Santa Ana River Valley

A drive through forest and chaparral, with the opportunity to dip your toes into a mountain river – and see how that quiet mountain river can tear apart the landscape during flash floods!

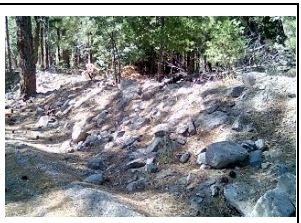
The first leg of this journey is 6 miles one-way along Seven Oaks Rd., a well-maintained dirt road. A scenic drive through both heavy woods and chaparral, alongside the Santa Ana River. There are many opportunities to pull alongside the road and wade into the (cold) waters of the Santa Ana River.

The second leg of the trip takes you along Front Line Road, another dirt road that climbs above the river, paralleling Highway 38. You will exit the dirt road at the South Fork of the Santa Ana River. You will then take Highway 38 through Barton Flats and then back to camp.

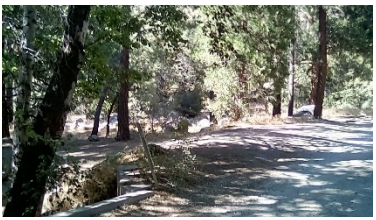
NOTE: Seven Oaks Rd. is usually passable by all vehicles, Front Line Rd. is not as well maintained. While 4-WD is not necessary, we recommend only higher clearance vehicles for Front Line Rd.

Front Line Rd starts here. Recommended for higher clearance vehicles. See mile-marker 5.5, in text.
41700 California 38
33 min
12.3 miles
SANGOSS CAMP
Jenks Lake Day Use Area
Whispering Pines Trail 1E33
38
33

Santa Ana River Valley/Seven Oaks Rd	
0.0	Start at the main camp gate, leading out to Highway 38. The area north of Highway 38, is part of camp property – in fact, almost 2/3 of the camp is on the north side of the highway! From the main camp gate, turn RIGHT on HIGHWAY 38.
0.3	 As you drive down Highway 38, you might catch a glimpse of the Tahquitz Lake off to your left. Camp property is on both side of the highway. At GLASS RD, turn LEFT.
	After you make the turn, if you look left you will see a gate across a dirt road. That road is used by the Wrangler program to get down to Jenks Meadow. It parallels highway 38 and ends at the far end of the Tahquitz Lake. For a few minutes you will be off camp property.
0.5	 This is the first of 3 bridges on this windy county road. You are crossing Hathaway Creek. You will see this creek from the highway if you return to camp via Front Line Rd.
0.6	You have once again entered Section 17 (the legal description of Camp Tahquitz). In fact, camp property is now on both side of the road, including much of the hill in front of you.
0.8	 You have reached the second bridge. Although Hathaway Creek looks quiet, looks can be deceiving! In July 2000 a sudden flash flood raged down from the mountains, turning this small quiet stream into a raging torrent!

	As soon as you cross the bridge, look to the pile of rocks on the right. These – and more along both side of the road - are remnants of the rocks that were washed up and over the bridge, destroying this stretch of road. Some of the rocks that covered the road were as alarge as a V.W. Bug! 
1.6	Right before the third bridge, tucked into the left, is the gated road to Lower Meadow. Officially known as "Jenks Meadow", this is where Lester Jenks – builder of the Jenks Lake – spent the last years of his life. A few of the apple trees he planted at the turn of the century can still be found around the edge of the meadow.
	You are approaching the third bridge of Glass Rd. You can see rocks piled up along the sides of the bridge. These rocks are from the "Valentine's Day Flood" of 2019 (we'll see more results from that flood later in the trip). As a side note, as you cross the third bridge you are now leaving camp property. However, off to the left you can still see some of the deep forest around Lower Meadow.
2.2	Ahead of you, on the other side of the valley, is the Big Bear Ridge. The ski resorts of Big Bear start at the top of that ridge. Of course, if you are the driver - don't focus on the ridge. Watch the road, as the "10 MPH" sign is warning you of an oncoming hairpin turn!

