

## Planning a Provisional Trip

- Consult the online peak lists of the Sierra Peaks Section (<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/sps/spslist.htm>), Desert Peaks Section (<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/dps/dpslist.htm>) and Hundred Peaks Section (<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/hps/hpslist.htm>). Each peak's entry contains its altitude, location (topo quad) and the class of the most common route. If you're planning an "M" provisional, look for 3<sup>rd</sup> class for summer trips over rock or 2<sup>nd</sup> class for snow trips. Read archived trip reports; these will describe the most common routes and the conditions encountered.
- Don't settle for the standard routes. An unorthodox route, if it's within your ability, could make a great provisional. For example, every HPS peak has a fairly straightforward standard route; but several have nonstandard routes that, depending on the season, can be M or even E-rated. But if you're planning a non-standard route, be sure you make that clear in your write-up.
- If you're planning an "I" trip, it doesn't have to be a peak climb. Think about leading a cross-country exploration to lakes, mines and other back-country features.
- Consult recent newsletters. Read a year's worth of the SPS Echo, the DPS Desert Sage or the HPS Lookout or read a few months worth of the Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities (<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/outingsDB/index.aspx?SearchType=TOD#SearchForm>) and you'll get a pretty good idea of the most commonly led peaks. Choose a peak that you don't see frequently in the newsletters. You'll learn a lot more on your provisional trips exploring an area that's new to you than you could possibly learn from visiting trampled ground.
- Read a guidebook such as R.J. Secor's *The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes and Trails* or the classic *Starr's Guide to the John Muir Trail and the High Sierra Region*. Resist the temptation to read one chapter. Read the whole thing. You just might find an area you want to explore. Remember, the whole point of a provisional trip is to learn something.
- Before you pick a destination, recruit an evaluating leader. Ask someone with whom you've hiked before. Look for someone whose leadership style you like and whom you think could teach you a lot.
- Before you submit your write-up, discuss the planned trip and route with the sponsoring outings chair and your evaluating leader. Get their take on its suitability as a provisional trip.
- Plan early to meet publication deadlines, particularly for the Angeles Chapter Schedule.
- Plan for times when the weather most likely will cooperate. No, you can't predict the weather or snow depth or water depth in the creeks three or six months ahead of time. But you can, with a little thought, rig the odds in your favor by choosing months when the conditions are likely to be favorable. In other words, if you want to do a rock climb in the Sierra, don't schedule it between November and April. If you want to do a snow climb and it absolutely must be in May, plan a route on a north-facing slope.