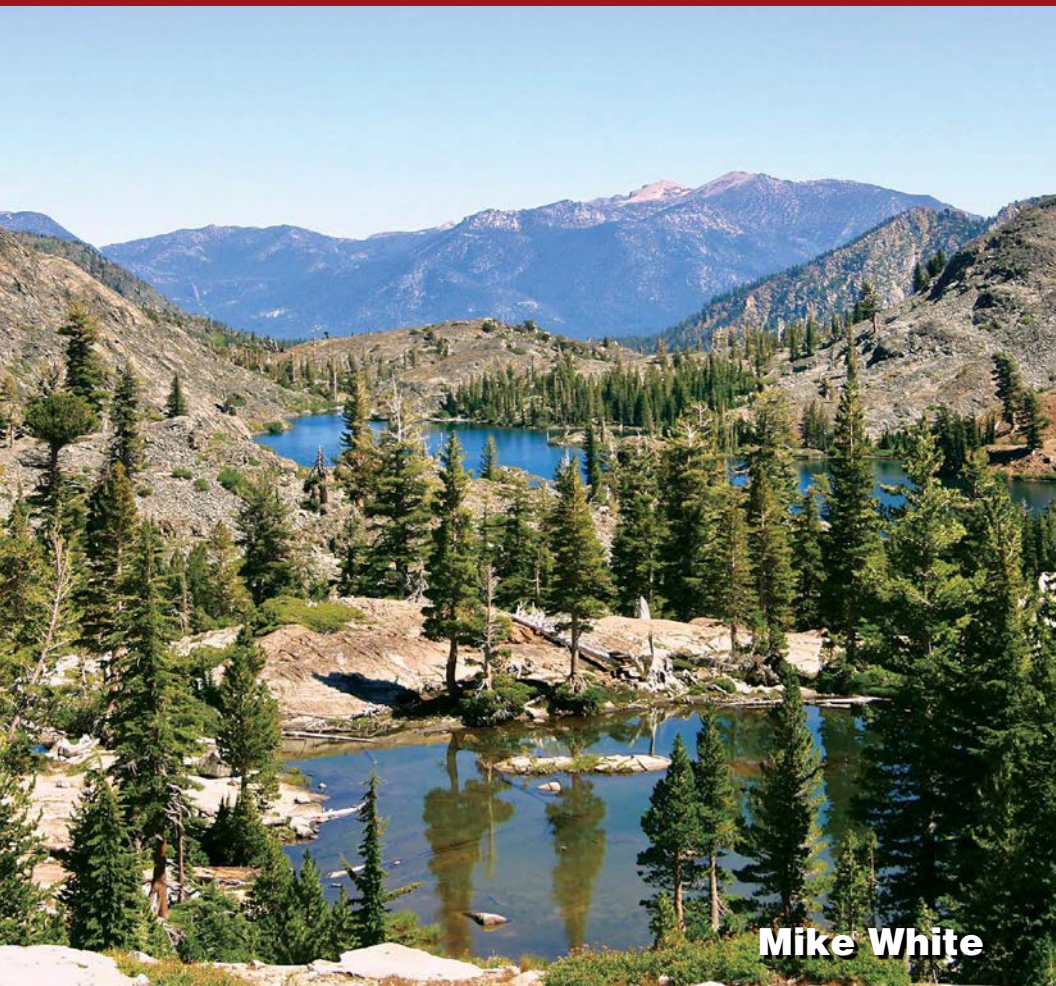




Lake Tahoe

59 MUST-DO HIKES FOR EVERYONE



Mike White

WILDERNESS PRESS



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Lake Tahoe Trails

Trail Number/Hike Name		Difficulty*	Length in Miles	Type*	USES & ACCESS								
					Hiking	Running	Biking	Horses	Child-Friendly	Dogs Allowed	Wheelchair Access	Camping	Permit
1. North Tahoe													
1	Mount Lola (p. 24)	4	10.4	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎	👨👦	🐕		🏕️	
2	Sagehen Creek (p. 28)	1	5.0	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎	👨👦	🐕			🏕️
3	Glacier Meadow Loop and Summit Lake (p. 31)	1–3	0.5–6.9	↗	👤	🏃		🐎		🐕		🏕️	
4	Frog Lake Overlook and Frog Lake (p. 36)	4	12.2	↗	👤	🏃		🐎		🐕		🏕️	
5	Warren Lake (p. 40)	5	15.0	↗	👤	🏃		🐎		🐕		🏕️	
6	Castle Peak (p. 46)	5	9.6	↗	👤	🏃				🐕			
7	Castle Valley, Round Valley, and Andesite Peak (p. 50)	3	9.6	↻	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎	👨👦	🐕		🏕️	
8	Point Mariah (p. 55)	3	6.3	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎		🐕			
9	Loch Leven Lakes (p. 60)	4	8.0	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎		🐕		🏕️	
10	Mount Judah Loop (p. 65)	3	4.6	↻	👤	🏃		🐎	👨👦	🐕			
11	Pacific Crest Trail: Donner Pass to Coldstream Valley (p. 69)	5	13.2	↘	👤	🏃		🐎				🏕️	
12	Granite Chief (p. 75)	5	5.0–10.2	↗	👤								
13	Five Lakes Basin (p. 80)	3	4.0	↗	👤	🏃				🐕			
14	TRT: Tahoe City to Truckee River Canyon Viewpoint (p. 83)	4	10.8	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎		🐕			
15	Incline Meadow Trail to Peak 9,561 and Gray Lake (p. 86)	4	9.2	↻	👤	🏃				🐕			
16	Mount Rose (p. 91)	4	10.0	↗	👤	🏃				🐕			
17	Rim to Reno Trail (p. 95)	5	18.0	↘	👤	🏃		🐎		🐕		🏕️	
18	Upper Thomas Creek (p. 100)	5	16.4	↻	👤	🏃		🐎		🐕			
19	Tahoe Meadows Nature Trails (p. 104)	1	0.8–3.3	↻	👤	🏃			👨👦	🐕	♿		
20	TRT: Mount Rose to Relay Peak (p. 109)	4	11.4	↗	👤	🏃	🚴			🐕		🏕️	
21	TRT: Tahoe Meadows to Diamond Peak Saddle (p. 115)	4	11.4	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎		🐕			
2. West Tahoe													
22	TRT: Ward Creek to Twin Peaks (p. 125)	4	11.6	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎		🐕			
23	PCT/TRT: Barker Pass to Twin Peaks (p. 129)	4	11.2	↗	👤	🏃	🚴			🐕			
24	Ellis Lake and Ellis Peak (p. 133)	4	8.6	↗	👤	🏃	🚴			🐕		🏕️	
25	Bear Pen (p. 137)	4	13.4	↗	👤	🏃	👤	🐎		🐕		🏕️	
26	General Creek Trail to Lost and Duck Lakes (p. 141)	3	13.0	↗	👤	🏃	🚴	🐎	👨👦			🏕️	
27	Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park Nature Trails (p. 146)	1	0.25–1.7	↗↻	👤				👨👦		♿		
3. South Tahoe													
28	Tahoe Yosemite Trail: Meeks Bay to Tallant Lakes (p. 159)	4	16.0	↗	👤	🏃		🐎		🐕		🏕️	🏠
29	D. L. Bliss State Park: Rubicon Point & Lighthouse Loop (p. 164)	1	2.0	↻	👤				👨👦				

