

RED HILLS AREA



Hiking Distance:	About 4.5 miles roundtrip
Difficulty:	Easy to moderate
Start Elevation:	1200 feet
Elevation Change:	About 200 feet
Location:	About 1 mile from Chinese Camp
Map:	USGS Chinese Camp Quadrangle

Description:

The Red Hills area is BLM land and has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in order to protect the rare plant species found here. Additional background information on the Red Hills can be found at the [BLM website](#). There are over 17 miles of trails in the area (a map of them is posted at the main parking area). They are quite popular with equestrians. The trail described here is a loop beginning and ending at the parking area off Red Hills Rd, and uses parts of the Overlook Loop, Soaproot Ridge, and Old Stage trails. While generally an easy trail, there is a moderate section up to and down from the Overlook hill, and parts of the trail are quite rocky. From the trailhead take the Soaproot Ridge trail up to a ridge where the signed Overlook Loop trail branches off. After descending from the Overlook hill you reach a seasonal stream where the trail branches -- take the left branch (ignoring the post with an arrow indicating to go right) and follow it along the stream bed. Upon reaching the intersection with the Soaproot Ridge trail (unsigned at this junction) turn left. After crossing another seasonal stream you will find a signed trail junction; turn right and eventually you will pass a horse trough, and a little bit further on the trail intersects with the Old Stage trail. Go right and eventually you will return to the parking area.

The Red Hills suffered a wildfire in 1997 leaving many standing dead Foothill pines. The unique (serpentine) soil conditions result in rather sparse vegetation compared to other Foothill areas. The dominant species are Foothill pines and Buckbrush. In the spring and early summer there are many diverse wildflowers especially if the spring has been a wet one. Some hillsides are covered with Goldfields and the stream banks are lined with Monkeyflowers (*Mimulus guttatus*), White Hyacinths (*Triteleia hyacinthina*), and both Foothill and California Poppies (*E. californica* and *E. caespitosa*) can be found in large numbers. Along this loop trail you may find several colonies of Rawhide Hill onions.

Area's Blooming Season	March		April		May		June		July		August		September
	Early		E	Mid		M	Late		L	Very Late		V	



Trailhead Directions:

From Jamestown take highway 108 west to the junction with highway 49. Take highway 49 to Sims Rd. Follow Sims Rd which crosses highway 120 and then merges into Red Hills Rd. (Or take highway 49 to Chinese Camp and turn onto Red Hills Rd). Follow Red Hills Rd until you reach the parking area for the trailhead. Coming east from Oakdale on highway 108/120 you would turn onto La Grange Rd (county J59) and then shortly turn left on Red Hills Rd and continue to the parking area.

