

Trails: Lyons Reservoir to Fraser Flat

ROG 16-51-05 2/2020

Railroads were an indispensable part of life in the central Sierra Nevada, ferrying people, equipment and raw materials up and down the slopes. Although it has been years since railroads served in the Stanislaus National Forest area, their footprints can still be seen.

Former railroad grades provide scenic rides and hikes from Lyons Reservoir on Mi-Wok Ranger District to the Old Strawberry Road, west of Pinecrest on Summit Ranger District. Some excellent multi-use trails have been set up on what were formerly railroad grades of the Sugar Pine and West Side railways. While these trails are normally sloped at about three percent, on occasion a trail will exceed this average.

The trail runs along the South Fork of the Stanislaus River from Lyons Dam to Fraser Flat, a distance of some 10 miles. Expect to encounter some ruts and rocky areas along the trail.

The first half mile of the trail is narrow. After that point, riders need to dismount, forge Lyons Creek, climb a small hill and drop back down to the railroad grade where it resumes. The trail from the last wire gate (at about the 4.2 mile mark) is rough and not recommended for beginners. Total travel time for the trip is approximately an hour and a half, one way.

The trail is used by hunters, hikers, horse riders, anglers and other visitors to the Forest.

The first five miles of this trail, starting at the reservoir and leading to the gate almost halfway up the trail is owned by PG&E. This five-mile section of the trail is open to non-motorized travel only. The remainder of the route located on Forest Route 4N90 is limited to highway licensed vehicles only.

Lyons Reservoir is both a popular fishing spot and a drinking water reservoir for Tuolumne County. It serves as a trail hub for some of the more popular trails within our district. At no time is swimming, boating, driving any vehicles or riding any stock allowed in Lyons Reservoir. It is a drinking water reservoir. The only activity allowed is fishing, and only from the shoreline of the reservoir.

Safety

Please exercise caution and care when enjoying these trails. They are not well maintained and an inattentive hiker or biker could suffer injury. If you are biking and not wearing protective gear, you risk serious injury in the event of a fall. Keep an eye out for obstacles and unexpected travelers coming from the opposite direction.

Protecting railroad resources

Do not remove railroad artifacts and remnants; leave them so that others may relive the past. Excavating, removing or otherwise damaging a heritage resource is a crime. Anyone caught doing so may be imprisoned and receive a substantial fine. Help protect these fragile and irreplaceable reminders of the past for future generations. If you discover anyone digging, metal detecting, removing or damaging any heritage resource, please contact the Forest Supervisor's office at (209) 532-3671.

The only authorized motor vehicle access to Lyons is a two-mile dirt road from Highway 108. The gate is closed Nov. 1 – April 30.



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