*See the Trails Table Legend on page xviii.

Introduction to Lake Tahoe

Tall mountains covered with a thick blanket of conifers surround the breathtakingly blue lake, creating a stunning, alplike setting, which is famous around the globe. Whether you plumb the depths of Lake Tahoe, climb to the summit of the highest peak, or journey somewhere in-between, the Tahoe Basin provides many opportunities to appreciate the grandeur of one of the West's most priceless treasures.

Geography and Topography

The Lake Tahoe Basin presents diverse topography that receives adoration from a devoted tourist base. At an elevation of 6,229 feet, Tahoe is the highest lake of its size in the United States and, with a depth of 1,645 feet (measured near Crystal Bay), it's the third deepest lake in North America as well as the tenth deepest lake in the world. The 22-mile-long and 12-mile-wide lake has a 71-mile-long shoreline, with 42 of those scenic miles belonging to California and the remaining 29 owned by Nevada. Lake Tahoe is perhaps best known for the crystal clarity of its waters, which allows visibility of up to 75 feet below the surface. Sixty-three streams flow into Lake Tahoe, but only one, the Truckee River, flows out of the lake, reaching its terminus in the Great Basin, at Pyramid Lake.

Geologists speculate that the landform that would ultimately become the Tahoe Basin we know today was once beneath a shallow ancient sea in the supercontinent of Pangaea. The North American Continental Plate eventually broke away from Pangaea and headed west, colliding into the Pacific Ocean Plate, which was drifting east. Extreme pressure and heat were created as the North American Plate rose above the Pacific Plate, producing molten rock that slowly solidified beneath the sedimentary surface into granitic rocks, which were later exposed through faulting.

Faulting fractures in Earth's crust allowed blocks of land to rise and fall, pushing the primarily plutonic rocks of the Sierra Nevada up from the ancient seabed. Two principal faults evolved in the Tahoe area, which produced uplifts that became the main Sierra Crest to the west and the Carson Range to the east. In between, the down-thrown fault block formed the deep V-shaped valley of the Tahoe Basin.

A lake began to form at the lowest, southern end of the basin, fed by precipitation and creeks draining the surrounding mountains. The level of the lake rose steadily, until an outlet for the river draining the lake was reached to the north, near the current town of Truckee. Later, a significant lava flow from Mount Pluto, site of the Northstar California Resort, dammed the outlet and caused the lake to rise again. Eventually the river was able to cut a new outlet through the volcanic rock, near the present-day Tahoe City. The highest level Lake Tahoe ever reached was an estimated 600 to 800 feet above the current level. Additional volcanic activity occurred at both the south end of the basin, around Carson Pass, and the north end of the basin, near Donner Pass.

Though a regional ice sheet was absent, in theory the last ice age put the finishing touches on the Tahoe Basin. Separate rivers of ice followed some of the existing V-shaped stream channels, carving them into classic U-shaped canyons. Glacial action

On the Trail

Every outing should begin with proper preparation, which usually takes only a few minutes. Even the easiest trail can turn up unexpected surprises. People seldom think about getting lost or injured, but unexpected things can and do happen. Simple precautions can make the difference between a good story and a dangerous situation.

Use the Top Trails difficulty ratings and trail descriptions to determine whether a particular trail is a good match for your fitness and energy level, given current conditions and time of year.

Have a Plan

CHOOSE WISELY The first step to enjoying any trail is to match the trail to your abilities. It's no use overestimating your experience or fitness—know your abilities and limitations, and use the Top Trails difficulty rating that accompanies each trail.

LEAVE WORD ABOUT YOUR PLANS The most basic of precautions is leaving word of your intentions with family or friends. Many people will hike the backcountry their entire lives without ever relying on this safety net, but establishing this simple habit is free insurance. It's best to leave specific information—location, trail name, and intended time of travel—with a responsible person. If there is a registration process available, use it. If there is a ranger station or park office, check in.

