

PCT to Three Lakes Hike

August 4, 2026

GENERAL LOCATION: Donner Summit

DIFFICULTY: Moderate/Strenuous due to trail conditions in some areas.

HIKE DISTANCE: 5.5 miles, part in/out, part loop

ELEVATION: Start 7109' / Max 7300' / appx 800' total gain

PACE: Moderate

TRAIL CONDITIONS:

Mostly dirt trails with some roots and rocks. Some parts: overgrown, switchbacks, a few short areas with rock trail w/ steep drop-off, some big uneven stone steps, off trail to get around high lake and to get back to PCT.

DESCRIPTION:

Beautiful walk through the Tahoe area forest! Vistas of far off peaks and Donner Lake, trail-side wildflowers, cool breezes, interesting rock formations, and lovely Flora, Azalea and Angela lakes. Lunch lakeside. Swimming is an option. Bring a snack since lunch is 3/4 into the hike.

FACILITIES:

Pit toilets at Cisco Grove exit - 11 miles before trailhead. Badly maintained porta potty at trailhead. Post-hike, consider Donner Ski Lodge if you want to purchase a snack or drink along with a potty stop. Also known for their pies!

DRIVE TIME/MILES:

1 hour and 30 minutes / 75 Miles - Reimbursement of \$15 to drivers is recommended.

LEADER/SWEEP:

Lisa Mariotti (lmariotti@gmail.com) / Tanya Blansett

MEET/LEAVE TIME:

Meet 7:00 / Leave 7:15 am

Return time to Lincoln approx. 4pm if traffic and construction cooperates.

Meet at far right end of Orchard Creek Parking Lot, rows 12-14

PREPARATION FOR THE HIKE:

Being prepared physically as well as having the right equipment makes for a better experience, not only for you, but for your fellow hikers.

If you have any health issues, please consider your condition before hiking at high altitude or at a fast pace.

WHAT TO BRING:

- **PLENTY OF WATER!** Recommend 50 oz. /1.5 liters minimum for 5-mile hike – more if longer. Electrolytes suggested. Higher altitudes are dehydrating even when cool.
- Hiking boots/shoes, hat, sun protection, insect repellent, small first aid kit. Wind/rain jacket always advisable in the mountains. Trekking poles recommended.
- ID (driver's license), health insurance card, and emergency contact / phone number.
- Extra pair of shoes to change into after hike and a plastic bag for muddy/dusty hiking boots to keep your driver's car clean.

HIKE ROUTE ON ALLTRAILS: [PCT to 3 Lakes Hike](#)

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

Navigate to: 19216 Donner Pass Rd, Norden, CA 96161

Coordinates: 39.31678° N, 120.32601° W

For toilets, stop at: Exit 165 - Cisco Grove - go back over the freeway and make an immediate right turn into Gould Park.

Driving directions from Lincoln:

Take your favorite way to I-80E

In Soda Springs, take exit 174 towards Soda Springs, Norden.

Turn Right on Donner Pass Rd. Drive Past Donner Ski Ranch lodge on the left.

Destination is a parking lot on the right with the trailhead across the street. At the top of the hill.