
Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Geology, Hydrology, Flora, Fauna and Trivia

All Who Wander are Not Lost

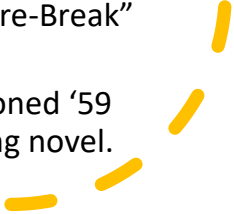


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Hike Upper Bear Trail > K2K > TRT > Van Sickle

We start where the Old Pony Express Trail forks into an old Placerville Lumber Company logging road cross over Edgewood Creek (which supplies the drinking water to Harrah's), then up trails dedicated and maintained by local residents, the Tahoe Mountain Bike Association (TAMBA) and the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRT). You'll see amazing rock formations (See if you can spot one that may remind you of a plumber) mature Incense Cedars, Sugar Pines and all sorts of flora and fauna. And some pretty cool waterfalls, the "Big Burn" forest fire scar and the "Fire-Break" which wasn't and isn't.

And of course, "Christine", an abandoned '59 Plymouth, just like in the Stephen King novel.

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Starting Point

Our hike starts off the end of Easy Street. Easy Street has been constructed over a portion of the Old Pony Express Route. Locals call the first dirt path off the end of the Street “Upper Bear Trail” and when that trail turns south we leave the Pony Express Route, which continued West to Friday’s Station. You can still see the buildings at Friday’s, now maintained by Edgewood Tahoe.

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Friday's Station

The last Nevada Pony Express Station before California was Friday's Station located at Lake Tahoe near present day State Line Nevada. In April, 1860, Robert (Pony Bob) Haslam received the first shipment of mail from Sacramento at Friday's Station and made his first run between Friday's and Buckland's Station, at present day Silver Springs. Friday's was already established as a way station for the Pioneer Stage Lines following the old Kingsbury Grade.

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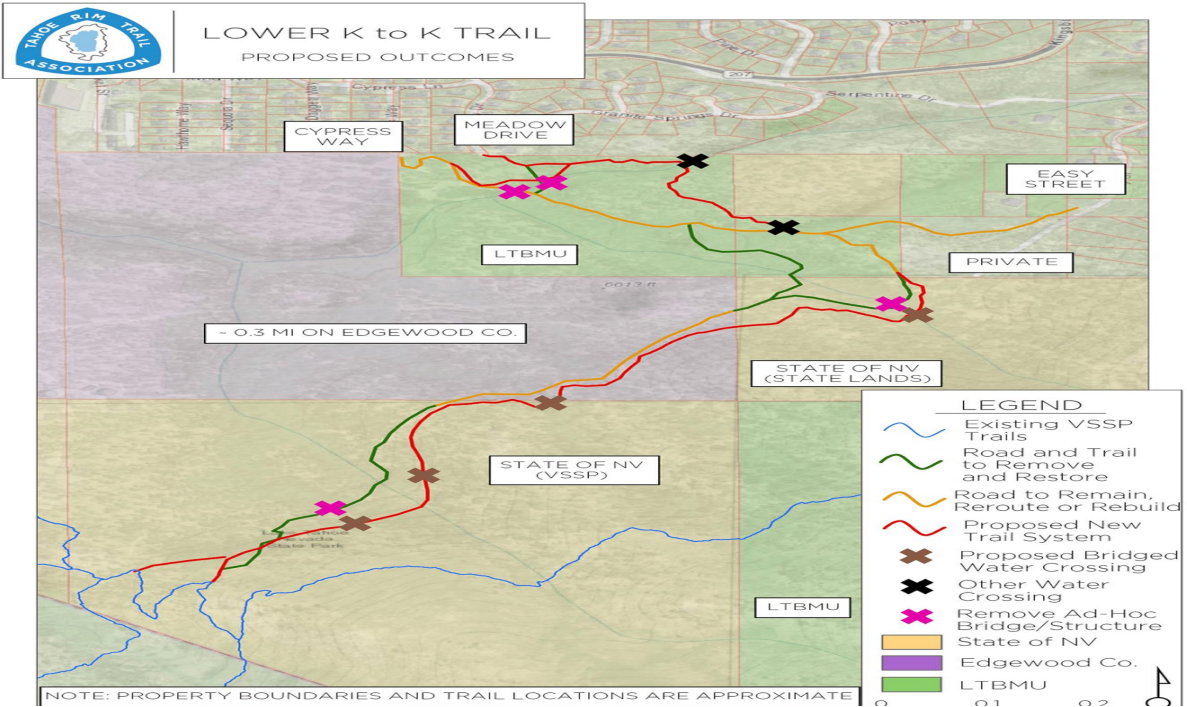
K2K (Kingsbury to Keller)

The Lower Kingsbury to Keller Trail is an unofficial trail that links Van Sickle Bi-State Park to Lower Kingsbury residential neighborhoods, traveling through Nevada State Parks land, U.S. Forest Service land, and private property. This trail will take us through a portion of the forest that burned during the Gondola Fire of '02.

