

Trove of trails to explore above Genoa



Plenty of views abound around nearly every bend of the Genoa Loop Trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

GENOA – People pay to go on hiking excursions all the time. Usually it's for a guide or a permit. Last week it was for a vet bill.

AJ and Cody thought it would be a great idea to go about 100 feet off the trail. The worst we thought is they would end up at the bottom of the canyon. Wrong. AJ came back with a gash that the next day required surgery. (She is doing fine, despite the cone and not being allowed to play for two weeks.)

It's just one of those things when you go off into the woods. There are sharp items. Was it a rock, a tree limb, part of a

stump or something else? We'll never know.

But what it showed the seven of us is the necessity to have a well-stocked first aid kit. Between those who brought survival supplies we were able to come up with multiple items to cover the wound of my four-legged daughter. Of course she wanted nothing to do with it so she ended up walking out without the torn skin being covered. She was on leash by this time.

Rosemary and I had attended a wilderness survival lecture last summer. Last weekend's experience got me thinking that maybe on all hikes or snowshoes I should carry my poles. We could have made a litter to carry AJ out of the woods. And it would be easy to put duct tape on the poles – because duct tape can be used in so many ways.

The hike

Carson Valley is becoming a hiking Mecca, with new trails being created all the time. Another route is being dedicated this weekend.

A week ago seven people – me, Sue, Suzy, Rosemary, Brenda, Danielle and Frank – and two dogs set off to do the 8.2-mile Genoa Loop. It has about 2,500-feet of elevation gain, which seemed to all be at the get-go starting from Carson Street.

The entire route is single-track. Luckily we all talk loud enough to allow for conversation with at least the person behind or in front of us.

It doesn't take long for expansive views of the Carson Valley to unfold. The land below looks fertile.

There are spots along the way where the trail splits, but they meet up again at the same point. Our guess is these are good passing opportunities for equestrians or mountain bikers. However, we only saw other hikers and some runners on the

trail. And a sign along the way says the terrain is challenging and not recommended for horses or cyclists.

A short section is shale. Most of it is hardpack dirt. Portions are layered with pine needles. As it gets warmer and drier, this trail is likely to be dusty, and definitely hot in the summer. Even on the first Sunday of April it was rather warm and nice to have as much shade as we did.

What surprised most of us was the abundance of water in various sections. This was perfect for the dogs.

Two other big surprises greeted us. One was Genoa Falls, which is about 12- to 15-foot high. It fell from a sheer rock face. Moss covered the lower rocks as bamboo sprung up along the creek.

Around a corner we came across a "Star Wars" pillowcase and a hard copy of "Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs" by George A. Petrides. What they were doing there we don't know.

Rosemary added a compass to the collection and Suzy a pink flamingo keychain from Tampa.

"Lush" was the word Rosemary used to describe some areas of the route. And it's not a word usually associated with the Carson Valley.

We scampered through Genoa, Schoolhouse and Sierra canyons along this trek. One misstep and it could be a long hike back to the trail.

While plenty of pine trees remind us we are still in the Sierra, the terrain was still much different than being in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

In a normal winter this trail would still have snow on it. A few patches remained on the side. There are other routes off this trail to explore on another day when my four-legged hiking buddy is able to explore again.

--

Getting there:

- From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 east. Turn right onto Kingsbury Grade. Turn left on Foothill Road. Park near the Snowshoe Thompson statue – on the right – in Genoa.

Trail is across the street, up Carson Street.

- Park on Carson Street or on Centennial Drive for out and back hikes.

Other:

- Carson Valley Trails Association is online.
- Not all trails are recommended for mountain bikes or equestrians.
- Dogs are allowed.
- Clear Creek Trail grand opening is April 13 – 10am-3pm, 14-mile equestrian led tour to Knob Point and back. From 3-6pm is a 14-mile mountain bike led tour to Knob Point and back. Events start at Jacks Valley Trailhead on the west side of Jack Valley Elementary School.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)