

## The Cleo's Bath North Side Hike

This hike is a cross-country hike from Pinecrest Lake to the north side of Cleo's Bath. It is quieter and much less crowded than the normal route, which goes up the south side of the Stanislaus River. Both routes require some scrambling up granite near their ends. During the spring and early summer, it is not possible to cross the Stanislaus except at the footbridge near Pinecrest Lake, so one must return from Cleo's Bath on the same trail that one took to get there.

The general idea of this hike is quite simple; one proceeds up the north side of the Stanislaus River until reaching the bottom of the cascade below Cleo's Bath (see Figure 1). At this point, one climbs the granite to the left of the cascade. However, although the general idea is quite simple, the details are somewhat complicated.

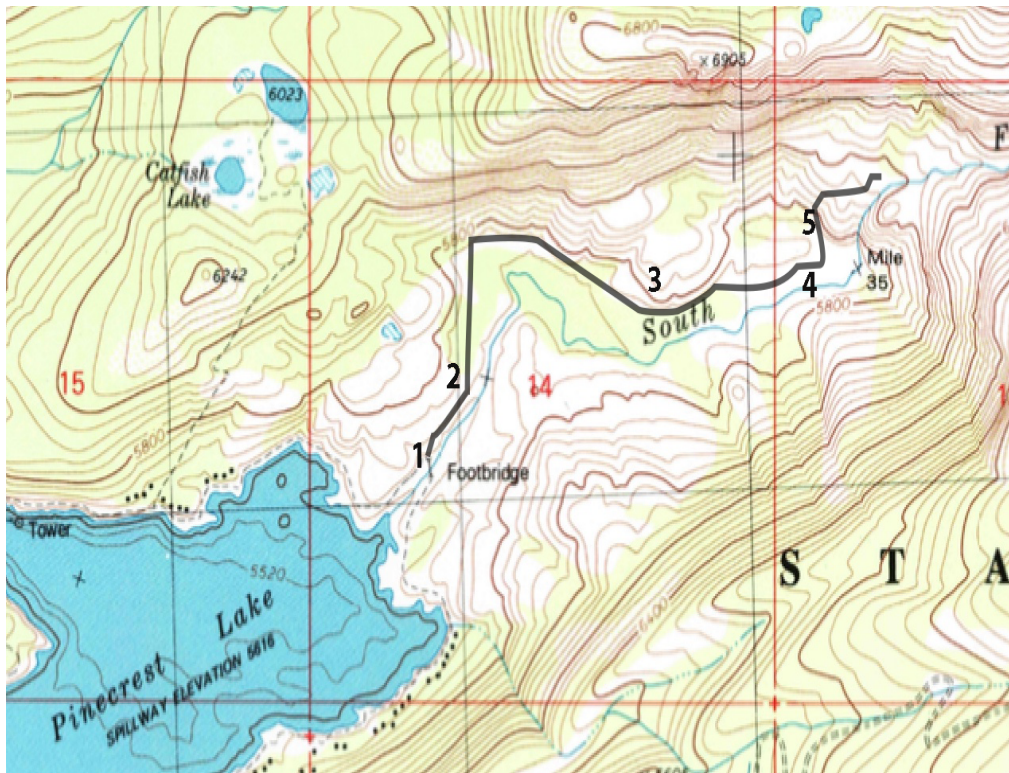


Figure 1: Cleo's Bath (North Side).

The hike begins at the footbridge (mark 1 on the map) over the river just

above Pinecrest Lake (this footbridge is on the main trail around the lake). In Figure 2, one can pick out the author on the granite in the center of the picture (the footbridge is behind the photographer and thus is out of view).



Figure 2: The Beginning of the Cross-Country.

The picture in Figure 3 was taken looking upriver from the author's position in Figure 2. One can see a steep granite ridge in the center of this picture. If one is sufficiently young and stupid, one can climb along this ridge. However, there is quite a bit of exposure to the right, so the preferred route stays to the left of this ridge.

