

Deadfall Lakes and Mt. Eddy



The Deadfall Lakes trails offer multiple hikes, from an easy 2.9-mile (one-way), fairly flat hike to Middle Deadfall Lake (pictured), to a moderate hike up the switchbacks of Mt. Eddy to the summit of the highest peak in the Trinity Mountains. You can hike the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) or beautiful Deadfall Meadow. Add a side trip to Lower Deadfall Lake, or a one-mile, 500' hike to the four upper Deadfall Lakes. The scenery is spectacular in the Deadfall Lakes basin, and if you make it to the top of Mt. Eddy, you will be treated to a fantastic view of Northern California.

Hikes

- ◆ **Middle Deadfall Lake (41° 19.143'N, 122° 30.207'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 3.5 miles via Deadfall Meadow, 5.8 miles via PCT
Elevation Gain: 843' via Deadfall Meadow, 471' via PCT
Difficulty: Easy-to-moderate via Deadfall Meadow, Easy via PCT
- ◆ **Upper Deadfall Lakes (41° 19.136'N, 122° 29.488'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 5.5 miles via Deadfall Meadow, 7.8 miles via PCT
Elevation Gain: 1,360' via Deadfall Meadow, 940' via PCT
Difficulty: Moderate beyond Big Deadfall Lake
- ◆ **Mt. Eddy Summit (41° 19.182'N, 122° 28.760'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 8.0 miles via Deadfall Meadow, 10.3 miles via PCT
Elevation Gain: 2,580' via Deadfall Meadow, 2,150' via PCT
Difficulty: Moderate beyond Upper Deadfall Lake

Topo Maps

- ◆ *South China Mountain* to Middle Deadfall Lake via either trail
- ◆ *Mount Eddy* beyond Middle Deadfall Lake to Upper Lakes or Mt. Eddy summit

Directions to Trailheads

31.5 miles to Deadfall Meadow, 32.7 miles to PCT

Take Hwy 3 north from Trinity Center about 19.5 miles. From Hwy 3, turn right onto Forest Service Road 17, also known as the IP Road. Follow this paved road 12 miles to the Deadfall Meadow Trailhead parking area (on the inside of the hairpin turn) – the trailhead is across the road in the meadow on the outside of the hairpin turn. Or continue on FS Road 17 another 1¼ miles to the IP Road summit parking lot for the PCT on the east side of the road (where the PCT crosses the road). The PCT trailhead is on the south side of the parking lot. Many people bring two cars and park one in the Deadfall Meadow lot, then continue to the PCT to begin their hike. This lets you see both trails, but takes you on the more moderate Deadfall Meadow trail downhill.



Middle Deadfall Lake

The Trails

As noted above, there are two trailheads for the Deadfall Lakes Trail. The more popular trailhead is located at the Pacific Crest Trail crossing at IP Road summit. The other trailhead is found at Deadfall Meadow. The first route follows the PCT for 2.8 miles to the junction with the Sisson-Callahan Trail, where it also intersects the route from Deadfall Meadow. The latter route is only 1.5 miles to the junction but it climbs 760 feet. The PCT trail rises only 385 feet.

While both are good options, the Deadfall Meadows route is preferable. Despite the greater elevation gain, it is shorter by over a mile. In addition, it follows Deadfall Creek through a large, lush meadow all the way to the junction with the PCT. The PCT route takes you through the woods and offers a view of the Trinity Alps in the distance. There are a few spring-fed meadows, though not nearly as extensive as Deadfall Meadow.

This description will cover both routes to the junction with the Sisson-Callahan Trail separately and then continue to describe the rest of the route to the summit of Mount Eddy.

Pacific Crest Trailhead

Beginning at the Pacific Crest Trail trailhead along the IP Road, the PCT travels southeast, in a long traverse of Mt. Eddy's north-west shoulder. The trail passes through shaded stretches with occasional grassy areas with numerous wildflowers.

When the forest cover clears, views to the west are good. Approximately 1.6 miles from the trailhead the PCT crosses a spring-



Deadfall Lakes and Mt. Eddy *(continued)*

fed creek. Once across, the trail turns sharply south. Although Mt. Eddy is not yet visible, the walls of Deadfall Basin can be made out at times. Deadfall Meadow, rapidly climbing up the Deadfall Creek drainage, begins to approach the same elevation as the PCT. About 2.8 miles from the trailhead, the PCT intersects the Sisson-Callahan Trail and the trail climbing up from Deadfall Meadow.

