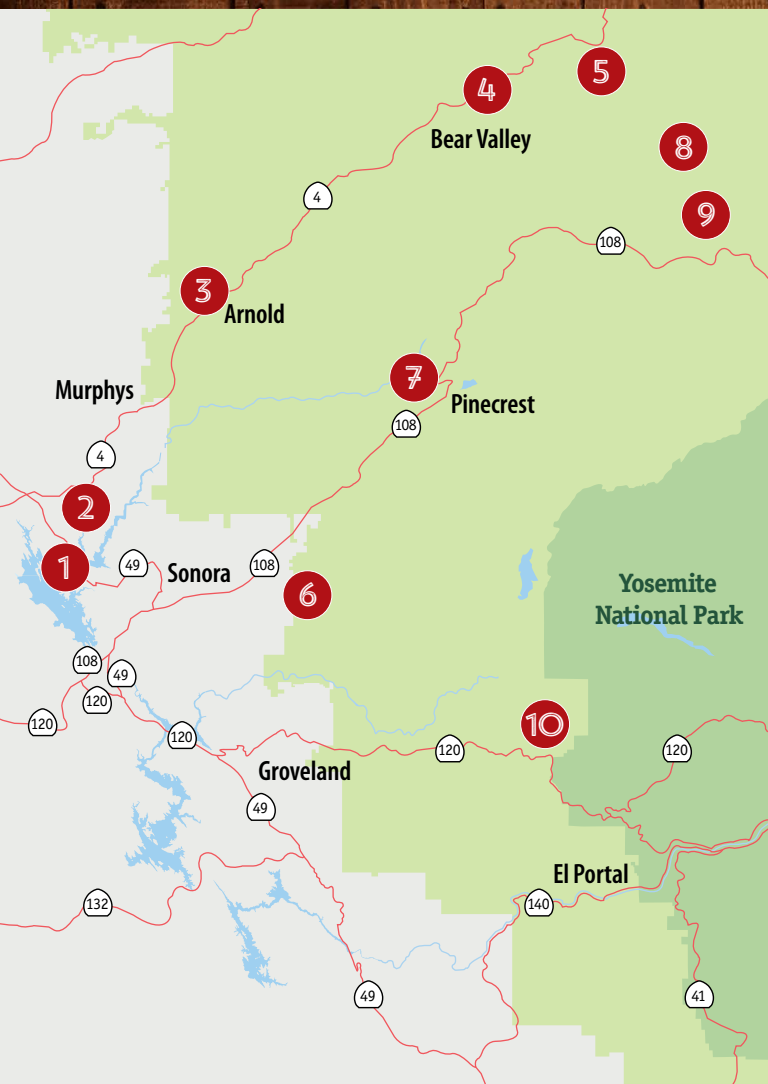


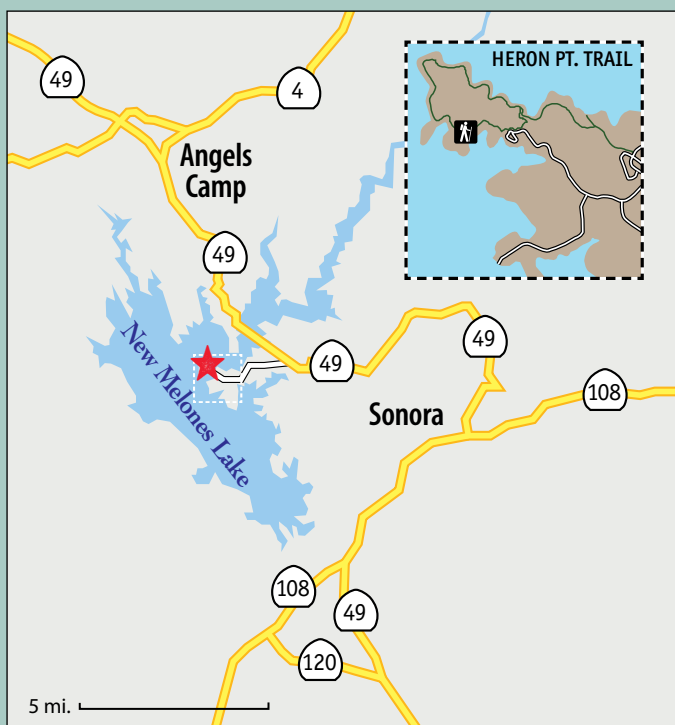


10 *Easy* SIERRA DAY HIKES

10 DAY HIKES NORTH AND WEST OF YOSEMITE



The area of the Sierra Nevada north and west of Yosemite Park rises gradually from California's Central Valley to elevations over 11,000'. It includes the Stanislaus National Forest, the Emigrant and Carson-Iceberg Wilderness areas, and a number of small towns. Opportunities abound for the outdoor enthusiast. **Here are 10 of the region's best day hikes.**



1 HERON POINT TRAIL NEW MELONES RECREATION AREA

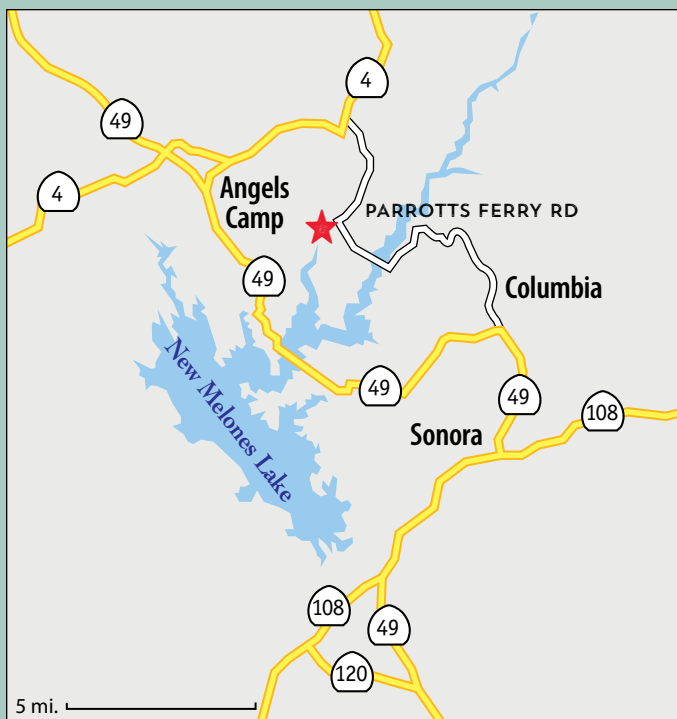
EASY • 1 OR 2.5 MILE ROUND TRIP
SEASON: ACCESSIBLE YEAR-ROUND
VIEWS OF LAKE, BIRDS, WILDFLOWERS



TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 1,100'

From Sonora, take Hwy 49 north towards Angels Camp for 8 miles. Turn left onto Reynolds Ferry Rd at the sign for Tuttletown Recreation Area. Go through the entrance station and past Acorn Campground on your right. Turn right onto the short road to the Heron Point day-use area. The trail begins at the gate near the restroom and parking area. Those wanting a loop hike can follow the trail approximately 1 mile, then take a shortcut on the right back to the trailhead. At 0.3 miles past this cutoff, the trail comes to a "T". Going left takes you to the reservoir. Going right takes you up to the Acorn Campground, or you can retrace your route back for a 2 mile hike.

Open year-round, the scenic Heron Point Trail winds along the shoreline of New Melones Reservoir. It is part of a larger system of trails located in the New Melones Recreation Area.



