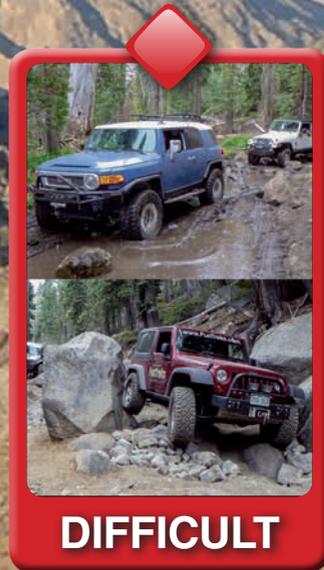


100 Mountain & Desert Trails

GUIDE TO
**California
Backroads &
4-Wheel-Drive
Trails**



Charles A. Wells & Matt Peterson

Published by FunTreks, Inc.
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First Edition

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Printed in China

Library of Congress
 Control Number: 2013920902
 ISBN: 978-1-934838-07-5
 FREE trail updates and GPS downloads available at www.funtreks.com.

To order additional books, call toll-free 1-877-222-7623 or order online at www.funtreks.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks to: everyone we met on the trails for giving us their time and allowing us to use their pictures; active 4-wheel-drive clubs across California who have adopted trails and work hard to keep trails open; staffers and rangers at the U.S. Forest Service, BLM and other government land agencies for their time and patience answering our many questions; 4 wheelers and clubs who, 10 years ago, showed us most of the trails in this book.

We would also like to thank our dedicated trail scouts Carl Lea and Rob Harmon. Carl drives a 2003 gold TJ (page 36) and Rob a 1988 black Range Rover (page 7).

GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION

We guarantee you will enjoy the trails in this book. If not, or if you are dissatisfied with the book in any other way, return it to us for a full refund. Or, call our toll-free number during business hours at 1-877-222-7623. We promise to do whatever it takes to make you happy.

DISCLAIMER

Travel in California’s backcountry is, by its very nature, potentially dangerous and could result in property damage, injury or even death. The scope of this book cannot predict every possible hazard you may encounter. If you drive any of the trails in this book, you acknowledge these risks and assume full responsibility. You are the final judge as to whether a trail is safe to drive on any given day, whether your vehicle is capable of the journey and what supplies you should carry. The information contained herein cannot replace good judgment and proper preparation on your part. The publisher and authors of this book disclaim any and all liability for bodily injury, death or property damage that could occur to you or any of your passengers.

We have made every effort to update trails to match U.S. Forest Service Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs) that were available at the time of this writing. We cannot match maps that have not yet been issued or keep up with annual changes to existing maps. We will attempt to report changes on our website, but make no guarantee of accuracy. You are ultimately responsible for following the latest and correct MVUM. In addition, OHV laws described in this book change constantly. We do our best to keep up with them; however, you are ultimately responsible to know the correct and latest laws. The publisher and authors of this book disclaim any and all liability for fines or other punishment that could result from being on the wrong trail or breaking the law.

Note: Telephone numbers and websites that appear in this book were verified Jan. 1, 2014.

