

Robie Point Fire Break Trail



Distance: 3.6 miles; 1½ hours each way (hiking), but a variety of shorter options are available

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

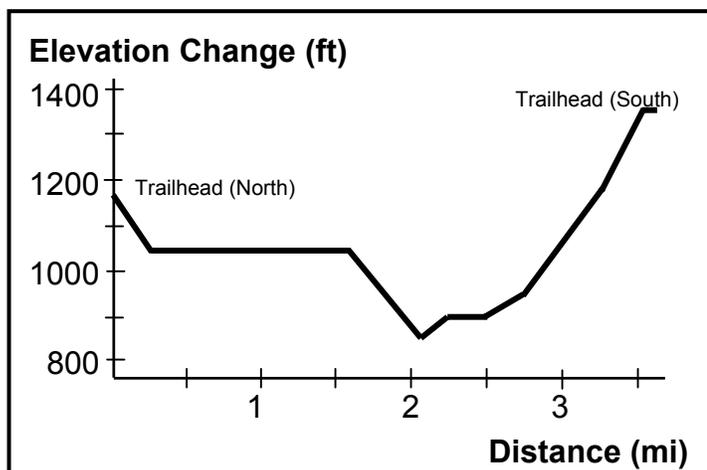
Slope: 3% avg; 10% max. (see below)

Trailhead / Parking

Trailhead (north) is on Hwy 49, ½ mi south of Auburn (on the right) and ¼ mi north of ASRA Park Headquarters (on the left). **Caution: cars coming downhill are hard to see on curve.** Trailhead (south) is at Overlook Park behind Gold Country Fairgrounds. Take Hwy 49 north into Auburn and follow signs to the fairgrounds. Proceed on Auburn-Folsom Rd past the fairgrounds and turn left on Pacific Ave. Turn right after ½ mi into large Overlook parking area. Trailhead (south) is on Pacific Ave at a paved and gated road just south of parking area.

Description

This fire break trail is wide, well maintained, and paved in some parts. It provides great views of the North Fork (NF) American River canyon and the Auburn dam construction site, including the diversion tunnel. Although the trail is steep at the southern end, it is otherwise fairly gentle and passes through three of the most common American River canyon ecosystems: foothill



woodlands, riparian woodlands, and chaparral. It can be hot in the summer since there is little shade on some parts, but it is ideal in the late afternoon or early evening for a hike or ride.

Starting at the north end, the Robie Point Fire Break Trail gradually descends to a small creek, passing through a densely forested oak and pine riparian woodland. The first 500 ft is paved, and then it turns to packed dirt. If you look closely, you can see the foundation of an old house on the left. After crossing the creek, the trail soon enters the main American River Canyon and you get some awesome views of the NF American River. Looking east, you can see the snow-capped Sierras in the distance.

At the ½-mile point, the trail merges with the historic Western States Trail (see sidebar), which enters from the left (a narrow dirt trail). At ¾ miles, the WST splits off to the right up the hill. For those wanting more of a workout, take the WST for ¼ mile up and over Robie Point. Otherwise, continue to the left on the Robie Point FBT for a level detour around Robie Point. Just past this point, you can start to see the high Forehill Bridge to the east in the distance.

