

Culvert Trail (#9 on the ASRA Topo Trail Map)



Distance: 1 mile one way; 1/2 hour down; 3/4 hour up hiking. Add 1 mile (1/2 hr.) from trailhead (north)

Difficulty: Moderate

Slope: 7.2% avg; 10% max. (see below)

Trailhead / Parking:

North: (N38-55-400; W121-01-876)

South: (N38-55-341; W121-00-911)

Trailhead (north) parking is on Foresthill Rd, 0.5 miles east of the Foresthill Bridge, at a large parking area on the left, just after the bridge. The trailhead to the Fuel Break Trail that accesses the upper (north) end of the Culvert Trail is behind the green gate at the end of the parking strip farthest from the Foresthill Bridge. There is very limited parking at the terminus of the Fuel Break Trail in a dirt turnout off the Lake Clementine Road.

Trailhead (south) is on Old Foresthill Rd. From the Foresthill Bridge drive approx 3 miles towards Foresthill. Turn right onto Old Foresthill Road at the sign for Cool, Placerville, and Hwy 49. Parking is on the left approx 1.5 miles from the turnoff in front of a bulletin board, just before the entrance to the Mammoth Bar OHV area. Trailhead is across the road from the parking area and bulletin board. This area may also be reached by driving approx. 1.5 miles up the Old Foresthill Road from the confluence area.

Description

This trail offers a short out and back excursion through rolling oak woodlands and open grasslands that are dotted with wildflowers in the spring. It is most frequently used to extend an outing or link with other trails. It is the safest way to traverse the busy Foresthill Rd. to go from the North Fork American River to the Middle Fork American River side of the Foresthill Divide.

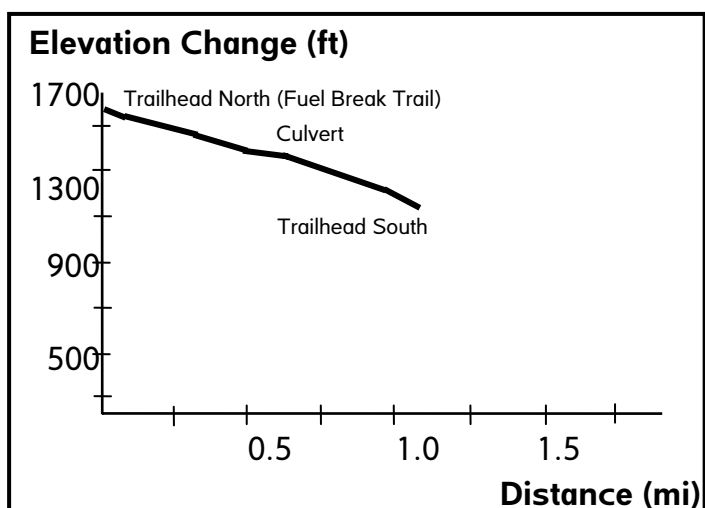
The Culvert Trail is a popular year round trail. It goes from the Fuel Break Trail (see separate trail guide) to the Old Foresthill Rd and Mammoth Bar OHV area.