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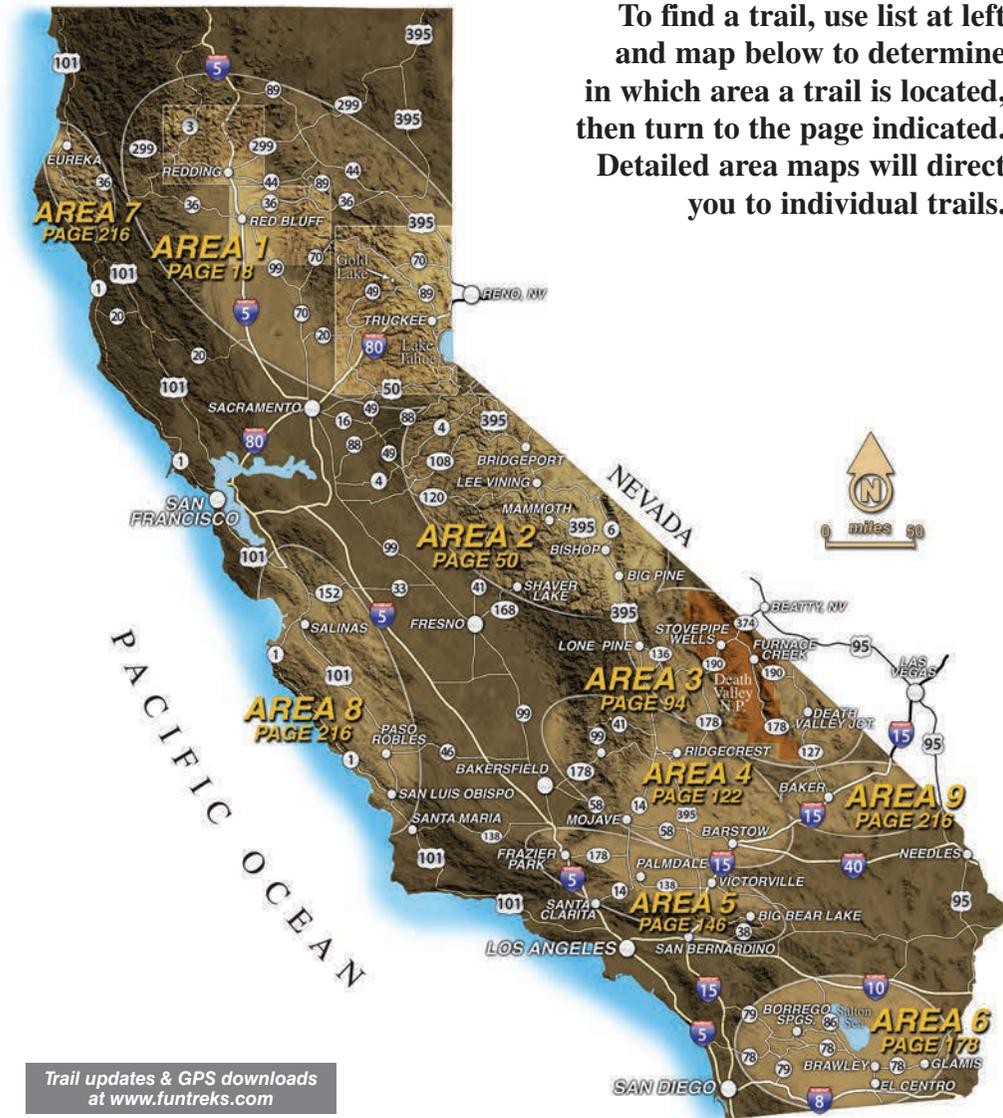
TRAIL LIST

Green = Easy, Blue = Moderate, Red = Difficult

#	Name	Pg.	#	Name	Pg.	#	Name	Pg.
AREA 1 MAP 18			Alabama Hills 96			68. Grapevine Canyon 162		
<i>Redding, Red Bluff, Gold Lake, Lake Tahoe</i>			38. Swansea-Cerro Gordo Road 98			69. Dishpan Springs 164		
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2. Shasta Bally Peak 22			40. Marble & Cottonwood Canyons 102			71. John Bull Trail 168		
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5. Stag Point 28			43. Inyo Mine, Echo Pass 108			74. Clarks Summit 174		
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19. Niagara Rim 58			57. Last Chance Canyon 138			88. McCain Valley Rd. 204		
20. Bodie Ghost Town 60			58. Wall Street Canyon Overlook 140			89. Los Pinos Mtn. Loop 206		
21. Kavanaugh Ridge 62			59. Odessa-Doran Loop 142			90. Sidewinder 208		
22. Copper Mountain 64			60. Phillips Loop 144			91. Bronco Peak 210		
23. Deadman Pass 66			AREA 5 MAP 146			92. Superstition Mountain 212		
24. Laurel Lakes 68			<i>Frazier Park, Santa Clarita, Big Bear, Lake Arrowhead</i>			93. Glamis, Oldsmobile Hill, Sand Highway 214		
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26. Wheeler Ridge 72			62. Alamo Mountain Loop 150			<i>Pacific Coast, Hollister Hills, Oceano Dunes, Mojave Road</i>		
27. Buttermilk Country 74			63. Liebre Mountain 152			94. Lost Coast Beach 218		
28. Coyote Flat 76			64. Sierra Pelona Ridge/Rowher OHV 154			95. Hollister Hills SVRA 220		
29. Mazourka Canyon 78			65. Cleghorn Ridge 156			96. Old Coast Road SVRA 222		
30. Bald Mountain 80			66. Pilot Rock Road 158			97. Oceano Dunes SVRA 224		
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AREA 3 MAP 94								
<i>Lone Pine, Death Valley National Park, Panamint Mountains</i>								
37. Movie Road,								

TRAIL FINDER

To find a trail, use list at left and map below to determine in which area a trail is located, then turn to the page indicated. Detailed area maps will direct you to individual trails.



