

Spaulding Lake Via Pioneer Trail

Thursday JUNE 4, 2026

General location: Emigrant Gap

Difficulty (Rating): Moderate/Strenuous for trail and elevation to 5,180'

Hike Distance: 6.9 miles out and back

Elevation: Start: 4,480' / Highest: 5,180' Gain: 1,180'

Pace: Moderate Pace

Trail Conditions: Short parts of the trail are steep and/or have loose rocks and roots and steep drop-offs. There is a fairly wide water crossing requiring you to step onto rocks and logs to cross. There are some big steps and a pipe that is about 4 feet above the ground that you must duck under. The hike is mostly shaded, except at the upper end. May be some mud.

Hiking poles highly recommended, especially for stream crossings.

Mosquitos may be present so bring insect repellent.

Description: We should see some dogwoods in bloom, streams and a river on the way to the scenic spots overlooking Spaulding Lake. We will stop for lunch near the lake.

Facilities: Two pit toilets at Sierra Discovery Trail parking lot, one mile before reaching Pioneer Trail trailhead at the South Yuba River. Additional pit toilets at the trailhead.

Drive Time/Miles: 1 hour 15 minutes, 60 miles

Donation: \$12

Leader/Sweep: Leader Bruce Quick Sweep TBD

Meetup/Leave Time: Meet 7:30 AM / Leave 7:45 AM

Meet at far end of Orchard Creek Parking Lot in front of Fitness center, rows 12-14.

Preparation for 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 Links:

<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/custom-routes/spaulding-lake-moderate-hike-b2a237f>

Driving Directions:

Navigate to: Emerald Pools Trailhead Parking, Nevada City, CA 95959

Hike starts on Bowman Lake Road, 2 miles north of State Highway 20.

Take I-80 to Highway 20 exit 161 for Grass Valley, one mile past the Yuba Gap exit.

Drive west for 4 miles downhill on Highway 20 and turn right on Bowman Lake Road. Drive one mile to pit toilets at the Sierra Discovery Trail parking lot and then one more mile to cross the South Yuba River bridge.

Just over the bridge there is a gravel parking area on the right. There is also parking nearby on the road if needed.