Awesome views of Tahoe from Snow Valley Peak



Much of Lake Tahoe can be seen at the end of the trail leading to Snow Valley Peak. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Snow Valley Peak is aptly named – especially right now with the various pockets of that white stuff leading up to the final approach.

With the heat wave the Lake Tahoe Basin has been experiencing, there will be even less snow now compared to two weeks ago. Still, it might be a good idea to take poles to steady yourself.

This East Shore peak at 9,214 feet is the tallest mountain in Carson City. (Carson is a city and a county all in one, with a small unpopulated swath of land that stretches into the basin.)

Traditionally, the east side of the lake is the place to hike in early season because the snow melts faster there than the

West Shore. With the Sierra receiving record snowfall last winter, it’s possible snow will be an issue for a while.

Our entire route to Snow Valley Peak was along the Tahoe Rim Trail. This was the second time I had done this hike. The first time we dropped in by Spooner Lake before going up to the peak – away from Marlette Lake and the Flume Trail.



Rhoda and Liz maneuver through one of the snow fields. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Had we been really adventurous, we could have gone the 61 miles to Tahoe City.

A nice thing about our route in June is bikes are not supposed to be on it. That’s a good thing. It’s mostly single track,

and was narrow at times with people coming from the opposite direction.

While there is plenty of beauty to be seen along the trail, it’s near the end that is the most spectacular. It’s as if the entire lake is before you. So often it’s just a section that is visible from most trails. Not this one. It’s like you are seeing 15-feet across and the whole 22-mile length of Tahoe.

The four of us, plus AJ the wonder dog, opted to not actually go to the peak itself. There isn’t any more beauty from there than along the ridge we were on. So we found some boulders and had lunch before turning back.

We met a woman along the way who had attempted to go to Marlette Lake, but said there was too much snow.

Several downed trees from winter storms cross the original path. For the most part they were easy to get around. There was one point where we lost the trail in the snow, but we quickly realized it and were able to get back on track.

There is no water, other than late snow melt, so be sure to take plenty with you and for your four legged companions.

Much of the trail is shaded, which was nice on a warm day. But it’s all exposed on the last push to the peak along the scenic ridge.

It’s about 12 miles round trip to the peak, with an elevation gain of 2,493 feet.



Marlette Lake from the trail above. Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe take Highway 50 east. Go up Spooner Summit. Just beyond Highway 28 is parking on the left. There is lots of signage at the trailhead there.