

## Frog Lake Overlook

7200 ft to 8650 ft and back; 3-4 miles (1-1/2 to 2 hours) each way on good foot trail

Wandering in level forest for first half, then relentlessly up. Spectacular views for most of the last third (Truckee, Donner Summit, Castle Peak, Sierra Buttes).

There are several ways to start this hike, depending on your familiarity with the area, skill at cross-country navigation, and tolerance of not seeming to get anywhere. This description starts at the PCT trailhead east of the Boreal Motel and is the longest of the options.

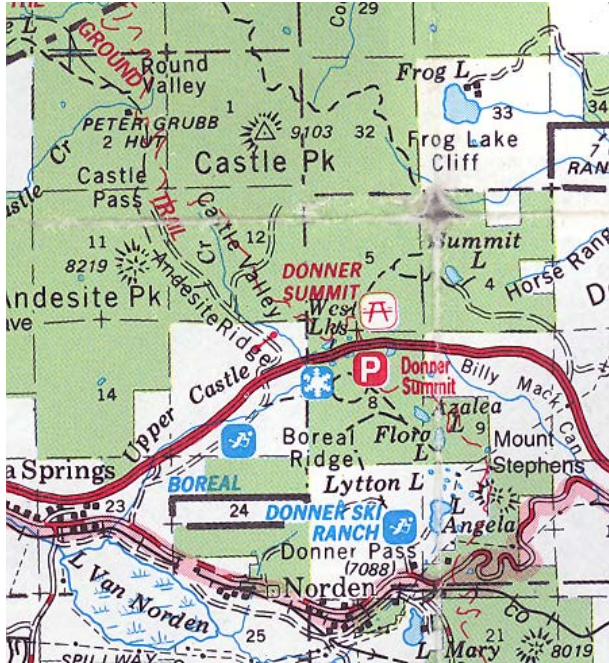
Take the Boreal/Castle Peak exit from I-80 at Donner Summit. Go east along the frontage road on the south side of the freeway, pass the Boreal Motel, and park in the PCT trailhead area at the end of the road.



Castle Peak from Frog Lake Overlook in late November (IMG\_2118.JPG).

The trail leaves east from the parking area, passes a junction which connects to the eastbound I-80 rest area (second possible starting point), and meets the PCT at the edge of a

meadow after a short mile. Head north on the PCT. After a few hundred yards, the trail enters a pair of culverts taking you under I-80. Continue north to a four-way trail junction and take the trail east toward Summit Lake.



You could also start the hike by picking up the PCT a short distance north of the westbound I-80 rest area and hiking east to the four-way trail junction (option 3). Note that rest areas are intended to provide "rest" for highway travelers, not parking for recreationists; occasionally, people parking for recreation have received tickets. If you're staying at Clair Tappaan Lodge, using a rest area means you have to drive east several miles on I-80 to make the change from eastbound to westbound.

The fourth starting point is at the end of the paved frontage road on the north side of I-80 at the Boreal Castle Peak exit. Follow the dirt road north about ¼ mile to Castle Valley, bear right along the southern edge of the Valley, cross the creek, and head

northeast through the trees (there is no trail) until you pick up the PCT. Follow the PCT generally east to the four-way intersection. Intuitively, this seems shorter than starting from the south side of I-80 but, because of the cross-country, it takes roughly the same amount of time. It minimizes your contact with I-80, however, possibly improving your "wilderness" experience.

About ¾ mile from the four-way intersection, there is another trail junction. You can take the eastbound trail about ½ mile to Summit Lake; this is a pleasant detour but be forewarned that 4WD vehicles can reach Summit Lake from the opposite side. Rather than detouring to Summit Lake, continue north on the main trail, which begins climbing more seriously (the relaxing walk in the forest is over).

After about another ¾ mile, the trail breaks out in the open giving you spectacular views to the east and south. You can see where I-80 passes over Donner Summit, but the highway itself is mostly hidden (improving the view). Depending on the season, you may see a small stream before the trail starts back up and into the trees. There can be good wildflowers through this section well into July.

The last few hundred yards is in the open again. At a saddle you can see Castle Peak to the northwest. The main trail continues north, dropping steeply into Coon Canyon and then contouring under the cliffs on the east sides of Castle and Basin Peak before reaching Warren Lake. From the saddle, you should take the spur trail east (right) to the actual overlook of Frog Lake.

Frog Lake and the section it occupies are private; you can see a few cabins and possibly the access road on the east side. The drop from the overlook is impressive, but so are the views

in nearly all directions. The jagged peaks through the gap to the northwest are Sierra Buttes. You can barely see Lake Tahoe through a gap in the ridge just north of Tahoe City. Some of the peaks beyond may be visible on a clear day (perhaps 100 miles away).



Summit Lake from the south (IMG\_2122.JPG).

<b>Frog Lake Overlook from PCT Trailhead—GPS Coordinates</b>				
<b>Location</b>	<b>Time (UTC)</b>	<b>Elevation</b>	<b>Latitude (N)</b>	<b>Longitude (W)</b>
PCT Trailhead/Parking	18:03	7246'	39° 20.375'	120° 20.576'
Glacier Meadow	18:18	7210'	39° 20.374'	120° 20.088'
Jct Summit Lake Trail	18:31	7300'	39° 20.705'	120° 20.303'
Jct Warren & Summit Lake Trails	18:58	7470'	39° 21.006'	120° 19.827'
Southeast Shoulder, Castle Peak	19:25	7880'	39° 21.351'	120° 19.680'
Saddle	20:00	8588'	39° 22.016'	120° 19.871'
Frog Lake Overlook	20:09	8664'	39° 22.044'	120° 19.763'



Frog Lake from its overlook (IMG\_5425.JPG)

20 July 2009