

Welcome to Nevada County's Great Outdoors

For hikers and walkers, the Grass Valley-Nevada City area offers a trail for every taste, age and ability. Short hikes are found near town, others meander through the nearby South Yuba River canyon, and high country hikes are found in the Tahoe National Forest in the Grouse Ridge area.

Before heading to the woods, explore Grass Valley and Nevada City, their Gold Rush charm, fine shops, dining and nightlife. Spend a night in a historic bed and breakfast inn, hotel or motel. See the walking tour maps to both downtown areas. For short walks in town, try the trails in Grass Valley's Condon Park. In Nevada City, walk the Rotary Club Miners Trail along Deer Creek.

Hitting the trail....

This brochure describes 18 trails, each with its own attractions and characteristics. Some are flat (three are wheelchair-accessible) and others demand fitness and climbing abilities. To help you find the right trail, we have included difficulty ratings as part of the trail descriptions.

Please help preserve Nevada County's great outdoors; show respect for the environment, don't litter and don't trespass on private property. Carry water and be prepared for changing weather, especially at higher elevations. Always tell someone where you plan to hike and when you will return.

Evolving trail guide

This trail guide is a continuing effort to assemble some of the best local trails into one easy-to-read guide.

Your comments and ideas for future maps are welcome. If you would like to nominate a trail for a future edition, please contact the Grass Valley/Nevada County or Nevada City chamber of commerce office, (530) 273-4667 or (530) 265-2692.

1. BRIDGEPORT BUTTERMILK BEND TRAIL

South Yuba River State Park

Trailhead: Off Pleasant Valley Road, upstream of Bridgeport, north side of river.

Where to park: North parking lot

Directions: From Grass Valley, west on Highway 20 to Penn Valley. Right (north) on Pleasant Valley Road, eight miles to Bridgeport.

Distance of hike: 1.25 miles each way

Degree of difficulty: 3. Fairly flat except for one 50-yard upslope.

Seasons: All year

Special features: A favorite wildflower hike in March, April and May. Offers nice views of the river canyon, access to many swimming holes. Literature available at the ranger station.

2. SOUTH YUBA RIVER INDEPENDENCE TRAIL

South Yuba River State Park

Trailhead: Highway 49, 5.5 miles northwest of Nevada City

Where to Park: Turnouts at and beyond trailhead. Use caution when crossing highway

Distance of hike: 2.5 miles downstream (west) and 2.5 miles upstream (east). West trail offers a 4.3-mile loop along swimming trail to Jones Bar Road, up to Excelsior Canal and back to start.

Degree of difficulty: Both 2.5-mile sections are rated 1. West Loop: 5.

Wheelchair accessibility: 1.5 miles each way

Seasons: All year. Can be muddy in Winter.

Historical significance: Trail follows alignment of the Excelsior Canal, built during the Gold Rush. Gold Rush-era wooden flumes.

Interesting note: Flume and canal systems built to carry water now carry people.

Special features: Wildflower walks in Spring, Rush Creek, 1 mile along West Trail.

3. ROCK CREEK NATURE TRAIL

Tahoe National Forest

Trailhead: Off Rock Creek Road, seven miles east of Nevada City

Where to park: At trailhead

Directions: Highway 20 east from Nevada City to Washington Ridge Conservation Camp Road (2 miles beyond the Five Mile House). Turn left, follow signs to Rock Creek Road, trailhead.

Distance of hike: 0.8-mile loop

Degree of difficulty: 1

Wheelchair accessibility: First 500 feet.

Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall

Special features: This interpretive trail has been used for many years in school nature study programs. Native plants and trees are identified. Brochures are available at the trailhead.

4. HARDROCK TRAIL

Empire Mine State Historic Park

Trailhead: Empire Mine Visitor Center

Where to park: Main parking lot

Directions: Exit Highway 49 at Empire Street, drive east one mile to park.