Throughout this book, you'll see the above gray box. It's a reminder that our website has trail updates that come from customers just like you. We invite you to send updates to us through our website, email to books@funtreks.com, or call toll-free at 877-222-7623.

In addition, all waypoints in this book are available as free .gpx downloads for your mobile device, GPS unit or computer. Simply go to our website and click on *Guidebooks*, then scroll down to *FREE Waypoint Downloads*.

TRAIL RATINGS DEFINED

Trail ratings are very subjective. Conditions change for many reasons, including weather and time of year. An easy trail can quickly become difficult when washed out by a rainstorm or blocked by a fallen rock. You must be the final judge of a trail's condition on the day you drive it. In this book, if any part of a trail is difficult, the entire trail is rated difficult. You may be able to drive a significant portion of a trail before reaching the difficult spot. Read each trail description carefully for specific information.



Easy

Gravel, dirt, clay, sand, or mildly rocky road. Gentle grades. Water levels low except during periods of heavy runoff. Full-width single lane or wider with adequate

room to pass most of the time. Where shelf conditions exist, road is wide with minor sideways tilt. Clay roads, when wet, can significantly increase difficulty. Some trails can be driven in 2WD under ideal conditions. Others will need 4WD and, in some cases, low-range gearing.



Moderate

Rutted dirt or rocky road. Careful tire placement may be necessary. Some grades fairly steep but manageable if dry. Soft sand possible. Sideways tilt will require caution. Narrow shelf roads possible. Backing may be necessary to pass. Water depths passable for stock high-clearance vehicles except during periods of heavy runoff. Mud holes may be present especially in the spring. Undercarriage may scrape occasionally depending on ground clearance. Rock-stacking may be necessary in some cases. Brush may touch vehicle. Four-wheel drive, low range, and higher ground clearance required in most cases. Standard factory skid plates and tow hooks recommended on many trails.



Difficult

Grades can be very steep with severe ground undulation and large boulders. Sideways tilt can be extreme. Sand hills very steep with soft downslopes. Deep water crossings possible. Shelf roads extremely narrow; use caution in full-size vehicle. Passing may be difficult with backing required for long distances. Brush may scratch sides of vehicle. Body damage possible. Some trails suitable for more aggressive stock vehicles but most trails require vehicle modification. Lifts, differential lockers, aggressive articulation, and/or winches recommended in many cases. Skid plates and tow hooks required.

