

Snow-covered trail thwarts ascent of Mount Rose

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Sometimes a hike becomes all about the journey and not the destination.

This happens when the trail is no longer visible and bushwhacking seems like a better option than going up over the rocky terrain to avoid the thicket.

Hiking Mount Rose seemed like a good idea when we started on a recent Monday. What a way to welcome summer – summit a 10,776-foot peak. We never made it.



Lake Tahoe
from the Mount
Rose trail on
June 21.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

Sue, who has done the hike before without snow, says the views from the top are spectacular. On clear days Mount Shasta can be seen. I can only imagine.

I can attest for some wonderful vistas of Lake Tahoe and the Carson City area from various vantage points. One day maybe I'll know what Sue is talking about.

One day we might actually finish a hike. That might occur if we would stay at a lower elevation.

The trail is accessible from a few spots off the Mount Rose Highway. The easiest to find is at the summit where there is a large parking lot. We opted to start down a little farther, closer to the lake, and across from the meadow on the other side of the highway.

Here a woman who works for the U.S. Forest Service and UC Davis told us what markers to look for to get to the summit. She was on her way to a research area where she and others are studying the impact beetles are having on trees in the region.

Sauntering along the vehicle-width dirt trail it wasn't long before patches of snow covered much of the path. Out came the poles – a must-have this time of year to balance along the slick, uneven surface.

This early section is part of the Tahoe Rim Trail. We chose not to attempt the 38-mile jaunt to Tahoe City through the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Near a pond, which is partially frozen now, is where the right turn to Mount Rose is. Going straight continues on the TRT, with Relay Peak not far away.

We descend into a meadow – slowly and carefully. Divots in the snow are making the walk tricky. Running water is melting the snow in places, creating streams in what seem to be random locations.

Eyes are carefully scanning and ears listening for rushing water to ensure I'm not walking over a covered stream. Another good use of the poles – to test the sturdiness of the snow covered water.

Mount Rose is in the distance. But even on the longest day of the year it doesn't seem like we'll make it there and back

since we got a late start. Still, we continue on.

The ski resort by the same name is to the right and actually on the other side of the highway.

Uneven rocks are less stable under our boots than the uneven snow. We're not having fun and nerves are getting frayed.

It's time to turn around without reaching our destination.

Meandering up the rocks to avoid the wall of bushes seems more daunting than plowing through the thicket. My bruised, scratched, bloody legs are hoping not to do that again any time soon.

Sue survives to say, "I could be in an ad for REI" as she looks at her filthy pants, with not even a slight rip in them.

I want to be an ad for Hot Springs Spas in my backyard soothing my aches.

We carry on in silence. Up the snowy hill we go. Coming to the point where we make a left back along the main trail is a welcome sight. At this point I'm having dreams of hot chocolate (remember it's the first day of summer) because my feet are so cold. My boots and socks are soaked. Thank goodness we turned around.

Then Lake Tahoe comes into view. A sight I never get tired of. Seeing it from a new perch suddenly makes the cold dissipate just a bit and a smile crosses my face.

Maybe it wasn't such a bad way to spend a day away from the office.

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