

Lake Clementine Trail



Distance: 4 miles roundtrip; 2 hrs. (hiking)

Difficulty: Easy, except for short stretch where trail narrows due to wash out

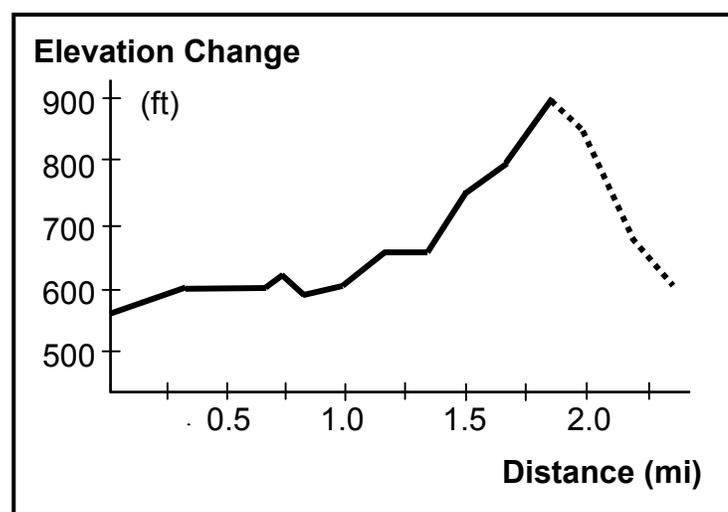
Slope: 3½% avg; 11% max. (see below)

Trailhead / Parking

Trailhead is at Confluence Area, 1¼ miles south of ASRA Park Headquarters. Take Hwy 49 from Auburn south to Old Foresthill Road at the bottom of the canyon. Continue straight for ¼ mile, cross the curved Old Foresthill Bridge, and park on the right. Trailhead is on the left across from parking area at green gate.

Description

This easy trail is ideal for a panoramic hike along the North Fork (NF) American River, much of it in the shade of conifers and oaks and in close proximity to riparian flora and chaparral. Several side trails lead down to the river, the last one descending to a deep pool beneath the North Fork Dam where spectacular views of water cascading over the dam can be seen.



Lake Clementine Trail begins at the Confluence Area on the far side of the curved Old Foresthill Bridge (built in 1955). It parallels the NF American River upstream, river left. At ¼ mile, concrete abutments for what was known as the Steel Bridge (1911-1955) may be seen on the opposite riverbank. At ½ mile, the trail goes under the Foresthill Bridge. (See sidebar.)

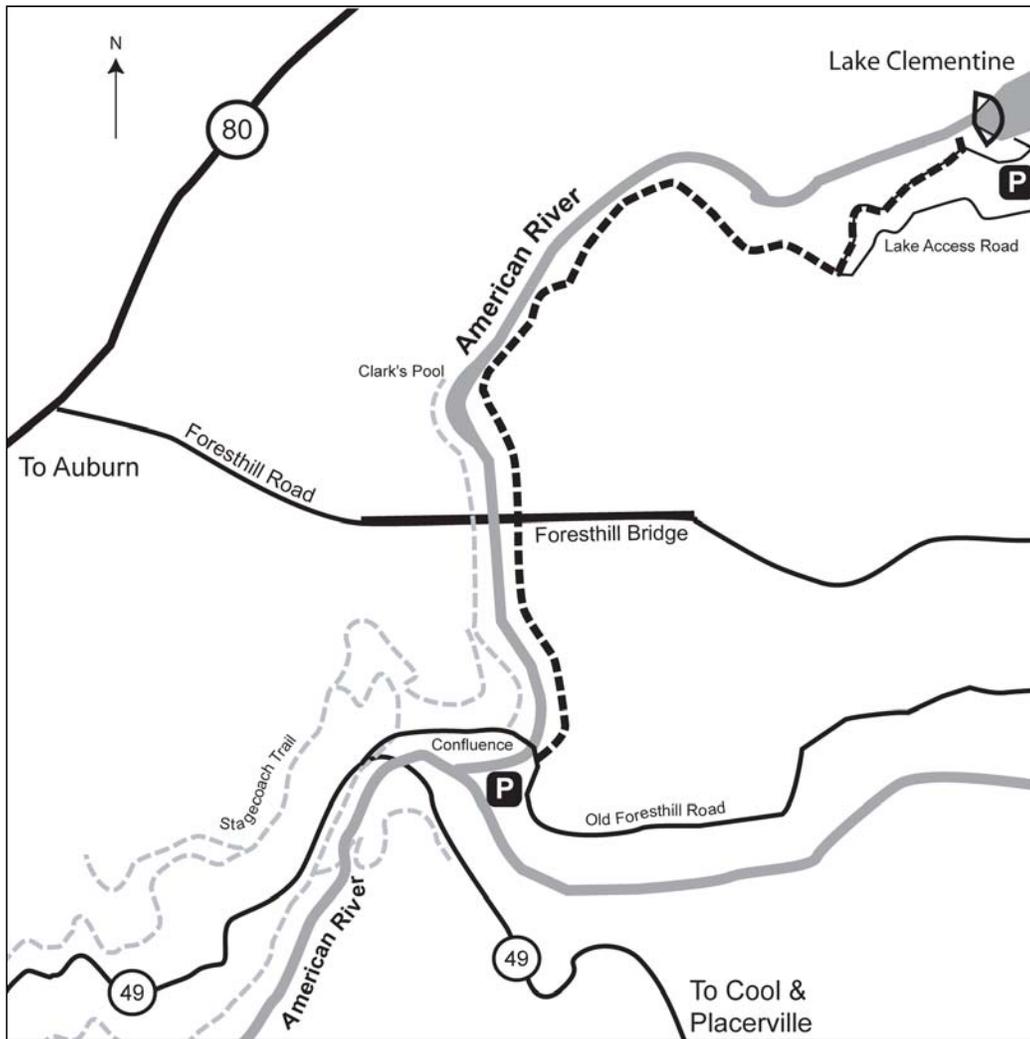
At ¾ mile, Clark's Pool can be seen on the left, a deep and clear rock-lined swimming hole that has been popular with locals for over one hundred years. A short side trail on the left leads down to Clark's Pool and a sandy beach. The summer water temperature of the river below Lake Clementine is surprisingly warm since it is fed from sun-warmed water from the surface of the lake flowing over North Fork Dam. By contrast, the Middle Fork American River is fed from the bottom of Oxbow reservoir and is considerably colder.