Distance of hike: 2 mile loop

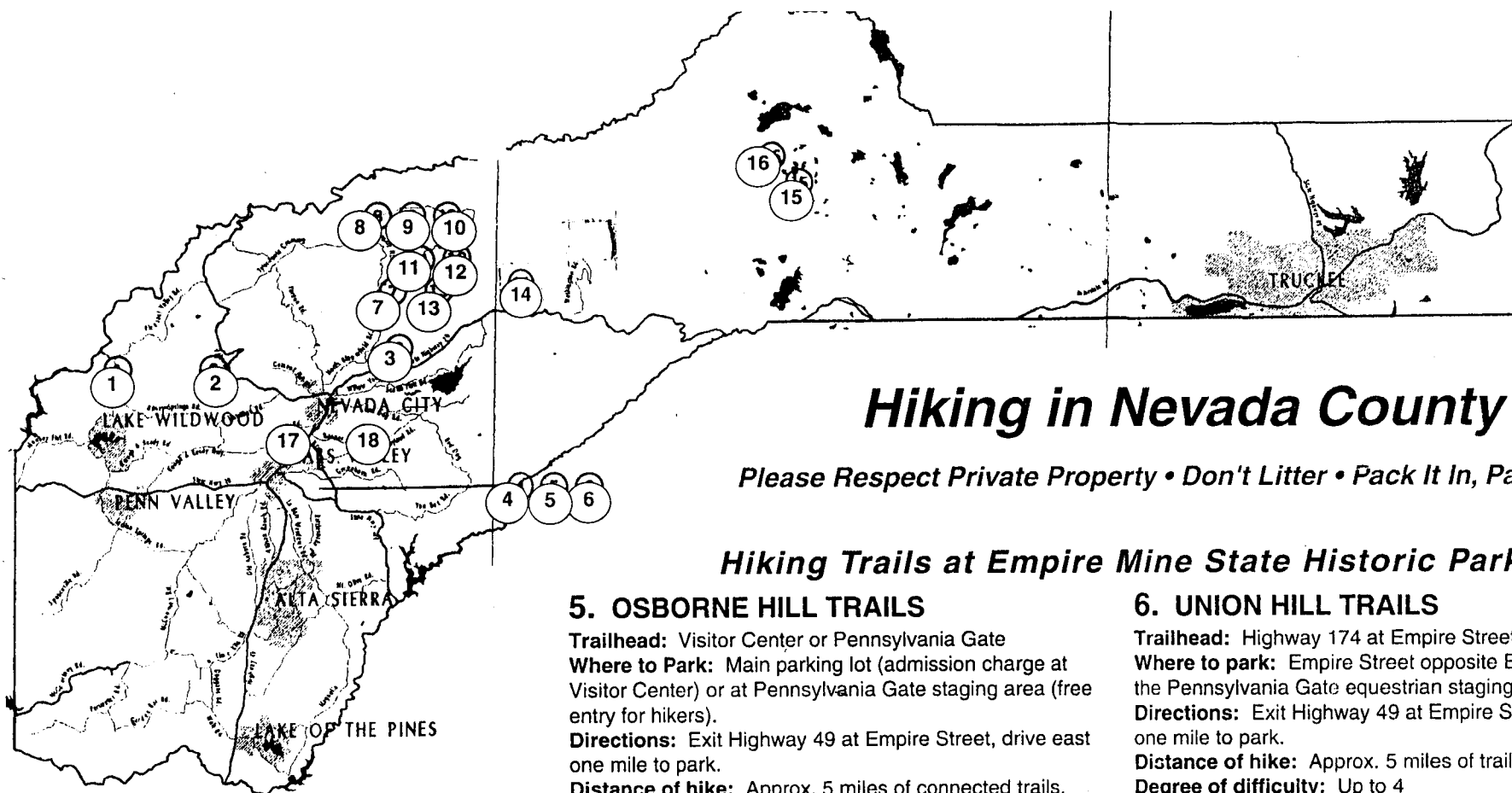
Degree of difficulty: 2

Seasons: Year-around

Historical significance: Passes many historic mining sites.

Special features: Visitors entering through the visitor center must pay admission. Free entry is allowed by parking at the Pennsylvania Gate equestrian staging area. This trail is the only one in the park for hikers only; no mountain bikers or equestrians are allowed. Dogs must be leashed. Open daily sunrise to sunset. Trail maps are available at park visitor center.

 **Please see Map and Trailhead
Locations on Reverse**



Hiking in Nevada County

Please Respect Private Property • Don't Litter • Pack It In, Pack It Out

Hiking Trails at Empire Mine State Historic Park

5. OSBORNE HILL TRAILS

Trailhead: Visitor Center or Pennsylvania Gate

Where to Park: Main parking lot (admission charge at Visitor Center) or at Pennsylvania Gate staging area (free entry for hikers).

Directions: Exit Highway 49 at Empire Street, drive east one mile to park.

Distance of hike: Approx. 5 miles of connected trails.

Degree of difficulty: Up to 6

Seasons: Year-around

Historical significance: Area is dotted with old mine sites and foundations

Special features: Beautiful forest setting, small creek crossing. Trail maps available at the park visitor center.