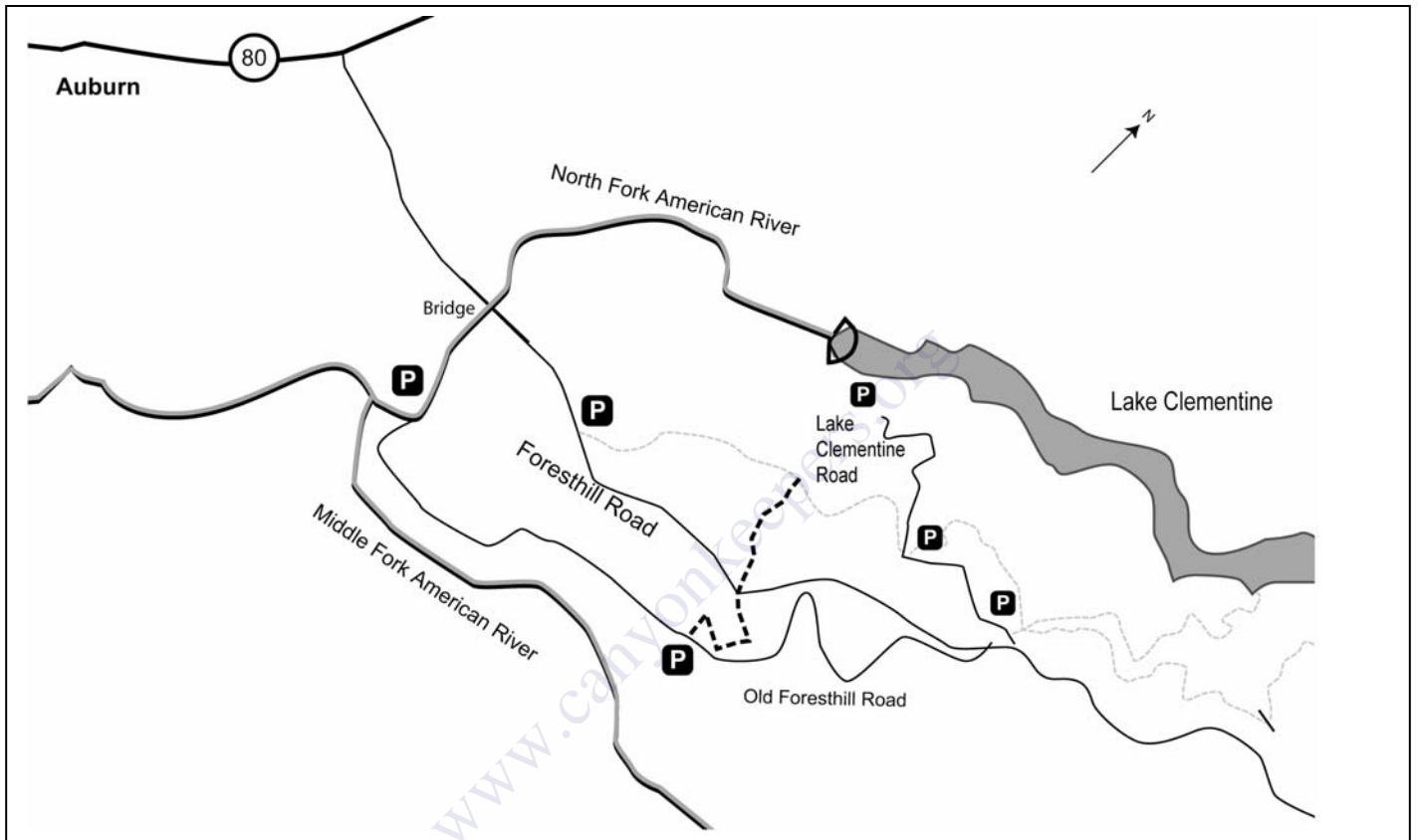
It is most frequently used by hikers and bikers to extend their outing by connecting with other trails, such as the Lakeview Connector, Lake Clementine, or Confluence Trail. Bikers almost universally access it from the Fuel Break Trail ridding downhill. Starting from the top or trailhead (north) adds a journey of one mile on the Fuel Break Trail before reaching the Culvert Trail trailhead proper. (N38-55-834; W121-01-167). Some bikers access it from the Lake Clementine Rd terminus of the Fuel Break Trail but parking there is poor.

Starting at the north parking area, the trip begins by ascending the ridgeline via the Fuel Break Trail. After a mile, the trailhead for the Culvert Trail enters on the right. The trail is generally single file with occasional wider spots. It crosses a pretty area of open foothills woodlands dominated by blue oaks and gray pines.

Soon you will hear the sound of traffic on the Foresthill Rd. In a little less than 0.5 miles, you reach the long metal culvert under the Foresthill Rd., for which the trail is named. Expect the culvert to be muddy after rain.

After traversing the culvert, the prettiest section of the trail is reached. The path soon opens up into large rolling grasslands dotted with majestic oaks and beautiful wildflowers in the spring.





There are also vistas across the oak meadows to the forested ridgeline rising above the MF American River. As you round a corner to the right above the Old Foresthill Rd., there is a good view into the limestone quarry located above the MF American River, near Cool. It

has been in operation since the 1880's.

The trail then begins its gradual descent to the Old Foresthill Rd. though a more woody area with lots of typical foothills shrubs before reaching the Old Foresthill Rd and trailhead (south).

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