2 NATURAL BRIDGES TRAIL NEW MELONES RECREATION AREA

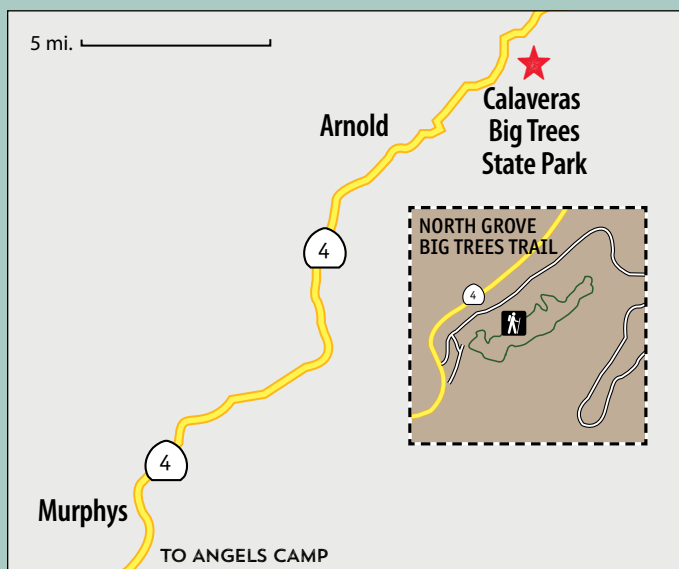
MODERATE • 2 MILE ROUND TRIP
SEASON: ACCESSIBLE YEAR-ROUND
VIEW (OR SWIM THROUGH) LIMESTONE CAVE



TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 1,500'

Look for the sign for the trailhead on the west side of Parrotts Ferry Road, 6 miles north of Columbia or 3.7 miles south from Highway 4. Park in the dirt off Parrotts Ferry or down along the spur road. The trail starts at the round metal gate on the west side of the spur road.

The trail descends 400 feet in elevation to Coyote Creek, which flows through limestone caves to create “natural bridges.” The water can be cold even in summer, but you can swim through the caves or enjoy one of the swimming holes along the creek. Be careful to avoid poison oak. Remember that unique geological structures such as these can take thousands of years to form, so make an extra effort to avoid causing any harm when visiting this unique low-elevation site.



3 NORTH GROVE LOOP TRAIL CALAVERAS BIG TREES STATE PARK

EASY • 1.5 MILE ROUND TRIP

SEASON: ACCESSIBLE YEAR-ROUND

ANCIENT GIANT SEQUOIAS, GUIDED TOURS

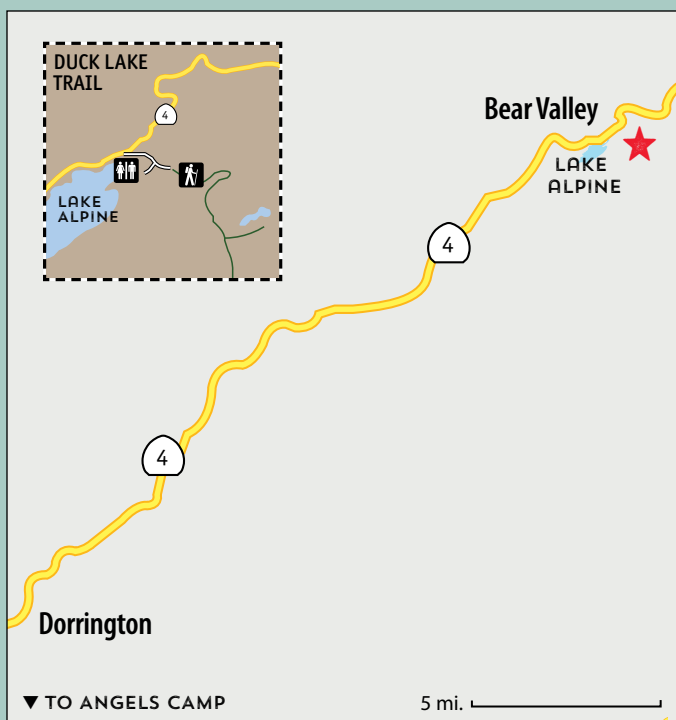


TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 4,700'

Head east on Highway 4 until you see signs for Calaveras Big Trees State Park - about 3 miles past Arnold. Turn right and pay the \$10 fee at the entrance station. Park in the main parking lot to access the North Grove as well as the visitor center.