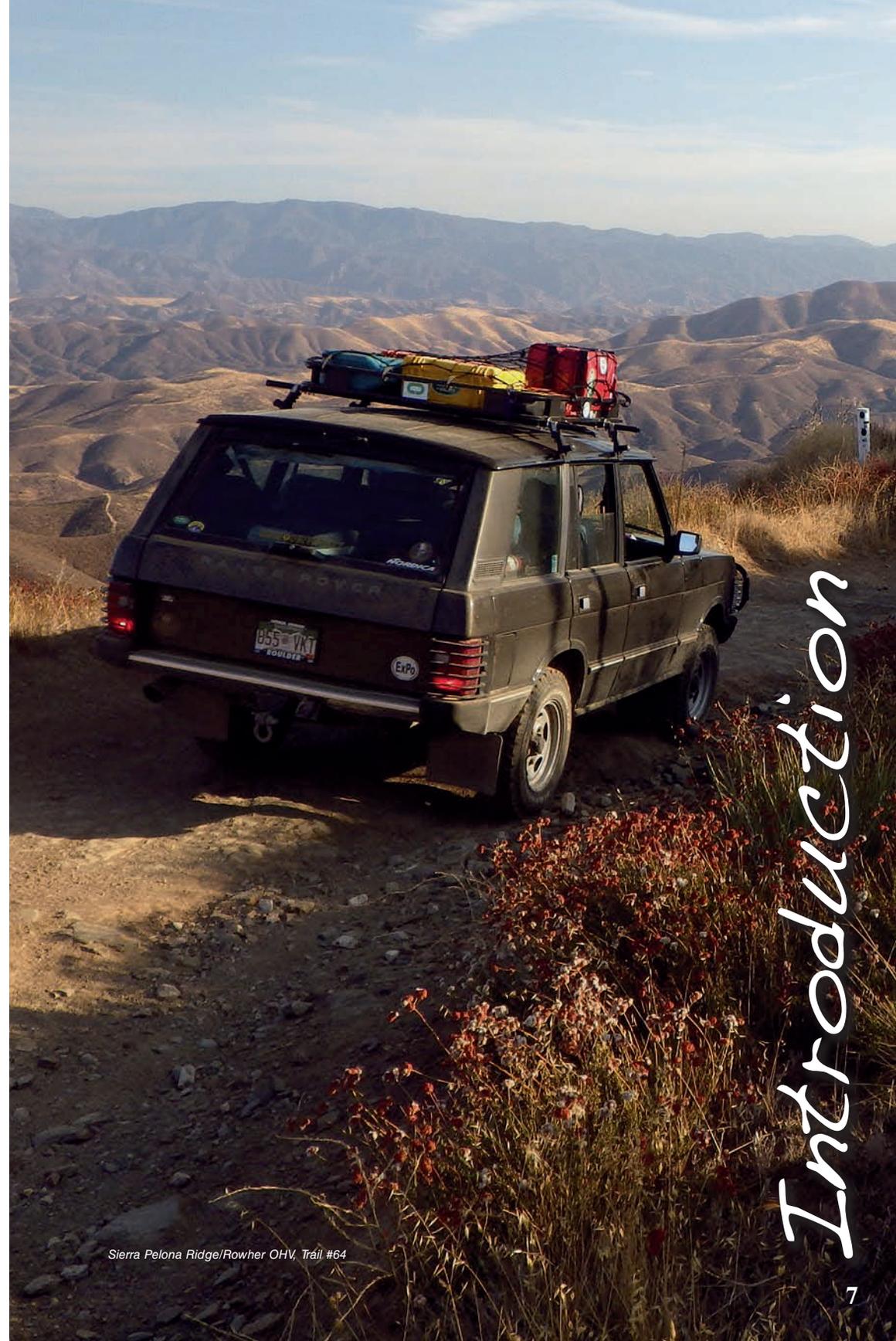
Our Vehicles: (See above photos)

A. 1988 Range Rover SWB (scout owned): Mostly stock, Old Man Emu suspension added, 1.5" lift, 29" BFG AT tires, brush guard & roof rack. (See photo A above and opposite page.)

B. 2012 Jeep® Rubicon 4-DR: Standard equipment includes lockers front and rear and push-button, quick-disconnect sway bar. Added CB radio and front steel bumper with brackets to tow vehicle behind motorhome.

C. 2012 Jeep® Rubicon 2-DR: Standard equipment includes lockers F&R and quick-disconnect sway bar. Added 3-inch lift, steel bumpers, winch and CB radio.

© "Jeep" is a registered trademark of Chrysler Corporation.



