

The Bell Creek Crosscountry Hike

This hike is a pretty hike along a creek and through meadows and forests. It is about five miles in length. To get to the starting point of the hike, one should drive up Dodge Ridge Road to the beginning of the loop road at the ski area. There is a sign that says “Welcome to Dodge Ridge” at this point. At this sign, one should turn right onto a Forest Service Road and drive about one-quarter mile to the Crabtree Road. One should then turn left and head up this road to the top of the ridge. The road at this point makes a sharp left-hand turn across the top of the ridge. The pack station is visible to the left. One should turn right onto a paved road before reaching the pack station; there should be a sign for Bell Meadows at this intersection. After proceeding about one-half mile down this road, there is a gravel road that leaves to the left. This road can be negotiated by 2-wheel-drive vehicles, but it is somewhat rough.

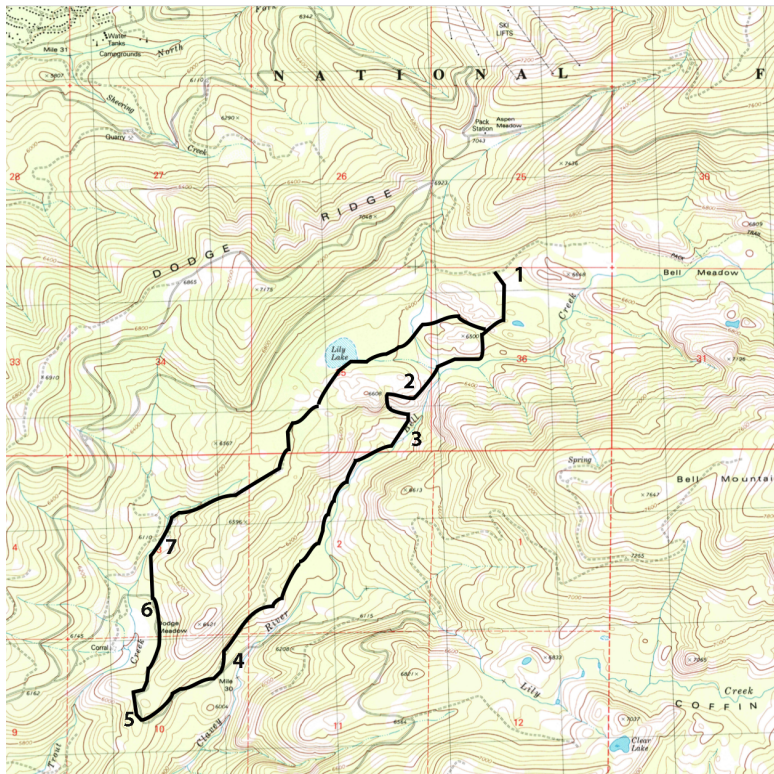


Figure 1: Bell Creek Map.

Upon reaching the bottom of the ridge, the road flattens out. One should proceed about one-half mile until one sees the meadow open up to the right (mark 1 on the map). There is a fence with a gate here, to the right of the road, and there are many parking spots available. If you are driving uphill, you have gone too far.

One should walk south through the meadow from this gate until one reaches Bell Creek. One should then turn right and follow the creek. One-half mile after reaching the creek, a very steep section of terrain (mark 2) is encountered; see Figure 2. One can downclimb this section in several ways; it is not necessary to cross the creek.



Figure 2: Steep Terrain.

At this point (mark 3), the terrain levels off and it is easy to walk next to the creek. Figures 3, 4, and 5 show the scenery in this part of the hike. It is possible, though not easy, in several places between marks 3 and 4 to turn right and climb up over the ridge to the valley below Lily Lake.



Figure 3: Along Bell Creek.



Figure 4: Along Bell Creek.

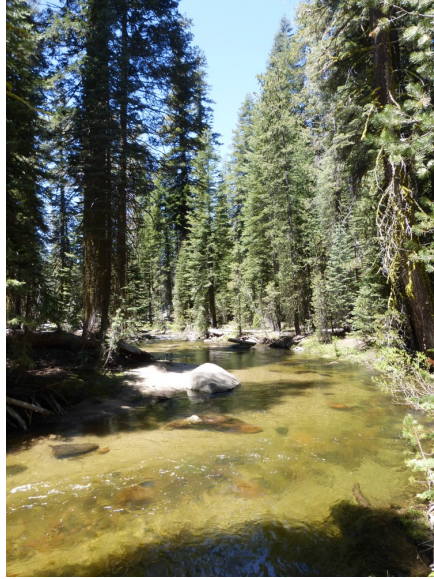


Figure 5: Along Bell Creek.

After about a mile from mark 3, a Forest Service road is reached (mark 4). One should turn right and walk along this road. As is seen in the map at mark 5, the road makes a turn to the right and goes through Dodge Meadow. When the north end of the meadow is reached (mark 6), the road turns to the west. One can proceed to the north through the forest for a few hundred yards until another road is encountered (mark 7). This road goes most of the way to Lily Lake. If one continues past the lake to the northeast, one eventually encounters the road on which their car is parked. On the map, we indicate a way to get back to the meadow near the starting point of the hike.