Gear<input type="checkbox"/> Small baggy of Handy-wipes, Toothbrush & paste<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper & trowel<input type="checkbox"/> water bottles – 2 liters minimum (“camelbak” not recommended)<input type="checkbox"/> Mess Kit (utensils, bowl, mug, etc)<input type="checkbox"/> Whistle<input type="checkbox"/> Trail Map (see website)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Warm Jacket<input type="checkbox"/> Matches or Flint<input type="checkbox"/> Pencils, Pens, Notebook<input type="checkbox"/> Rope – 10 Feet<input type="checkbox"/> Warm Sleeping Bag and Pad<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Small towels<input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses<input type="checkbox"/> Money for Sunday lunch
--	--	--

Important Equipment Notes:

1) Hiking conditions at present are 0-30 inches of snow that is in a “freeze-thaw-slush” state. That is, the snow melts in the daytime and re-freezes at night. In sunny areas there may be no snow but lots of mud. All this results in mixed conditions from icy crust that can be very slippery, especially in the shade to tramping around in the mud. **Three pieces of equipment are highly recommended:** 1) ice spikes for your shoes, and 2) a pole with a spiky end, such as a trekking or ski pole. Two poles may be advantageous over just one. (If you have a ski basket on the end, better, but not necessary.) Please note: a standard hiking staff (such as we often distribute at the trailhead) will be insufficient as the end is not pointy. Both pieces of equipment can be purchased at a reasonable cost. Ice spikes are can be loaned from the troop; ski poles may be available for loan from members of the troop. Finally, 3) hiking boots that are properly water-proofed.

2) May temperatures will range from the teens at night, to the 50's during the day. Prepare accordingly.

3) Please keep in mind that a full backpack should be no more than one-fourth the weight of the scout carrying it. Remember to plan for your share of food and troop gear distributed Thursday.

John Douglas