

## South of Burst Rock - Part 2

This document is a continuation of the document “South of Burst Rock - Part 1”. In that document, we describe hikes that are shown in Figure 1 and labeled from 0 to 4, and 7. In this document, we will describe the hikes labeled 5, 6, and 8.

Burst Rock is a granite outcrop that is near the eastern end of Dodge Ridge (see Figure 1). It is about eight miles east of Pinecrest. One can drive to the Gianelli trailhead, which is shown on the map (it is called “Gianelli Cabin (site)”). There are two roads that end at this trailhead; they can be seen on the map coming from the west. The better access road is called the Crabtree Road. One can access the west end of this road about 2 miles west of Pinecrest on Highway 108; it is just east of the end of the Old Strawberry Road. A better way to access this road is to drive up Dodge Ridge Road until one reaches the beginning of the loop road for the ski area. There is a road to the right at this point. This road leads to Crabtree Road in about half a mile. Upon reaching Crabtree Road, turn left and drive to the Aspen Meadow Pack Station. Drive through the pack station and continue for about 6 miles to the end of the road, which is Gianelli trailhead. There is only one offshoot of this road; it goes to Crabtree Camp trailhead.

The other access road to Gianelli trailhead is called Gooseberry Road. Its western end is on the return loop of the Dodge Ridge Ski Area loop road, about one-quarter mile after one leaves the ski area parking lot. This road is fairly rough in some places and should not be attempted without a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

If one wishes to hike to Burst Rock from the trailhead, one should go north from the parking area until a large Forest Service sign is encountered. The trail is marked with a 0 on the map. Another trail (marked “Pack Trail”) is shown on the map. This trail is no longer in use, although one can certainly get to Burst Rock this way. The first trail is much more gradual, which is a plus, since one will climb over 600 feet in about a mile. When the trail levels out and a wilderness sign is reached, Burst Rock is to the north (left) about 200 yards. The trail, which one can see on the map, continues on to Powell Lake and points east. The view looking southeast from Burst Rock can be seen in Figure 2. On a clear day such as the one when this picture was taken, one can see the main ridge of the Sierras as far south as Mt. Lyell, the tallest mountain in Yosemite National Park; it is the right-most snow-covered peak on the horizon in the picture. The horizontal snow patch on Mt. Lyell is the Lyell Glacier. In this picture, one notices a ridge in the middle-ground that blocks a lot of the view. This ridge can be hiked to by proceeding about two miles along the trail at Burst Rock (a great viewpoint is at the western end of the route marked 8 on the map). It is not possible to see any of the features of Yosemite Valley from either viewpoint, because they are blocked by intervening ridges. (As an aside, it is possible to see Mt. Starr King from a point just off of Gooseberry Road on Dodge Ridge.)

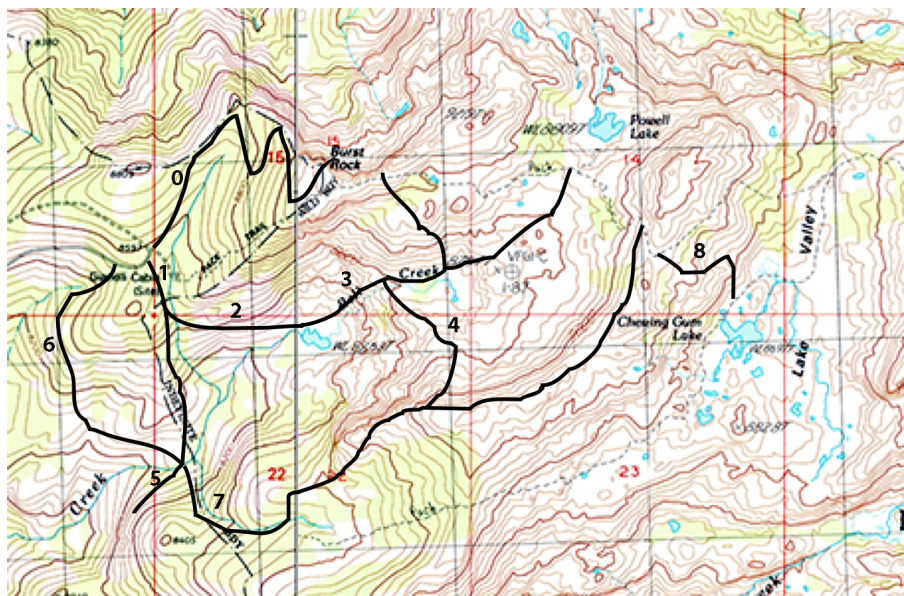


Figure 1: South of Burst Rock.

If one continues along the trail past Burst Rock, one eventually passes Powell Lake (see the map). At this point, one can turn right and walk southeast down the Bell Creek watershed, reaching the waterfalls described in Part 1. If one continues on the trail, a saddle is eventually reached on the ridge separating Bell Creek from Lake Valley. From this saddle, many of the mountains on the Sierra crest in Yosemite National Park are visible. After leaving the saddle, the trail turns right. It is possible at this point to turn right and leave the trail. By going steeply down the slope, one can get to Cheering Gum Lake (this is the route marked 8 on the map). It can be seen in the map that it is also possible to get to this lake by staying on the trail.

The hike labeled with a 6 on the map starts about one-quarter mile west of the parking lot at the Gianelli Trailhead. One hikes around the west side of the small bump just to the south of the road, and then heads down into the Bell Creek valley. About one-half mile after leaving the road, one begins to encounter large trees with red bark. These are western junipers. The largest of this species in the United States is called the Bennett Juniper. It is in the Stanislaus National Forest, and is accessible by road and by trail. It is about



Figure 2: Looking Southeast From Burst Rock.

2 miles south of Pigeon Flat. The best way to get to this tree is to drive to Eagle Meadow and then continue about three miles on the road. This tree is extremely impressive; one can find many pictures of it on the web. Figure 3 shows a few of the junipers along the route being described here.



Figure 3: Western Junipers South of Gianelli Trailhead.

The route continues to the bottom of the valley. It is easy to cross Bell Creek almost anywhere. Once the creek is crossed, one can hike southwest, climbing away from the creek. With some patience and/or luck, one can find the western juniper shown in Figure 4. Its location is shown in the map; it is at the end of the short spur marked 5. This tree is among the two or three largest western junipers I've seen, other than the Bennett Juniper. There are several ways to



Figure 4: A Very Large Western Juniper.

return to the trailhead. One way is to go back to Bell Creek and walk due north. The other way, which is a lot more fun, is to climb to the top of the ridge that is south of Bell Creek and then walk about 3 miles northeast along the ridge until the trail from Burst Rock is reached; this route is marked with a 7 on the map. This route is quite straight-forward; one just walks along the top of the ridge, at times staying slightly south of the top, to avoid cliffy sections.