REVIEW THE ROUTE Before embarking on any hike, be sure to read the entire description and study the map. It isn't necessary to memorize every detail, but it is worthwhile to have a clear mental picture of the trail and the general area. If the trail or terrain is complex, augment the trail guide with a topographic map. Park maps, as well as current weather and trail condition information, are often available from local ranger stations and at trailheads.

Carry the Essentials

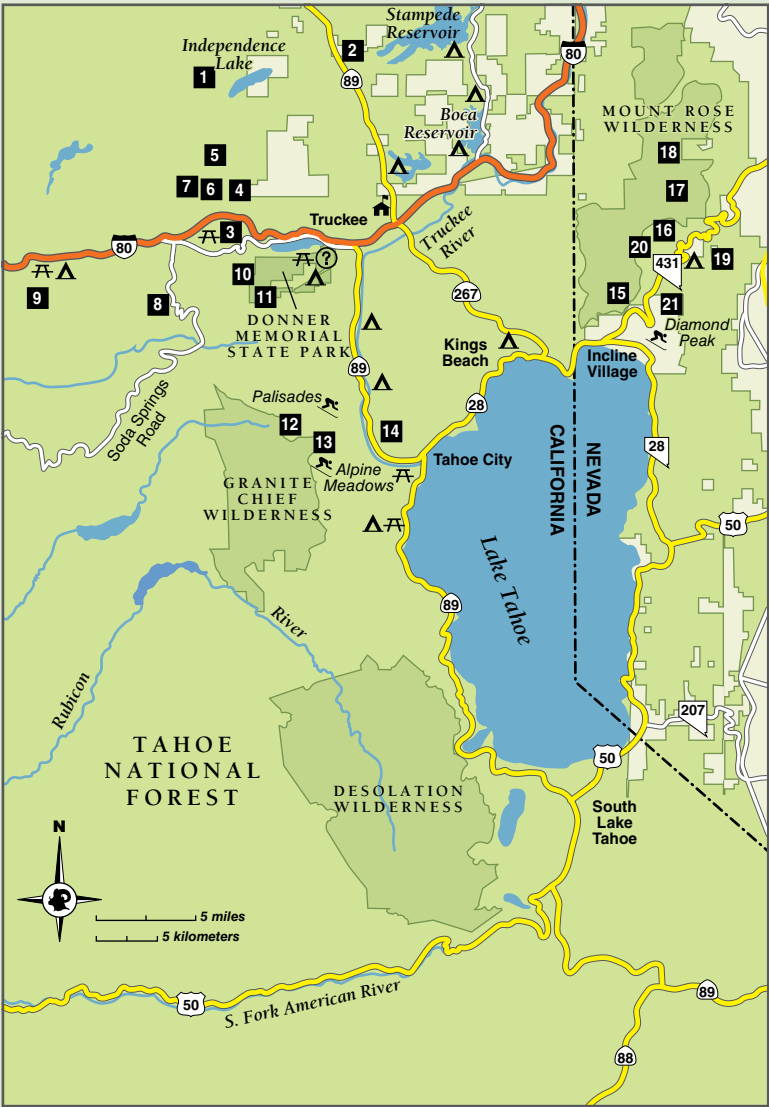
Proper preparation for any type of excursion includes gathering certain essential items to bring with you. Trip checklists will vary according to the trail and the conditions you could encounter.



Prepare and Plan

- Know your abilities and your limitations.
- Leave word about your plans.
- Know the area and the route.

North Tahoe



North Tahoe

1. Mount Lola 24
2. Sagehen Creek 28
3. Glacier Meadow Loop and Summit Lake 31
4. Frog Lake Overlook and Frog Lake 36
5. Warren Lake 40
6. Castle Peak 46
7. Castle Valley, Round Valley, and Andesite Peak 50
8. Point Mariah 55
9. Loch Leven Lakes 60
10. Mount Judah Loop 65
11. Pacific Crest Trail: Donner Pass to Coldstream Valley 69
12. Granite Chief 75
13. Five Lakes Basin 80
14. Tahoe Rim Trail: Tahoe City to Truckee River Canyon Viewpoint 83
15. Incline Meadow Trail to Point 9,561 and Gray Lake 86
16. Mount Rose 91
17. Rim to Reno Trail 95
18. Upper Thomas Creek 100
19. Tahoe Meadows Nature Trails 104
20. Tahoe Rim Trail: Mount Rose to Relay Peak 109
21. Tahoe Rim Trail: Tahoe Meadows to Diamond Peak Saddle 115



North Tahoe

The north Tahoe region contains some splendid backcountry, boasting many of the area's best trails. Whether you're searching for expansive vistas, serene lakes, or vivid wildflower displays, you have plenty to choose from amid the diverse terrain at the north end of the lake. Access to the trailheads is straightforward, thanks primarily to the four-lane freeway of I-80, as well as the Mount Rose Highway (NV 431) and CA 89 and CA 267.

Permits and Maps

The north Tahoe area straddles the border between Nevada and California, and administration of the backcountry is divided between the Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest; the Truckee, Sierraville, and Nevada City Ranger Districts of the Tahoe National Forest; and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. The 28,000-acre Mount Rose Wilderness and the 19,050-acre Granite Chief Wilderness are the only designated wilderness areas at the north end of the lake, but the proposed Castle Peak Wilderness would add approximately 18,000 more acres. Currently, permits are not required for either day or overnight trips.

Maps of the north Tahoe region are available at Forest Service ranger stations in Nevada City, Grass Valley, Sierraville, Truckee, Sparks, and Carson City. The best maps for trail use are the USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles. Specific maps for the trails covered in this section are listed in Appendix 4.

