

Smith Lake Trail

Plumas National Forest
Beckwourth Ranger District



Trail Description

Smith Lake Trail starts in Lakes Basin Recreation Area and continues to the Jamison Creek Trail 2.5 miles away in Plumas Eureka State Park. Along the way there are opportunities to visit Smith Lake, take in panoramic ridgeline views overlooking Smith Lake and valleys of the Middle Fork of the Feather River.

Smith Lake Trailhead is at the northwest corner of the parking area. This is the same trail that accesses Mt. Elwell and is the return leg of the Gray Eagle Creek / Smith Creek Loop.

The trail starts with a steady ascent traversing the hillside. At the end of this early climb the trail dips downward to Smith Creek. Turn left at the intersection with Smith Creek Trail and take the bridge over the creek. It's just over a quarter of a mile to Smith Lake. Along the way Mt. Elwell Trail intersects from the left. And soon afterward the trail splits. Both of these trails are the Smith Lake Trail. One accesses the Smith Lake, and the other continues to Jamison Creek Trail.

After visiting Smith Lake (there is a trail along the south shore), turn back and continue on toward the State Park. The first part of this section ascends along a ridgeline with wonderful views of Smith Lake, surrounding peaks and valleys. Watch for hunting eagles and Osprey on the lake. After the highest point of the trail, it descends through alpine meadows and thick forest before reaching Jamison Creek Trail. As the trail enters the State Park it becomes a bit rocky and steep.

Driving Directions

From Graeagle go south about 1.5 miles on Highway 89. Turn right onto Gold Lake Highway. Drive 4 miles and turn right at Gray Eagle Lodge. Just before the lodge, turn toward Smith Lake Trail. Smith Lake Trailhead is at the northwest end of the parking area.



Related Activities

- Backpacking is allowed at Smith Lake and areas accessed by Jamison Creek Trail
- Explore other areas of Lakes Basin Recreation Area
- Observe wildlife
- Photography
- Visit Plumas Eureka State Park
- Visit Frazier Falls Trail
- Petroglyph Interpretive Trail near Lakes Basin Campground

Notes

- Open to foot, biking and equestrian traffic
- Do not crush brush or block traffic when parking
- Pack out all trash
- A restroom is available at the parking area
- Do not drink from naturally occurring water sources without proper water treatment
- Dogs must be under control at all times
- Dress for changing weather conditions

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Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
Plumas National Forest
www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas

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Elevations - 5,120 to 6,080 feet

Distance - 2.4 miles each way

Difficulty - Moderate

Usage - Moderate

