

Loch Leven Lakes Trail System

Nevada City Ranger District

Tahoe National Forest



Loch Leven (primary route)

General Information

Mileage	railroad tracks, 1.1 mi. 1 st lake, 2.5 mi Salmon Lake trail, 2.6 mi 2 nd lake, 2.8 mi Cherry Point trail, 3.0 mi Upper Loch Leven, 3.6 mi
Elevation Change	5,680 to 6,850 (1,070 feet)
Difficulty Level	moderate
Use Level	heavy
Quad maps	Cisco Grove, Soda Springs

Trailhead

The trail begins one-eighth mile east of Big Bend Visitor Center on old U.S. 40 (Big Bend exit off I-80). A restroom is available at the trailhead. The trail begins across the road from the parking area.

Trail Description

The Loch Leven trail leaves the South Yuba river canyon, crossing the ridge above to reach the glacially formed Loch Leven lakes chain, small bowls in the granite. The trail is generally open for hiking from early June to November, weather permitting. The trail is not marked for winter use, and can be difficult to find in winter.

The trail works its way upward on a moderately steep grade to the southwest to the UPRR tracks, then trends southeasterly.

Granite outcroppings and glacial erratics are numerous along the first portion of the route, and the trail can be difficult to follow on the bare rock sections. As the trail ascends, it crosses minor hogbacks and depressions, generally trending upward. Prior to the railroad tracks, hikers cross a buried telephone trunk line, and petroleum pipeline. Hikers will see the markers for these features. Near the railroad tracks, a small bridge spans a creek that flows swift and cold in early season.

The railroad tracks are on the original 1860s route of the Central Pacific railroad, built by hand with

Chinese labor, and it remains a major freight and passenger route in and out of California.

After crossing the tracks, the trail becomes steeper, going from 6,000' to 6,800' in 1.25 miles. At the top of the ridge, the trail descends gradually into the Loch Leven lakes basin. The trail in the basin is primarily level, but follows the topography.

At the south end of lower Loch Leven, a trail junction continues left to middle and high Lochs, or right to Salmon Lake.

Fishing is generally good, and camping is dispersed throughout the basin. Campfire permits are required for campfires, backpacking stoves, BBQs, and lanterns.

Salmon Lake (secondary route)

Mileage	to Salmon Lake cutoff, 1.0 mi from cutoff to lake, 0.25 mi from cutoff to Loch Leven trail, 0.6 mi
Elevation Change	6,581 to 6,797 (216 feet)
Difficulty level	easiest
Use Level	light
Quad map	Cisco Grove

Trailhead

From Yuba Gap exit on I-80, drive south on Yuba Gap road for 0.3 mile, and turn right toward Lodgepole campground. At 1.1 miles further, turn left on road 19 (unpaved). Drive four miles and turn left on road 38. Drive 2 miles to the trailhead, 0.5 mile past Huysink Lake. The trail begins on the left near a willow thicket. Parking is available on the right side of the road.

Trail Description

The Salmon Lake route is a lovely hike through meadows, fir forest, and along rocky outcrops with views toward the North Fork American river canyon and Cherry Point. The trail is generally open for hiking from early June to November, weather permitting.



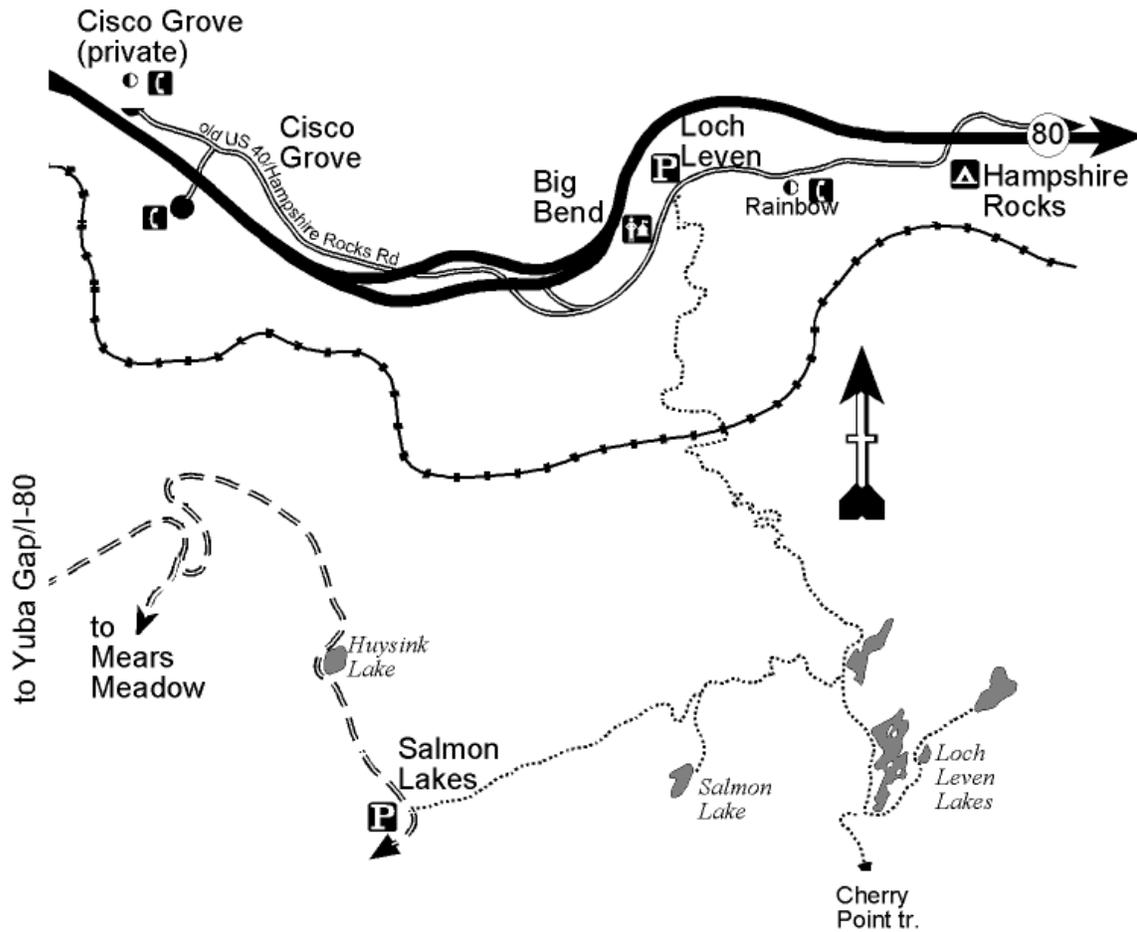
United States
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Forest Service
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Tahoe National Forest
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Trail Map



The trail initially skirts a meadow blooming with wildflowers in early summer. It then climbs into old growth fir forest, and across weathered granites and metamorphic rocks with expansive views to the south. Grades are not difficult, but the trail rolls across the countryside to Salmon Lake.

The lake sits in a rocky bowl with limited campsites, primarily on the southeast side. Fishing is poor in the lake. Although it is very swimmable, most users will prefer the Loch Leven lakes. Campers will find Salmon lake a less crowded alternative to the Loch

Leven basin. Campfire permits are required to campfires, backpacking stoves, BBQs, and lanterns.

All Are Welcome

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Loch Leven trail profile

