

Robie Point FB Trail (#33 on the ASRA Topo Trail Map)



Distance: 3.6 miles; 1½ hours each way (hiking), but a variety of shorter options are available

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Slope: 3% avg; 10% max. (see below)

Trailhead / Parking:

North: (N38-54-001; W121-03-536)

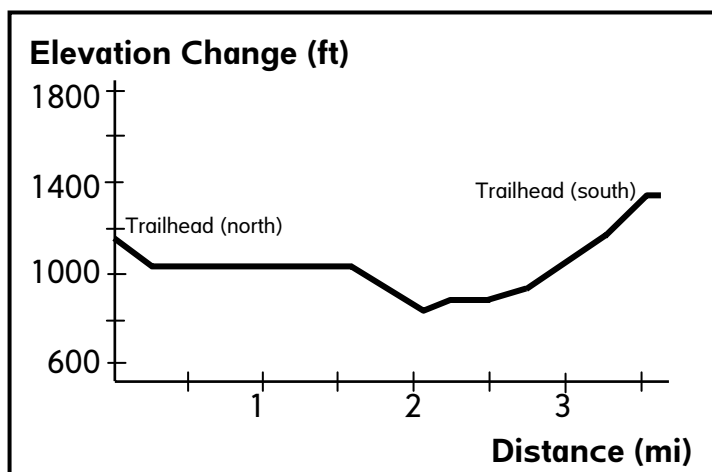
South: (N38-53-245; W121-04-246)

Trailhead (north) is on Hwy 49, southbound from Auburn ½ mi (on the right) or northbound from ASRA Park Headquarters ¼ mi (on the left).

Caution: cars coming downhill are hard to see on curve. Trailhead (south) is at Overlook Park behind Gold Country Fairgrounds. Take Hwy 49 north into Auburn to the fairgrounds. Proceed on Auburn-Folsom Rd. past the fairgrounds and turn left on Pacific Ave. Turn right after 0.5 mi into the large Overlook parking area. After parking, walk back along Pacific Ave to trailhead (south) at yellow-gated road that you passed just before entering parking area.

Description

This firebreak trail is wide, well maintained, and paved in some parts. It provides great views of the North Fork (NF) American River canyon and the Auburn Dam construction site, including the diversion tunnel. Although the trail is steep at the southern end, it is otherwise fairly gentle and passes through three of the most common



American River canyon ecosystems: foothill woodlands, riparian woodlands, and chaparral. It can be hot in the summer since there is little shade on some parts, but it is ideal in the late afternoon or early evening for a hike or ride.

Starting at the north end, the Robie Point Firebreak Trail gradually descends to a small creek, passing through a densely forested oak and pine riparian woodland. The first 500 ft is paved, and then turns to packed dirt. If you look closely, you can see the foundation of an old house on the left. After crossing the creek, the trail soon enters the main American River Canyon with some awesome views of the NF American River. Looking east, you can see the snow-capped Sierras in the distance.

At the 0.5 mile point, the trail merges with the historic Western States Trail (WST)(see sidebar), which enters from the left (a narrow dirt trail). At ¾ miles, the WST splits off to the right up the hill. For those wanting more of a workout, take the WST for ¼ mile up and over Robie Point. Otherwise, continue to the left on the Robie Point FBT for a level detour around Robie Point. Just past this point, you start to see the high Foresthill Bridge in the distance to the east.

Just beyond the 1 mile point, evidence of the Auburn Dam construction project becomes visible on the opposite side of the canyon. The terraced roadways up and down the canyon provided access for construction equipment to the keyways for the proposed dam. The trail rejoins the WST just past the 1¼ mile point. Stay to the left at the junction of the trails.

Just beyond the 1.5 mile point, the WST splits off (again) to the right up the hill around the gate. The Robie Point FBT continues to the left down the hill. From this vantage point, you get a great view of the diversion tunnel below (see sidebar). The western keyway for the dam is easily visible from here, towards the right.

From this view point, the Robie Point FBT descends rapidly for the next ¼ mile. At the





Did You Know? – The Western States Trail originally stretched from Sacramento to Utah. The Sierra Crest portion of the trail, blazed by Paiute and Washoe Indians and later used by miners, is now the route of two world-famous endurance races: the Western States 100 mile Endurance Run and the Tevis Cup Ride for equestrians. This part of the WST (from the Mountain Quarries RR Bridge to the Auburn Staging Area) is the final leg of these races. The trail marker at the base of Robie Point indicates “mile 2.0”, which means there are two miles to the finish line.

Did You Know? – The diversion tunnel is 0.5 mile long and 30-ft in diameter. It was opened in 1968 to redirect the NF American River for the Auburn Dam construction in the now dry riverbed to the right of the tunnel. The Auburn Dam was first designed as a double-curvature, thin-arch concrete dam. Extensive seismic studies of the dam site were completed in 1978, and as a result, the design was changed to a concrete gravity dam to address earthquake concerns. Work on the dam was later discontinued due to a lack of funding. A project to close the diversion tunnel and restore the river to its original flow began in late 2003.

bottom of the hill, a side trail splits off to the left, leading down to the river and the boulder-strewn Tamaroo Bar ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile and 400-ft descent). Robie Point FBT continues to the right for another 1.5 miles and affords even closer views of the dam construction site. The last $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the trail is paved and climbs over 500 ft before reaching Pacific Ave.

If starting from Overlook Park, trailhead (south) is on Pacific Ave at a paved and gated road just south of the parking area. Go around the gate and continue on the paved road down the hill. The road splits after 100 yards; follow the left fork down the hill. (The right fork is the Auburn to Cool Trail.)