Deadfall Meadows Trailhead

From the parking area at the Deadfall Meadows Trailhead, cross the road and take a few steps down into the meadow. Depending on the time of year and the amount of precipitation during the winter the first part of the trail can be very muddy. After 0.1 miles the trail crosses Deadfall Creek and angles to the southeast. The route temporarily leaves the meadow and passes through some open forest, though the meadow and the creek are still visible and audible.

About 0.25 miles beyond the first crossing, the trail crosses another creek, this one coming from Lower Deadfall Lake. This creek's flow is much less than the main branch of Deadfall Creek and is at times dry.

A third crossing, this time over Deadfall Creek again, comes in another 0.25 miles. At this point the trail begins to climb in earnest, skirting the outer edge of the meadow. Small, spring-fed streams cross the trail intermittently, causing the trail to get muddy. The creek, at times visible, can always be heard. Eventually the trail levels out as it enters a sparse forest and intersects the PCT, 1.5 miles from the trailhead.

Sisson-Callahan Trail

At the junction with the Pacific Crest Trail, it is possible to head west on the PCT, then cross country for about 0.1 miles to get to Lower Deadfall Lake. This can make a nice side trip on the way back to add Lower Deadfall Lake to your collection.

To continue towards the other Deadfall Lakes and Mt. Eddy, head southeast from the junction with the PCT, now on the Sisson-Callahan Trail, an old route from the 19th century that connected the Mount Shasta area with the town of Callahan, which was on the old stage line between Trinity Center and the Scott Valley. Today it is a National Recreation Trail stretching nearly 20 miles from the Deadfall Basin to the north shore of Lake Siskiyou, just outside of the town of Mount Shasta.

Almost immediately as the trail enters into Deadfall Basin, a short trail branches off to the right, leading to Middle Deadfall Lake — at 25 acres, the largest in the basin, and the most popular destination for the “easy hike” hikers. The forest in the area is sparse, evidence of the poor, highly mineralized soil. Mt. Eddy is composed of serpentine and peridotite, neither of which is particularly hospitable to most plants. Views of the high cliffs over 1,000 feet above the basin improve. There is a trail that goes all the way around Middle Deadfall Lake, about a mile in length.

To continue to the upper lakes, continue ESE on the Sisson-Callahan trail from the junction with the PCT; or from Middle Lake, head uphill on one of the short trails heading north to re-join the Sisson-Callahan Trail. Nearly 0.6 miles past the junction with the PCT, the trail turns NE and begins a short, sudden, steep climb. This is one of the steepest parts of the trail, though it does not last long. Once it has been surmounted, a small lake, one of many minor unnamed tarns in the basin, as well as the true summit of Mt. Eddy come into view.

From most perspectives, Mt. Eddy appears to be a high, red lump, hardly impressive. However, when viewed from the west, with its red and white streaked 1,200 foot face plainly visible, Mt. Eddy seems a much more formidable mountain. Beyond the small lake, the trail winds its way along the south shore of Upper Deadfall Lake, perhaps the prettiest of the lakes in the basin. The lake is fed by a cold stream that meanders slowly through a meadow perched at the base of Mt. Eddy's sheer west face.

From Upper Deadfall Lake, the summit trail is about 1.5 miles and climbs 1,200 feet. Rather than passing through the meadow, the Sisson-Callahan Trail makes a sharp turn to the south and climbs steeply out of Deadfall Basin on to the south shoulder of Mt. Eddy. Once on top of the ridge, the Sisson-Callahan Trail descends into the canyon of the North Fork of the Sacramento River, ultimately ending at Lake Siskiyou. The route to the summit of Mt. Eddy climbs to the east, beginning the final ascent of the mountain.

Mt. Eddy

Mt. Eddy is one of the great, but lesser known mountains of Northern California. Climbing to the top, one reaches the highest point in Trinity County, the highest peak west of Interstate 5, the tallest mountain in the Klamath Mountains and an ultra-prominence peak. The route travels through a beautiful flower field in early summer, past several mountain lakes and ends with the finest vista in the region.

