

Waterfall season at Tahoe a roaring sensation



Glen Alpine Falls is at the far end of Fallen Leaf Lake. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

With the burst of moisture in March and April, it is making waterfall season rather glorious right now.

The peak runoff usually doesn't hit until later in May in the Sierra, so the rush of water should be flowing strong for several weeks, if not well into June. Plus, the temperature is supposed to be in the high 60s this week, which will just make the snow melt all that much faster. That's a good thing for waterfall enthusiasts.

On the South Shore there are several waterfalls worth seeing.

And not all of them require putting on a pair of hiking boots.

Glen Alpine Falls is raging. The multiple strands of water tumble down in ribbons across a wide swath of granite.

https://www.laketahoenews.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_1243.mp4

To get there, take the bumpy Fallen Leaf Lake Road until the falls come into view. Last weekend it was passable without four-wheel drive, but the El Dorado County maintained road is in horrible condition. Lots of other people last Saturday had the same idea, so it was a bit crowded at this gateway to Desolation Wilderness.

Up the road on Highway 89 is Eagles Falls. The lower falls are just off the road and descend into Emerald Bay. The upper falls are on the other side of the highway and require walking.



AJ runs out of trail at Hawley Grade Falls. Photo/Kathryn Reed

With this being the off season, it was surprising to see all the vehicles parked in the provided parking, along the highway and in ways that could have kept tow trucks busy.

Another fall that is worthy of a short hike is Hawley Grade Falls. It, though, also requires going down a poorly maintained county road in Meyers. Take South Upper Truckee Road almost to the end. There's parking on the right.

Don't let the mild river coming down the trail deter you. The reward at the end is well worth the climb – about a 900-foot elevation gain. Plus, it's not that far. The few patches of snow are easy to traipse over with trail shoes.

The water is coming from Echo Lake, crossing under Highway 50. It empties into the Upper Truckee River, which in parts was raging a week ago.



The Hawley Grade trail is wet in many parts, with the red manzanita branches adding color. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It looks like it will be a while before mountain bikers can safely cross Hawley Grade Falls to get to the other side. In summer, this is a popular trek.

The Hawley Grade was part of the Pony Express Trail in 1860. A granite plaque at the start of the trail explains some of this history.

For those who want easy drive-by falls, there are two along Highway 50 through the American River Canyon. One is Bridal Veil Falls. People often can be seen there taking pictures as well as filling up on water. Horsetail Falls is visible while

driving west. This body of water comes from Aloha Lake and looks like a horse's tail.