

# Hirschman Trail

Only a mile from the heart of downtown Nevada City, here is a great new trail system that gets you quickly out into nature with lots of different things to enjoy. The centerpiece is lovely Hirschman's Pond, named after the Hirschman brothers who were pioneer miners and merchants of the area. The eastern 0.4 mile of trail is constructed to ADA standards, providing barrier-free access to Hirschman's Pond. Highlighting this section of trail is a 40-foot long trestle that was built to replicate the railroad and flume construction techniques of the late 1800's. West of the pond, the trail narrows and meanders through oak woodlands, pines, and grasslands for an additional 2 miles.

<b>Place:</b>	Nevada City, CA
<b>Season:</b>	Year around
<b>Land:</b>	On 85 acres of City of Nevada City open space; trail built and signs placed by Nevada County Land Trust
<b>Trail signs:</b>	Well signed with City of Nevada City signs
<b>Length:</b>	2.4 miles
<b>Altitude change:</b>	Less than 150'
<b>Difficulty:</b>	Easy
<b>Trail surface:</b>	Dirt
<b>Environment:</b>	Most is recovering forest on heavily mined historic diggings. Ponds. One meadow.
<b>Rules:</b>	No horses or motorized vehicles. No smoking. Dogs on leash. Please stay on the trails and respect private property. Hikers and mountain bikers watch for each other and pass safely.

## Trailheads:

*Cement Hill Trailhead:* Take Highway 49 west toward Downieville past the Nevada County Government Center and turn right on Cement Hill Road. Go 0.1 mile and turn left into the unpaved driveway at 115 Cement Hill Road. There is a small parking area about 30 feet down the driveway on the left - please park perpendicular to the trail. Do not go farther down the residential driveway or disturb residents. The trail begins at Cement Hill Road and wraps around the back of the parking area (N39.26844 W121.02969).

*Indian Flat Trailhead:* Go 2.4 miles west on Highway 49 from the north end of Nevada City where Highway 49 turns west toward Downieville. Opposite the Willo restaurant, turn right on Indian Flat Road and go 0.2 mile. The trailhead is at the southwest corner of the intersection of Indian Flat Road and Indian Trail (the main internal road of the Indian Trails subdivision). Park on the wide road shoulder of Indian Flat Road about 50 yards east of the trailhead (N39.26853 W121.05326).

*Woods Ravine Trailhead:* Go 2.4 miles west on Highway 49 from the north end of Nevada City where Highway 49 turns west toward Downieville. Opposite the Willo restaurant, turn right on Indian Flat Road and go 0.2 mile. Turn right on Indian Trail and go 0.6 mile. Park on the road shoulder. The trailhead is on your right (N39.26812 W121.04629).

*Juvenile Hall Trailhead:* Go 1.0 mile west on Highway 49 from the north end of Nevada City where Highway 49 turns west toward Downieville. Look on your left for the entrance to Nevada County Juvenile Hall at 15434 Highway 49. Park on the right (north side) of Highway 49 about 70 yards west of the Juvenile Hall entrance, near a "Report Drunk Drivers" sign where the road shoulder is wide. You will a metal gate with a trash container and dog cleanup bag dispenser. Follow the road to Hirschman Trail, near the southern shoreline of Hirschman's Pond (N39.26675 W121.03395).

## Trail tips:

To go the full length of the Hirschman Trail, start at the Cement Hill Trailhead (see above) and go 0.4 mile to Hirschman's Pond. From the parking area, the trail weaves westward along in thick forest, first passing a house on your right and then several small seasonal ponds that in the spring may be alive with noisy frogs. There are nice views of Hirschman's Pond as you reach its shore. A little further on, at the south end of the pond, you will see and cross a wooden foot bridge.

Note: This first section of trail was improved to ADA standards in 2011. The trails west of Hirschman's Pond were newly constructed in 2010 to modern standards. These include the Hirschman Trail and also the Woods Ravine Trail which connects the Indian Trails subdivision to the Hirschman Trail.

Hirschman's Pond is five acres of water from natural sources at the foot of tall cliffs carved by hydraulic mining of the area in the 1800's. Now people visit to enjoy the tranquil scenery, fish along the shore, and view wildlife including ducks, geese and heron on the pond. There is a nice bench on the south shore of the pond for taking in the view.

From the foot bridge at the south shore of Hirschman's Pond continue west on Hirschman Trail. You will soon see a sign for Woods Ravine (1 mile) and Indian Flat Road (2 miles). The trail goes gently downhill for about 500 feet beyond this sign, then arrives at a wooden foot bridge over a seasonal pond lined with willows -- a pretty spot to pause. After this pond the trail parallels a low ridge of rocks on your left, comes out near Highway 49, then climbs to a cliff that follows the road for a while. Houses will be visible to your right in this stretch.

The trail now climbs as it moves away from the road, then reaches the edge of a ridge and begins to drop down the side of a shallow valley where you will find a large open meadow on your right. The meadow is the only place of its kind on this hike -- a place to explore if you wish and to ponder Native American and pioneer history of the area.

After the meadow, the trail winds gently up another ridge, moving away from the highway. The trail then begins a long set of switchbacks down a broad slope into Woods Ravine where a long wooden causeway takes you across stream channels and wetlands of the ravine. After the causeway, it's a short distance to the junction of the Woods Ravine Trail. If you take the Woods Ravine Trail, it will lead you a quarter of a mile up a side ravine to Indian Trail, the internal one-way road in the Indian Trails subdivision. From there you can either return back down to Hirschman Trail or create a loop by going left (west) along the paved Indian Trail roadway to the Indian Flat Trailhead (see above).

From the lower end of the Woods Ravine Trail, continue west on Hirschman Trail. The trail heads south a short way with a deep gully in Woods Ravine on your left, then turns more westerly and begins a long meandering climb up a low forested ridge to what looks like a small watering pond on your left and then, a bit later, a wooden foot bridge over a small ravine.

After this foot bridge, the trail gradually descends to parallel Highway 49, eventually crossing a very small rivulet or stream that comes down from your right, then passing through a nice stand of large manzanita, then coming out onto nearly flat land opposite where Old Downieville Highway meets Highway 49. From here it's about 0.4 mile to the Indian Flat Trailhead, about half of it through open woods near the highway, then a switchback route up a wooded hillside to the Indian Flat Trailhead.

**Possible loop trips:** Depending on your mode of travel (bike or on foot) you will quickly see the potential for various loop trips in the area by combining trail and paved road sections. At the west end, loops are possible utilizing the Indian Trail roadway and the Woods Ravine Trail. At the east end you can make a short loop utilizing the Cement Hill and Juvenile Hall trailheads. Indian Flat Road, Cement Hill Road, West Broad Street and Old Downieville Highway offer longer routes that connect with downtown Nevada City. It's also possible to go out East Broad Street, connect at the northwest corner of Highway 49 and East Broad/North Bloomfield with a new trail to the Nevada County Government Center and then go through the Government Center to the Cement Hill Trailhead.