

Codfish Falls Trail (#7 on ASRA Topo Trail Map)



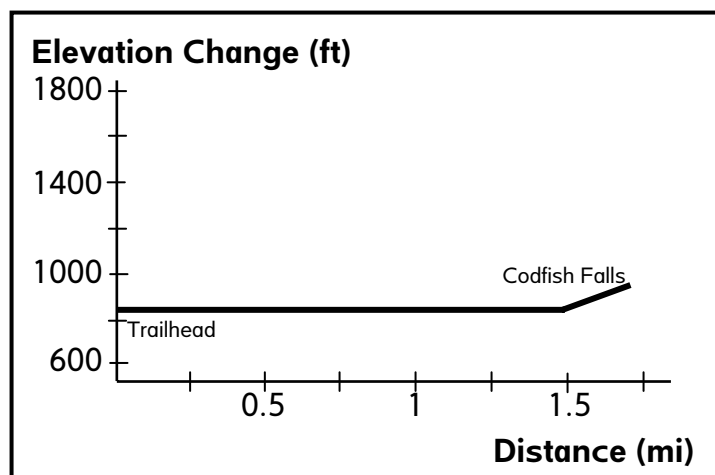
Distance: 1.7 miles to falls; ¾ hours
Difficulty: Easy, but trail is narrow at times with steep drop-offs to river
Slope: 0% avg; 10% max. (see below)

Trailhead / Parking: (N38-59-995; W120-56-420)

Trailhead is on Ponderosa Way, 6 miles south of Weimar. From Auburn, take I-80 east to 2nd Weimar exit (Weimar Cross Roads) and turn right on Canyon Way. After about ½ mile, the road turns left and becomes Ponderosa Way. Proceed to parking area on right just before Ponderosa bridge over the North Fork American River. Trailhead is beyond parking area. Caution: Ponderosa Way is recommended for high clearance vehicles for the last 2½ miles. Passage during winter can be difficult after rains.

Description

This easy trail provides beautiful views of the North Fork (NF) American River and leads to an impressive 40' waterfall. An excellent brochure that details the flora and fauna on this trail is available at a discovery marker located ¼ mile from the trailhead. The pamphlet was written and illustrated by Heather Mehl, under the supervision of Eric Peach and P.A.R.C., for her 2001 Senior Project at Colfax High School.



Codfish Falls Trail provides an excellent opportunity to experience some beautiful river canyon scenery. In the spring, many species of wildflowers can be spotted along the trail, and a profusion of butterflies enjoy the cool, moist morning air around the falls. In the summer, the falls can be dry and the trail can be hot in the afternoon, so morning hikes are recommended. You may want to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at the falls. Watch for poison oak, as it thrives along the trail.

The trail starts at the parking area where Ponderosa Way crosses the NF American River. It parallels the river downstream (river-right) for the first mile and then heads up Codfish Creek to the falls. The first mile is relatively flat, and there are many side trails down to the river for those interested in cooling off on hot summer afternoons. If you look closely, you may spot dippers (also known as water ousel) in the river. They are small, brownish-gray birds about the size of a robin, and they can often be seen bobbing up and down, and then suddenly diving below the water. You can often see merganser ducks in the river, hunting for fish.

The North Fork American River was commercially mined for gold from the mid-19th century until well into the 20th century. Remnants of dredge mining operations can still be seen in this area. Look for the large, uniform mounds of dredged cobble tailings on the opposite bank.

Many species of plants native to a riparian woodlands ecosystem can be seen on this trail. Look for three species of oak: canyon live oak, interior live oak, and black oak. Two trees often confused are manzanita and pacific madrone (known for their reddish-brown bark). Both can be seen along this trail. Many fine examples of ponderosa pine, grey pine (also known as foothill, digger or whispering pine), and douglas fir can also be seen along the trail.



