



Old 40: Truckee to Cisco Grove

Rich in History, Rich in Scenery, Rich in Fun.

One section of the Yuba-Donner National Scenic Bypass is extraordinarily rich in history and scenery. Don't you dare take the freeway!

Old Highway 40 was the route over the Sierra before the Interstate. The section from Truckee to Cisco Grove on Donner Summit, only about 27 miles, is not to be missed.

In the old railway town of Truckee there are museums, shops, restaurants, and historic sites. Just outside of town is the Donner Memorial State Park where half of the Donner Party camped in 1846-47. There is a visitors' center, a monument dedicated to the "emigrants' suffering, determination, and heroism during their isolation at Donner Lake in the winter of 1846." The base of the monument, 22 feet high, shows how high the snow was that winter. Continue on Old 40 along the shore of Donner Lake to Donner Summit. At Donner Lake there is swimming, picnicking, hiking, and boating.

The route to Donner Summit is historic. Through here came Native Americans for thousands of years, the first transcontinental railroad, the first transcontinental highway, and the first transcontinental telephone line. Overhead was the first transcontinental air route.

Along the way you'll find magnificent views, Native American petroglyphs 4,000 years old, China Wall built without mortar by the Chinese workers in 1867-8, Sierra railroad tunnels blasted out of the Sierra granite by Chinese workers, the first bridge with a compound rising curve, historical ski areas and lodges, snowsheds that once extended for 40 miles protecting the railway route,

In Summit Valley at the top Native Americans camped in summers for thousands of years leaving behind dozens of mortars and metates.

There are lots of opportunities to walk, hike, photograph, bird watch, rock climb, and just enjoy.

20 Mile Museum interpretive signs are all along the route giving the history of the sites, good stories, and things to do.



Rust marks and grooves in the granite from emigrant wagons and trains at Big Bend.

The source of the Yuba River on the flank of Mt. Judah.



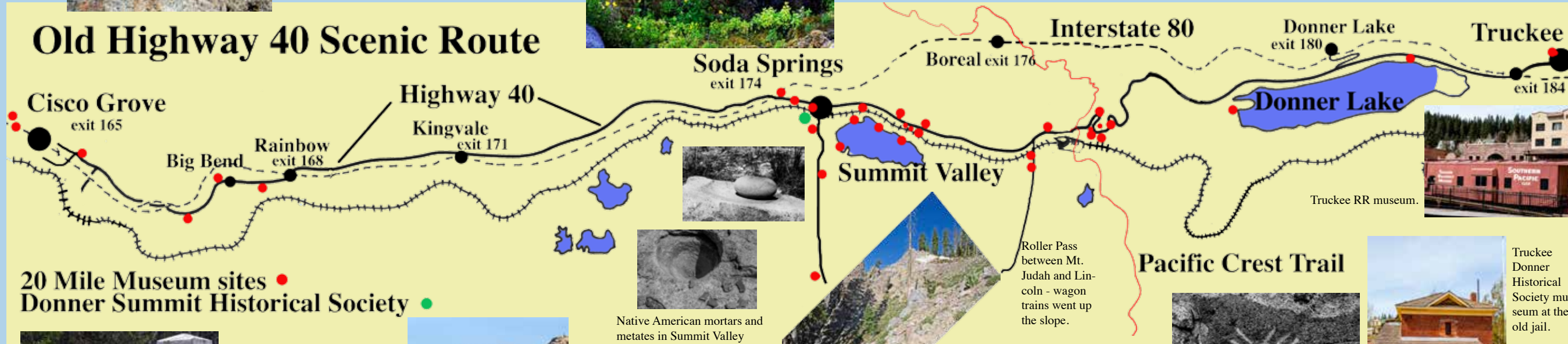
Sierra Junipers, thousands of years old, this one overlooking Donner Lake.



Catfish Pond, possibly stocked with catfish by Chinese RR workers.



Summit Valley, Jewel of the Sierra.



Lincoln Highway marker at Big Bend.



Donner Summit Bridge, 1926



Native American mortars and metates in Summit Valley



Original Emigrant Trail in the forest along the side of Summit Valley.



Native American petroglyphs 2,000 - 4,000 years old.

Tunnel 6, the longest of the Sierra tunnels, took 2 years to build from four different directions



Truckee Donner Historical Society museum at the old jail.



Original Lincoln Highway along the Yuba River.

China Wall



Snowsheds along the flank of Donner Pk.



Ads painted on rocks to direct early 20th Century "automobilists."

20 Mile Museum interpretive signs all along Old 40 and nearby - the map's red dots. Each tells the history, a good story and things to do.