

PCT South of Hwy. I-80 to Mount Judah - Donner Summit Area

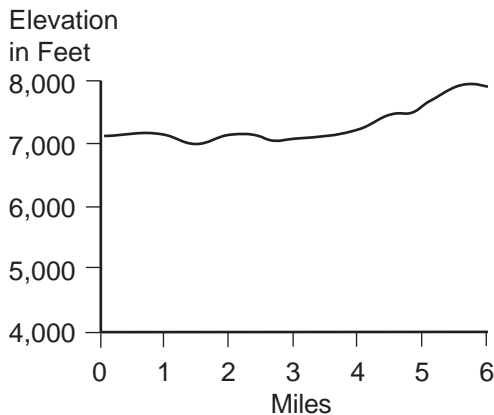
Truckee Ranger District - Tahoe National Forest



General Information

Mileage: 6.0 miles one way
Elevation: 7200-7000-8243 feet
Difficulty: (Difficult)
Use Level: Heavy
Season: July-October
Topographic Map: Norden

Trail Profile



Special Note about the PCT:

Congress established the Pacific Crest Trail on October 2, 1968 with passage of the National Trail System Act. The P.C.T. runs for 2,500 miles generally following mountain divides from Mexico to Canada, through California, Oregon and Washington.



Mechanized and Motorized equipment is prohibited, this includes motorcycles and bicycles.

Access

Unattended parking is not permitted at the Interstate 80 rest areas on Donner Summit. To access the trails in the Donner Summit area there is a Forest Service trailhead, with restrooms and water. To reach the trailhead take the Castle Peak Area/Boreal Ridge Road exit, which is immediately west of the highway's Donner Summit Roadside Rest Area. On the south side of the highway there is a sign reading:

Tahoe National Forest Trailhead
Donner Summit
Pacific Crest Trail

Follow the directions on the sign, turning east for .4 mile to the trailhead. To reduce the hike by 3.5 miles, the PCT can be accessed off Hwy 40 just beyond Donner Ski Ranch.

Trail Description

From the trailhead follow the Pacific Crest Access Trail .5 mile to the PCT. The first leg of the hike (to Donner Pass) is a rather easy 3.5 miles providing several views of Donner Lake and the I-80 area. All along this segment huge boulders of smooth granite bear evidence of the glacial ice which shaped the terrain thousands of years ago. This segment also provides rock climbers easy access to some challenging cliffs.

After the trail crosses Old Highway 40 it follows the road directly opposite the trail for about 200 yards then continues off the road to the southeast. The trail starts a steep climb up a granite headwall then flattens and follows the contour of the mountain, climbing moderately. This portion of the trail provides nice views of Lakes Mary and Angela to the north and Lake Van Norden to the west.

Approximately 1 3/4 miles from Donner Pass the trail crosses Roller Pass, a significant point on the Overland Emigrant Trail. Signs at the pass tell the story of early California settlers and the difficulties they encountered at this point on their trek west.

From Roller Pass hikers can return via the PCT or via the Mt. Judah Loop Trail. The loop trail offers a rewarding view of Donner Lake, the Truckee and some of the dominant peaks such as Anderson, Castle Peaks, and the more distant Sierra Buttes.

Camping spots are available but somewhat limited along this segment of the PCT.

Note

Water is often not available along the route. Only water from developed systems at recreation sites is maintained safe to drink. Open water sources are easily contaminated by human or animal waste. Water from springs, lakes, ponds, and streams should be properly treated before drinking. You may wish to carry water with you. Another method of treatment is to use a backpackers water filter.

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