OPPOSITE: Impressive cliffs *create a beautiful backdrop at Frog Lake (Trail 4, page 36).*

West Tahoe



West Tahoe

- 22. Tahoe Rim Trail: Ward Creek to Twin Peaks 125
- 23. Pacific Crest Trail: Barker Pass to Twin Peaks 129
- 24. Ellis Lake and Ellis Peak 133
- 25. Bear Pen 137
- 26. General Creek Trail to Lost and Duck Lakes 141
- 27. Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park Nature Trails 146



West Tahoe

Sandwiched between the mega ski resorts of north Tahoe and the casinos and commercialism of south Tahoe, the west side of the lake seems relaxed and sedate. More than the other sides of the lake, the backcountry above the west shore is about walking through dense forests and strolling along peaceful streams, though the area is not entirely devoid of high summits with excellent vistas. You'll find plenty of history here, too, including a couple of state parks that provide glimpses into the past.

CA 89 provides the principal access to the west side of Lake Tahoe, with no other paved highways crossing the mountains between Tahoe City and South Lake Tahoe.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit oversees the national forests on the west side of the lake. Two state parks, Ed Z'Berg Sugar Pine Point and D. L. Bliss, administer lakeshore units involving trails described in this chapter.

Maps and Permits

Permits are not required for either day hikes or backpacking trips. Entry fees are collected for state parks.

Forest Service maps covering west Tahoe are available at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center or the ranger station in Truckee. USGS maps pertaining to the trips described in this chapter are listed in Appendix 4.

OPPOSITE: *Wildflowers along Ward Creek (Trail 22, page 125)*

Tahoe Rim Trail: Ward Creek to Twin Peaks

TRAIL USE Hiking, Running, Biking,
Horses, Dogs Allowed

LENGTH & TIME 11.6 miles,
6 hours

VERTICAL FEET
±2,400

DIFFICULTY 1 2 3 4 5

TRAIL TYPE Out & Back

START & FINISH
N39° 08.429' W120° 11.504'

FEATURES Canyon, Mountain,
Summit, Stream, Waterfall, Wildflow-
ers, Great Views, Photo Opportunity

FACILITIES None

This trip combines one of the best wildflower displays with one of the best summit views found anywhere in the Tahoe Basin. Despite such natural beauty, the trail is not as heavily used as one would expect. Most of the route follows the well-built Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT), but the last quarter mile to the summit of east Twin Peak is a steep off-trail climb requiring a bit of scrambling. Be sure to pack along a map to help you identify all the landmarks visible from Twin Peaks.

Best Time

The spectacular wildflower display along Ward Creek peaks during July and early August, but the excellent view from the summit of Twin Peaks is fine anytime between mid-July and late October.

Finding the Trail

From CA 89 near the community of Sunnyside, turn west onto Ward Avenue/Ward Creek Boulevard and proceed along paved road for 2 miles to a small turnout on the left-hand shoulder, where the trail is marked by a small TRT signboard and a 6x6-inch post.

Trail Description

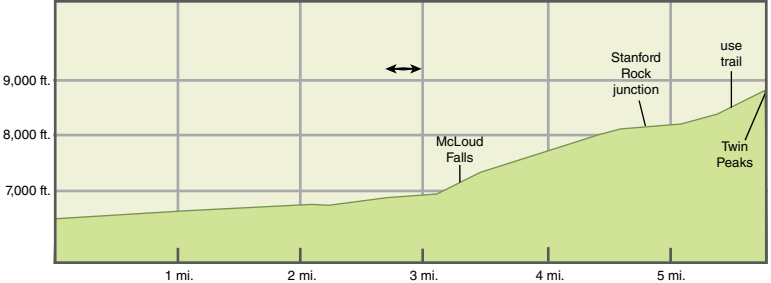
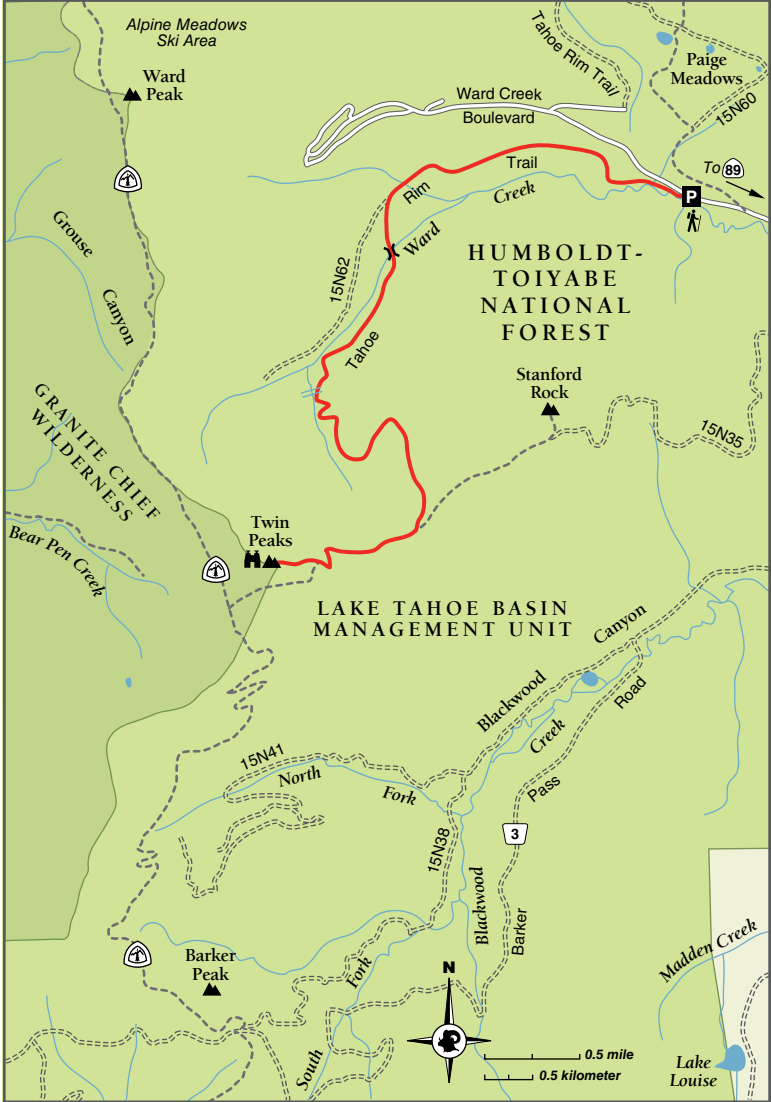
►1 From the turnout, walk around a closed gate and follow the TRT, a gently graded road at this point, through a mixed forest of firs and pines, just to the



