



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Cross-Country Skiing

Echo Lakes Basin

Johnson Pass

Eldorado National Forest

Placerville Ranger District



Directions

The Johnson Pass cross-country ski trail system has 3.1 miles of posted trail including 3 loop trails and one trail that leads you to Echo Lakes Sno-Park. To get to the trails at Johnson Pass from U.S. Highway 50, if traveling east, drive 1 1/2 miles past the Sierra-At-Tahoe sign towards Echo Summit. Turn left onto the Johnson Pass road which has the Echo Lakes sign. Travel approximately 1/2 mile until you come to the Sno-Park on the south side of the road. The parking lot is part of the California Sno-Park system and requires a permit. Permits are not available at the trailhead so pick one up in advance.

Trail Descriptions

Little Shorty Loop (0.4 M / 0.7 km)

Elevation: 7,300 feet. This loop can be accessed from the southeast corner of the Echo Lakes Sno-Park. The loop trail starts about 100 feet south of the parking lot down a main stem trail that leads you to the other two loop trails. Blue diamonds and blue signs with yellow arrows guide you through this high elevation forest. The predominant trees in this forest are called conifers. The trees bear cones to produce their seeds, and their leaves are in the shape of various needles. The variety of tree species includes red fir, western white pine, Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, and lodgepole pine. It is a good warm-up trail to start your skiing with. It takes you over some rolling terrain as you meander through the trees.

Echo Lakes Ski Trail (1.1 M / 1.8 km)

Elevation: 7,300 feet. This trail follows the Echo Lakes Road. The terrain is fairly gentle. Views of the glacier-created Echo Lakes await the cross-country skiers of this trail.

Big Shorty Loop (0.5 M / 0.7 km)

Elevation: 7,300 feet. This ski trail loop starts about 200 feet south of the junction with the Little Shorty Loop, and takes you through and around a small basin. The predominant trees of this loop are lodgepole pine. Lodgepole pine has a high tolerance for moisture and can live in soils that would drown roots of other trees. Yes, a tree's roots need to breather in order to uptake the water and minerals that a tree needs to grow. This trail will eventually lead you back to the main stem trail, but it will be further south than where the trail first connects to the main stem trail.

Ridge Loop (1.1 M / 1.8 km)

Elevation: 7,300 to 7,400 feet. This trail involves some steeper terrain than the two shorter loops. It will take you through a forest with three distinct sizes of trees. You will see the saplings grouped together among a fairly open forest of intermediate-sized trees. As the trail gets close to Highway 50, you will encounter scattered large trees. This is an opportunity to see trees in a variety of sizes.

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