Nevada County Government Center Trails

One of the area's best kept secrets, the Nevada County Government Center (aka Rood Center) has several nice places to walk, stroll, or ride a bike plus a gem of a little park complete with historic pond, piers and a picnic area. With two important trails along the Highway 49 corridor, the Government Center Trails also serve to link downtown Nevada City with the beautiful Hirschman Pond area to the west. And if you have business at the Government Center or the Madelyn Helling Library you can now walk or bike there from town.

Place: Nevada City, CA  
Season: Year around  
Land: County of Nevada  
Trail signs: None. The features of Tobiassen Park, however, are nicely signed.  
Length: Along the Highway 49 front about 0.6 mile; in Tobiassen Park 0.2 mile.  
Altitude change: About 20’ on Rood Center Path; about 60’ from Marsh Pond to Wet Hill Road  
Difficulty: Easy to moderate depending on routes and pace.  
Trail surface: Rood Center Path is paved; all others are dirt or decomposed gravel.  
Environment: Highway 49 corridor in front; forest, meadow and riparian in Tobiassen Park.  
Facilities: Restrooms, drinking fountains, grill in Tobiassen Park. None along Highway 49.  
Rules: None posted along Highway 49. Tobiassen Park is for day use only; closes at dusk. Picnic only. No campfires. No camping. Watch children around pond. Please carry out trash.

A quick overview: There are three places with trails at the Rood Center. First is the Rood Center Path, an excellent paved multi-use bike path extending from the corner of Highway 49 and North Bloomfield Road west to the heart of the government center. Second is a new walking trail going west from the Center's entrance drive all the way to Cement Hill Road across from the entrance to the Hirschman's Pond trails. Third, in the hidden gem of Tobiassen Park above the library, there is a wheelchair accessible path to Charles Marsh Pond and a peaceful picnic area above the pond. A narrow informal trail up a forested hillside connects the picnic area with Wet Hill Road on the north.

Trailheads: Rood Center Path begins at the intersection of Highway 49 and North Bloomfield Road, on the northwest corner (N39.26920 W121.02119). The trail along Highway 49 in front of the Rood Center begins on the west side of the entrance drive (N39.26895 W121.02562). There is ample parking for both these trails in the Rood Center main parking lot or along roads near those trails. Tobiassen Park is north of the Madelyn Helling Library and hidden from view. Park in the library's west parking lot. By foot or bike go about 100 yards up the paved road leading north from the parking lot, staying left. The park entrance and beginning of the path to the pond and picnic area are there (N39.27084 W121.02364). Note: There are two handicapped parking spaces at the park entrance but no general parking.

Trail tips:  
Rood Center Path: This paved 1/4 mile path, which curves gently along the wooded hillside above Highway 49, has opened up a new way to get to the county's government center from the town of Nevada City. In the relatively short time it has been open, more and more people are discovering and using it. Soon there will be an additional boost in connectivity. The City of Nevada City will build a new pedestrian walkway from the top of Main Street along East Broad Street to the intersection of Highway 49 where the Rood Center Path begins. When this is done, there will be an easy walking route from the center of town to the Rood Center and from there to Hirschman's Pond and beyond. In the government center itself, between the west end of the Rood Center Path and the Government Center office building there is a short path of interest. It goes about 200 feet through a nice little natural area called a "rain garden" with a bioswale where parking area runoff is caught and filtered. There is an excellent display at the north end of the walkway explaining how the rain garden works and how rain gardens benefit the environment.

Trail Along Highway 49: Informal trails along the Highway 49 front of the Rood Center have recently been improved and extended from the Rood Center entrance drive all the way west to a point along Cement Hill Road that’s very close to the eastern entrance to the Hirschman Pond Trail. Combined with the Rood Center Path, this new trail offers a safe and enjoyable way of walking from town to the 85 wooded acres of the Hirschman's Pond open space preserve west of
town. A point of interest along the Highway 49 front is a hydraulic mining display, complete with historic "monitor" water cannons, pipes, and a plaque commemorating the origin of hydraulic mining at nearby American Hill.

**Tobiassen Park:** From the east end of the Rood Center Path a sidewalk goes uphill for about 100 yards along Helling Way to the Madelyn Helling Library. This is the way to Tobiassen Park (aka Coyote Park) which is hidden behind trees to the north of the library parking lot. The park was named in honor of the late civic leader and county supervisor, Dave Tobiassen. A destination in its own right, the park is built around an historic reservoir, built in 1861 by pioneer businessman and civic leader Charles Marsh as part of his South Yuba Canal Company system delivering water for hydraulic mining. At the park entrance is Pappy Brimhall Field, a modern baseball field with water fountains and restrooms nearby. Going north on the obvious path, you will quickly come to Marsh Pond with its two wooden piers overlooking the water, and short paths along the south and north bank. An informational sign near the southeast corner of the pond tells the impressive story of Charles Marsh. North of the pond is a very pleasant picnic area in a partially shaded clearing. There are two picnic tables in the clearing and another nearby, off the trail to the picnic area. An informal but well used dirt path connects the picnic area with Wet Hill Road on the north edge of the park about 90 yards west of North Bloomfield Road. Along the way are the fenced remnant of an early hand-dug gold mine and a sign explaining that the mine was part of the historic "Coyote Diggins."

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