

# Chilao Visitor Center

## ANGELES National Forest

### *Los Angeles River Ranger District*



The Chilao Visitor Center is located within the Charlton-Chilao Recreation Area, a beautiful portion of the Angeles National Forest. At an elevation of 5,280 feet, it is located on State Highway 2 about 27 miles north of the city of La Canada, CA (off Interstate 210).

The Center offers an introduction to the Forest through a variety of exhibits, trails and activities. Nature trails leading from the building and 20 indoor exhibits introduce visitors to themes of national forest management, history of the San Gabriel Mountains, forest wildlife and recreational opportunities.

Admission is free. When staffed, the Center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday to Monday. Groups are welcome anytime. Advance notice is required if a program is requested. Teachers should call at least two months in advance, as January through June dates often fill up early.

Programs may be arranged by calling (818) 899-1900. The Center's parking area is designed to accommodate buses, motor homes and vehicles which are equipped for disabled visitors.

The Chilao Amphitheater is the location of most programs where a Forest Naturalist will introduce you to some of the secrets of the Angeles National Forest revealed as the seasons change. During the summer months you can join a Naturalist on a nature walk, participate in a children's activity, or attend an evening program.

Several nature and hiking trails are just a short distance from the Visitor Center. The Pacific Crest Trailhead at Three Points is only 2 miles away. The San Gabriel Wilderness is accessible at Three Points and Devil's Canyon Trailheads (1/4 mile away).

Adjacent to the Visitor Center is the Chilao Picnic Area. Picnic sites (tables and barbecues) are designed to accommodate small groups as well as sites for large groups.

Not only is this a lovely spot during the summer, but when snow blankets the area after a winter snowfall, beginning cross-country skiers find the area a good place to practice. However, the picnic area is closed Nov. 15 to April 1.

A cabin which once was the West Fork Ranger Station sits behind the Visitor Center. It was built in 1900 by Ranger Louie Newcomb, and was the first Forest Service ranger station in the San Gabriel Mountains - the second in the United States.

The cabin was originally located where Shortcut Canyon joins the West Fork, but was moved to Chilao and restored in the early 1980s. It stands as a memorial to the pioneers whose job it was to manage and protect the San Gabriel Timberland Reserve (renamed the San Gabriel National Forest in 1907, and the Angeles National Forest in 1908).

One mile from the Visitor Center is the Chilao Campground which contains two loops with over 80 family campsites. Campsites within the campground offer a variety of outdoor experiences from the grassy meadow to panoramic views of valleys and peaks.

Coulter and Meadow group campgrounds are also located in this area. Reservations are required for sites at both locations and may be made by calling (877) 447-6777 or online at recreation.gov.

Please respect those camping nearby. Quiet hours at campgrounds (no loud music, vehicles, generators, etc.) are from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.

For more information about the Visitor Center, conditions and activities call (626) 796-5541, or contact the Los Angeles River Ranger District at (818) 899-1900.