6. UNION HILL TRAILS

Trailhead: Highway 174 at Empire Street.

Where to park: Empire Street opposite Empire Court, at the Pennsylvania Gate equestrian staging area.

Directions: Exit Highway 49 at Empire Street, drive east one mile to park.

Distance of hike: Approx. 5 miles of trails on Union Hill

Degree of difficulty: Up to 4

Seasons: Year-around

Historical significance: Area is peppered with old mine sites and includes the pipeline that brought water to the mines.

Special features: Detailed trail maps are available at the park visitor center.

7. SOUTH YUBA RIVER TRAIL

South Yuba River Canyon

Trailhead: Eight miles northeast of Nevada City, off North Bloomfield Road

Where to park: Parking lot at trailhead.

Directions: Highway 49 to No. Bloomfield Road. Drive eight miles, past the river, follow signs to the campground and trailhead.

Distance: 7.5 miles one way

Degree of difficulty: 7

Season: Year-around

Historical significance: Trail passes through Gold Rush remains.

Special features: Trail can also be accessed from Purdon Crossing. Hiking, horseback riding, picnic sites, primitive and maintained camping. Swimming, fishing, nature study.

Trails by the Number

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Bridgeport | 10. Blair Trail |
| 2. South Yuba Independence Trail | 11. North Bloomfield Trail |
| 3. Rock Creek | 12. Missouri Bar Trail |
| 4. Hardrock Trail | 13. Humbug Creek Trail |
| 5. Osborne Hill Trails | 14. So. Yuba Trail, East |
| 6. Union Hill Trails | 15. Grouse Lakes Area |
| 7. So. Yuba River Trail | 16. Glacier Lake Trail |
| 8. Rim Trail | 17. Litton Trail |
| 9. Diggins Loop Trail | 18. Cascade Canal Trail |

Hiking Trails at Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

8. RIM TRAIL

Trailhead: North Bloomfield Road or Malakoff Campground. Parking.

Directions: From Nevada City, Highway 49 north to Tyler-Foote Crossing Road, then right (east) to Malakoff Diggins.

Distance of hike: 3 miles

Degree of difficulty: 6

Seasons: Year-around. Some snow in winter.

Historical significance: Views of the Malakoff hydraulic diggings

Special features: Pine and cedar forests. No Dogs. Bicycles Okay.

9. DIGGINS LOOP TRAIL

Trailhead: Diggins Overlook, North Bloomfield Road. Parking.

Distance of hike: 3-mile loop

Degree of difficulty: 3

Seasons: Year-around. Some snow in winter.

Historical significance: Trail loops through what was once the largest hydraulic mining operation in the U.S.

12. MISSOURI BAR TRAIL

Tahoe National Forest

Trailhead: Located off Relief Hill Road

Where to park: At the trailhead

Directions: From Nevada City, Highway 49 north to Tyler-Foote Crossing Road, then right (east) to Malakoff Diggins and Relief Hill Road. Follow signs.

17. LITTON TRAIL

Trailheads: Hughes Rd., Sierra College Drive

Where to park: Near trailheads

Directions: Between Grass Valley and Nevada City

Distance: 2.1 miles each way

Degree of difficulty: 1-2. Partly wheelchair accessible

Seasons: Year around

Special features: Built by the Nevada County Land Trust. The original segment parallels the Nevada Irrigation District Grass Valley Canal. Please respect water quality. Dogs must be leashed.

10. BLAIR TRAIL

Trailhead: North Bloomfield Road near North Bloomfield

Where to park: Parking at trailhead

Distance of hike: half-mile loop

Degree of difficulty: 2

Seasons: Year-around. Some snow in winter

Historical significance: The Blair pond dates to the mining era.

Special features: Spur goes to campground, 3/4 miles. Pine and cedar forests. No dogs, bicycles or horses.

11. NORTH BLOOMFIELD TRAIL

Trailhead: North Bloomfield Road, village of North Bloomfield

Where to park: Near the trailhead, in town.

Distance of hike: 3/4 mile

Degree of difficulty: 6

Seasons: Year-around. Some snow in winter.

Special features: Pine and cedar forests.

Malakoff trails, Christy and Greg Sherr, park rangers

Distance: 1.6 miles one-way

Degree of difficulty: 6

Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall

Historical significance: Was probably used by miners in North Bloomfield's mining heyday

Special features: Trail extension will provide connection to the South Yuba River Trail. Watch for poison oak.

