

Trek along Emerald Bay a vision of Sierra beauty

By Kathryn Reed

Hiking season in the Lake Tahoe area is a gradual migration from lake level to higher elevations. It may be an extended lake level season this year based on the weather the Sierra has experienced this month.

Still, I was able to get in one of my favorite hikes earlier this month – Rubicon Trail. The four of us started at the Vikingsholm parking lot at Emerald Bay and went as far as Rubicon Point at the end of the bay. (It costs \$7 to park because it's a state park.)



Emerald Bay
along the
Rubicon Trail.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

When the hiking legs are more energized we often do the nine-mile round-trip to the beach at D.L. Bliss State Park as the halfway point. The round-trip is my favorite hike in the basin. It's one of those ones where bringing an extra camera battery is a good idea.

Going part way like we did this particular Saturday or having another vehicle at D.L. Bliss makes it less strenuous. To the

point it's flat and about two miles. To the state park means a few slight hills, but nothing overly taxing. The worst part about the hike is the mile-long trek up from Vikingsholm to the parking lot.

The 200-foot elevation gain feels like a lot more than that.

An old lighthouse is close to D.L. Bliss. California Conservation Corps crews built a trail to it as an offshoot from the main route. It's worth a look.

I've seen a few daring soles jump from the rocks into the water below. I'm not sure how safe this is, so I'm not recommending it. But it does look like fun for people who don't have height or cold-water issues. There have been fatalities in the past with jumpers.

It's the views along the entire route that are breathtaking. Sauntering along Emerald Bay is mesmerizing. Boats cruise by. The only downside this day is a boat overloaded with partiers looking for a cove to anchor in. Luckily, our lunch spot was too rocky for them.

A kayaker has paddled up to the boat-in only campground. The M.S. Dixie takes a boatload around Fanette Island.

An eagles' nest is on the other side of the bay, so don't be surprised to see one of these majestic birds.

It's mid-May and the trail is well used. It's popular most of the year when snow is not on the ground.

The odd-looking bright red snow plant is sprouting. People have put sticks and rocks around them so they won't be trampled.

Massive sugar pine cones dot the area.

Make sure you are not in a rush. This is one of those hikes that can take all day, not because of the distance, but

because of the scenery.

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