Introduction

Sierra Pelona Ridge/Rowher OHV, Trail #64

AREA 1

Green = Easy, Blue = Moderate, Red = Difficult

#	Name	Pg.
1.	Bowerman Ridge	20
2.	Shasta Bally Peak	22
3.	Peligreen Jeepway	24
4.	High Lakes	26
5.	Stag Point	28
6.	Cleghorn Bar	30
7.	Poker Flat	32
8.	Deer Lake, Gold Valley	34
9.	Snake Lake	36
10.	Sierra Buttes	38
11.	Ellis Peak	40
12.	Buck Lake	42
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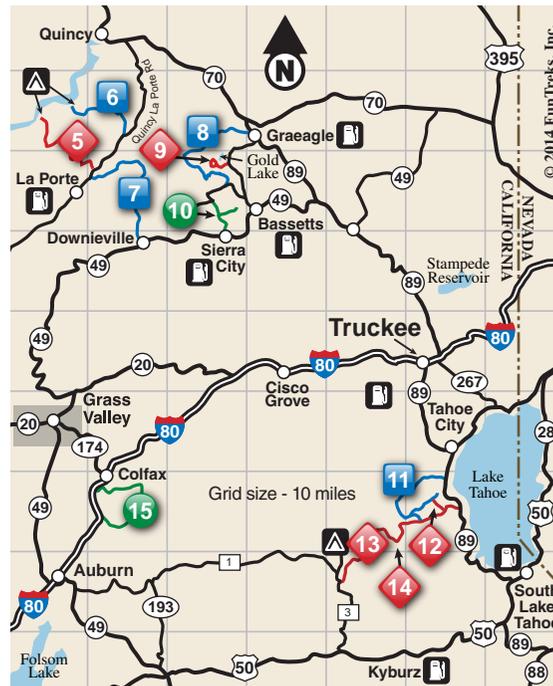
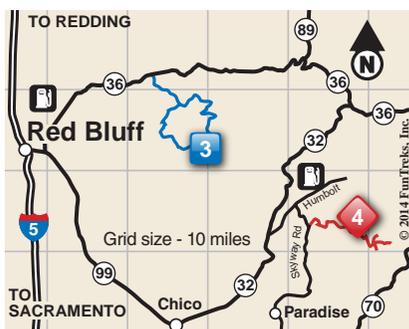
Redding, Red Bluff, Gold Lake, Lake Tahoe

We've broken down Area 1 into three parts. This allows us to show better detail on each trail location.

Take note that Area 1 includes the mighty *Rubicon*, perhaps the most publicized trail of its time. This trail lives up to all the hype and should be at the top of every 4-wheelers bucket list. We've split this trail into a 2-day unforgettable adventure. As we were completing the Rubicon, we noticed a side trail that

wasn't included in the first edition of this book, *Buck Lake*. It gives you a taste of the Rubicon, but requires far less time to drive. It climbs higher than the Rubicon and has outstanding mountain views. After the Rubicon, head north from Lake Tahoe to smaller Gold Lake, around which you'll find three extremely beautiful trails: easy Sierra Buttes (one of our favorites), moderate *Deer Lake/Gold Valley* and difficult *Snake Lake*. There's something in this area for all skill levels.

We round out Area 1 with mix of trails not far from Redding and Red Bluff. Two are near lakes in tourist areas, and two are in remote areas, known mostly to hunters, fisherman and 4-wheelers.



Rubicon Trail #13 and #14, rated difficult. Leaving camp below Buck Island Lake to start day two.



Narrow shelf road hugs mountain as it climbs.



Park below gate at Waypoint 05 and hike to top.



Sierra City has a few shops and 24-hr. gas.



Loose boulder partially blocked the trail.

Historical Highlight: Sierra City served as an important mining town starting in the 1850s. Today, the quaint town consists of many turn-of-the-century buildings complete with boardwalks. Don't miss the Kentucky Mine Stampmill and Museum east of town.

Overview: Perhaps the most enjoyable easy trail in this book when driven, as described here, from Sierra City. The drive is fun, exhilarating and very beautiful. The view from Sierra Buttes Lookout is dizzying. A steep 3/4-mile hike is required to reach the lookout. Take plenty of water, your camera and binoculars. Green-sticker vehicles may wish to start at the top where there is more room to park. Follow directions at right starting from Bassetts.

Rating: Easy: A narrow shelf road that climbs steeply up the mountainside. Minor loose rocks in a few places and quite steep towards the top. Suitable for stock, high-clearance 4WD SUVs.

Stats: Length: 10 miles. Time: 3-4 hours. Elevation: 4,200 to 7,950 ft. Best time: May-September.

Current Conditions: Tahoe National Forest, Yuba River Ranger District. (530) 288-3231.

