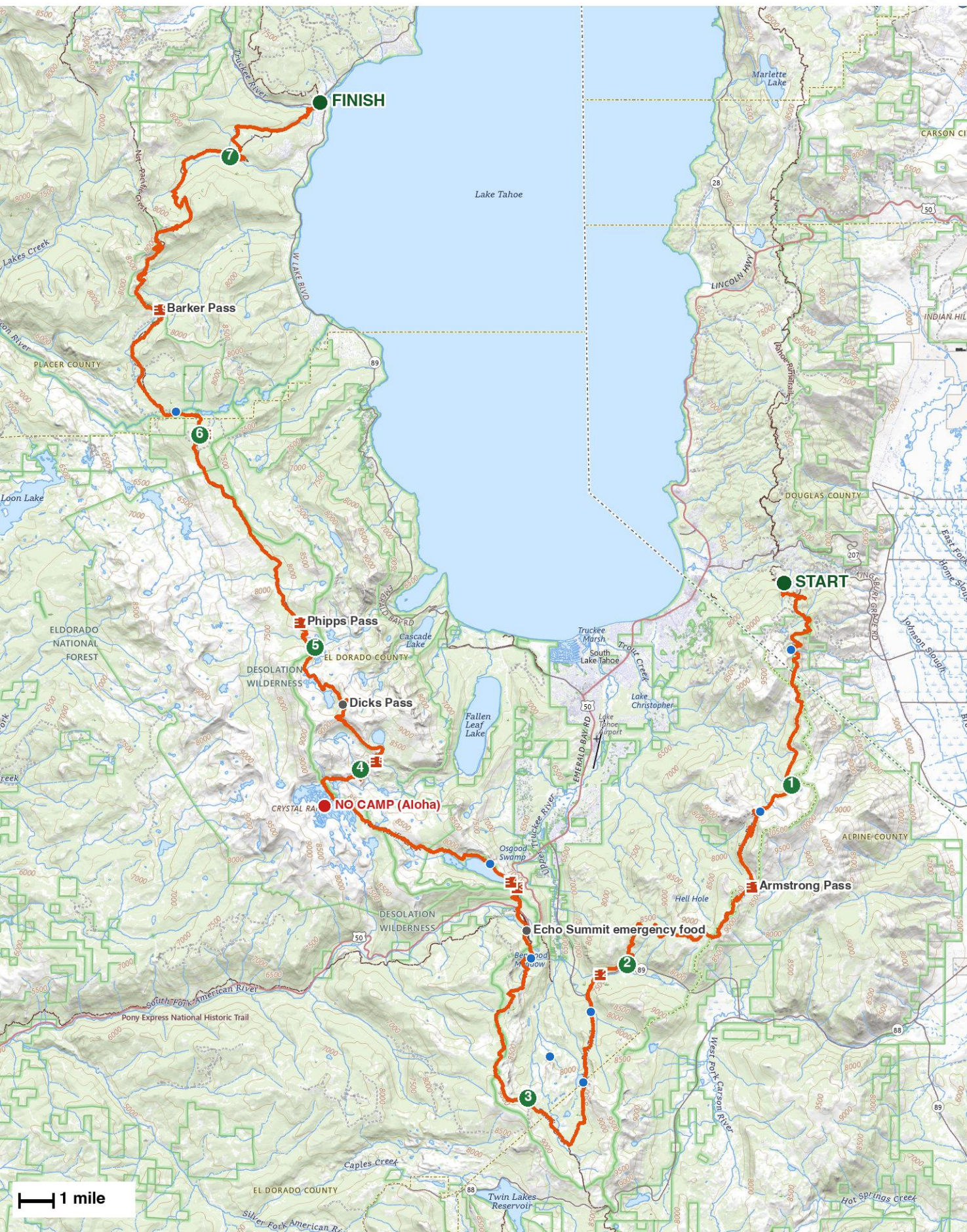


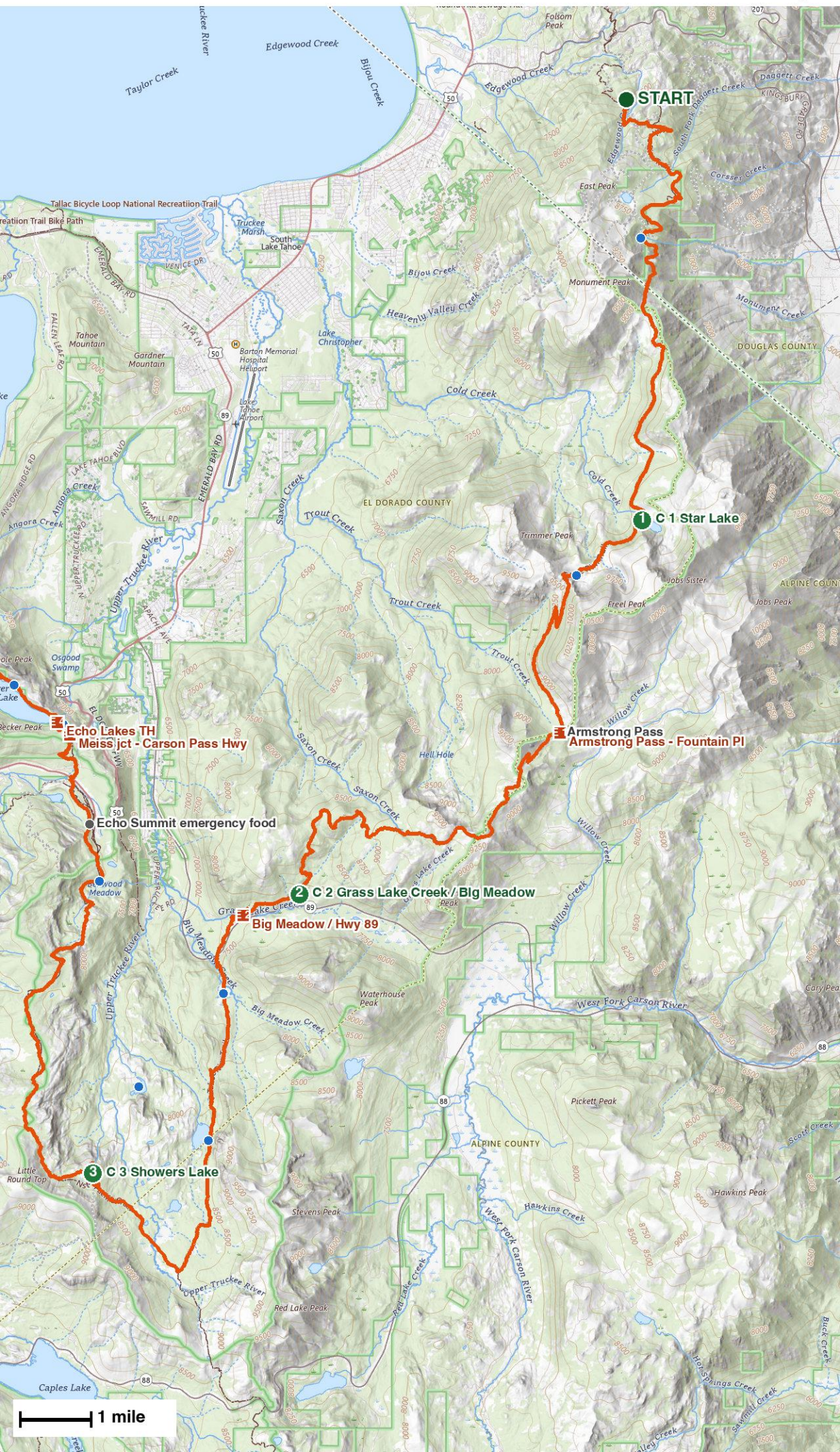
TRT: Kingsbury South to Tahoe City — OVERVIEW