OPTIONS

It is possible to arrange for a shuttle and combine this trip with Trail 23 to create a point-to-point excursion.

Tahoe Rim Trail: Ward Creek to Twin Peaks



left of bubbling, meadow-lined Ward Creek. Plenty of shrubs grow beside the road, including bitterbrush, currant, manzanita, and pinemat manzanita, interspersed with verdant grasses and a wide variety of wildflowers.



After 0.5 mile the road bends slightly away from the creek and proceeds along the valley floor, offering filtered views of the peaks and ridges along the canyon rim.

You enter a verdant garden of wildflowers near the crossing of a tributary stream, 1.75 miles from Ward Creek Boulevard, and continue another 0.5 mile through lush meadowlands to a bridge across the main channel of Ward Creek. Beyond the crossing, head upstream, climbing mildly alongside the dancing creek amid more lush gardens. The profusion of wildflowers you're apt to see along Ward Canyon includes aster, columbine, daisy, lupine, paintbrush, elephant head, corn lily, arnica, and mariposa lily. At its height, this is one of the best wildflower displays in the Tahoe Basin. Continuing up the canyon, you encounter a thicker, mixed forest of lodgepole pines, western white pines, red firs, Jeffrey pines, and aspens, interspersed with pockets of lush foliage.



Eventually, the trail bends away from the main channel of Ward Creek and follows a steeper route up the canyon of a side stream. Soon the sound of tumbling water heralds your approach to a 30-foot-high waterfall, 3.3 miles from the trailhead. Though the stream and fall fail to appear on the USGS map, the fall is known to locals as McCloud Falls. ▶2 Continue a switchbacking climb across flower-filled slopes and pockets of light forest, with improving views of the surrounding topography. At 4.8 miles from the trailhead, you reach the



Twin Peaks is visible from this meadow along Ward Creek.



crest of the ridge and encounter a signed three-way junction with a path to your left, which heads toward the summit of Stanford Rock. ►3 Peak baggers wishing to add Stanford Rock to their list of accomplishments can opt to follow this 0.9-mile one-way route to the top.

Turn right (west) at the junction and follow a rising trail along the ridge through western white pines and mountain hemlocks, with pinemat manzanita as the principal ground cover. Soon a steeper, switchbacking climb leads past a rock knob to an unmarked Y-junction at 5.5 miles. ►4 (The TRT veers left and continues on a 0.5-mile traverse below Twin Peaks to a junction with the Pacific Crest Trail.)

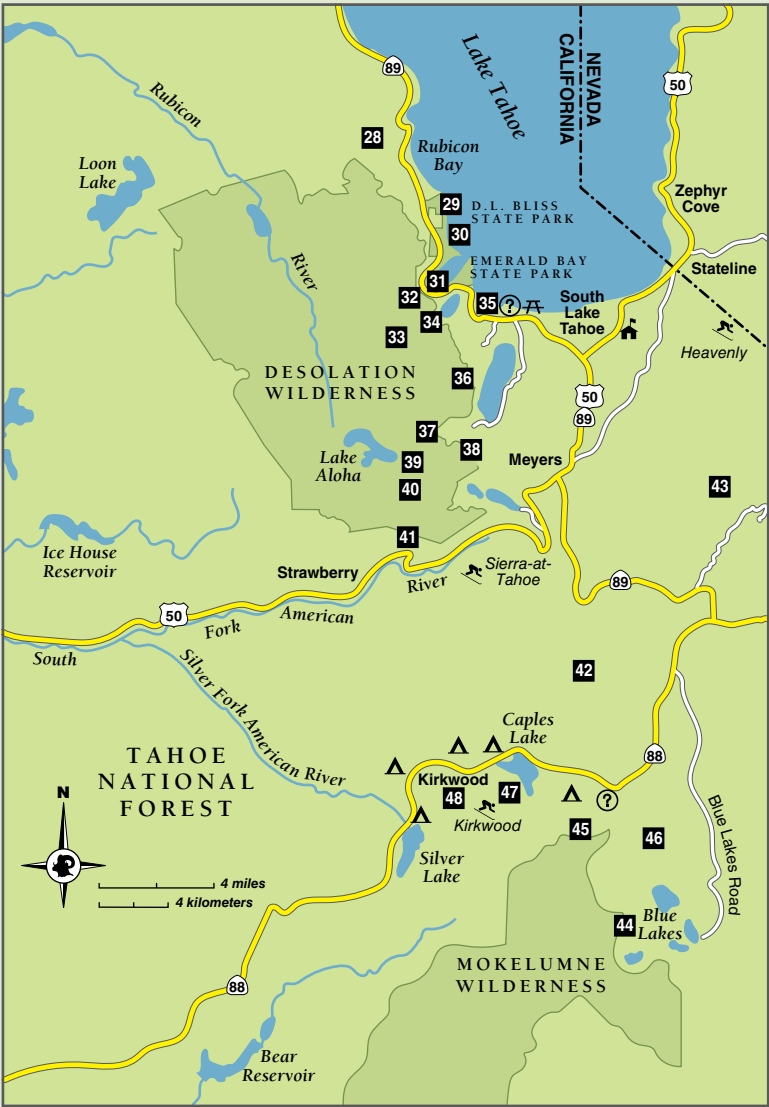
Veer right at the junction and climb steeply up the east ridge of Twin Peaks, where you'll be treated to stunning views across wildflower-covered slopes of Lake Tahoe, the summits of Desolation Wilderness, and all the surrounding canyons. Continue the steep ascent of the ridge and scramble over rocks to the east summit of Twin Peaks and an awe-inspiring 360-degree view. ►5 After fully taking in this wonderful vista, retrace your steps to the trailhead. ►6



