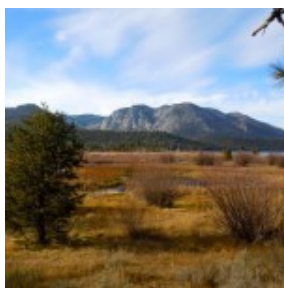


South Shore's 2 best known lakes on 1 easy hike

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Tahoe's past, present and possible future unfold along the shore of Lake Tahoe and Fallen Leaf Lake on an easy five-mile trek that never gets old.

Meandering through the estates of the Tallac Site on the South Shore, the buildings of yester-year dot the landscape. If only they could talk. Life in the basin was much different when the Baldwins, Hellers and Popes called this lakefront oasis home.



Looking across the meadow toward Taylor Creek.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

Now it's a historic site on land owned by the U.S. Forest Service. In the summer it's more populated with tourists and the buildings are in use. The old boathouse is a theater. The grand hall is used for weddings and other functions.

Markers along the way tell the story of how these buildings came to be.

Walking close to the shore, the lake looks cold and uninviting

in December. With the abundance of snowfall last year, the water level is $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet higher than it was a year ago at this time.

We come to Taylor Creek Visitors Center and walk through the Rainbow Trail. The dead foliage looks otherworldly.

The stench of decaying fish fills our nostrils. A couple months ago the creek was teeming with kokanee salmon on their annual migration to spawn.

The four of us cross Highway 89 to go up Cathedral Road. The Forest Service is looking at making this a safer crossing, along with a slew of other improvements to the trail system in the area.

Signage is lacking. It's a good thing we know where we are going. Plus, this is a common running loop for Brenda so she is our leader this afternoon.

We cross the dam at Fallen Leaf Lake. That too is old. In 1934, Anita Baldwin put up the money for it to be built.

We come out at the campground, then head across the highway again, headed back to our vehicles parked at the Beacon restaurant.

No wildlife to be seen on this particular day. But the scenery is ever changing with the lakes, meadow and forest.

If you can do five miles of walking, this is one of the best routes on the South Shore for ease, beauty and history.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 89 north to Camp Richardson. Turn right to park at the Beacon restaurant.

Begin walking to the left of the restaurant at the beach and into the Tallac Site. If you see signs for Taylor Creek

Visitor Center, follow those. Then take the Rainbow Trail. Cross the highway on the other side of the stream profile center.

Go up Cathedral Road. A dirt trail juts off from the road to the left. From there, well, stay to the left and hopefully you will find the dam. (There are no signs.) Keep walking and you'll hit the campground. That leads you to Fallen Leaf Lake Road, which goes to Highway 89. Cross the highway and follow the bike path to Camp Rich.

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