Jul 26–Aug 2, 2026 · 88 mi · camps numbered by night · blue=water · orange=route



Page 2 — SOUTH: Kingsbury / Star Lake / Freel (Days 1-2)

4L out of Star Lake — Freel springs seasonal; Saxon Ck backup <1mi off Saxon Trail



Fill at Echo Lake outlet before crossing · permit on you from Echo · camp C4 Susie





PAGE 5 - IF PHONE DIES: FULL TRIP REFERENCE

Tahoe Rim Trail, Kingsbury South > Tahoe City - Jul 26 - Aug 2, 2026 - ~88 mi - water status per TRTA report 7/7/26

D1 Sun 7/26 Kingsbury South (7,780 ft) > Star Lake (9 mi, ~+2,600 ft)

WATER: Daggett Ck and Mott Canyon Ck both FLOWING per TRTA 7/7/26 report - still leave town with 1.5-2L in case of late-July fade. Cold Ck tributary just N of Star Lake almost always flows. Star Lake itself NEVER goes dry. Do NOT drink East Peak Lake (Heavenly snowmaking reservoir, not potable).
CAMP: Star Lake, 9,100 ft - best sites on the east shore; popular. Night can approach freezing even in late July - wear layers to bed. Emergency exit from here: Cold Creek / High Meadows trail descends W toward South Lake Tahoe.

D2 Mon 7/27 Star Lake > Freel saddle (~9,730 ft - TRIP HIGH POINT) > Grass Lake Ck (14 mi) ** DRIEST + BIGGEST DAY **

WATER: LEAVE STAR LAKE WITH A FULL 4L - this is the rule regardless of reports. Springs between Freel saddle and Armstrong Pass rated 'likely' by TRTA 7/7 (they flow in all but the driest years, both sides of the saddle) - treat any you find as a bonus, never as the plan. Water AT Armstrong Pass needs a long off-trail detour: skip it. EMERGENCY BACKUP: Saxon Creek at Tucker Flat, <1 mi off the Saxon Creek Trail. FIRST GUARANTEED WATER: Grass Lake Spur junction / Grass Lake Creek - FLOWING per 7/7 report.
CAMP: Grass Lake Creek / Big Meadow area. Cross the exposed Freel shoulder IN THE MORNING - afternoon thunderstorms are the Sierra summer pattern. EXITS today: E1 Armstrong Pass > Fountain Place Rd (2 mi W to road); E2 Big Meadow / Hwy 89 trailhead at day's end (easy hitch to South Lake Tahoe).

D3 Tue 7/28 Big Meadow > Round Lake > Meiss country > Showers Lake (10 mi)

WATER: Easiest water day of the trip - all confirmed by TRTA 7/7: Big Meadow Ck (0.5 mi S of the trailhead), Round Lake at ~3.4 mi, Dardanelles Lake (short spur), Four Lakes ponds N of Meiss Meadow, Upper Truckee River at Meiss Meadow (reliable), Showers Lake at camp (reliable).
CAMP: Showers Lake. Mellow day - swim, rest, sort food. Do NOT push past Showers into Desolation: the permit is date-locked to a 7/29 entry and rangers check. EXIT today: E3 - at the Meiss junction the PCT runs S ~3 mi to Carson Pass / Hwy 88 (staffed info station in summer).

