

Upper Stagecoach Trail (#39 in the ASRA Topo Trail Map)



Distance: 1 mile one-way; ½ hr (hiking)

This does not include the distance walked on Stagecoach Trail to the trailhead. Access to this trail is from Stagecoach Trail.

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Slope: 9% avg; 12% max. (See below)

Trailhead / Parking (N 38-54-683; W121-03-257)

Parking is off Russell Rd. From I-80 exit at Foresthill. Turn right (west) on Lincoln Way. Follow Lincoln way for about 1/2 mile and turn left onto Russell Road. Drive slowly as many residents, children, and pets may be walking or biking along this single lane road. After about ½ mile, there is a small parking area on the left as you round a curve to the right. Trailhead is behind the parking area beyond green gate.

Description

Trail goes from Stagecoach Trail to Stagecoach Trail. While not as wide, level or well graded as Stagecoach Trail, it provides another perspective on the canyon, and has some shade. On clear days it is possible to see the snow-capped Sierra Nevada as well as views both up and down the American River Canyon. There are two locations

where there are benches from which to enjoy the views along the way.

The trail crosses several small oak meadows. It also provides a good view of the imposing Foresthill Bridge (see sidebar) and some opportunities to watch hikers and bikers below on Stagecoach Trail.

Upper Stagecoach Trail is usually used as an alternative route to or from Stagecoach Trail (See Sidebar) or as a shorter hike from Russell Road. It can be hot in the summer.

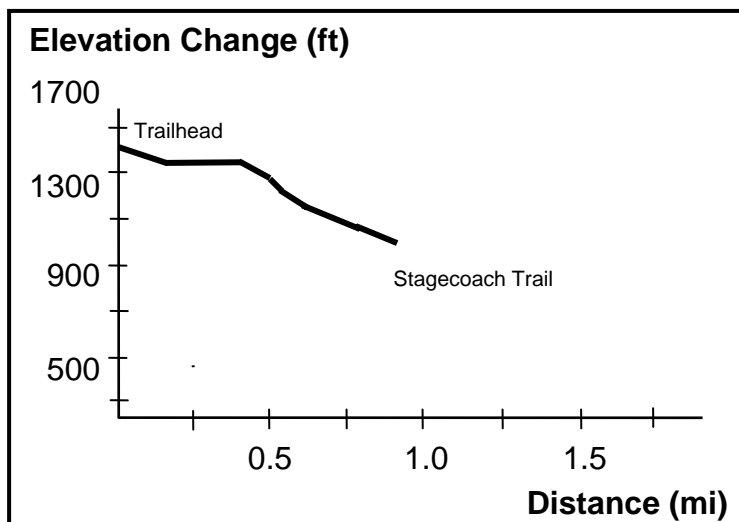
From the top of Stagecoach Trail (off Russell Road) proceed down Stagecoach Trail for just over a ¼ mile. Upper Stagecoach Trail begins at the sign on your left. (N 38-54-730; W 121-03-142). Go left up the hill at the sign for Upper Stagecoach.