Upon passing the ridge, one comes across a small group of trees (see Figure 4). In this picture, one sees Frankenstein's Bluff and Pinecrest Peak in the background. One should walk into this small forest and veer slightly to the left (north).



Figure 3: Avoiding the Ridge.



Figure 4: A Small Forest.

After walking through the trees for a hundred yards or so, one comes across the remains of a wooden dam, at mark 2 on the map (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: A Wooden Dam.

This dam was built in the mid-1800's and was part of a structure that held back water in what was called Lake Gertrude. This lake and others on the Stanislaus River were created to increase the duration of the water flow during the summer months for gold mining operations. The area between this dam and Cleo's Bath is the extent of this lake's bed.

Figure 6 shows a beautiful rock wall that is also part of the dam structure. It is just behind the wooden dam and can be found by walking around the wooden dam to the right. After admiring the wall, one should proceed due north through the forest until the terrain starts to rise and granite is encountered. At this point, one should turn right (east) and head along the left side of the lake bed, staying fairly close to the granite. At times, one can make out an old trail, but this trail is neither marked nor maintained. One must walk through quite a few stands of small trees, but these present no problems. However, at mark 3 there is one 50-yard section that is fairly hard to get through (an ad hoc trail maintenance crew has been notified). One should try to stay as close as possible to the granite cliff to the left when negotiating this section.



Figure 6: A Beautiful Rock Wall.

After getting through this section, it is easy hiking for awhile. In another quarter of a mile, a ditch is encountered (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: The Ditch.

This ditch serves as the beginning of the more-difficult part of this hike. After crossing this ditch and passing the view of Frankenstein's Bluff shown in Figure 8, one should walk to the northeast (left) and try to find a small pond at mark 4 (shown in Figure 9).



Figure 8: Frankenstein's Bluff.



Figure 9: A Small Pond.

One should walk around this pond on its right-hand side and continue for a short ways through the forest. Very soon, one will encounter a rocky stream bed coming down from the left (see Figure 10). One should walk up this stream



Figure 10: The Rocky Stream Bed.

bed for 50 feet or so. At this point, there is a small opening in the forest. One continues through the opening and enters a small set of trees (see Figure 11).



Figure 11: Onward!.

After negotiating this set of trees, one should encounter the view shown in Figure 12 (mark 5 on the map). Note the large ponderosa pine at the top of this picture; it can serve as a trail marker.



Figure 12: Some Serious Granite.

If one goes to the right of the tree in the center of the picture in Figure 12, one arrives at the base of some granite slabs (see Figure 13). One should start up these slabs by going up the cleft in the left-center of this picture.





Figure 13: The Beginning of the Climb.

After reaching the position of the author in Figure 13, the appearance of the granite is as shown in Figure 14. One goes horizontally across this section, along the crack in the center of the picture.



Figure 14: A Horizontal Section.



Figure 15: Up the Cleft.

At this point, one turns left and picks one's way up the cleft (see Figure 15).



Figure 16: At the Top of the Cleft.

Figure 16 shows the granite slabs at the top of the cleft. From this point onward, the hike is very easy.

Figures 17, 18, and 19 show the terrain on the rest of the hike. In Figure 18, the river is between the author and the granite cliff in the right-hand side of the picture. Hackenbush Ridge is also clearly visible in this picture.



Figure 17: Granite!



Figure 18: More Granite!



Figure 19: Still More Granite!

Figures 20 and 21 show Pinecrest Lake (looking west) and Cleo's Bath (looking east).



Figure 20: Looking Towards Pinecrest Lake.



Figure 21: Cleo's Bath.

Upon retracing one's steps, the only difficult part is finding the top of the cleft. In Figure 22, the author is shown near the top of the cleft. Note the black rock in the middle distance of this picture; it can serve as a landmark.



Figure 22: The Top of the Cleft From Above.