

Lakeview Connector Trail



Distance: 3.6 miles; 1½ hrs each way (hiking)

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Slope: 3% avg; 8% max. (see below)

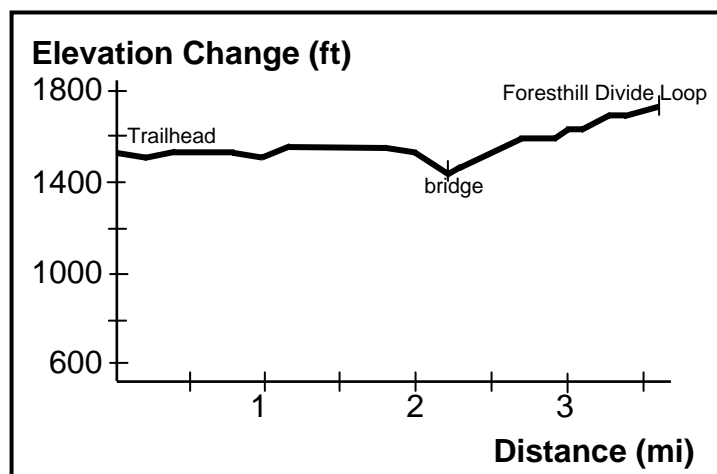
Trailhead / Parking: (N38-55-990; W121-00-705)

Trailhead is on Lake Clementine Rd. From I-80, take Foresthill Exit and continue on Foresthill Rd towards Foresthill for 3.2 miles; turn left on Lake Clementine Rd. A small parking area is ½ mile ahead on left at a sharp right bend in the road.

Watch for dip entering parking area. After parking, walk back along Lake Clementine Rd to trailhead you passed on the right just before the parking area. (An alternative parking area is ½ mile back up Lake Clementine Rd – you passed it on the right just after turning off Foresthill Rd.)

Description

This fairly level trail is the latest one to open in the Auburn State Recreation Area (Sept 2003). It connects Lake Clementine Road to the Foresthill Divide Loop Trail, meandering through areas of chemise and foothill woodlands on the south side of the canyon above Lake Clementine. It affords some beautiful views of the lake, and it is one of the few places to see groupings of both madrone and manzanita trees. Caution: poison oak is plentiful along this trail.



The Lakeview Connector Trail follows contours on the canyon between Lake Clementine (see sidebar) and Foresthill Road. On clear days, the vistas on this trail are outstanding. Although not visible until well along the trail, the lake and the opposite canyon occasionally peek through the trees at various points.

