



2018 TRACE NOTES

Helpful information for your adventure on Section 5 of the Hiker Challenge.

Start Point— Laurel Dam Parking Lot Mile 205

End Point— 49er Diner 32 Miles Total

WEATHER DECISION Temps will be in the mid 80's this time of year. Please watch for signs of heat exhaustion. Drink plenty of fluids, stop for frequent rest breaks.



Section 5: LAUREL DAM TO 49ER DINER TRUCK STOP

Section 5 features a lake shoreline walk, past the Marina which can be a welcome stop if you are not too early. The Trace goes within 100 feet of the Holly Bay Campground and you will enjoy the welcome aroma of campers on the hills cooking breakfast. Your first few miles wind in and out of the many coves that make up Laurel Lake.

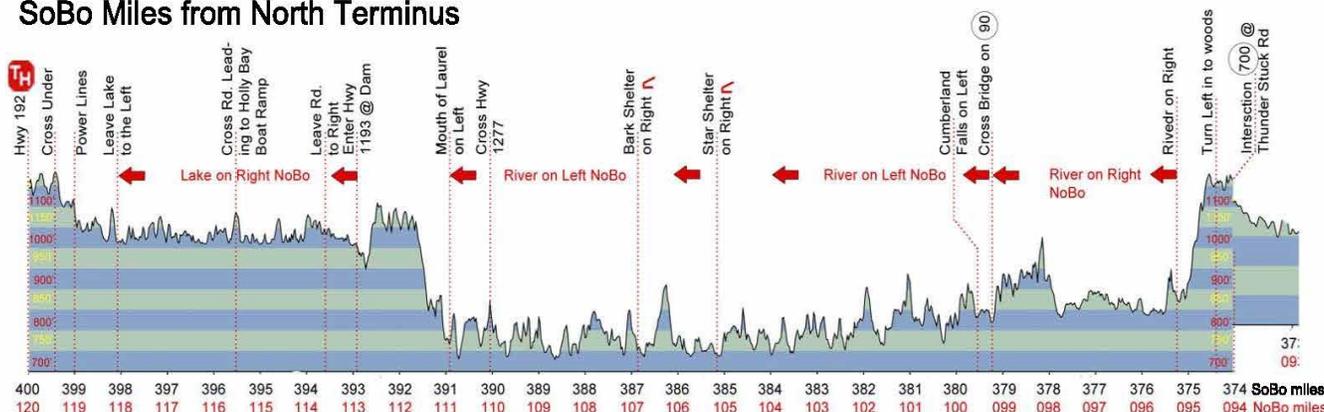
An amazing waterfall rest stop, some navigational challenges, a walk through a forest restoration area and an ending at a truck stop. Its May and we hope the rains have moved on but in their place will be warm temps, and the chance to have a few ticks and other creatures hitch a ride on your person or gear up the Trace. A few gravel roads will give you a momentary break from climbing hills, crossing streams, but will require some attention be paid to navigating your way north to the end point at the 49er Diner.

A perfect place for lunch, rest and reflection, this month's path takes you to Vanhook Falls, where in 2016 the STA, in cooperation with the DBNF and our members, donors and friends built this beautiful spot along the Trace. There is only a short 5 minute hard road walk along Highway 80. Use caution as you cross the road as this is a major highway with vehicles traveling at high speed.

Elevation profile courtesy of Kaner "Rudy" Davis , End 2 Ender, Class 2014

1 of 2 Profiles for this Section. Your hike starts at mile 115. Second profile is on page 4

NoBo = Miles from South Terminus
SoBo Miles from North Terminus





Section Five Trace Notes:

Laurel Dam—49er Diner 32 Mile Hike

FRIDAY NIGHT CAMPOUT: Your option for camping Friday night is at the STA Livingston Visitor and Training Center. Sleeping accommodations are a tad higher than on the Trace. The old oak floors make for a comfortable sleep. Some have even brought a cot along and stashed it in their cars on Saturday morning. There are no showers so come clean or wash up early before we leave for the shuttle. We leave for the 49er at 6:00 am. Please be packed and ready or make your way there on your own. We will have coffee available at the center.

ATTENTION: THE FIVE POUND DROP IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT. You will need to carry all your gear for the whole weekend.

Water / Water Obstacles. There is plenty of water to draw from along the Trace. Treat water. There are several small streams that you will need to cross but the major streams have bridges so water shoes are not needed.

Need to Know And You Need to Know

- ◆ **Saturday Shuttle:** 6:30 am at 49er Diner. As you come into the truck stop area, you will go immediately left and through the concrete barriers toward the RV Park. As you enter, turn left and park along the fence row. If that is filled up then go right and park to the right with front of your car pointed to the concrete barriers.
- ◆ **Shuttle Directions:** Coming north or going south, this is perhaps the easiest shuttle pickup point of the Challenge. Either direction get off at exit 49. If coming south, at the end of the ramp, go right and the truck stop is on the left. Coming north on I-75 at the end of the exit ramp go left, cross the bridge and the truck stop is on the left. If you are going to be late please let us know and go straight to Laurel Dam.

- ◆ **Saturday Night Camp Site:** Your Saturday night campsite will be in the vicinity of McFadden Cemetery near mile 192.
- ◆ **Safety, Safety:** You will be crossing Highway 80 a major highway with speeding traffic. Please be alert and cautious as you cross the highway.
- ◆ **Ticks:** As the forest leafs out, brush begins to grow, the ticks will be out in force. Please take extra care to prevent ticks from making your hike a less than pleasant situation. Use tick sprays, treat your clothes, check throughout the day.