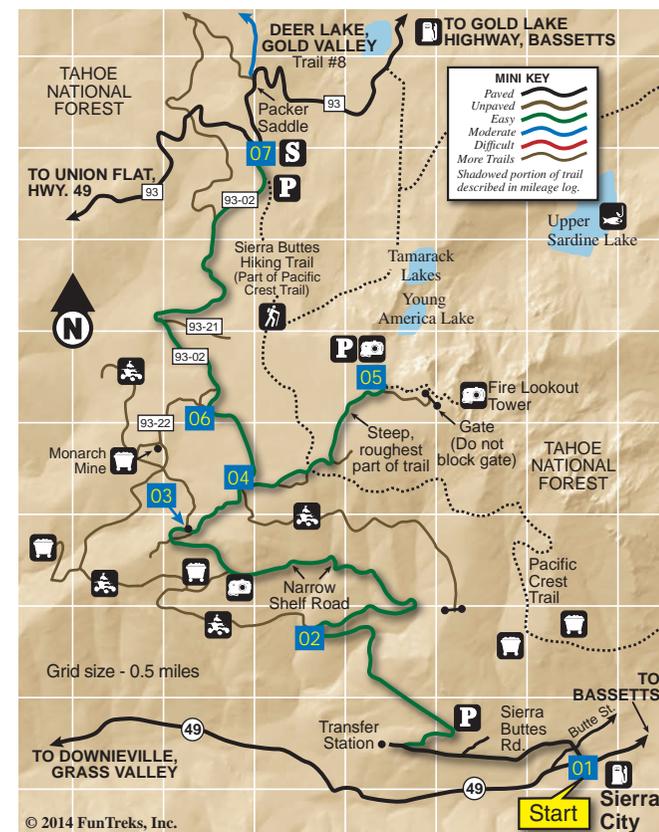
Getting There: From Grass Valley: Take Hwy. 49 past Downieville to Sierra City. **From Truckee:** Take Hwy. 89 north then turn west on Hwy. 49 to Sierra City. **From Bassetts to start at top:** Head north on Gold Lake Hwy. 1.3 miles and turn left on Packer Lake Road across bridge. Stay on this paved road 4.8 miles until you reach a parking area on left for Sierra Buttes Hiking Trail.

START MILEAGE LOG:

- 0.0 Zero trip odometer [Rev. Miles] Head north uphill on paved Butte St. & bear left on Sierra Buttes Rd. [6.3] **01 N39 33.952 W120 38.126**
- 1.1 Turn right on dirt road and start to climb. [5.2]
- 2.5 Make a hard right on lesser road. Next 2 miles are a narrow shelf road with very little room to pass. [3.8] **02 N39 34.572 W120 39.686**
- 4.8 Bear right following sign for Sierra Buttes. [1.5] **03 N39 35.051 W120 40.454**
- 5.2 Turn right following sign to Sierra Buttes Lookout, then stay to left as you climb sandy road. [1.1] **04 N39 35.276 W120 40.083**
- 5.6 Bear left. [0.7]
- 6.1 Bear left. [0.2]
- 6.3 Reach major parking area with hiking trail to lookout tower. You may continue another 0.2 miles to gate to avoid some of the hiking. After visiting tower return to Waypoint 4. [0.0] **05 N39 35.703 W120 39.254**
- 0.0 Zero trip odometer at Wpt. 04 From Wpt. 04 head north on much flatter road. [2.6]
- 0.6 Stay right. (Left goes to Monarch Mine.) [2.0] **06 N39 35.643 W120 40.300**
- 0.8 Stay right. [1.8]
- 1.9 Stay right where good road cuts over to 93. [0.7]
- 2.6 Trail ends at large parking area. To reach town of Bassetts, turn right and follow paved 93 east downhill. [0.0] **07 N39 36.852 W120 39.983**



Steep staircase to tower.



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Views from lookout tower are outstanding on a clear day.

Ellis Peak



AREA 1 map on page 18



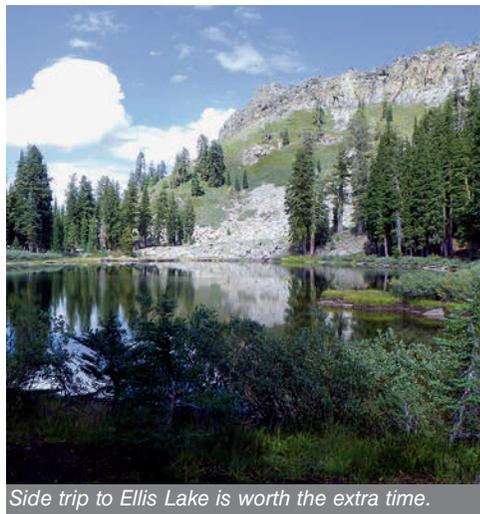
Views of Lake Tahoe from Ellis Peak.



Great views as you climb.



We made a quick stop at Bear Lake.



Side trip to Ellis Lake is worth the extra time.