There aren't many places in the Sierra Nevada to see spectacular Giant Sequoia groves. These huge trees can live to be 3,000 years old! The flat, handicap-accessible North Grove Trail provides easy access to many impressive trees, and guided hikes are offered periodically.





DUCK LAKE STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST

EASY • 2.5 MILE ROUND TRIP

SEASON: SUMMER & FALL

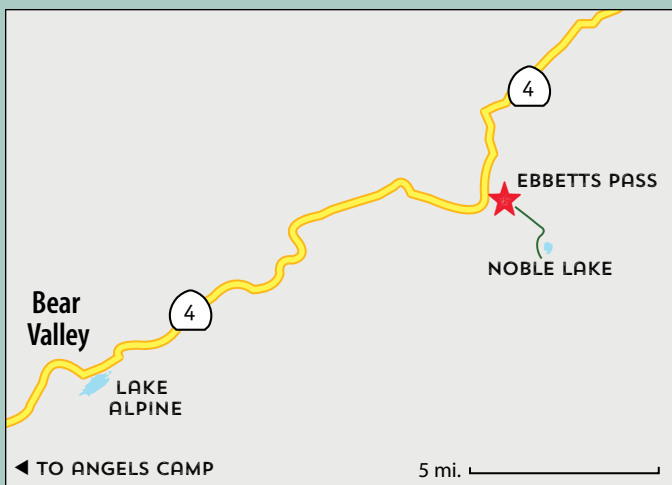
ALPINE LAKE, EXPOSED GRANITE, WILD AREA



TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 7,200'

From Arnold, head east on Highway 4 for about 29 miles to Lake Alpine. Turn right at the east shore of the lake, and head a short distance upslope to the Silver Valley Trailhead, near the entrance to the Silver Valley Campground. The trail starts with a mild uphill section. Be sure to stay on the main fork headed southeast to Duck Lake.

The gentle trail swings over a ridge and winds down to the west of Duck Lake, a small, grassy lake in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Visitors may see beautiful wildflowers and wildlife, especially if you extend the hike by following the trail around Duck lake. Mosquitos love the marshy meadow conditions in spring, so bring repellent if you visit early! Energetic hikers can add an hour-long walk around Lake Alpine at the start or end of the Duck Lake hike.



EBBETTS PASS TO NOBLE LAKE HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE N.F.

MODERATE • 8 MILE ROUND TRIP

SEASON: SUMMER & FALL

VOLCANIC GEOLOGY, PEAKS, WILDLIFE

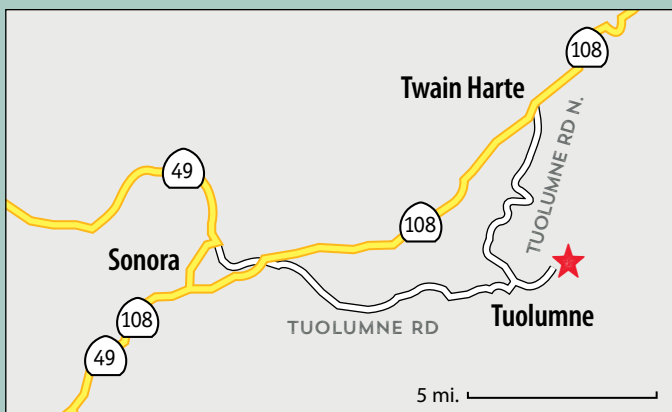


TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 8,700'

Head east on Highway 4 from Arnold about 43 miles until you reach the crest of Ebbetts Pass. At 0.4 miles east of the crest, turn right up a short, bumpy dirt road to the large trailhead parking area for the Pacific Crest Trail. Look for a wooden trailhead sign and a permanent restroom.