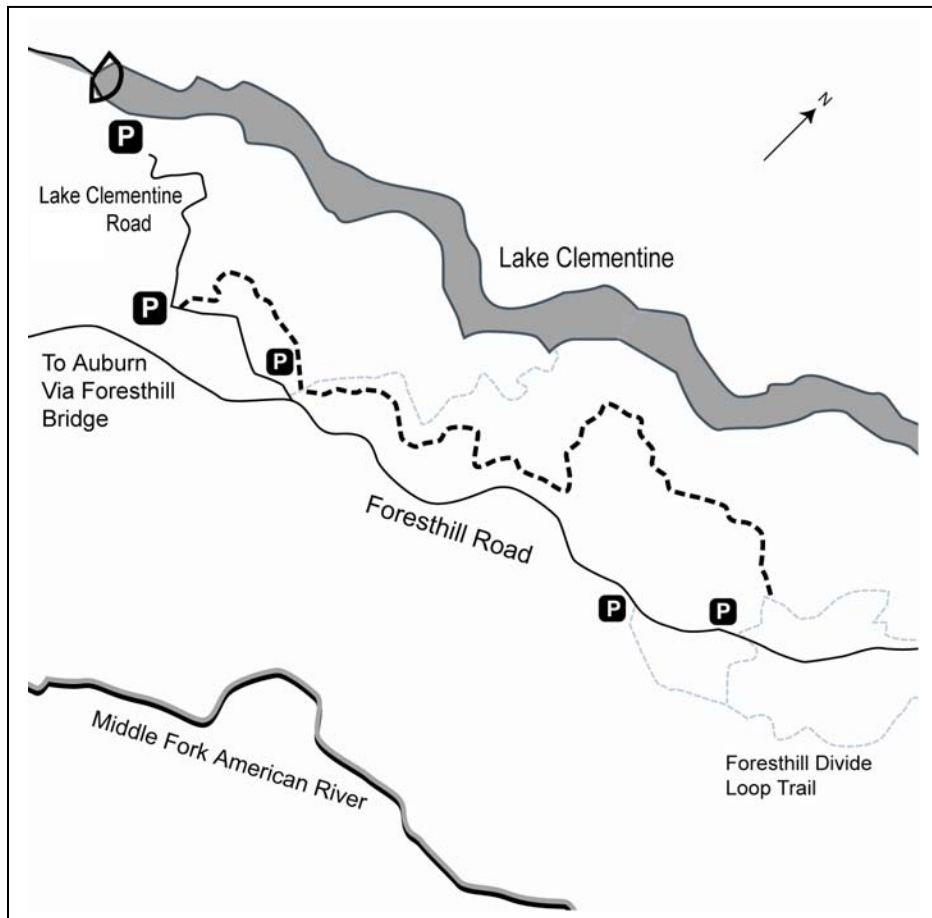
At the ¾ mile point, the trail opens up to views of beautiful, chemise-covered hillsides. A little further along the trail, large boulders appear to be strategically placed beside the trail as if a sculpture for your enjoyment.

At the 1 mile point, the trail crosses the unmarked but wide Lake Clementine Access Trail (N38-55-994; W121-00-692 - see separate trail guide) leading down to the lake in 1 ½ miles from the green gate on the Lake Clementine Rd and the back-up parking area.

The Lakeview Connector Trail continues straight across this trail, passing mainly through foothill woodlands for the next mile. There are several stands of manzanita and the less frequently seen madrone - both of which have distinctive reddish bark that always feels cool to the touch - as well as ponderosa pine, bay, several types of oaks and other foothill favorites.

At the 2¼ mile point, there is a bridge spanning a seasonal stream and its small riparian corridor. This is the lowest elevation on the trail. The trail then begins a steep rise for the next ½ mile, at the top of which is the best vista point on the trail, providing a great view of the lake. On the opposite hillside, below a few houses, a large outcropping of limestone can be seen. This is labeled "Lime Rock" on topo maps but is known locally as "Robbers Roost" (see sidebar).

Looking down on Lake Clementine from this vista point, it is clear that the lake is a dammed river, meandering through the North Fork American River canyon behind the spillway



Did You Know? -- Lake Clementine is used exclusively for public recreation. It was created when the North Fork Dam was completed in 1938. The dam was designed and built by the Army Corps of Engineers in order to collect sedimentation from upriver hydraulic mining. A few years later, it was made superfluous when such operations were discontinued by state edict.

Did You Know? -- Lime Rock is locally known as Robbers Roost. When Foresthill was still a booming gold mining site, a local band of outlaws, the Gassaway Gang, is reported to have used the rock as a strategic lookout point to spot and then signal when the stagecoach was enroute from Foresthill to Auburn.

dam a few miles downstream.

The next mile is mostly in the shade, although small, open, sunny areas often have colorful displays of wildflowers in the spring. As you approach the end of the trail, there is a small clearing and a path entering from the left. This is a cutoff to the Foresthill Divide Loop Trail going towards Driver's Flat.

A little further along, there is a larger clearing and the Lakeview Connector Trail ends at

the Foresthill Divide Loop Trail going both left and right. (See separate trail guide.)

Going right on the Foresthill Divide Loop, the trail passes alongside a pretty oak meadow and arrives at the Foresthill Road in less than 0.3 mile. There is a small dirt parking area on Foresthill Road, which some use as a shuttle parking area. The Loop Trail continues across Foresthill Road for another 8 miles, eventually returning to this intersection with the Lakeview Connector Trail.