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at trailhead
- 2 3.3 McLoud Falls
- 3 4.8 Turn right (east) at Stanford Rock junction
- 4 5.5 Veer right at unmarked junction with use trail to summit
- 5 5.8 East summit of Twin Peak
- 6 11.6 Return to trailhead

South Tahoe



South Tahoe

- 28. Tahoe Yosemite Trail: Meeks Bay to Tallant Lakes 159
- 29. D. L. Bliss State Park: Rubicon Point and Lighthouse Loop 164
- 30. Rubicon Trail 168
- 31. Vikingsholm and Eagle Falls 172
- 32. Eagle Lake 176
- 33. Bayview Trail to Velma Lakes 180
- 34. Cascade Falls 184
- 35. Taylor Creek Visitor Center Nature Trails 187
- 36. Mount Tallac 191
- 37. Glen Alpine to Susie and Heather Lakes and Lake Aloha 195
- 38. Triangle Lake, Echo Peak, and Angora Lakes Loop 199
- 39. Echo Lakes to Lake Aloha 204
- 40. Echo Lakes to Lake of the Woods and Ropi Lake 208
- 41. Horsetail Falls 212
- 42. Big Meadow to Carson Pass 215
- 43. Tahoe Rim Trail: Armstrong Pass to Star Lake 220
- 44. Upper Blue Lake to Fourth of July Lake 225
- 45. Winnemucca and Round Top Lakes Loop 229
- 46. Carson Pass to Forestdale Divide 233
- 47. Emigrant Lake 237
- 48. Thunder Mountain 241



South Tahoe

The area around the south shore of Lake Tahoe contains some of the most picturesque and, consequently, most heavily used terrain around the lake. D. L. Bliss State Park and neighboring Emerald Bay State Park manage lakeshore tracts around Lake Tahoe that draw tourists and recreationists like a magnet to sandy beaches, picnic areas, campgrounds, and historical sites. Trails in these parks offer some of the best lakeshore views of Tahoe within the basin.

The 63,960-acre Desolation Wilderness, being blessed with an abundance of glacier-scoured lakes and granite peaks, is the most visited wilderness per square mile of any such area in the entire country. The 105,165-acre Mokelumne Wilderness, south of Lake Tahoe, is a rugged landscape of volcanic peaks and lofty ridges that tower over deep canyons. The part of the area that lies near Carson Pass is nearly as popular as Desolation.

Access to trailheads around the south shore of Lake Tahoe is straightforward via CA 89 and US 50, though summer traffic can be quite congested at times, especially in South Lake Tahoe. A mass transit system for Lake Tahoe has received considerable attention since President Clinton's Lake Tahoe Summit in the 1990s, but more work is needed in order for the system to be completely effective. CA 88 services trailheads in and around the Mokelumne Wilderness.

Permits and Maps

The South Tahoe region is administered by a number of state and federal agencies. California State Parks oversees 6 miles of Lake Tahoe shoreline and 1,830 acres of surrounding lands in D. L. Bliss and Emerald Bay State Parks. Free brochures with sketch maps are available from the parks, or for online viewing at the state parks website, parks.ca.gov. Trails 29–31 occur within these parks. Both parks charge a nominal entry fee.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Eldorado National Forest manage Trails 28, 32–34, and 36–41, all of which enter Desolation Wilderness at some point. Available by self-registration at most trailheads, free day-use permits are required for all day hikes that enter the wilderness. In addition, parking at the Eagle Lake (Trail 32) and Pyramid Creek (Trail 41) Trailheads is subject to a nominal fee.

Backpackers wishing to overnight within Desolation Wilderness have a rigorous set of hoops to jump through in order to secure a permit. Wilderness permits are required throughout the year, but an overnight quota is in effect from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September. Half the permits can be reserved ahead of time, up to six months in advance, online at recreation.gov. Within 14 days of departure, reserved permits can be printed online or picked up at ranger stations. The other

OPPOSITE: Morning at Middle Velma Lake (Trail 33, page 180)