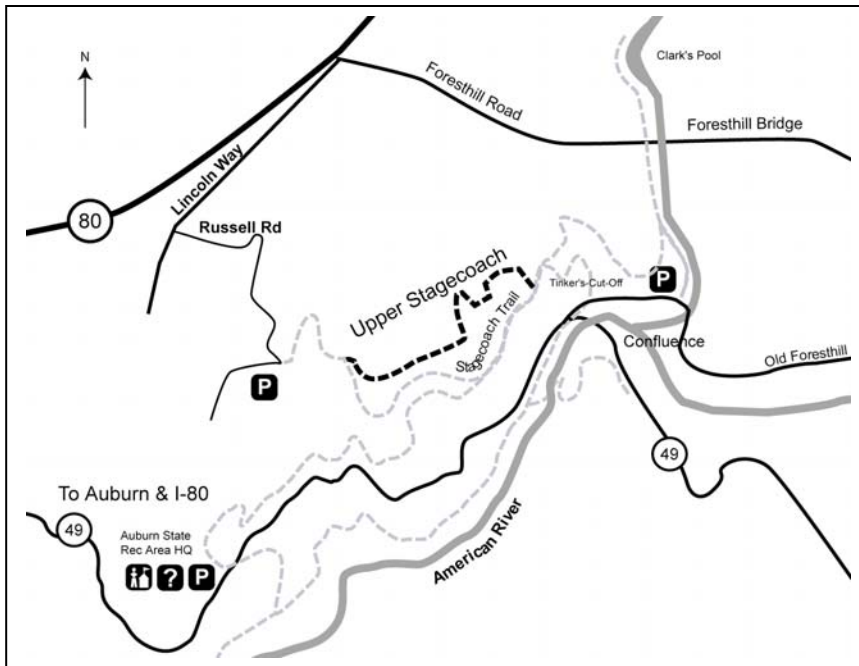
There are several unofficial unmarked trails going up to private property and homes near the canyon rim as well as others going down that are used mainly by bikers to access Stagecoach trail below. The main trail is easy to follow.

Shortly after reaching the top of the rise, the trail comes out of the trees and shrubs into an area of small open meadows. In less than 0.2 miles there is a nice wide wooden chair offering views of the canyon and the hikers below on Stagecoach Trail. The view encompasses Route 49 curving towards Cool and the Quarry Trail along the south bank of the Middle Fork American River as well as views up the Middle Fork. The wide steep trail rising to the ridgeline across the American River, at the end of the cable stretching across the canyon, is the Pointed Rocks Trail to Cool.

After passing a small meadow, but before re-entering the trees and scrubs, there is another bench with a good view of the Foresthill Bridge.

Shortly after reentering the trees and shrubs, at ½ mile, Upper Stagecoach Trail meets Flood





Trail. At the fork, a sign points to Stagecoach Trail to the right and Flood Trail straight ahead. This connector down to Stagecoach is 0.5 mile, and is usually considered part of Upper Stagecoach Trail. Do not continue straight on Flood Trail. This narrow, overgrown, and single file trail leads up to Flood Road, a residential neighborhood with no parking. The trail is largely overgrown and offers little to see.

At this point, either retrace your steps to the start or go right to return to Stagecoach Trail closer to the confluence. Those turning right will soon be following a rutted single file red clay trail through a small manzanita grove. After this, watch for a large field of periwinkle on the left. Looking behind the periwinkle the remnants of the stone foundation of a house may be seen. A few steps further, on your left, is the start of the Mossy Rock Trail. Continue straight-ahead and down. In about 0.1 of a mile you will reach Stagecoach Trail at a little past the halfway point. From here, turn right and return to Russell Road or turn left and follow Stagecoach Trail down to the confluence. (See separate guide for Stagecoach Trail.)

Did You Know? – Stagecoach Trail was originally a toll road built in 1852 known as Yankee Jims Turnpike and later as Old Stagecoach Road. The original road led to a toll bridge over the North Fork American River just upriver from Clarks Hole and from there to the towns of Yankee Jim’s and Iowa Hill. In the late 1800s, Yankee Jims was a popular mining area and Foresthill had not yet developed. In 1875, the original toll bridge was replaced with a wooden covered bridge (pictured in the kiosk located at the top of the trail). In the 1870’s, tolls on the bridge ranged from 6¢ for a cow to 50¢ for a horseman and \$1 for a wagon and two horses. There were numerous stagecoach hold-ups along this trail, most notably in 1873 and 1880.

Did You Know? – The 2,248-ft long Foresthill Bridge was designed to span the reservoir had the Auburn Dam been completed. (Work on the dam was discontinued in the late 1970’s.) Water was expected to reach near the top of the cement piers. The bridge towers 730 feet above the river, making it the tallest bridge in California. It was opened in 1973 with much fanfare and has been featured in numerous movies and commercials and has been the site for many legal and illegal stunts.