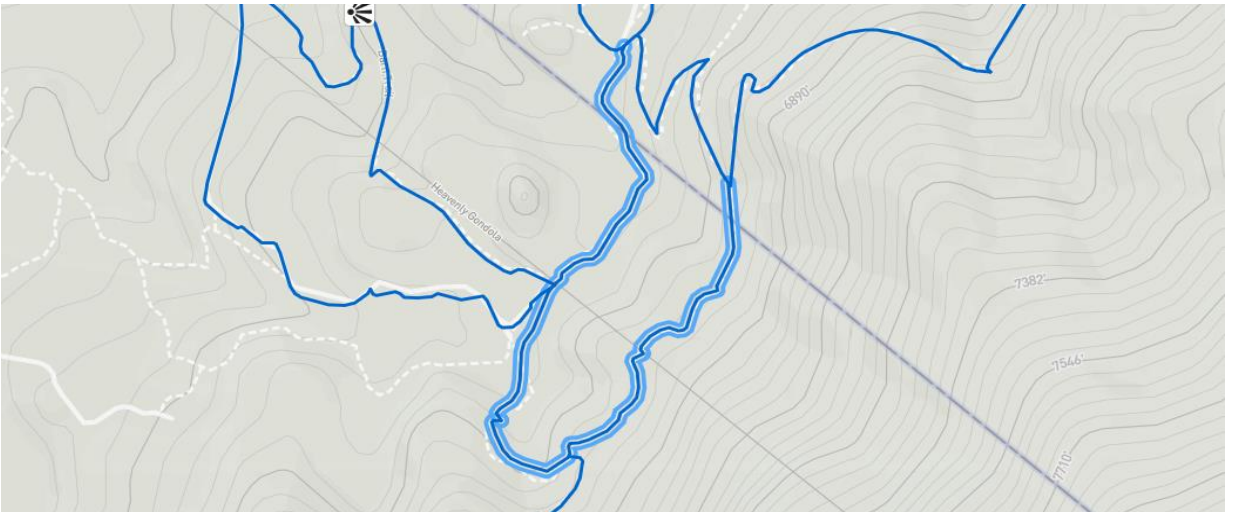


Reno Gazette-Journal / Scott Sa dy via AP





Cal-Neva Loop



We traverse a short part of the Cal-Neva Loop that overlaps K2K



TRT and the Waterfall

- From K2K we leave the trail to take the TRT trail up to the bigger falls – we have already seen the 5-6 level falls at the new TAMBA/TRT Bridge



VAN SICKLE RANCH and the BARN TRAIL

We then re-trace our route to the Van Sickle Trail intersection, the head back towards Harrah's on the Barn Trail.

Jack Van Sickle's brand was the "Crescent V", and until 2 years ago the local shopping center bore that name.

Jack wanted to get into the Ski Resort business and had his lumberjack's blaze a line up the mountain for a lift. Locals call it "The Fire Break"