This portion of the Pacific Crest Trail swings south from Ebbetts Pass, offering sweeping views of the volcanic geology unique to this part of the Sierra Nevada. The trail traverses a ridge below the volcanic crest before it descends into Noble Canyon, where the trail swings sharply to the right to make the short ascent to Noble Lake. This small lake provides scenic views of volcanic peaks, a swim-friendly shoreline, and fishing opportunities.





WEST SIDE TRAIL STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST

EASY • UP TO 10 MILE ROUND TRIP
SEASON: ACCESSIBLE YEAR-ROUND
WILDFLOWERS, CANYON VIEWS, HISTORY



TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 2,900'

From Sonora, take Mono Way to Tuolumne Road and head southeast toward Tuolumne. Travel 7 miles to a "T"- intersection. Turn left on Carter, and then right on Buchanan Road. Before the road winds into the canyon, look on the left side for a trailhead parking area, just after Mira Monte Drive. Wooden stairs descend to the trail.

Interpretive signs describe local history along this flat, old railroad grade. Enjoy wildflower displays in the early springtime and views of the North Fork Tuolumne River far below. There is not much shade on this trail, so it is most popular in mild weather. Bring sun protection and water when visiting.





SOUTH FORK STANISLAUS RIVER FRASER FLAT RAILROAD GRADE STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST

MODERATE • 6 MILE ROUND TRIP

SEASON: SPRING THROUGH FALL

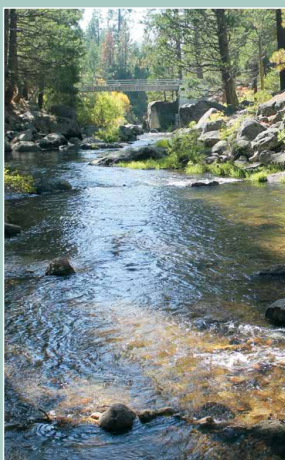
SCENIC FOREST, RIVER VIEWS, EASY ACCESS

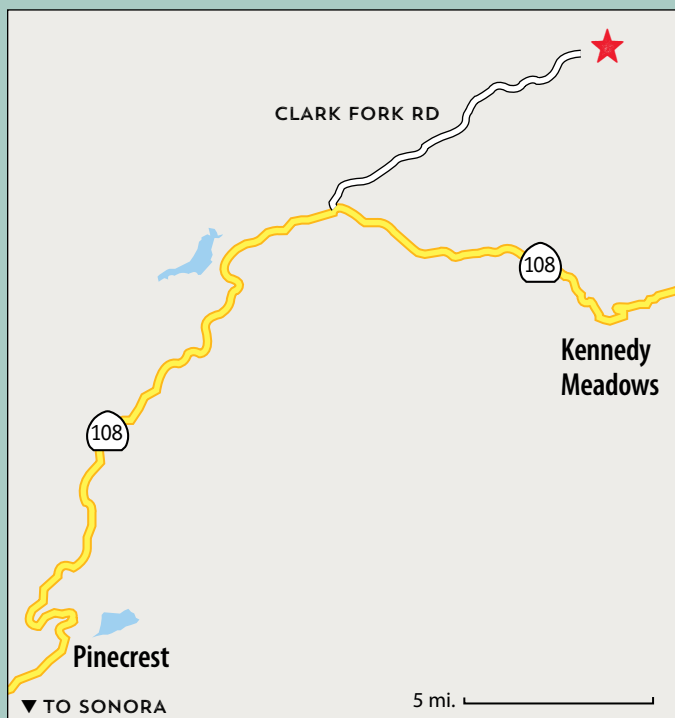


TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 4,770'

Head east from Sonora about 24 miles on Highway 108. Turn left on Fraser Flat Road (Forest Rte 4N01). Follow the winding paved road just over 2.5 miles down to the South Fork Stanislaus River. Park on the right before the bridge. There are no signs, but the trail (an old railroad grade) winds along the south side of the river, ending at Old Strawberry Rd.

