

Hiking Trails in the Stanislaus National Forest

ROG 16-41 11/2018



Aquamarine lakes and streams, delicate wildflowers, spectacular vistas, unique geological formations and other scenic wonders are just some of the things hikers and nature lovers find when they visit the Stanislaus National Forest.

Forest trails give travelers a variety of opportunities: day hikes, backpacking or self-guided interpretive trails. Please be prepared for trail conditions ranging from well maintained to not maintained.

Whether your hike lasts for an hour or a week, wear comfortable footwear appropriate for the season. Carry plenty of water and snacks for energy. Take a good map of the area with you. Let someone at home know where you are going.

Please be aware of your impact on the natural environment and practice Leave No Trace™ hiking and camping techniques. Smoking while hiking is allowed only between November and April when vegetation is green.

If you travel in the spring, be extremely careful when walking near streams. Snow runoff can rapidly increase water depth and swiftness while dropping water temperatures to dangerously low levels. Stay away from stream banks and resist the temptation to swim or wade.

If you plan to bring your pet, keep it on a leash and under control. Being a responsible pet owner helps decrease public concern about safety, sanitation and any threat to wildlife.

Enjoy wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural setting. Please leave them so they will be there for others to enjoy after you've gone. Pack out any trash you find or create so that the next visitors may have an equally natural and pristine outdoor experience.

About Water Quality

Lakes and streams may be contaminated even though the water may look and taste pure. The best method for treating water is to boil it for five minutes. A 0.5 micron filter can remove most harmful bacteria and protozoa, including giardia. Other methods involve filtering or using chemical

disinfectants such as iodine or chlorine tablets or drops. Chemical disinfectants are not considered as reliable as heat in killing giardia, although these products work well against most waterborne disease-causing bacteria. For increased safety, treat filtered water with chemical disinfectants.

Backpacking:

Most of the backpacking opportunities on the Stanislaus National Forest are found in the three designated Wilderness areas described below. Wilderness Permits are required for overnight camping in these areas.

Emigrant Wilderness

This 113,000-acre wilderness contains about 185 miles of developed trails. Primary attractions are many subalpine meadows and glacial lakes. Many areas receive heavy use during the summer months. Major trailheads are Bell Meadow, Crabtree Camp, Gianelli Cabin, Coyote Meadow (Cooper Meadow) and Kennedy Meadows on the Summit Ranger District and upper Hwy 108, Box Springs on the Mi-Wok Ranger District and lower Hwy 108 and Cherry Lake on the Groveland District Hwy 120.

Carson-Iceberg Wilderness

Some 78,000 acres of this wilderness are within the Stanislaus National Forest. Another 82,000 acres of the wilderness lie within the Toiyabe National Forest, on the east side of the Sierra crest. The Stanislaus portion has about 94 miles of developed trails providing access to most areas.

Unlike the Emigrant Wilderness to the south, the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness has few lakes, but no doubt you will find a greater degree of solitude. Major trailheads are Wheat's Meadow, County Line, Arnot Creek, Disaster Creek and Clark Fork on the Summit Ranger District and Silver Valley and Lake Alpine, Stanislaus Meadow, Heiser Lake, Pacific Valley and Highland Lakes on the Calaveras Ranger District along Hwy 4. When possible, avoid Sword Lake and Lost Lake areas on weekends—a high volume of traffic is creating an overuse situation for these popular destinations. Better sights for solitude can be found in other locations on weekends.



Carson-Iceberg Wilderness



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Mokelumne Wilderness

Roughly 22,000 acres of this wilderness are within the Stanislaus National Forest. Another 83,000 acres lie in Eldorado and Toiyabe National Forests. The Stanislaus portion of this wilderness has about 32 miles of developed trails. Much of this area, however, is very rugged and without trail access. Major trailheads from Hwy 4 on the Calaveras Ranger District include Lake Valley, Underwood Valley and Sandy Meadow.

For entry from the north contact the Amador Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest at (209) 295-4251. Entry from the east may be arranged through the Carson City Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, at (775) 882-2766.

Pacific Crest Trail

About 32 miles of this National Scenic Trail follow the boundary between Stanislaus and Toiyabe National Forests and touch all three Wilderness areas on the Stanislaus.