18. CASCADE CANAL TRAIL

Trailheads: Red Dog Road, Gracie Road

Where to park: Near trailheads

Directions: Located about four miles east of Nevada City.

Distance: 5 miles each way

Degree of difficulty: 3. Mostly flat.

Seasons: Can be snowbound in winter.

Special features: Trail follows the canal berm of the Nevada Irrigation District Cascade Canal. Portions of the trail cross private property. Please respect water quality and private property rights. Dogs must be leashed.

13. HUMBUG CREEK TRAIL

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

Trailhead: North Bloomfield Rd. in the park.

Where to park: Trailhead parking lot. \$4 daily use fee.

Distance: 3 miles each way

Degree of difficulty: 6. Includes a 1,000-foot return climb out of the river canyon

Season: Year-around

Historical significance: Malakoff was once the largest hydraulic mine in the world and its almost 8,000-foot North Bloomfield drain tunnel emptied into Humbug Creek, carrying mine tailings into the South Yuba River.

Special features: Trail connects with the South Yuba Trail at the river. Waterfalls, swimming in the Yuba Historic relics include ditches, mine shafts, rock walls. No pets, no mountain bikes.

Hank Meals, author, Yuba Trails 2

14. SO. YUBA TRAIL, EAST

South Yuba River Canyon

Trailhead: Hike upstream from the trailhead at the South Yuba Campground. To hike downstream, begin at Poorman Creek, two miles downstream from the little town of Washington. Both trails are clearly marked.

Where to park: Ample parking at trailheads.

Directions: The South Yuba Campground is reached from Nevada City via North Bloomfield Road to Grizzly Hill Road. Poorman Creek is reached via Highway 20 and Washington Road to the town of Washington. Cross the bridge and follow the signs to the trailhead.

Distance of hike: 16 miles one-way

Degree of difficulty: 5 (but it will take all day)

Seasons: Year-around

Historical Significance: Thousands of placer miners occupied this area during and after the Gold Rush.

Special features: Grand views, huge oaks, beautiful pools and solitude.

Hank Meals, author, Yuba Trails 2

15 Hikes - Continued from reverse

15. GROUSE LAKES AREA

Tahoe National Forest

Trailhead: Grouse Ridge Lookout

Where to park: Near the Grouse Ridge campground

Directions: From Nevada City, Highway 20 east to Bowman Lake Road. Turn left, proceed north six miles. Turn right on Grouse Ridge Road. The campground is 5.3 miles up a very rough dirt road.

Distance of hike: Hikes range from 2 to 8 miles. Trails marked with signs.

Degree of difficulty: 3-10

Seasons: Summer, Fall

Historical significance: Some trails date to the mining days

Special features: High alpine environment, expansive views, many lakes, fishing, swimming, wildflowers.

16. GLACIER LAKE TRAIL

Tahoe National Forest

Trailhead: Grouse Ridge Lookout campground. Hike on the Grouse Ridge Trail east to Glacier Lake Trail.

Where to park: Near the campground

Directions: From Nevada City, Highway 20 east to Bowman Lake Road. Turn left, proceed north six miles. Turn right on Grouse Ridge Road. The campground is 5.3 miles up a very rough dirt road.

Distance of hike: 4 miles one-way

Degree of difficulty: 5

Seasons: Summer, Fall

Special features: High Sierra meadows, forests, glacial moraine. Glacier Lake is nestled in a small red fir forest in the shadows of the Black Buttes.

For More Information

For more detailed information on Nevada County trails, check with local State Parks or Forest Service ranger stations:

Tahoe National Forest

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

631 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-4531

www.fs.fed.us/r5/tahoe

Gold Mines Sector

CALIF. DEPT. OF PARKS & RECREATION

10556 East Empire St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 273-3884

For historic trail information, see:

Yuba Trails 2: A Selection of Historic Hiking Trails in the Yuba River and Neighboring Watersheds, by Hank Meals, \$15.95 at local book stores

For lodging, dining and other visitor services:

Grass Valley/Nevada County

Chamber of Commerce

248 Mill Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 273-4667 • (800) 655-4667

www.grassvalleychamber.com

Email: info@grassvalleychamber.com

Nevada City Chamber of Commerce

132 Main Street, Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-2692 • (800) 655-6569

www.nevadacitychamber.com

Email: info@nevadacitychamber.com

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Hikes & Walks



E. KOPP

The Best Hiking Trails in Grass Valley and Nevada City

*Nevada County
California*

Joint Chambers of Commerce of
Nevada County