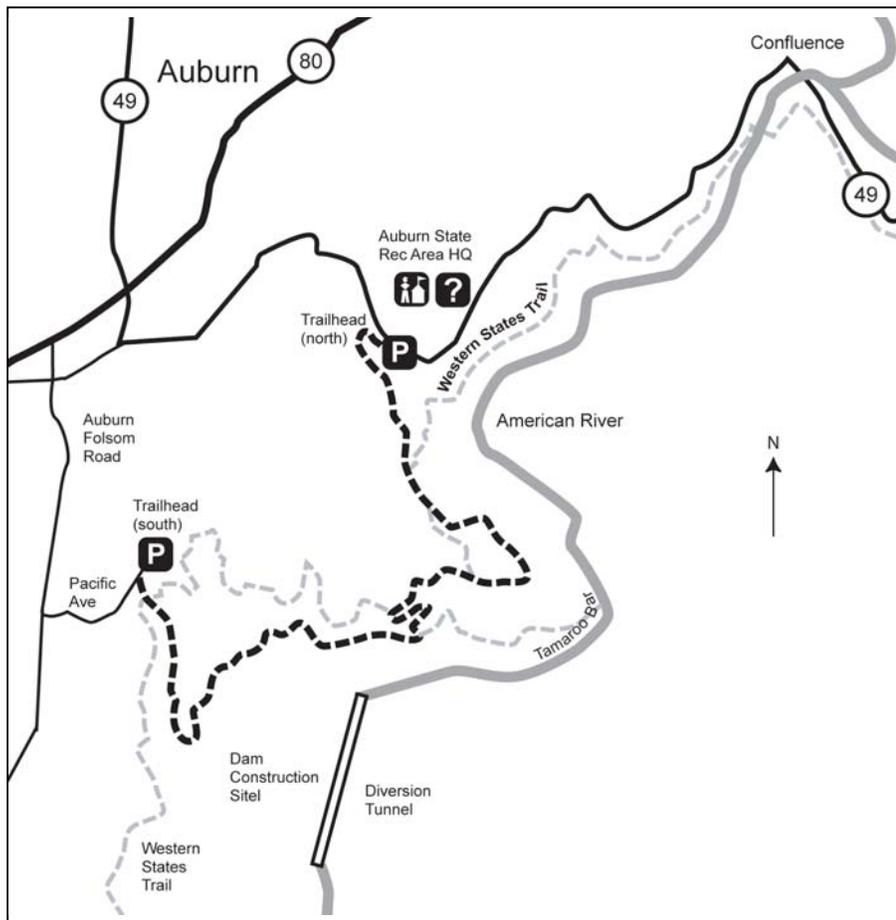
Just beyond the 1-mile point, you can start to see evidence of the Auburn dam construction project on the opposite side of the canyon. The terraced roadways up and down the canyon provided access for construction equipment to the keyways for the proposed dam. The trail rejoins the WST just past the 1¼-mile point. Stay to the left at the junction of the trails.

Just beyond the 1½-mile point, the WST splits off (again) to the right up the hill around the gate. The Robie Point FBT continues to the left down the hill. From this vantage point, you get a great view of the diversion tunnel below (see sidebar). The western keyway for the dam is also easily visible from here, towards the right.

From the diversion tunnel overlook, the Robie Point FBT descends rapidly for the next ¼ mile.

Continued on back →





Did You Know? – The Western States Trail originally stretched from Sacramento to Utah. The Sierra Crest portion of the trail, blazed by Paiute and Washoe Indians and later used by miners and Pony Express riders, is now the route of two world-famous endurance races: the Western States 100-mile Endurance Run and the Tevis Cup Ride for equestrians. This part of the WST (from Mountain Quarries Railroad bridge to the Auburn Staging Area) is the final leg of these races. The trail marker at the base of Robie Point indicates “mile 2.0”, which means there are two more miles to the finish line.

Did You Know? – The diversion tunnel is ½-mile long and 30-ft in diameter. It was opened in 1968 to redirect the NF American River for the Auburn dam construction in the now dry riverbed to the right of the tunnel. The Auburn dam was first designed as a double-curvature, thin-arch concrete dam. Extensive seismic studies of the dam site were completed in 1978, and as a result, the design was changed to a concrete gravity dam to address earthquake safety concerns. Work on the dam was later discontinued due to a lack of funding. A project to close the diversion tunnel and restore the river to its original flow is scheduled to begin in 2003.

At the bottom of the hill, a side trail splits off to the left, leading down to the river and the boulder-strewn Tamaroo Bar (¾ mile and 400-ft descent). The Robie Point FBT continues to the right for another 1½ miles and affords even closer views of the dam construction site. The last ¾ mile of the trail is paved and climbs over 500 ft before reaching Pacific Ave and Overlook Park.

If starting from Overlook Park, the trailhead (south) is on Pacific Ave at a paved and gated road just south of the parking area. Go around the gate and continue on the paved road down the hill. The road splits after 100 yards; follow the left fork down the hill. (The right fork is the Auburn to Cool Trail.)

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