

## Sam Fink Peak 28P- Star Emblem Peak

Lat/lon 33.775976,-116.621774  
UTM 11S 535020E 3737381N

Elevation: 7339'

View Caltopo [map](#) or download [GPX](#)

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Sam Fink Peak on [Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: Riverside County, about 6 miles east of Idyllwild, 112 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Tahquitz Peak (LO), Red Tahquitz

Land Manager: San Bernardino National Forest, San Jacinto Ranger District (909) 382-2921

**USE AT YOUR OWN RISK. CONDITIONS MAY CHANGE, AND UNEXPECTED HAZARDS MAY BE PRESENT.**

### About the peak

This peak is named for Hundred Peaks Section leader R. S. Sam Fink. Sam almost single handedly built a trail from Red Tahquitz to Antsell Rock that came to be known as the Sam Fink Trail. This trail was subsequently incorporated into the PCT when it was created. Sam was also the second person, after Weldon Heald, to complete 100 peaks and the first to complete the HPS list. HPS gives out their highest service award every year in his name.

Although Sam Fink Peak is a bit off the beaten track, with most area hikers focusing on the more western portion of the San Jacinto area, Route 1 is an interesting and varied hike. Starting from the Devil's Slide Trail, it travels through the alpine forest of the San Jacinto Plateau where ferns may cover your path in the spring, to catch the sometimes overgrown (but manageable with careful route finding) Caramba Trail until it reaches Tahquitz Creek. The creek is generally easy to cross but is often too deep or strong to cross in springs with heavy snow melt. From there it winds its way to the rocky summit, with unique views of the steep canyons of the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation that descend nearly 7000 feet to the city of Palm Springs below, with San Jacinto Peak to the northwest and the Desert Divide to the south.

Wildfire notes: The 2013 Mountain Fire was started by an electrical malfunction at a ranch in the Garner Valley and burned large patches of the San Jacinto Wilderness including portions along Tahquitz Creek east of Skunk Cabbage Meadow. The Caramba Trail from Reeds Meadow and the Cedar Trail from Willow Creek Trail to Laws were wiped out and are now overgrown.

Special conditions: Crossing Tahquitz Creek may be difficult or dangerous during periods of high water.

Wilderness permits are required under all circumstances. Permits are limited to 12 hikers. Permits may be obtained from the Idyllwild Ranger Station just off SR 243 at 54270 Pine Crest Road. There

is a self-issue permit stand outside of the ranger station. A quota applies between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Permits may be obtained in 90 days in advance from:

San Jacinto Ranger District

54270 Pinecrest

P.O. Box 518

Idyllwild, CA 92549

Voice: (909) 382-2921

Fax: (951) 659-2107

Historical notes: Peak 7339' is not named on the USGS or USFS maps. In 1999 the Hundred Peaks Section named this peak for R. S. (Sam) Fink, one of the original players of the "hundred peaks game" in the 1940's. Sam Fink was the second person (after Weldon Heald) to climb 100 peaks in southern California. He was the first to complete the HPS List, and was the first to complete it a second time. From the late 1960's until the mid 1970's Sam cleared a route from Red Tahquitz south over South Peak to Antsell Rock, known as the Sam Fink Trail. Today, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) follows much of this route.

The Hundred Peaks Section's highest award, given annually, according to Section Bylaws, "made in recognition of distinguished overall service to the Section," is named for Sam Fink.

Sam Fink Peak has 1 official HPS route:

## Sam Fink Peak Route 1- From Devils Slide Trail

Distance: 14 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 1, strenuous

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Adventure Pass may be required

Gain: 4500

Time: 7-9 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Easy

Road type: Paved

### Driving directions:

- Drive I-10 to Banning. Exit at 8th Street (SR 243). Note your odometer and go as follows:
- At 0.2 mile, turn left.
- At 0.7 mile, turn right on San Gorgonio Avenue.
- At 1.4 miles, keep left on SR 243.
- At 25.0 miles, Idyllwild Ranger Station (San Bernardino National Forest) on the left. Turn left on Pine Crest Avenue. Note your odometer and go as follows:
- At 0.6 mile, intersection. Make a half right on South Circle Drive.
- At 0.7 mile, Fern Valley Drive on the left with a sign "Humber Park". Turn left.
- At 1.2 miles, fork. Keep left.
- At 2.2 miles, trailhead on the left. This is the climbers trail for Suicide Rock. Keep straight.
- At 2.6 miles, Humber Park. Park here.

### Hiking directions:

- The Devils Slide Trail begins at the upper right corner of the parking lot. From this trailhead (6500'), hike up the trail 2 1/2 miles to Saddle Junction (8100'). At this point there are four trail choices.
- Take the Willow Creek Trail for 1.1 miles.
- When the trail begins to veer north toward Hidden Lake Divide and Long Valley, leave the trail and follow a faint use path/deer trail east down a ridge and then down to Willow Creek. This trail is locally known as the King Trail and avoids the bad bushwhacking on the old trails that burned in the Mountain Fire.
- Cross Willow Creek north of Laws Camp (7400'), climb over a low ridge, cross a tributary of Tahquitz Creek, and climb slightly to rejoin the old Caramba Trail.
- Follow the faint remains of the Caramba Trail to Caramba Camp (6600'), 3.7 miles from Saddle Junction.
- Cross Tahquitz creek at the south side of Caramba Camp. Follow a use trail past Tahquitz Creek to the overlook campsite on the slope.
- Climb the slope southerly, curving around to the left staying about 50 yards below the cliffs until you reach a ridge, or one can take a bearing on the saddle from Caramba Camp and

hike along the bearing to the saddle through open country. The climb to the saddle is steep and about 500'.

- Cross the ridge and contour around until you reach the saddle at 7200'.
- Turn left (southeast) and scramble to the summit.

**Additional Route 1 notes:**

