

A Hike to Historic Roller Pass

Join us for a hike to Roller Pass, the most popular of the passes over the Sierra Nevada on the Truckee Trail, at 9:00 AM on July 15, 2018. The hike is beautiful and we will also hike actual trail on both sides of the pass.

The original emigrant pass over the Sierra Nevada on the Truckee Trail – Stephens Pass – roughly followed highway 40 west from Donner Lake over the top. Stephens pass was very difficult and was soon superseded by Roller Pass a few miles to the south. The emigrant road to Roller Pass via Cold Stream Canyon is not difficult but the pass itself is very difficult – a few hundred yards seemingly straight up. Chains were wrapped around a log at the top of the pass and connected to oxen which were driven down the hill in order to draw the wagons up. Thus the name "Roller" Pass. Eventually a switchback was cut into the slope in order to allow wagons to ascend at a more gentle grade. The steep slope is still visible as are many traces of trail along the switchback bypass. Trail is also visible to the west of the pass until it disappears into the Sugar Bowl ski area. And the view from Roller Pass is spectacular as well.

The hike is about 2 miles in each direction with an elevation gain of 800 feet. The highest elevation is about 7,900 feet. Our exploration of the Truckee Trail traces will probably involve another mile of hiking and several hundred more feet of climbing. The first half mile of the trail is rocky. The remainder is mostly dirt. Hikers need to be in relatively good condition and should wear boots or sturdy hiking shoes. Bring lots of water and lunch.

DIRECTIONS: We will meet at the parking lot on top of Donner Pass (where Donner Pass Road reaches its highest point).

From Reno, take Interstate 80 west to Donner Pass Road (exit 184). Continue west on Donner Pass Road past Donner Lake and up the hill for 7 miles to a cluster of buildings at the very top of the pass. Turn left into the parking lot. Parking should be available at the top of the pass or along the (poor) road heading to the trail.

From Sacramento, take Interstate 80 to the Norden/Soda Springs exit (exit 174) and drive about 3.8 miles east past Sugar Bowl on the right and Donner Ski Ranch on the left. Then turn right into the parking lot at the very top of the pass.

Email David Fullerton at dfullertond@netscape.net if you wish to participate in the hike, listing how many people will be in your party and your cell phone contact information. He will send you additional information about the hike prior to the date. **Do not reply to this email to respond.**