Access to the Pacific Crest Trail is at Sonora Pass Trailhead on Hwy 108 and Ebbett's Pass Trailhead on Hwy 4. The Pacific Crest Trail Association's website is www.pcta.org.

Day Hikes

Mileage listed for hikes is one way. Stanislaus National Forest and wilderness maps may be purchased at any Forest Service office.

Summit Ranger District:

- **Pincrest Lake Loop** (four miles). A fairly easy hike. This is a National Recreation Trail around Pincrest Lake, located one mile off Hwy 108. Dogs must be leashed.



- **Catfish Lake** (one mile). Moderate difficulty. Trail is a side trip from the Pincrest Lake Loop on the north side of lake. Shallow lake surrounded by old growth conifer forest.

- **Camp Lake** (three miles). Moderate difficulty. Very popular destination; one night camping limit. Trail to this small granite lake in the Emigrant Wilderness begins at Crabtree Trailhead. Wilderness Permit required for overnight camping.
- **Bear Lake** (four miles). Moderate difficulty. Very popular destination; one night camping limit. Trail starts at Crabtree Trailhead and continues into the Emigrant Wilderness one mile past Camp Lake to this small granite lake. Wilderness Permit required for overnight camping.
- **Burst Rock** (one mile). Moderate difficulty. Spectacular views. This Emigrant Wilderness hike starts at Gianelli Cabin Trailhead. Wilderness Permit required for overnight camping.
- **Powell Lake** (two miles). Moderate difficulty. Hike starts at Gianelli Cabin Trailhead and continues one mile beyond Burst Rock to this small granite lake. Spectacular views. Very popular destination; one night camping limit. Wilderness Permit required for overnight camping.



- **Eagle Creek to Eagle Pass** (three miles). Moderate difficulty. Primitive campsites obscure trailhead. Spectacular views of the Three Chimneys and Castle Rock. From this point south, you are going into the Emigrant Wilderness. Wilderness permit required for overnight camping.
- **Relief Reservoir** (three miles). Moderate difficulty. Very popular destination for camping and fishing. This Emigrant Wilderness Trailhead starts at Kennedy Meadows Resort. Trail from Kennedy Meadows is heavily used by stock.
- **Sword Lake** (three miles). Moderate difficulty. Very popular destination. This Carson-Iceberg Wilderness hike starts at the County Line Trailhead at the end of Fence Creek Road. Spectacular views. Wilderness Permit required for overnight camping.

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- **Stanislaus River Trail** (three miles). A fairly easy hike. Park at China Flat Day Use Area below Beardsley Dam. Walk downriver past the After Bay Reservoir to the Spring Gap powerhouse.
- **Boulder Lake** (four miles). Easy to moderate difficulty. This Carson-Iceberg Wilderness trail begins at Clark Fork Trailhead and Iceberg Meadow. The 2.5 miles are an easy hike along Clark Fork Creek. The last 1.5 miles of the trail is steep in places and the trail becomes vague the last half mile. Wilderness Permit required for overnight camping.
- **Cooper Meadow** (three miles). Moderate difficulty. Trail begins at the Coyote Meadow Trailhead and hikes through high-elevation forest and meadows. Views of Three Chimneys and Cooper Peak.



Cooper Meadow

Groveland Ranger District:

- **Preston Flat Trail** (4.5 miles) Moderate difficulty. Elevation 2,100 to 2,500 feet. Trail goes along the north side of the main Tuolumne River. Take Cherry Lake Road to Early Intake. Turn right immediately after bridge, drive past residences and powerhouse to trailhead parking lot.
- **Indian Creek Trail** (three miles). Strenuous trail. Elevation 1,200 to -2,840 feet. Take Ferretti Road from Highway 120 for 5.25 miles, right on Clements Road past Pine Mountain Lake Stables. When road narrows, turn right through gate and follow signs to the trailhead parking lot. Access is gained through private property, so please be respectful. Trail starts at trailhead parking area and ends at the Tuolumne River.
- **Andersen Mine Trail** (4.5 miles). Moderate difficulty. Elevation 1,900 to 2,100 feet. From Hwy 120, take Cherry Lake Rd. approximately nine miles to Early Intake, cross bridge and bear left. About a mile beyond the bridge, turn left on Forest Road 1532Y to Holm Powerhouse. Park in turnout across the bridge. Trail begins next to bridge and proceeds downstream.