TRACE NOTES FOR SATURDAY

The shuttle will take about 45 minutes to get back to the dam. Once we get that picture, you are on the road across the dam, and at the end you go through the guardrail onto the Trace. For the first 6 miles you are walking along the lake, winding in and out of the many coves that make up the lake shoreline. Most of the first miles are shaded.

Near mile 7 for the day you come out at the 192 trail head. The support vehicle should be there. Crossing the road, the Trace goes down into the woods into one of the most engaging sections of the trail. Water is prevalent as you cross several streams or hear and view several waterfalls.

At Pounder Branch where you cross the large bridge. Nice location to cool your feet or take a swim. At least grab some water.

In less than five minutes you climb around a small cliff line and then you will see the staircase and platforms built by the members and friends of the STA in cooperation with the Forest Service. to improve access to the falls. The bench and platform make a great location to stop and take a break.

TRACE NOTES SATURDAY Continued

Up the steps back on the trail you come to a rock climb. While short it can be a little slick even in dry times. There is a small tree there that can help you but if you think you will have trouble, maybe get a fellow hiker to assist. At the top of the rock the trail winds its way for a short time down to a creek. This is the feeder stream for Vanhook Falls. The crossing is easy and in most instances the water very low. Across the stream, **NOW YOU NEED TO PAY ATTENTION. Up the small climb you come to an intersection. THE TRAIL TO THE LEFT (#401) GOES TO BEE ROCK. DO NOT DO NOT GO LEFT. THE TRAIL STRAIGHT GOES TO FOREST SERVICE ROAD 119. DO NOT GO STRAIGHT. THE TRACE GOES TO THE RIGHT AND UP STREAM.** In a mile and half on the left trail 401 again entices you to go left. No left. In one mile you come out on a closed FSR 749. Here you will go left and in 5 minutes see a gate and again FSR 119. The support vehicle may be in this location.

In about a mile the Trace leaves this FSR and goes left back into the woods. There should be a sign there. You are now using the Trace to cross over to FSR 457. At the road, go left and down the hill. Be alert once you round the corner and go down the road for the Trace to return to the woods on your right. Again, there should be a sign and blazes. Again you are using the forest path to cross over from the FSR back to the same FSR a distance of about 2.5 miles. At the bottom of the hill you will cross Big Dog Branch and climb out to FSR 457. When you hit the road you are 5 minutes from camp.

SUNDAY TRACE NOTES

Sunday is your navigational challenge day. Lots of crossings, changes in direction to get you out to Highway 80. Past McFadden cemetery the Trace follows an old road down a steep hill. Steep. Southbounders dread the climb. You get the downhill. Again you will cross Big Dog Branch and Sinking Creek near mile 188. Near mile 186 you will come down a rough, rocky slope to the suspension bridge at mile 186. From here you climb up the old road, watch for mountain bike traffic, to an open area mile 185. Future plans call for this area to see commercial logging. The Trace makes a left turn into the woods to cross over to FSR 747. If you miss the turn and end up on the road anyway, just go left.

At mile 184 you are at Pine Tree Church. Picnic shelter makes a great place to take a break. The support vehicle should be there or should drop some water there if you are short. There is water ahead within a couple miles. Back on the road you in less than a mile the Trace drops back into the woods on your right. Again the Trace here is used to get you over to FSR 4225. This section has some climbs within it so be prepared.

Near mile 182 you will come out on FSR 4225. Go left. You have no choice really you are the dead-in of the road. In less than a mile you will go back into the woods on your left. It is on the climb up the hill. In less than a mile you come out on Highway 80. Go left and in 10 minutes max you need to carefully cross over the road and go back into the woods. This small piece of trail takes you over to Highway 1956. At the road go right and look to left across the road. The support vehicle should be there at the small trailhead. Again, watch for mountain bikers all day as this section of the Trace is very popular with the riders.

Leave the trailhead and you are heading for Hawk Creek. A popular dayhike area, the trail goes from single track onto an old road back to single track. ATV traffic may be seen in the area. At the stream you cross on the suspension bridge and the trail goes toward the cliff line and up the hill. The next mile is a significant climb to Kroomer Ridge. At the top of the climb the Trace joins an old gravel road and goes down the steep hill. There are no right turns up the hill and out to the open area that has been closed for years for reforestation.

At the bottom of the rock hill, a small sometimes swampy area forces you to maybe get your feet wet. The Trace in this area can be hard to follow because the Forest Service dropped hundreds of trees to stop unauthorized use by

OHV community. There should be a post with a blaze to give you a direction. Follow the downed trees, cut now to allow passage, up and down the ditches. There will be a steep rock climb toward the north end of the area. As you climb picture OHV, dune buggies etc climbing this same rock formation. At the end of the reforestation area, you will pass through metal culvert pipes stuck vertical in the ground to block off vehicles.

The Trace now returns to a single path into the woods. At mile 177 the Trace goes left. There is a road to the right. Do NOT go right. Go left onto the road path. You are now on gravel road the rest of the day. There are a few small roads to the left and right but you want to make no turns. Past mile 175 the gravel road becomes more obvious. Go right and now you are a mile from the truck stop and your vehicle.

Up and down a few hills, an finally one last decent and you will hear the noise of the interstate and see the truck stop.