D4 Wed 7/29 Showers > Echo Summit > Echo Lakes > Aloha > Susie Lake (14.5-16.5 mi) ** PERMIT ENTRY - LONGEST DAY **

WATER: Upper Truckee at Meiss Meadow reliable; multiple feeder creeks near Benwood Meadow (flowing per 7/7). CRITICAL: FILL AT THE ECHO LAKE OUTLET (by the dam/chalet) - the water is hard to reach once you cross the outlet and start the lakeside traverse. After the S. Desolation border, water is continuous: Aloha, Heather, Susie.
CAMP: Susie Lake (preferred - established sites) or Heather. Start at FIRST LIGHT. Permit signed + carried from Echo onward. NO camping at Lake Aloha (Zone 33). Mosquitoes severe at dusk (TRTA: 'significant activity') - headnet on early, camp on a breezy rise. Water taxi across Echo: \$25/person, needs 4 riders - plan to walk. Echo Chalet snacks 9-5. EXITS today: E4 Echo Lakes TH (parking, people, phone at chalet); E5 Glen Alpine trail ~2 mi E from Susie to Fallen Leaf road.

D5 Thu 7/30 Susie > Dicks Pass (9,377 ft) > Middle Velma Lakes (8.5 mi)

WATER: Water everywhere today, all reliable: Gilmore Lake (short spur), Dicks Lake, Fontanillis Lake, the Velmas. No carries needed beyond 1L.
CAMP: Middle Velma Lakes - Desolation night 2 of 2, within 300 ft of the TRT. Cross Dicks Pass BEFORE NOON - it is the most exposed point of the route in a thunderstorm. Short day: swim, dry gear, eat the heavy food. EXIT today: E6 Bayview / Eagle Falls trails ~4 mi from the Velmas down to Hwy 89 at Emerald Bay (busy trailheads, easy help).

D6 Fri 7/31 Velmas > Phipps Pass > Richardson Lake (9-10 mi) ** PERMIT EXIT DAY **

WATER: TANK UP AT MIDDLE VELMA BEFORE LEAVING (2-3L). Phipps Creek is rated 'spring through mid-summer' flow (TRTA) - by July 31 assume LOW or DRY; if it is running, fill and walk upstream for cleaner flow. Next certain water after the Velmas is Richardson Lake at camp (shallow and warm - filtering is slow; Micropur tabs work fine).
CAMP: Richardson Lake - just OUTSIDE the wilderness boundary, matching the permit exit. Friday night: the McKinney-Rubicon 4x4 jeep road passes the lake - expect possible engine noise and vehicle campers; pick a site away from the road. EXITS today: E7 Phipps Pass > Meeks Creek (TYT) trail ~6.5 mi NE to Hwy 89 at Meeks Bay; E8 the jeep road itself, ~5 mi E to Tahoma.

D7 Sat 8/1 Richardson > Barker Pass > Twin Peaks > Ward Creek (13-15 mi)

WATER: Springs just S of Barker Pass plus a RELIABLE creek 2 mi S of Barker - FILL THERE as the plan. Good 2026 news (TRTA 7/7): several springs also cross the trail N of Barker, and N. Fork Blackwood Ck is running - so the Barker stretch is friendlier than usual this year, but fill S of Barker anyway. Ward Creek at camp is reliable year-round.
CAMP: Ward Creek area - last night. NAVIGATION TRAP: at Twin Peaks the TRT SPLITS FROM THE PCT - follow TRT signs EAST toward Tahoe City; the PCT continues N and will take you miles off-route. EXIT today: E9 Barker Pass > Blackwood Canyon road ~7 mi down to Hwy 89 (some traffic on summer weekends).

D8 Sun 8/2 Ward Creek > Page Meadows > TAHOE CITY, 6,240 ft (8 mi - done by midday)

WATER: Ward Creek at the start; Truckee River 0.5 mi S of Tahoe City. No carries - this is a victory lap.
Gentle downhill through Page Meadows; the trail delivers you essentially to the Tahoe City grocery store. You are staying in Tahoe City - no pickup, no logistics. Eat something enormous.

