

Genoa Falls dances from the rugged brush



Genoa Falls at about 10-feet-high tumbles from the mountainside. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

GENOA – There is something about a waterfall that always brings a smile to my face even it isn't very big. Something about the magic of Mother Nature; showing who's boss, mixing up the contours of the landscape. I'm never disappointed.

A week ago eight people and two dogs set off to see the Genoa Falls for the first time. Considering it was a holiday weekend, we were pleasantly surprised not to come across that many people.

This is the time of year when hiking at lake level is still

iffy because you don't have to go up far in elevation to still hit snow. That is why starting lower is a safe bet.



Vibrant snowplants just off the trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The distinctive yellow flowers of mule's ear are already sprouting on the Carson Valley side of the range. Snow plants are in their glory.

This trail that begins on the outskirts of Genoa is a bit steep at first. More than one person complimented the trail builders. It's single-track almost all of the way as the switchbacks wind their way up about 1,400 feet.

A mix of hardpack dirt and loose rock fill the trail. While I'm not big on using poles, I was glad I had them for the ascent, and especially for the descent. My footing slipped in a couple places and the poles kept me upright.



Switchbacks are necessary to ease the steepness. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's understandable why signs recommend cyclists and equestrians stay off this trail – it's the verticle. Still, that didn't deter a couple mountain bikers who passed us. Fortunately, we all shared the trail respectfully.

It doesn't take long until sweeping views of the Carson Valley come into view. With the moisture we had in May, it was still amazing how verdant this farmland is. Living in Tahoe it's easy to forget how lush areas can become with rain.

There was a little bit of water at times for the dogs, but definitely bring some along for them. Wiley had no problem plopping himself down in the water that ran from the falls. It was like a private bath for him.

The tree canopy provided plenty of shade, which was a good thing. While I was in shirtsleeves, I wish had been in shorts.

We turned around at the waterfall, but the trail kept going. There are longer loops. The trail hooks up with the Tahoe Rim Trail at 13.4 miles from the parking lot. Our out and back was just shy of 6 miles total.



Plenty of lush green grass for the cattle in Carson Valley.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 east to Stateline. Go right on Kingsbury Grade. Go left on Foothill Road. Go left on Carson Street. The road dead ends at the Genoa Canyon Trailhead.