Overview: Beautiful, high mountain area west of Lake Tahoe. Route passes several beautiful lakes with outstanding views of Lake Tahoe from top of Ellis Peak. Open to green-sticker vehicles with large staging area at start.

Rating: Moderate: Narrow, steep and rough in places. Suitable for stock high-clearance 4x4 SUVs. Some tight brush.

Stats: Length: 21.2 miles as described. Time: At least 4 hours. Elevation: 6,284

to 8,539 ft. Best time to go: June-October.

Current Conditions: Tahoe N.F., Truckee R.D. (530) 587-3558. Lake Tahoe Basin Mgt. Unit (530) 543-2600.

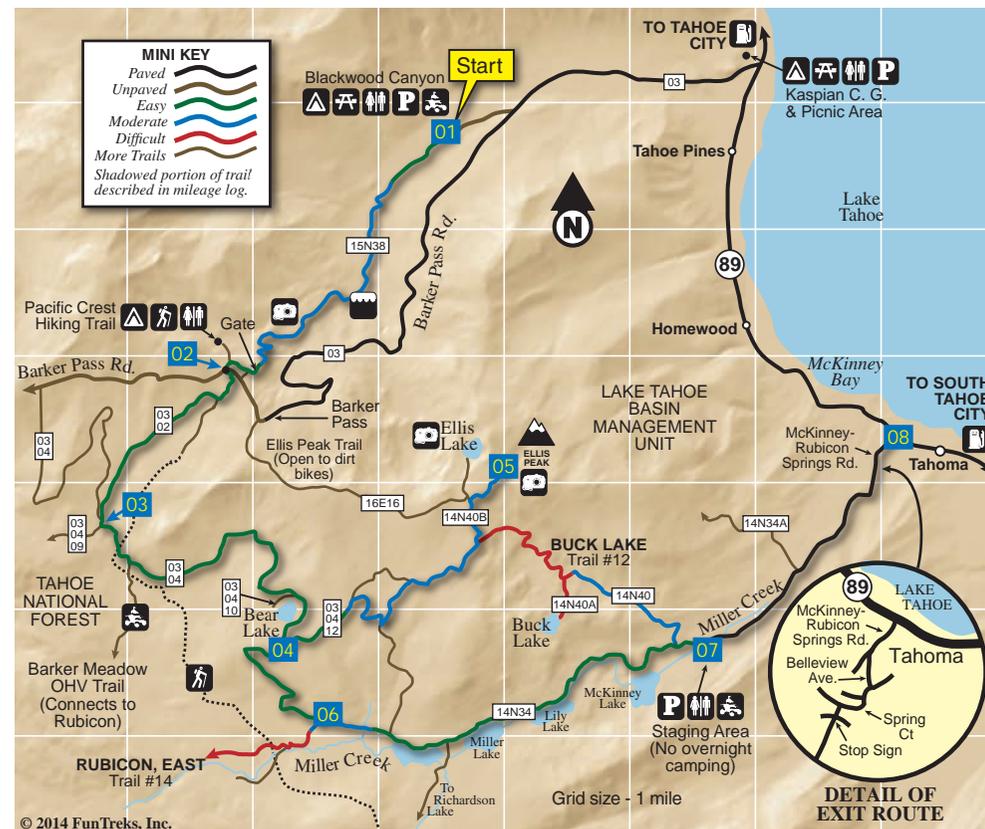
Getting There: Head south from Tahoe City on Hwy. 89. Turn right after 4.3 miles on Barker Pass Road. After 2.2 miles, continue straight on dirt road where pavement turns left. Staging area is hidden in trees on right in 0.45 miles.

START MILEAGE LOG:

- 0.0 **Zero trip odometer** [Rev. Miles] From staging area, head west on dirt road. [10.9] **01 N39 06.191 W120 12.241**
- 3.1 Pass through gate, then continue straight across large circular area. Stay right of white tanks. [7.8]
- 3.2 Cross major Barker Pass Road and continue downhill on lesser road. [7.7] **02 N39 04.603 W120 14.128**
- 3.5 Stay right. [7.4]
- 5.1 Turn left on more traveled road where F.S. 03 04 09 goes straight. [5.8] **03 N39 03.535 W120 15.120**
- 5.5 Continue straight. [5.4]
- 7.4 Continue straight where small road on right goes to Bear Lake. [3.5]
- 7.9 Turn left on F.S. 03 04 12 for Ellis Peak. [3.0] **04 N39 02.747 W120 13.622**
- 8.6 Turn right. [2.3]
- 9.1 Turn hard left. [1.8]
- 9.4 Stay right. [1.5]
- 10.2 Stay left where Buck Lake (Trail #12) goes right. [0.7]
- 10.5 Stay right. Trail on left goes to Ellis Lake. [0.4]
- 10.9 Park just below Ellis Peak. Short climb to top for views of Lake Tahoe. Return to Wpt. 04. [0.0] **05 N39 03.948 W120 11.847**
- 0.0 **Zero trip odometer at Wpt. 04** Head south at Waypoint 4. (You may also exit the way you came in.) [7.3]
- 1.3 Turn left. Road from Rubicon, East Side, Trail # 14, joins on right. [6.0] **06 N39 02.233 W120 13.351**
- 1.7 Continue straight. You'll pass several lakes. [5.6]
- 4.5 Continue straight where Buck Lake (Trail #12) goes left. [2.8]
- 4.8 Continue straight past staging area. [2.5] **07 N39 02.749 W120 10.065**
- 6.6 Turn right on road marked Springs Ct. following signs for Hwy. 89. [0.7]
- 6.9 Turn left on Bellevue. [0.4]
- 7.0 Turn right on McKinney Rubicon Springs Rd. [0.3]
- 7.3 Arrive at Hwy. 89. [0.0] **08 N39 04.219 W120 08.411**



Fun area for ATVs.





Climbing past Buck Lake. Lake Tahoe can be seen in the distance upper left.



Several good campsites at Buck Lake.



Tight brush in places.

Overview: Add this trail to the Rubicon or drive as stand-alone. Alternate route to top of Ellis Peak is both challenging and beautiful. Quickly reached from west shore of Lake Tahoe. Difficult access to Buck Lake means good campsites are often available. Trail is open to green-sticker vehicles with large staging area just east of Waypoint 02. Thanks to the North Tahoe Trail Dusters for adopting this trail.

Rating: Difficult: Moderate to Waypoint 03. Large, loose rocks above Buck Lake. Fallen trees and large rocks make side trip to Buck Lake very challenging. Steep with tight brush in places.

Stats: Length: Four-wheel-drive portion with side trip to Buck Lake is 2.8 miles. About 6 miles to Ellis Peak from start. Time: About 2 hours one-way. Elevation: 6,284 to 8,048 ft. Open seasonally from June - November.

Current Conditions: Tahoe National Forest, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Call (530) 543-2600.

Getting There: From Tahoe City: Drive 8 miles south on Highway 89 to McKinney-Rubicon Springs Road on right. **From Tahoe Valley:** Drive 19.4 miles north on Highway 89 to McKinney-Rubicon Sprgs. Road on left.

START MILEAGE LOG:

- 0.0 Zero trip odometer [Rev. Miles]
Head west on paved McKinney-Rubicon Springs Road. [2.8]
01 N39 04.219 W120 08.411
- 0.2 Turn left on Bellevue. [2.6]
- 0.4 At stop sign turn right on Springs Court. [2.4]
- 0.7 Turn left at sign for Rubicon Trail and Miller Lake access. [2.1]
- 2.5 Continue straight past staging area on left. [0.3]
- 2.8 Turn right at start of Buck Lake trail. [0.0]
02 N39 02.737 W120 10.376
- 0.0 Zero trip odometer at Wpt. 02
Head north up narrow F.S. 14N40. [1.7]
- 1.5 Turn left for Buck Lake.
The trail narrows as you get closer to lake. [0.2]
03 N39 03.272 W120 11.427
- 1.7 Arrive at campsite area.
Return to Waypoint 03 when done. [0.0]
04 N39 03.087 W120 11.431
Zero trip odometer at Wpt. 03
- 0.0 Turn left uphill. [0.9]
- 0.9 Join Ellis Peak (Trail #11) described on previous pages. Turn right to reach top of Ellis Peak or left to exit. [0.0]
05 N39 03.464 W120 12.005

Trail updates & GPS downloads at www.funtreks.com



Trip to Buck Lake is difficult with downed trees and large rocks.



Quiet moment at edge of Buck Lake, Waypoint 04.