2.3	The dirt road to the left is United States Forest Service (USFS) Road 1N86. If you were to take this very rough road you would ford across Barton Creek (the bottom corner of Section 17), drive past Middle Meadow, and eventually end up on Highway 38 - of course, if you tried to get to Highway 38 with this road, your journey may be blocked by a landslide!)
2.4	Starting to the east at South Fork, the Santa Ana River Trail (SART) is a hiking and biking trail that follows the Santa Ana River, eventually ending up at Angelus Oaks. The trail crosses both sides of Glass Road.
	You are now at the bottom of the valley. Be sure to turn RIGHT onto Seven Oaks Road. (Stay on the road, heading left if you want to visit the small "resort" of Seven Oaks).
2.6	The collection of mailboxes alongside the road are for the cabins and camps that are located scattered across the valley.
	The road on the left leads to Camp Radford, the oldest youth camp in the area (established by City of L.A. in 1919), as well as USFS Converse Station, the oldest fire station in the area. The road then turns into (USFS 2N06) and climbs up and over the Big Bear Ridge.

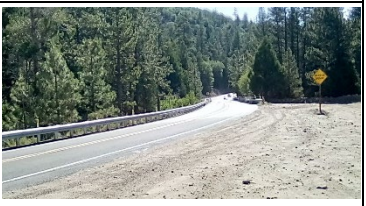
	Ahead of you is Sugarloaf, the most prominent peak of the Santa Ana River Valley. The first surveyor of the area stayed at a local camp while he was doing his work. He was so impressed by the camp cook that he named this peak after his favorite dessert that she prepared for him.
3.0	The yellow sign is telling you that the pavement ends, as the Seven Oaks Rd continues as USFS 1N45. Although it is a dirt road, it is well maintained due to the number of cabins and camps along the road…unless there is a flash flood!
	When the pavement ends, there is a small parking lot on the right. If you stop here and cross the road you will find a few interpretive signs, giving more information on animals and former residents of the Santa Ana River. Keep going, and soon you will cross the river over a small bridge.
3.1	Right after the bridge is an example of the many nice spots, like this pull out on the left (there is also another one on the right) where you can stop and walk down to the river. This is especially nice on a warm summer day. 
	Three are many cabins, like this one on the left of the road, that dot the valley. Starting in the early 20th Century, the USFS permitted private cabins on forest lands. Some of these cabins, with 20-year renewable permits, have passed down from generations. (These are PRIVATE cabins, please respect their privacy).

3.6		This single-line pole brings power to the camps and cabins of the valley. The line starts in Redlands, climbs to Angelus Oaks, goes down to Seven Oaks, and then winds its way through the valley floor, bringing power to the cabins and camps located along the river.
4.0	Across the river on the right is Camp Wasewagan, one of the larger camps in the greater Barton Flats. Like many camps in this valley, campers must cross the river to get to their camp!	
4.		Leaving Wasewagen, you will enter a deep forest. On the left is sign of erosion caused by a river that raged outside of its banks during the Valentine's Day Flood.
	As you continue, you can see on the right other remnant of the flood: trees that were knocked down, and piles of rocks caught in roots. Look out - single lane bidge ahead!	
4.5		Entrance to Camp Alandale, one of the smaller – as well as one of the newer - camps in Barton Flats. From 1988-2015 this was Camp Metoche, sponsored by the Bellflower Baptist Church.
	After Camp Alendale, and before you reach the next bridge in ½ mile, there are many nice spots to pull out and go down to the river. For years this was a well-known Trout fishing stream.	

5.0		After crossing the bridge, the road starts to climb, leaving forest and entering chaparral.
5.1		The U.S. Forest Service motto is "land of many uses". In addition to youth camps, hiking, recreation, fishing and private cabins, ranching has been allowed here since the 1860's.
5.4		To the right is the entrance to River Glen Camp. This is the site of UniCamp, a service of UCLA students. Starting in 1928, over 450 UCLA students provide program for more than 1200 inner-city youth every summer.
5.5		**IMPORTANT!** Read carefully before continuing! **Turn RIGHT to continue along the Seven Oaks Road**. **However, the road no longer goes to Highway 38** (The road is washed out ahead.) If you turn left, you will be on Front Line Road, and arrive at highway 38 after 2 miles (Front Line Road descriptions starts on the next page). **Front Line Road is not recommended for low clearance vehicles.**
		Over many decades, the Santa Ana river would flood, overflow its banks, and carve away at this hillside creating landslides and erosion. The most recent event was the infamous Valentrine's Day Flood of 2019..

