

Second & Third Divide Trails - Downieville Area

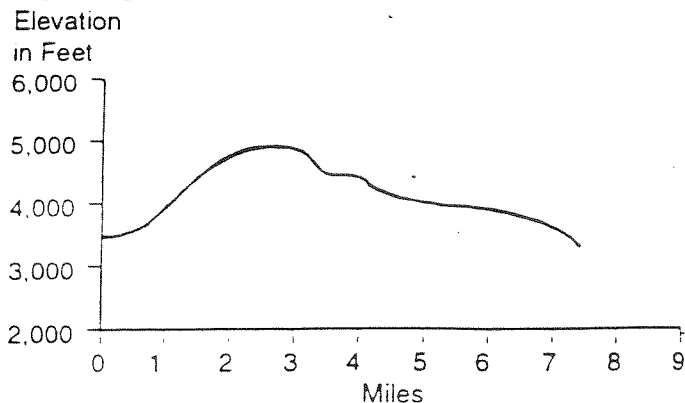
Downieville Ranger District - Tahoe National Forest



General Information

Mileage: 7 miles round trip
Elevation: Third Divide: 3480-4440 ft.
Second Divide: 3400-4400 ft.
Difficulty: Moderate
Use Level: Light to moderate
Season: April to November
Topographic Map: Downieville 7.5'
Sierra City 7.5'

Trail Profile



Access

On Upper Main Street, proceed through the historic Gold Rush town of Downieville. Approximately 1/2 mile east of the town post office, cross the Downie River bridge. Continue on the dirt road 2.7 mile to the Second Divide trailhead on the right. To access the Third Divide trail, continue another 1 1/2 mile to a well-defined road fork. Take the right branch, entering Empire Ranch private land, and proceed 0.2 mile to the trailhead sign on the right. Please park your vehicle well off the road and respect the rights of private property owners.

There are several possibilities to explore in this area. Backpackers may choose to follow Second or Third

Divide Trails to the junction of the Butcher Ranch and Pauley Creek Trails. The Butcher Ranch Trail offers beautiful displays of spring flowers. The scenic Pauley Creek trail accesses Gold Valley. Day hikers who can arrange transportation may wish to be dropped off at the Third Divide trailhead and hike the loop to their vehicle at Second Divide.

Trail Description

This description covers the loop from Third to Second Divide. A few hundred yards after the beginning trailhead at Third Divide, the trail crosses Lavezzola Creek and climbs moderately for 2 miles through a beautifully wooded area until it reaches the ridgetop. Another 0.2 mile brings you to the junction with the Second Divide and Butcher Ranch Trails. The Second Divide Trail follows Pauley Creek down the canyon. This area has a wide variety of birds, wildlife, and flowers. Pauley Creek falls rapidly and the short spur trails leading to the creek are well worth exploring for picnicking, fishing, and sightseeing.

During mild winters this trail can be accessed year round.

Note:

Only water from developed systems at recreation sites is maintained safe to drink. Open water sources are easily contaminated by human or animal waste. Water from springs, lakes, ponds, and streams should be properly treated before drinking. One recommended method of treatment is to bring clear water to a rolling boil for five minutes.

Downieville Ranger District

North Yuba Ranger Station
15924 Hwy. 49
Camptonville, CA 95922-9797
(916) 288-3231



United States
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Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

Tahoe National Forest