

Blue Oak Loop Trail

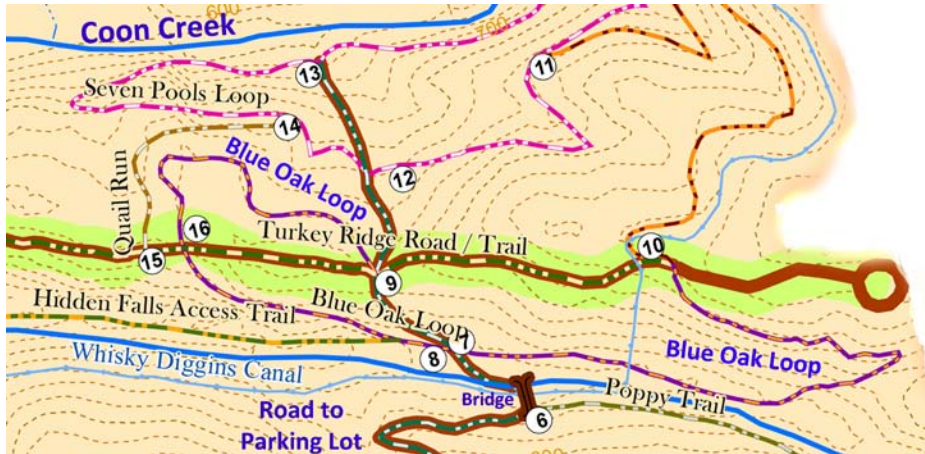
Hidden Falls Regional Park, Placer County

by Robert H. Sydnor, AERC Trail Master and M-LBHA June 2010

Introduction and Location

The Blue Oak Loop Trail is a splendid 1.3-mile trail within Hidden Falls Regional Park, located in southwestern Placer County, about six miles northwest of Auburn. This trail loops around Turkey Ridge and has blue oaks along most of the trail.

For driving directions and trail maps of Hidden Falls, visit the website of Placer County Parks at <http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/Facility/Parks/hiddenfalls.aspx/>

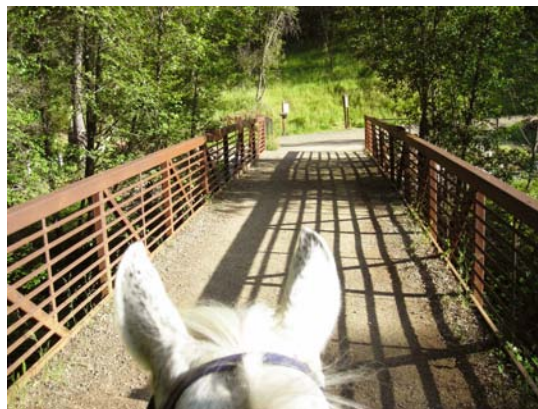


Trail Map for the Blue Oak Loop

Hidden Falls
Regional Park
Placer County Parks

Pond Turtle Road and Bridge across Deadman Creek

Water your horse at the assembly area, since there are no watering troughs along the trails. From the parking lot, ride your horse along the main graveled trail (Pond Turtle Road & Trail) and then across the bridge at Deadman Creek, then ascend Turkey Ridge.



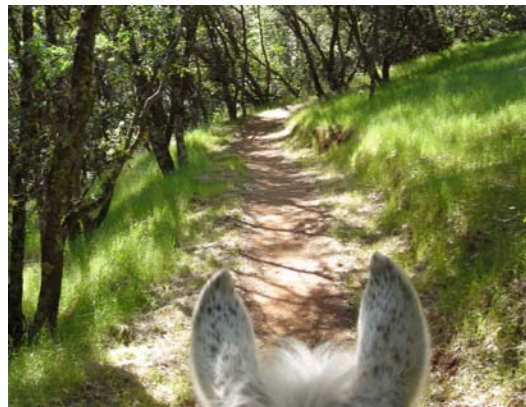
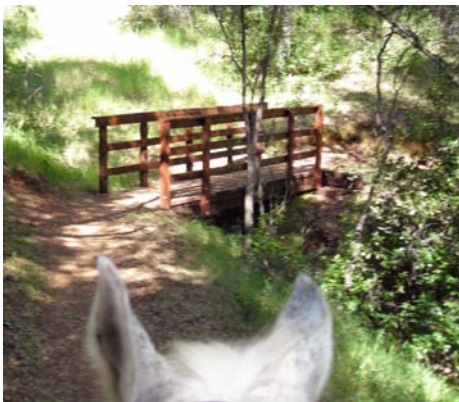
At left: The parking lot and equestrian assembly area for Hidden Falls Regional Park. **At right:** The newly-constructed wide footbridge across Deadman Creek. The bridge leads to Turkey Ridge and the Blue Oak Loop trail.

Geology of the Trail Bed for Blue Oak Loop: There are very few outcrops of rocks along Blue Oak Loop, so the trail bed is an optimum red colluvial soil derived from the underlying Copper Hill metavolcanic rocks of Jurassic age. Equestrians will not see very many rocks on this loop, compared to the spectacular cliffs that form the waterfall of nearby Hidden Falls.

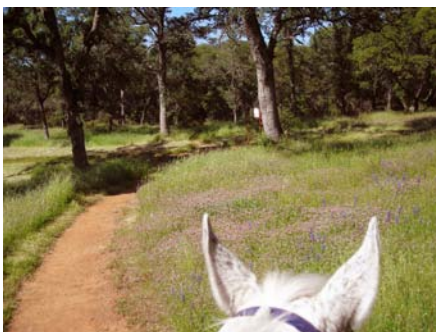
Blue Oak Loop Trail - shaded canopy and sunny meadows



At left: The Blue Oak Trail departs from the Hidden Falls Access Trail, and forks uphill. **At right:** Lots of red clover in a meadow is a welcome snack for our horses. After eating baled hay all winter long, our horses are glad to be out in the sunshine getting some exercise, and eating fresh clover.



At left: A newly constructed timber bridge across a ephemeral creek. **At right:** the Blue Oak Loop Trail ascends at a gentle gradient to the crest of Turkey Ridge. Notice that the properly constructed trail is beautifully out-sloped for optimum drainage and that there are *no* wooden waterbars (which would need future trail maintenance).



At left: Beautiful meadows of red clover under a canopy of oak trees along Turkey Ridge. This is a shaded fuel break to prevent wildfires. Here at Trail Signpost #10, the trail forks in several directions. Riders can continue onward to the Seven Pools Vista Trail, or return down the crest of the ridge. **At right:** Happy horses loaded-up and ready for the return trip home to the Loomis Basin.