At 1 mile, rock abutments of a wooden covered toll bridge, built in 1875 and used until 1911, are visible on the opposite riverbank. A short distance upriver, if you look carefully, you can see evidence on the opposite riverbank of abutments where three different bridges existed between 1852 and 1875.

Continuing upriver, this part of the trail uses a largely shaded roadway that was once an old stagecoach route connecting Auburn with the Gold Rush camps of Iowa Hill, Georgetown and Greenwood in the late 19th century. (See sidebar).

Lake Clementine Trail ends at the Lower Lake Clementine access road. You may follow this paved road to the left about ¼ mile and then take a side trail left towards the river to an exciting view of water cascading over the dam face from the 3½-mile long Lake Clementine. (See sidebar).





Did You Know? – The 2,248-ft long Foresthill Bridge was designed to span the reservoir that would have resulted had the Auburn Dam been completed. (Work on the dam was discontinued in 1976.) Water was expected to reach the top of the cement piers, but today the bridge towers 730 feet above the river, making it the tallest bridge in California. It was opened in 1973 with much fanfare and has been featured in numerous movies and commercials and has been the site for many stunts – both legal and illegal.

Did You Know? – Lake Clementine is used exclusively for public recreational. It resulted from the North Fork Dam completed in 1938 and built by private funds in order to collect sedimentation from upriver hydraulic mining. It was made superfluous a few years later when such operations were discontinued by state edict.

Did You Know? – Stagecoach Trail was originally a toll road built in 1852 known as Yankee Jim's Turnpike and later as Old Stagecoach Road. The original road crossed the North Fork American River at a toll bridge just upriver from Clark's Pool, and from there, it led to the towns of Yankee Jim's and Iowa Hill. In the late 1800s, Yankee Jim's was a popular mining area, and Foresthill was yet to be developed. In 1875, the original toll bridge was replaced with a wooden covered bridge. In the 1870's, tolls on the bridge ranged from 6¢ for a cow to 50¢ for a horseman and \$1 for a wagon and two horses.

Thank you for visiting the Auburn State Recreation Area. Please take care to preserve and protect the trails, plants, and historic artifacts for other visitors (and for the wild residents of ASRA) by staying on the trail and by packing out all garbage to the trailhead. Some trails are very popular and may be crowded at times with hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Trail courtesy requires that bikers yield to hikers and equestrians, and that hikers yield to equestrians. In order to reduce conflicts and increase everyone's enjoyment, park visitors are required to act in a safe and courteous manner, obeying all park rules and speed limits, and respecting trail designations. **Not all trails are open to all uses. A large print version of this trail guide is available at ASRA Park Headquarters.**

This trail guide was created by ASRA Canyon Keepers, volunteers who assist the professional Park Rangers by providing information and assistance to ASRA visitors. Canyon Keepers conduct monthly hikes and meetings (open to the public) to learn more about the history and natural beauty of the American River Canyon. They also help maintain and improve hiking trails in ASRA. To learn more about Canyon Keepers, please call 530-885-3776 or click www.psyber.com/~asra/asrack.htm