EXITS / BAIL-OUTS (E-numbers match map squares)

E1 Armstrong Pass > Fountain Place Rd (D2) - connector ~2 mi W to road toward SLT
E2 Big Meadow / Hwy 89 trailhead (end D2) - easy hitch to South Lake Tahoe
E3 Meiss junction > PCT south ~3 mi > Carson Pass / Hwy 88 (D3)
E4 Echo Lakes TH (D4) - parking, people, chalet phone; US-50 nearby
E5 Glen Alpine trail > Fallen Leaf Lake road, ~2 mi E of Susie Lk (D4/5)
E6 Bayview / Eagle Falls > Emerald Bay Hwy 89, ~4 mi from Velmas (D5)
E7 Phipps Pass > Meeks Ck (TYT) trail ~6.5 mi NE > Meeks Bay Hwy 89 (D6)
E8 Richardson Lk > McKinney-Rubicon jeep rd ~5 mi E > Tahoma (D6/7)
E9 Barker Pass > Blackwood Canyon rd ~7 mi > Hwy 89 (D7)
Also: Star Lake > Cold Ck/High Meadows trail W to SLT (D1); Ward Ck camp is ~2 mi from Hwy 89 neighborhoods (D7/8).
You are NEVER more than ~4-6 trail mi from a road or busy trailhead.

PERMIT & RULES

Permit - Desolation TRT Thru-Hike. ENTRY Echo Wed 7/29. EXIT Richardson Lk Fri 7/31. Max 2 nights inside Desolation.
Camp within 300 ft of the TRT corridor. NO camping at Lake Aloha (Zone 33). Camp 200+ ft from water and trail.
NO campfires anywhere on this route - stove OK (CA Campfire Permit carried). Bear canister required the ENTIRE trail: ALL food + scented items in the BV500 every night, 100+ ft from tent. Trash and used-TP bags stay OUT of the canister (outer pack pocket).

CONTACTS & PROTOCOL

EMERGENCY: 911 (El Dorado County SAR) - iPhone satellite SOS works with NO signal: follow on-screen prompts, point at sky
Placerville Ranger Station: 530-647-5415 (7 days, 8:00-4:30)
Yellow Cab S. Lake Tahoe (24/7): 530-544-5555 or 530-200-0000
Tahoe Taxi: 530-545-8767 - Echo Chalet (9-5): 530-659-7207
Check-in contact: _____ (text from every camp when there is signal - high points work best, Verizon strongest)
PROTOCOL: if no contact by NOON the day after a missed check-in, call El Dorado County Sheriff / 911 and read them this itinerary.

KEY FACTS & SURVIVAL NOTES

CONDITIONS BASIS: TRTA official report Jul 7, 2026 - entire trail snow-free; significant mosquito activity in meadows/creeks.
Elevations: Kingsbury 7,780 - Star Lk 9,100 - Freel saddle ~9,730 (trip high, D2) - Echo Lk 7,414 - Dicks Pass 9,377 (D5) - Tahoe City 6,240.
Weather pattern: highs 75-85F, lows 35-45F (Star Lk can touch freezing). Afternoon thunderstorms build after ~1pm - cross Freel (D2) and Dicks (D5) in the morning. If caught: drop off ridgelines, spread away from lone trees, sit on pack.
Sun: rises ~5:55a, sets ~8:15p. ~14 hrs of light - plenty of margin on every day if moving by 7am.
Water treatment: Micropur = 1 tablet per liter, wait 30 min (4 hrs if water is very cold or cloudy). Tabs are the backup - they work on everything including Richardson's warm water.
If lost: STOP. Backtrack to the last TRT blaze/sign - the trail is heavily signed and traveled; someone passes within hours on every section. Do not shortcut switchbacks or follow game trails downhill.
Sanitation: cathole 6-8 in deep, 200 ft from water/trail/camp; pack out ALL toilet paper (required in Desolation). On granite days D4-D6 use a WAG bag - do not force a shallow hole.
Records: Amtrak res (SF>Truckee 7/25). Lodging after: Tahoe City. Food carried: 7 days, no resupply; Echo Chalet (D4) - sells snacks if rationing feels thin.