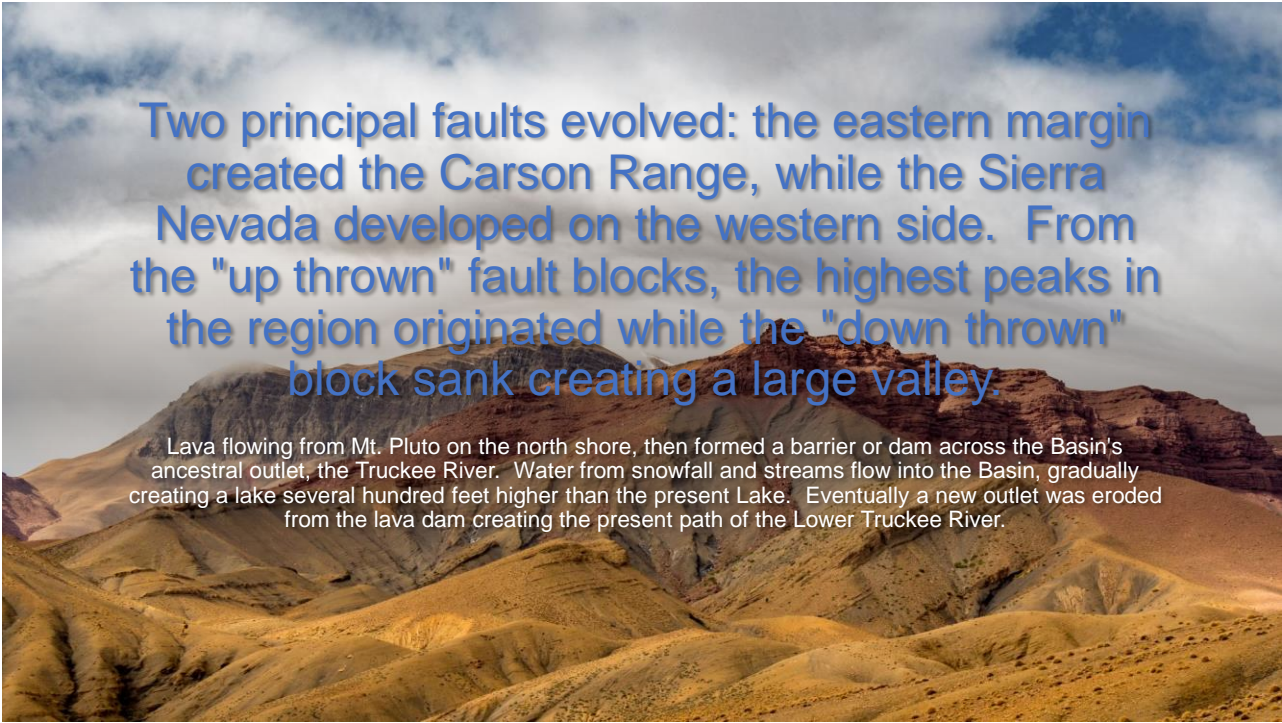




GEOLOGY

Lake Tahoe is the third deepest lake in North America and the tenth deepest in the world. The Lake is 22 miles in length and 12 miles wide with approximately 72 miles of shoreline. Its greatest measured depth is 1,640'. The average depth of the lake is 1,000'

Another amazing fact about Lake Tahoe is that the bottom of the lake, 4,580 feet in elevation, is actually lower than the Carson Valley floor in Nevada.



Two principal faults evolved: the eastern margin created the Carson Range, while the Sierra Nevada developed on the western side. From the "up thrown" fault blocks, the highest peaks in the region originated while the "down thrown" block sank creating a large valley.

Lava flowing from Mt. Pluto on the north shore, then formed a barrier or dam across the Basin's ancestral outlet, the Truckee River. Water from snowfall and streams flow into the Basin, gradually creating a lake several hundred feet higher than the present Lake. Eventually a new outlet was eroded from the lava dam creating the present path of the Lower Truckee River.

Following the faulting and volcanic period of the Basin, an Ice Age developed. Huge glaciers formed and moved down the V-shaped canyons on the western side of the lake. These glaciers scoured away loose rock and reshaped the canyons into broad U-shaped valleys. The rock and gravel left behind at the sides and end of these melting glaciers are called moraines. As these glaciers melted away, they also left behind brilliant bays, jagged peaks, glacial polished ridges and crystal clear lakes.



Flora of the Tahoe Basin

As they float down the mighty rivers of British Columbia: the giant redwood, the larch, the fir, the mighty Scots pine...

Gentle Jeffrey



Incense Cedar



Sugar Pine

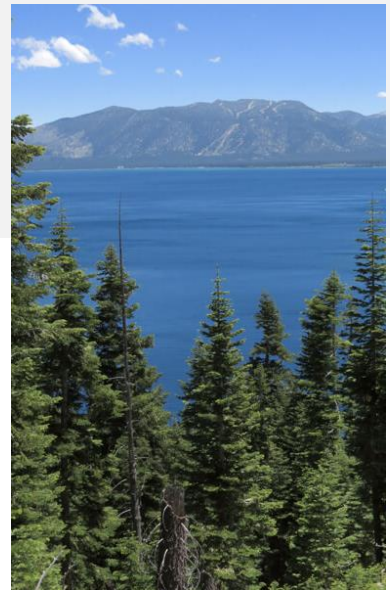


- The Sugar Pine is the tallest, largest and most magnificent of all the pines. This 5-needled pine is easily recognized at a distance by the long, pendulous cones that hang down from the tips of the higher branches. It has longer cones than any other conifer species (up to 12" or more!).



White Fir

The White Fir is the second most common tree in Lake Tahoe. Old trees make excellent wildlife refuges because of large cavities that often form in White Fir. White Fir cones break apart at the top of the tree, so are rarely found on the ground.



Quaking Aspen

- This tree derives its name from leaf stems that quiver with just the slightest breeze. In autumn, the Aspen cloaks the Lake Tahoe Basin in a golden-yellow blaze of color. Aspen root systems are completely interconnected and new trees typically sprout from the roots rather than seeds. Aspens are technically considered the largest living organism in the world because each grove with interconnected roots is considered one living system.



*Prickly Ponderosa
or Puzzle Pine*

This tree is very similar to the Jeffrey Pine. One way to tell the two apart is by their cones. The cones on the Ponderosa have prickles which stick out and make the cones difficult to hold. The Jeffrey's cones have prickles that point inward.





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Fauna of the Tahoe
Basin

Let's start with
Class
Mammillia,
Phylum
Chordata:





BEAVER:
Currently
active in the
pond at Rabe
Meadow, just
across
Highway 50
from Tahoe
Justice Court



Next Door
to Harrah's



Marten





Ursus Americanus

Pip the
Wonder Dog



Coyote







Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel

(not a
chimpunk)





Phylum Chordata,
Class *Aves*:

Stellar Jay (not Blue
Jay)