6.0	The road ends here, washed out by the Valentine's Day Flood of 2019. Although you cannot go any further, this is a great place to park, have a picnic, and walk down to the river. When finished you can return to camp the way that you came, or go back to the "Y" to Front Line Rd

Front Line Road to Highway 38 *Mileage resets at 1N45/1N04 split, listed above at mile marker 5.5*	
0.0	After returning from the washed-out Seven Oaks Rd, reset your mileage counter and turn left as you start out on Front Line Rd (USFS 1N04) This narrow road will bring you to Highway 38 in approximately 2 miles.
	Cactus in the mountains? While you might not think of cacti in the mountain forests, you're entering chaparral again. You are also on the "dry" side of the valley, as this side of the mountain slope does not get as much rain as the other side. So, you shouldn't be surprised to find cacti alongside the road.
0.4	If you are a passenger, look out to your right and you can see the Seven Oaks Rd. was washed out by the 2019 flood (if you are a driver – keep your eyes on the road!)
0.9	That scar on the mountainside? That's Highway 38, leaving Barton Flats and descending along the side of the mountain to meet the Santa Ana River. You'll be there soon!

2.0	As you start down, you will be leaving chaparral and coming back into the forest. Some of the curves on the road at this point are narrow, so look out for approaching traffic. The cabins of the valley floor will soon begin to re-appear.	
2.1		The flash of metal on the right? That's the bridge for Highway 38 as it crosses the West Fork of the Santa Ana River. You're almost there!
2.2	Front Line Rd ends here, and you can access Highway 38. Watch for traffic, and then turn right and head over the bridge. As soon as you cross the bridge the South Fork Campgrounds will be on your left.	
2.4		As you cross the bridge, on the right is a parking lot for the start of the Santa Ana River Trail (the same trail that crossed Glass Rd. earlier). This is also where the Seven Oaks Rd. would have accessed Highway 38, before it was washed out in the middle! Highway 38 will now start to climb back up to Barton Flats.
3.2	There is a turnout that will give you a good view of Sugarloaf Mountain. From the top of the San Gorgonio ridge the bare spot on Sugarloaf is said to look like a running deer…. *we're not so sure of that…so we'll let you decide*.	
3.7		You have finished your climbing! To your left is Jenks Lake Road East; on your right is a turnout. The mailboxes there are for the camps and cabins located along Jenks Lake Road East. There is also another access to the Santa Ana River Trail.

4.1	On the right is Greyback Amphitheatre, where the Forest Service frequently holds night-time programs during the summer.	
4.3	There are three public campgrounds coming up on the right-hand side: Lobo-Oso ("Wolf-Bear"), San Gorgonio, and Barton Flats. 	
		On the right is a very rough road labeled "Not Maintained by the County". If you were to drive up this road (or better yet, bike up the road) you would eventually end up on Barton Road at the camp's back gate.
5.7	There is a parking spot on the right side of the road; if you were to park here and cross the road you would be at the trailhead for a biking/hiking trail up to Jenks Lake.	
5.9		On the left is the Barton Flats Visitor Center. Below the tall telephone pole on the right is a small cement pad where once stood a pay phone. For many years (long before cell phones), there was no public phone at camp and staff members who wanted to call home, or their girlfriends, had to walk down to this phone. In the 1970's it was jokingly called the "Man Phone" since you had to be a "real man" to walk down the dark and spooky road to get to this phone at night after campfire.

6.1	You are now crossing Hathaway Creek. As soon as you cross the bridge, Glass Road will be on your right. Glass road will take you down to Seven Oaks and the Santa Ana River. When you cross Glass Road you have also re-entered Camp Tahquitz property, which is now on both sides of the road.
6.2	 As you leave Glass Rd, on the right you might be able to catch a glimpse of the Tahquitz lake between the trees. You will soon be back at the Camp's main gate. **Welcome home!**

Special thanks for the assistance of Christian Hochhausler and Matt Downs for their assistance in developing this guide.

Please note!
The information provided by Camp Tahquitz/Long Beach Area Council BSA is for general information purposes only. While we try to keep this information current and up to date, the status of roads and trails outside of Camp Tahquitz may change without warning, and there is no warranty or representation to the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or to the suitability of the road for your vehicle. Families undertake these activities at their own initiative, and Camp Tahquitz cannot be held liable for any injuries or property loss.