This stretch of the old Sugar Pine Railroad grade provides a very easy hike above the South Fork Stanislaus River. You will pass through patches of beautiful older forest and enjoy scenic river views as you follow the old railroad grade toward the town of Strawberry. Watch for migratory songbirds and other wildlife.





CLARK FORK TRAIL STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST

MODERATE • 5+ MILES ROUND TRIP

SEASON: SUMMER & FALL

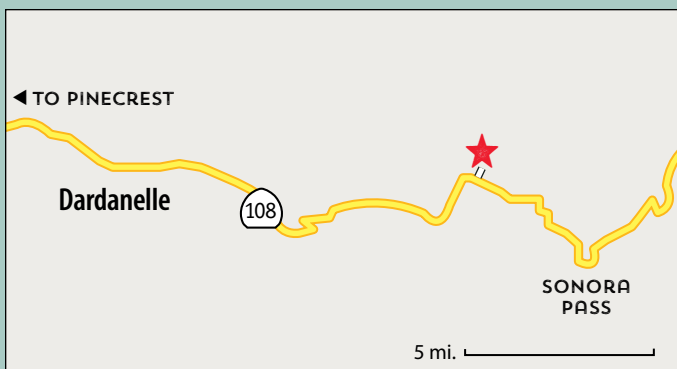
WILD AREA, RIVER VIEWS, HIKING, FISHING



TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 5,600'

Take Highway 108 east, about 47 miles from Sonora. Turn left at Clark Fork Road and follow it for 9 miles until it ends at Iceberg Meadow. Park off the road. The Clark Fork Trail begins on the river side of the road (the Disaster Creek trail begins across the road).

This scenic hike follows along the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River, ascending up through old forest in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness with several places to access the river to wade, fish, or picnic. One short, early stretch has very steep switchbacks. In about 2.5 miles you'll reach the Boulder Lake trail junction, one possible turn-around spot. If you feel ambitious, head up the river toward Boulder Lake. The trail definitely gains elevation, but children or older hikers can do this hike if the pace is gentle.



ST. MARY'S PASS STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST

MODERATE • 3 MILE ROUND TRIP

SEASON: SUMMER & FALL

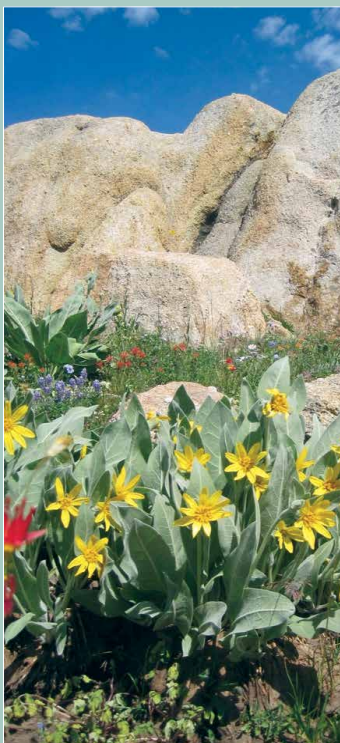
VIEWS OF SIERRA CREST, WILDFLOWERS

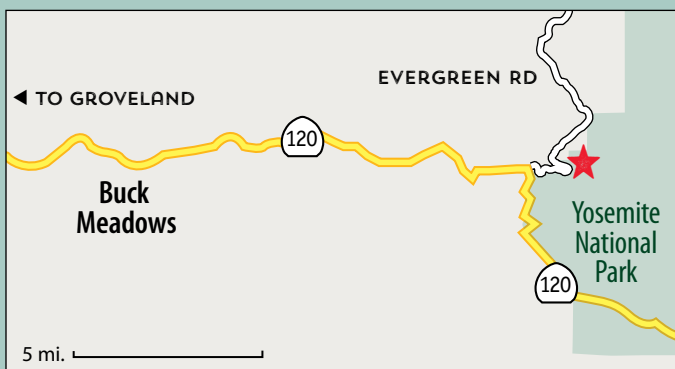


TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 9,200'

Travel east on Highway 108 to a point 0.75 mile west of the Sonora Pass crest. Turn left onto a difficult to notice dirt spur road and head up to the small parking area. Look for a small sign indicating the St. Mary's Pass trailhead.

