

Litton Trail

A well-established trail through an informal urban greenbelt in the vicinity of the Sierra College campus in Grass Valley. The greenbelt is a blend of small forest reserves associated with a country club, irrigation canal, community college, high school, and retirement community in this area. The Litton trail ties them all together with lots of variety and interest.

Place:	Grass Valley, CA
Season:	Year around
Land:	Trail easements on various private and public land
Trail signs:	Nevada County Land Trust signs
Length:	2 miles one way
Altitude change:	131 feet
Difficulty:	Easy
Trail surface:	Various. Predominately dirt and graveled dirt. Paved from Hughes Road to Sierra College Drive.
Environment:	Mixed conifers and deciduous trees. Some sections follow an irrigation ditch.
Rules:	Foot and bike only. Dogs on leash. No motorized vehicles. Stay on trails. Additional rules apply on Sierra College campus. See signs.

Trailheads:

Hughes Road: Along Hughes Road 1/4 mile south of Ridge Road. This is on the east side of Hughes Road about 75 feet uphill from the intersection of Hughes Road and Lidster Avenue. Ample street parking nearby. (N39.23132 W121.05890)

Ridge Road (Eskaton): At the entrance to Eskaton Village Grass Valley retirement community. Take Ridge Road to Via Colina Drive, the entrance road for Eskaton Village. The trailhead is down Via Colina Drive about 140 yards, to the right of the large Eskaton sign at the entrance. Park off the paved road, if possible, near the intersection of Via Colina Drive and Evergreen Drive. (N39.24358 W121.04781)

Other access points: This trail, and the complex of related trails in the area can be accessed from several other places. The most obvious of these are where the Litton Trail crosses Sierra College Drive. Look for the modern Grass Valley Fire Department, Station 2, on your right about ¼ mile up Sierra College Drive from the Nevada City Highway (East Main Street.) You will see a trailhead directly across the street from the fire station. This part of the Litton Trail leads to Hughes Road. On the same side of the street as the fire station, and just below it, is the trailhead for joining the Litton Trail as it continues up into the college campus and beyond to the Ridge Road trailhead at Eskaton Village.

Trail tips:

To walk the full length of the official Litton Trail, start at the Hughes Road trailhead where you will enter a very nice paved trail that goes for ½ mile along the Grass Valley Ditch irrigation canal. You will be in forest overlooking the fairways of the Nevada County Country Club. There are several benches along the way.

When you reach Sierra College Drive, cross the street with care (there is no crosswalk) and find the continuation of the Litton Trail along the sidewalk below the fire station. The wide dirt path now goes through woods, passes a side trail that goes up to campus, and then climbs gently to a big meadow on the northeast side of campus. The trail skirts the far edge of the meadow and, near the top, turns westerly and runs in a straight line with the campus on your left and a wooded residential area on your right. Keep going straight, cross a paved road with a closed gate (the Eskaton back gate) on your right, and continue another 140 yards to a brown and white trail sign on your left marking a key trail junction.

Notice the right arrow on the sign to "Ridge Road 0.8 mile." (If you continue straight at this junction, keeping close to the campus on your left, you will come out on Sierra College Drive opposite the lobby of the medical office building at 300 Sierra College Drive. There is a sidewalk along Sierra College Drive which you can follow (left) back down to the fire station where Litton Trail crosses the street.)

To complete the main Litton Trail to Ridge Road, go right at the junction sign. Just below the junction, you will see a metal exercise structure with bars. Stay to the right, keeping the bars on your left, and the north-running fence of Eskaton Village on your right as you walk through woods. Soon you will see the athletic fields of Nevada Union High School on your left. There are several dirt side paths in this area that can be confusing. Just keep going north with the Eskaton Village fence on your right. Beyond the high school fields, the trail climbs gently and you will see another metal exercise structure, this one with rings. Pass this structure, keeping it on your left, and arrive at a "T" junction in the trail. Go right at the "T" and follow it east about ¼ mile along a narrow right-of-way to the Ridge Road trailhead at the entrance to Eskaton Village. Ridge Road is about 140 yards up Via Colina Drive from the trailhead.

Note:

As you will discover or may know, there are various dirt paths that cross the area traversed by the Litton Trail. These are informal "use" trails that connect the Sierra College campus and the Nevada Union High School with points nearby. The wooded areas that lie just south of the high school campus, in particular, have a heavy concentration of such paths. These may be of interest but they are not part of the Litton Trail and are not shown on the map and Google Earth link in this trail description.

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