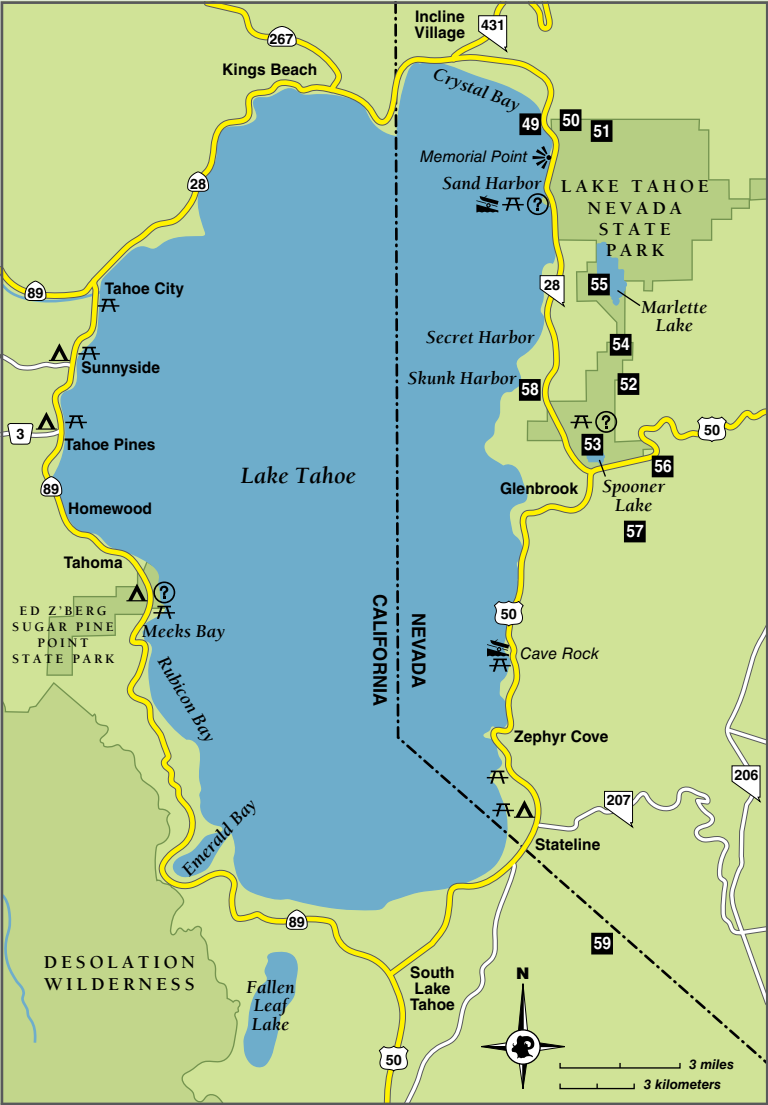
half of the permits can also be picked up at participating ranger stations on a first-come, first-served basis.

In addition to the \$6 reservation charge, fees are also collected for overnight use of Desolation Wilderness. Per-person costs for one night in the backcountry are \$5 and \$10 for 2 or more nights, up to 14 nights total. The cost of a single permit is not to exceed \$100 per party. Children 12 and under are free. All fees are payable by credit card, check, or money order. The Desolation Wilderness Trip Planning Guide can be viewed online at desowv.org/files/DWTPG.pdf.

Trails 43–47 are within areas managed by the Eldorado National Forest. Currently, permits are not necessary for day hikes into the Mokelumne Wilderness, but overnight visits do require a free wilderness permit. Parking at the Carson Pass, Meiss Meadow, and Woods Lake Trailheads is subject to a nominal fee. Within the Carson Pass Management Area (CPMA), between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, a two-night limit is in effect for Round Top and Winnemucca Lakes (three-night limit for Fourth of July Lake), and camping is limited to designated sites. Permits for these campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis from the Carson Pass Information Station. Campfires are not permitted within the CPMA or along the Blue Hole Trail but are allowed below 8,000 feet within the rest of the wilderness.

The U.S. Forest Service produces excellent waterproof plastic topographic maps of both Desolation Wilderness and Mokelumne Wilderness at a scale of 2 inches equals 1 mile for \$12 each. Maps are available from the Taylor Creek and Carson Pass visitor centers, as well as from U.S. Forest Service headquarters and district ranger stations, or online from the USGS Store at store.usgs.gov. The USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles specific to this area are listed in Appendix 4.

East Tahoe



East Tahoe

- 49. East Shore Trail 250
- 50. Monkey Rock 254
- 51. Twin Lakes 257
- 52. Tahoe Rim Trail: Spooner Summit to Snow Valley Peak 261
- 53. Spooner Lake 265
- 54. Marlette Lake 269
- 55. Flume Trail 273
- 56. Five Valleys Viewpoint 278
- 57. Tahoe Rim Trail: Spooner Summit to South Camp Peak 281
- 58. Skunk Harbor 285
- 59. Tahoe Rim Trail: Kingsbury South to Star Lake 288



East Tahoe

The east side of the lake is perhaps the least developed area around Lake Tahoe. With such a distinction, the logical conclusion would be that this side of the lake would offer an abundance of backcountry trails. Ironically, until the relatively recent completion of the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT), the area was considerably lacking in a developed and maintained trail system. Nowadays, with the building of the TRT, the closing of certain roadways in the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park to motorized travel, and an explosion of mountain biking trails, recreationists have plenty of opportunities to hike, bike, or ride in the mountainous terrain of east Tahoe.

Access to the forest lands on the east side is straightforward on two main highways. The four-lane thoroughfare of US 50 climbs west to Spooner Summit from Carson City and then runs along the southeast shore of the lake before leaving the basin beyond South Lake Tahoe at Echo Summit. NV 28, from a junction with US 50, takes motorists northbound along the east shore and eventually into California.

Permits and Maps

The backcountry on the lake's east side falls under the jurisdiction of four governing agencies: the Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the federal government, Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, and California State Parks. Without any designated wilderness areas, permits are not required for day hikes or backpacking trips. However, overnights desiring to camp within the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park are restricted to designated campgrounds; call 775-831-0494 for reservations or more information. The park charges an entry fee.

U.S. Forest Service maps may be procured at ranger stations in Carson City, Reno, and Truckee, or from the Taylor Creek Visitor Center. A full-color map showing the backcountry routes of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park is available at park headquarters near Spooner Lake, from state park headquarters in Carson City, or from the park's website at parks.nv.gov/parks/marlette-hobart-backcountry. USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles for trips covered in this section are listed in Appendix 4.

