

DONNER PEAK/MT. JUDAH LOOP

Tuesday, Sept 23, 2025

DIFFICULTY: Moderately strenuous (but only about 5 ½ miles)

PACE: Moderate

ELEVATION/ELEVATION GAIN: Trailhead at 7,060 feet; gain 1,200 feet

HIKE DISTANCE: 5 ½ miles

TRAIL CONDITIONS: Steep, rocky switchbacks at start and end. Total 1,200 ft. elevation gain. Short off-trail section with some loose rock to Donner Lake overlook.

GENERAL LOCATION: East on Hwy 80 to Soda Springs, south on Hwy 40 to PCT trailhead near Donner Ski Ranch

DESCRIPTION: Heading up rocky switchbacks, we soon leave the Pacific Crest Trail on the scenic Mt. Judah loop. A short but steep use trail over rock brings us to our lunch stop at the top of Donner Peak with great views. Continuing across ridgeline to top of Mt. Judah opens even more spectacular views in every direction. We will rejoin the PCT near Roller Pass where emigrants partially disassembled their wagons to winch them over the brink.

TRAVEL TIME/DISTANCE: 1½ hour travel time each way/about 70 miles. Expected return to SCLH about 4:30 p.m. The suggested contribution for the driver is \$12.

HIKE LEADER/SWEEP: Bruce Quick/TBD

SPECIAL NOTES:

FACILITIES: Rest stop at Cisco Grove Exit 165 – Gould Park on north side of I-80. Porta-potty at trailhead.

PREPARATION FOR HIKE:

- 1) IF YOU HAVE ANY HEALTH ISSUES, PLEASE CONSIDER YOUR CONDITION BEFORE HIKING.
- 2) Bring a copy of your ID (driver's license), health insurance card, and an emergency contact name and phone number with you on the hike.
- 3) Always bring 2 pairs of shoes, along with a plastic bag to store your muddy/dusty hiking boots after the hike. DO NOT get your driver's car dirty by wearing your dirty boots on the drive home.
- 4) Hiking boots and trekking poles strongly recommended for steep, rocky trail and off-trail areas. Bring plenty of water, lunch, sunscreen, and windbreaker. May be windy on the ridge.

RISKS: High altitude (to 8,200 ft.), rocky trail, steep drop-offs along exposed ridgeline. No poison oak at these elevations.

QUESTIONS: Contact Bruce Quick brucewquick@gmail.com

MEETING TIME: 8:15 a.m. for 8:30 departure

Driving Directions to Donner Peak/Mt. Judah

Take favorite route to I-80 East.

Rest Stop: Exit 165 Cisco Grove for Gould Park rest stop (about 60 miles from SCLH). Left under freeway, then immediate right to Gould Park.

Continue East on I-80 to Exit 174 SODA SPRINGS/NORDEN (about 70 miles from SCLH). Turn right to head East on old US 40 towards Sugar Bowl and Donner Ski Ranch about 3 ½ miles to top of hill. TURN RIGHT at steep-roofed metal shed by Sugar Bowl Academy. Drive down narrow Sugar Bowl Road about ¼ mile past PCT trailhead (sign says No Parking-Fire Lane), then park perpendicular on widened right side of road past trailhead. Portapotty at trailhead.

