Kenny Ranch Trails

Kenny Ranch is a large property around Twin Cities Church west of Grass Valley including the urbanized ridge with some open meadows, and a forested hillside that drops down toward Deer Creek on the north. There are two good trails here; Wildflower Ridge Trail along the ridge, and Rough & Ready Ditch Trail running along the hillside about ¼ mile below the ridge. The two are connected by separate access routes, making possible a loop as well as various "out and back" combinations. Spring wildflowers on ridge meadows are outstanding. The ditch trail below is a peaceful walk with views.

**Place:** Grass Valley, CA  
**Season:** Year around  
**Land:** Easements on private land  
**Trail signs:** Minimal  
**Length:** Wildflower Ridge Trail: 0.9 mile  |  Rough & Ready Ditch Trail: 1.0 mile  
**Altitude change:** Wildflower Ridge Trail: 114'  |  Rough & Ready Ditch Trail: nearly level (36')  
**Difficulty:** Easy  
**Trail surface:** Dirt except graveled sections in front of Twin Cities Church  
**Environment:** Urban on ridge but with open areas; rural with mixed forest on hillside  
**Rules:** Wildflower Ridge Trail: No motorized vehicles. Watch for vehicles crossing trail at Twin Cities Church driveways. Dogs on leash.  

**Location:** From the top of Mill Street in downtown Grass Valley go 1.4 miles west out of town on West Main Street (becomes Rough & Ready Highway) to the intersection of Rough & Ready Highway and Ridge Road. A to Z Supply is about 1/3 mile to the right (east) on Ridge Road from this intersection. Twin Cities Church is about 0.2 mile farther left (west) on Rough & Ready Highway from this intersection.

**Wildflower Ridge -- Trailheads:** You can access this long straight trail from either end, or in between, as you wish.

The east end trailhead is at the dirt parking area next to the A to Z Supply "Garden Center" on Ridge Road. (N39.22928 W121.07946). There is additional parking on the south shoulder of Ridge Road about 40 yards west of this trailhead.

The west end trailhead is at the intersection of Rough & Ready Highway and Kootenai Road (un-signed dirt road) 1/3 mile west on Rough & Ready Highway from the entrance to Twin Cities Church. (N39.22932 W121.09600) You will see a rustic sign on a pine tree to the right as you look down this road with a large letter "K" (for Kubich Lumber Company) painted on the sign. Park at pull-offs along the shoulder of this dirt road. The trailhead is near the paved highway on the east side of the dirt road.

When church is not in service, you can use the parking lot at Twin Cities Church to access the trail as it passes along in front of the church.

You can also use the road shoulder parking on Ridge Road about 100 yards east of the intersection with Rough & Ready Highway. The Wildflower Ridge Trail runs close to and along the north side of Ridge Road here. Also, from the north shoulder parking area you can walk straight north away from Ridge Road to find the eastern access route down to the east end of the Rough & Ready Ditch Trail.

**Wildflower Ridge -- Trail Tips:** From the east end near A to Z Supply this trail first traverses open upland meadows for about ½ mile, never far from the road. There is thin soil here, lying on top of an "ancient volcanic mud flow." This unusual geology supports a rare concentration of native plants while also resisting invasion by non-native species. According to the Redbud Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, over 100 plant species have been identified on just 25 acres in this area. April through May are the prime months for seeing the brilliant displays of wildflowers. Guided spring walks are often given by the Redbud Chapter, and by the Bear Yuba Land Trust.
Past the meadows going west, the trail becomes a wide gravel path running along the entire front of the large parking lot of Twin Cities Church. At the west end of this section the gravel path will end and you will encounter a paved driveway where you have to zigzag a bit to find the dirt trail that continues west to Kootenai Road.

Where the gravel path ends, step down into the driveway and go about 10 yards to your right, away from the highway. Look on your left for a tall light standard set on a round concrete base. As soon as you pass it, go left into a clearing on a wide graveled dirt road. Continue straight about 40 yards through the clearing, then angle left and go about 60 yards along a narrow graveled dirt road which at first is indistinct. Ahead you will see a cable strung across the graveled road and a short graveled driveway that comes up from the highway. Behind and to the right of the cable barrier you will find the dirt trail. It parallels the Rough & Ready Highway in forest for over 200 yards to the trailhead at Kootenai Road.

**Rough & Ready Ditch -- Trailheads:** Reach the west end trailhead by going to the intersection of Rough & Ready Highway and Kootenai Road (becomes Mountaineer Trail.) This is an un-signed dirt road 1/3 mile west on Rough & Ready Highway from the main entrance to Twin Cities Church. As you look down this road you will see a rustic sign on your right with a large letter "K" -- for Kubich Lumber Company -- painted on the sign. Go 0.3 mile down Kootenai Road watching carefully for the water of Rough & Ready Ditch on your right. There is shoulder parking for 2 or 3 cars about 20 yards past the ditch on your right, and there is ample overflow parking around the next curve downhill on either side of the road.

From the place where the ditch crosses Kootenai Road (N39.23409 W121.094810) you can go either west or east on the path along the ditch. Presently, the western section is only accessible for 0.2 mile where it reaches a fence on private land that blocks the way. An extension of the western section is planned but no construction date has been set as of early 2011. The eastern section of the ditch trail is 0.8 mile long, of which 0.6 mile is along the running water of the ditch and 0.2 mile is along a dry remnant of the old ditch.

The eastern end of the Rough & Ready Ditch can be reached by an access route that starts from Ridge Road about 100 yards east of the intersection with Rough & Ready Highway. From the north shoulder parking area go 30 yards straight away (north) from Ridge Road, ignoring any other apparent route. Next, angle about 45º to your right (east) along the eroded track of an old ranch road for about 150 yards to a clearing. At the clearing go left (north-northeast) down the hill on the old road for about 550 yards (about 0.3 mile) looking carefully for a small, flat piece of ground on your left with young ponderosa pines (N39.23340 W121.08588.) Turn left (west) onto this flat and go about 30 yards where you will pick up the trail along the dry eastern end of Rough & Ready Ditch Trail (N39.23339 W121.08622.)

**Rough & Ready Ditch -- Trail Tips:** Hidden away on a peaceful wooded slope below the highway, the Rough & Ready Ditch quietly shuttles water from Nevada City to Rough & Ready -- as it has been doing since 1854. It was the "first attempt to build a large scale mining ditch in California" according to Ron Nelson, general manager of the Nevada Irrigation District. The easiest way to get onto this trail is from the west end trailhead of the ditch on Kootenai Road.

From here you can go east along running water for 0.6 mile to a point where a feeder stream enters the ditch down an impassable gully. (This water comes down from a newer, upper section of the Rough & Ready Ditch which you will see along the Wildflower Ridge Trail between the Ridge Road intersection and Twin Cities Church. There is a diversion point near the church that sends the water down the gully.)

Where the feeder stream comes in, you can choose to return to the trailhead, or you can make a loop by continuing east along a dried up section of ditch for 0.2 mile, then 0.4 mile up the old ranch road (described above) to the Wildflower Ridge Trail, taking it west to Kootenai Road and then going back down Kootenai to the trailhead where you started. From the same trailhead, you can go west along the ditch for 0.2 mile to a locked gate on private land, then return to the trailhead. In any combination, the ditch trail takes you through some lovely and varied forest with occasional views out across the valley of Deer Creek to ridges beyond. In summer, the north-facing slope and running water make this a fine choice for an afternoon stroll in the heat of the day.