OPPOSITE: Monkey Rock overlooks Lake Tahoe (Trail 50, page 254).

East Shore Trail



East Shore Trail

TRAIL USE Hiking, Running, Biking, Dogs Allowed (on leash), Wheelchair Access

LENGTH & TIME 2.5 miles, 1.25 hours; 5.0 miles, 2.5 hours

VERTICAL FEET
±200

DIFFICULTY
1 2 3 4 5

TRAIL TYPE Point-to-Point; Out & Back

START (Point-to-Point)
N39° 13.867' W119° 55.925'

FINISH N39°11.894', W119°55.870'

START & FINISH (Out & Back)
N39° 13.867' W119° 55.925'

FEATURES Mountain, Lake, Great Views, Photo Opportunity, Historical Interest

FACILITIES Restrooms, Restaurants, Park Benches, Interpretive Signs, Water, Picnic Area, Boat Launch

One of the more recent additions to Lake Tahoe's trail system, the East Shore Trail has rapidly become one of the most popular in the region and has been referred to as "America's most beautiful bikeway." The multiuse trail connects the community of Incline Village to Sand Harbor in Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, affording outstanding views nearly every step of the way. Art displays, park benches, 16 vista points, and interpretive signs provide pleasant diversions for trail users, along with access to beaches and coves along Tahoe's east shore. The 10-foot-wide paved path is ADA compliant, making the East Shore Trail a path for all.

Best Time

The East Shore Trail is usually snow-free from sometime in April to early November. Crowds at Lake Tahoe should be expected from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, which makes the shoulder seasons of late spring and early fall excellent times for a visit. Arriving early at the parking area is strongly advised, as the 91 spaces fill up very quickly.

Finding the Trail

Follow NV 28 to the south part of Incline Village to the three parking lots by Ponderosa Ranch Road near the old Ponderosa Ranch (where the TV show *Bonanza* was filmed), 2.8 miles from the Mt. Rose Highway (NV 431) junction. Parking fees are \$1–\$4 per hour, depending on the time of day. Weekends are more expensive than weekdays, and parking is free every day 7–11 p.m. The East Shore Express provides shuttle service from the old Incline Elementary School (at 771 Southwood Blvd.) to the parking lot (and to Sand Harbor) for \$3 a person, and \$1.50 for seniors and individuals with disabilities.



Sand Harbor *from the East Shore Trail*

Trail Description

►1 The paved, 10-foot-wide walkway begins at the south end of the parking area near some informational signs and portable toilets. Initially the trail closely follows the shoulder of NV 28 for 0.2 mile until private property at Rocky Point forces the route up the hillside on a winding climb through scattered forest. Where the trees part, the higher vantage allows striking views of Lake Tahoe and the surrounding mountains. Nearing the half-mile mark, encounter the first of the 16 vista points along the 2.5-mile trail, where beautiful stone work and interpretive signs tempt users to stop and smell the roses. Shortly beyond the vista point is the first of many park benches as well.

Beyond the high point, the trail makes a gradual descent past more vista points and interpretive signs until plunging more steeply down toward the highway. Pass an unmarked trail angling uphill, which provides a connection to a lateral back northwest toward Tunnel Creek Road. About a mile from the trailhead, the path arcs down to a tunnel below the highway and reaches a T-junction on the far side. ►2 Uphill to the right, pavement leads past a vault toilet and up to the Hidden Beach bus stop, plus access to a dirt trail providing shoreline access to the north part of Hidden Beach.

Turn left (south) at the junction, following a sign pointing the way to Sand Harbor and Memorial Point, now on the west side of the highway. Nearby is a kiosk with pertinent information, trash and recycling bins, and bike racks for riders who want to park their bikes and walk down the shoreline access

to Hidden Beach. Continuing south, a short bridge leads across Tunnel Creek and then to Balancing Rock North and Balancing Rock South shoreline access trails a bit farther. At 1.3 miles is the north end of the 810-foot span of the longest section of bridge on the East Shore Trail. The bridge, which hugs the steep shoreline, was fabricated in Ohio and shipped to Nevada in sections. Vista points at both ends of the bridge allow passersby to gain unique perspectives on this impressive structure. During the height of summer, the surface of the bridge can be extremely hot during peak sunlight hours; dog owners should plan accordingly.

Beyond the bridge, the path drops below the highway to allow for a fine view across the lake's surface to the mountains on the far shore. After a short bridge across an unnamed creek, the path proceeds onward to Memorial Point, 1.8 miles from the trailhead, where sets of stairs lead up to an observation platform with restrooms, running water, and informational signs, as well as a bus stop. A short interpretive trail below the observation deck offers a great view of the lake along with pertinent information.

Away from Memorial Point, near the 2-mile mark, is a lateral to the Harbor View Overlook, where a short path leads to a viewpoint above the harbor. Beyond the path to the overlook, shoreline access trails lead down toward the water's edge, and rising tread leads up alongside the highway before dropping again on the approach to Sand Harbor. A pair of bridges offer grand views of Sand Harbor on the way to a T-junction, where the left-hand path travels shortly to a closed gate at the edge of the highway and the right-hand path soon leads to the boundary of Sand Harbor. ►3 Come to a self-registration toll booth, where entry into the park will cost \$2 per person. If you are planning to take the shuttle back to the trailhead parking lots, you must work your way through the park to the bus stop near the visitor center. Otherwise, retrace your steps back to the trailhead. ►4



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at trailhead
- 2 1.0 Turn left at T-Junction near Hidden Beach
- 3 2.5 Sand Harbor park boundary
- 4 5.0 Return to trailhead

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looking for, there's
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