Pray Meadows dazzles with its verdant beauty

Pray Meadows can be seen looking west from Highway 28. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It’s always an interesting hike when you have to flag down a truck to ask where you are.

And so it was late last month with Rosemary. We knew where we wanted to go. And we got there. We just didn’t know where we were when we went a little farther.

We were in Glenbrook, on Lands End Road.

We got there by going through Pray Meadows, which was our

original plan.

I just figured we could get to Lake Tahoe through the meadow. I didn’t realize there would be a subdivision in between the two – and a private one at that. We opted not to even try to deal with getting to the lake; partly because we didn’t know if we’d be breaking some law, and partly because we had gone far enough for one day.

It was about 9.4-miles round trip from the starting point at Highway 28.

Fortunately, there was a creek running through the meadow so the dogs could cool off their bodies and lap up the water. Still, it was good we brought water for them because it was a warm day and we ended up going more miles than expected.

AJ and Cody are content to stick with the trail and not run in the meadow. Photo/Kathryn Reed

At least on June 29 there were no signs of wildflowers, but as the meadow dries out a bit that will change, and may already be doing so.

The lush green meadow is so incredibly vibrant. It looks like it would be wonderful to run through, maybe even bring a blanket for a picnic.

We stayed on the trail, though, which got a little buggy. I can only imagine how bad it would have been in the thick grass.

Tall conifers surround the meadow on all sides. Aspens are in abundance as well, which makes me think this would make for a beautiful fall excursion.

This area of Nevada was once a bustling timber haven that provided wood for the mines in Virginia City during the silver rush in the late 1800s. There are remnants of the old railroad grade. It was nice having it so wide so it was easy to have a conversation. The one mountain biker we saw made us think we might want to revisit the area on two wheels.

According to “The Saga of Lake Tahoe” by E.B. Scott, Capt. Augustus W. Pray was one of the first settlers in Glenbrook in 1860. The two volumes of this book reference Upper and Lower Pray Meadow.

Interestingly, most modern day references for the meadow spell Prey with and E. However, in Glenbrook there is a Pray Meadow Road.

At one time Pray owned hundreds of acres in Glenbrook and was instrumental in the lumber business.

“Pray and his associates – N. E. Murdock, G.W. Warren and Rufus Walton – felled, barked and faced sugar pine to build a crude log cabin, splitting cedar for the shake roof. They harvested the wild hay that grew abundantly on the rich bottom

land of the meadow and planted grain and vegetables," the book says. "In the rarefied mountain air a yield of 60 bushels of wheat and 4 tons of timothy hay per acre was not unusual, while oats grew 7 and 8 feet tall."

Going to Pray Meadow is the long way to get to Glenbrook. Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe take Highway 50 east. Turn left on Highway 28 toward Incline Village. Go about 2.3 miles, park on the left. There is a gate leading down. A trail will intersect with this one, take it to the left. If you go straight, you will hit Skunk Harbor.