- **Little Golden Forest Trail** (2.5 miles) Moderate trail; steep first part. Elevation 3,100 to 3,250 feet. A 0.5-mile interpretive trail followed by a two-mile general trail set along the confines of the 1987 Complex fire that required vast reforestation.



- **Hamby Trail** (three miles). Strenuous trail. Elevation 1,250' to 3,100 feet. Access on Ferretti Road, north from Hwy 120, for roughly two and a half miles. Turn right immediately after Kings Road and travel through gate for 0.7 mile to the trailhead. Access is gained through private property, so please be respectful. Visitors are asked to close the gate. The trail joins the Tuolumne River Trail downstream of the Clavey River confluence. Trail has approximately 40 switchbacks.
- **Tuolumne River Trail** (six miles). Moderate trail. Elevation 1,250' to 1,400 feet. Trail goes along the south side of the Tuolumne River to the confluence of the Clavey River. Take Lumsden Road off Ferretti Road for 4.5 miles to the trailhead, about 0.5 mile downstream from the Lumsden Boat Launch.

Mi-Wok Ranger District:

- **Westside Railroad Trail** (three miles). Easy hike. Begins at Miramonte subdivision on Cottonwood Road, a mile east of Tuolumne City. Stroll along the old railroad grade and gaze at the huge Tuolumne River Canyon. Springtime walks offer a special bonus of wildflowers.
- **Sugar Pine Railroad Trail** (three miles). Easy hike. Begins at Fraser Flat Campground and continues up to the Old Experimental Forest station on Old Strawberry Road. Parallels the South Fork of the Stanislaus. Great wildflowers in spring and early summer. Trail is self-guided and interpretive, with a narrative offered on the Sugar Pine Railway.

Calaveras Ranger District:

- **Emigrant-West** (1.3 miles). Portion of historic pioneer route. Trailhead is on Highway 4 at parking area 0.5 mile past Bear Valley. Trailhead not well marked at this time.
- **Osborne** (1.3 miles). Trailhead located at Hwy 4, 0.25 mile east of Silvertip Campground. Panoramic view of Lake Alpine area from Osborne Point. Ends at Emigrant West trail.



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- **Duck Lake** (one mile). Easy walk. Begins on Highland Creek Trail at Lake Alpine's Silver Valley Campground. A loop route continues for about two more miles around Duck Lake in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Wilderness permit required for overnight camping.
- **Bull Run Lake** (3.5 miles) Trailhead is off Forest Road 8N13 and Hwy 4 at Stanislaus Meadow. First 1.5 miles is fairly level, then ascends into a more difficult slope. Connects with Heiser Lake Trail at the two mile marker. Wilderness permit required for overnight camping. It is often crowded on summer weekends.
- **Heiser Lake** (2.5 miles) Uphill trail of moderate difficulty. Begins at Mosquito Lake on Hwy 4. Connects with Bull Run Lake Trail for loop route.
- **Inspiration Point** (1.5 miles) Uphill climb of moderate difficulty. Access from Lakeshore Trail. At the top, the hiker is rewarded with spectacular views of Spicer Reservoir and the Dardanelles.
- **Lakeshore** (1.5 miles) Easy walking. Follows south shore of Lake Alpine. Begins at Pine Marten Campground and ends at Forest Road 7N17, where it becomes a 4-wheel drive road.

This information was is designed to help you and your group plan your hiking options. All hikes are not the same in terms of duration or difficulty.

Please consult our informational material on the many self-guided interpretive trails available throughout the Stanislaus National Forest and on the forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus.

If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this guide, please contact any of the forest's front desk operations:

Forest Supervisor's Office

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Sonora, CA 95370
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(209) 965-3434

Calaveras Ranger District

5519 Hwy 4
PO Box 500
Hathaway Pines, CA 95323
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Groveland Ranger District

24545 Hwy 120
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Remember,