Depending on which trailhead you choose, only 4.0 or 5.2 miles away and only 2,500 feet of elevation gain from the lower trailhead brings you to a very accessible summit. Whichever way one takes, the trail is fun and offers spectacular views on the way to the top of a magnificent mountain.

Mt. Eddy Ascent

After departing the Sisson-Callahan Trail, the route to the summit of Mt. Eddy continues along the ridge for nearly 0.5 miles before it begins to switchback up the mountain. Once the switchbacks commence, it is another 0.6 miles to the summit. Views get continually better as one climbs, particularly to the south and to the west. Upon reaching the top, Mt. Shasta comes into view.

To the north, the Whaleback, Gooseneck and Willow Creek Mountains all lead ones attention to distant Mt. McLoughlin in Oregon. To the northwest, the Scott Valley, Marble Mountains, Russian Mountains and Scott Mountains are all discernable. To

Deadfall Lakes and Mt. Eddy (continued)

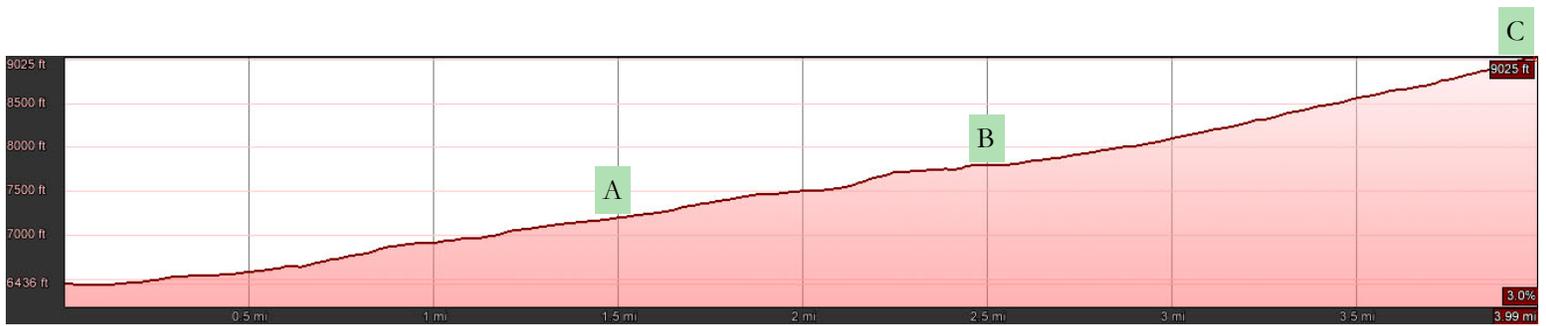
the west is an arresting view of the Trinity Alps, with nearly every major summit of the eastern, higher part of the range visible. To the south the rest of the Trinity Divide is readily apparent. All of the major peaks, including the Grey Rocks, the Castle Crags, “Castle Peak”, “Grey Rock Dome” and “Harry Watkins” can be seen. Far to the southeast, Lassen Peak and the rest of the Mt. Tehama rabble line the horizon.

On the summit, the ruins of an old lookout are in the latter stages of decay. From this point, a trail leads to the east, cross-

ing a saddle to Peak 8,881. While crossing the saddle, the impressive bowl beneath the summit of Mt. Eddy drops off to the north. The bowl often holds snow well into the later parts of the summer and is often there all the way through to winter. From Peak 8,881 a tremendous view of Mt. Shasta, Black Butte and the Strawberry Valley can be had. The bowl directly below Peak 8,881, which is often referred to as Eddy Bowl, is the headwater of the Sacramento River.



Elevation profile for the Easy hike to Middle Deadfall Lake from the PCT trailhead — a gentle elevation gain of 440' over 3 miles



Elevation profile for the Moderate hike to Mt. Eddy from the Deadfall Meadows trailhead — an elevation gain of 2,580' over 4 miles.

A

Junction between PCT, Deadfall Meadow Trail, and Sisson-Callahan Trail

B

Upper Deadfall Lake

C

Mt. Eddy Summit

Deadfall Lakes and Mt Eddy Trail Map