The highly scenic trail begins at over 9,000 feet and climbs above 10,000 feet, traversing open hillsides that are seasonally covered in wildflowers. Enjoy the small seasonal creeks as you enter the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, and enjoy the shade of a patch of pines. Take your time reaching the top of the pass as the trail ascends steeply. At the top you can take in views of Sierra Nevada peaks in every direction, with Stanislaus Peak nearby to the north and Sonora peak to the east. In summer, the wildflowers here are amazing.





10

CARLON FALLS TRAIL STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

EASY • 4 MILE ROUND TRIP

SEASON: SPRING THROUGH FALL

WATERFALLS, YOSEMITE, RIVER VIEWS



TO TRAILHEAD • ELEVATION: 4,300'

Take Highway 120 east from Groveland about 23 miles. Turn left onto Evergreen Road, just a half mile before the entrance to Yosemite Park. Follow Evergreen Road for one mile until you reach the South Fork Tuolumne River, where you can park at the dirt pullout. The trail heads upstream on the far (east) side of the river.

For a short distance this trail is located within the Stanislaus National Forest before it enters Yosemite Park. Roughly one mile out on the trail, Carlon Falls can be heard and then seen. If you visit in spring, be very cautious of high water levels. Also be aware of hazardous dead trees remaining from the Rim Fire that burned through this area. When the high spring runoff has subsided, the serene waterfall becomes a popular swimming hole.



TIPS *for* DAY HIKERS...

Smart hikers plan ahead. Obtain trail maps, guidebooks, trail distance, estimated time required and any other information before you leave on a hike. Check weather conditions and forecast. Start early so that you have time to enjoy your hike and the destination. Plan to finish your hike before dark.

Tell someone of your plans and when you expect to return.

Keep trail maps and guidebooks in a ziplock bag.

Consider using a GPS.

Consider the ability level of everyone in your group.

Avoid hiking alone. Invite a friend.

Keep your pack weight as light as possible.

Bring plenty of water – 2 quarts per person – or take a purification system.

Plan accordingly for cooler temps at higher elevations.

Hike only as fast as the slowest member of your group.

Pace yourself. Don't hike too quickly. Save your energy.

Stay on trails.

Never approach wild animals.

Be careful where you are walking.

Keep track of your progress on the map.

Pack high energy snacks like granola, energy & fruit bars.

Keep your feet dry – change socks.

Hiking sticks or poles may help make your trip a little easier by giving you some stability on wet trails, and reducing strain on your legs when going up or down slopes.

Be aware of your increased exposure to ticks.

Bring a whistle and your smart phone.



Water

Forests

Wildlife

Wild Places

Yosemite

Education



For over 25 years, the Central Sierra Environmental Research Center (CSERC) has served as an environmental watchdog for the Northern Yosemite region – identifying threats to nature and striving for balanced solutions.

CSERC takes water samples in local streams, surveys for rare wildlife species, and monitors logging projects and livestock impacts to meadows and wetlands. Without CSERC, many threats to water, forests, and wildlife would go unchallenged.

CSERC also presents free educational presentations to schools and community groups – reaching 150,000+ participants since 1990. Interested in learning more?



**Download this guide and read about other trails
at our website: www.CSERC.org/trails**



CSERC



— PROTECTING —
Water • Wildlife • Wild Places



PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER

**IMAGES ON FRONT AND BACK COVERS AND PAGE 14 BY
PRESTON BIRDWELL - WWW.GILDEDMOON.COM**