

# Grand National Mine

Moderate, 5.8 miles



The Grand National Mine (sometimes called the Tangle Blue Mine) was owned by a family in French Gulch. The area was known for gold, silver and copper ore. The hike to Grand National follows the trail to Tangle Blue Lake to a fork, and then follows the old road up to the mine.

## Hikes

- ♦ **Grand National Mine** (41° 12.733'N, 122° 43.801'W)  
Total Length (round-trip): 5.8 miles  
Elevation Gain: 1,995'  
Difficulty: Moderate

## Topo Map

- ♦ *Covington Mill*

## Directions to Trailhead

24.4 miles to Tangle Blue Trailhead

Take Hwy 3 north from Trinity Center about 20¾ miles to USFS Road 39N20. The turn is about 1¼ miles beyond the IP Road (the sign for the road may be missing), on the outside of a hairpin turn. Follow 39N20 about 3.6 miles to the trailhead. There is ample parking.

## The Trail

The trail to Tangle Blue Lake from the Tangle Blue Trailhead is actually named the Grand National Trail on the Trinity Alps Wilderness maps.

The trail begins by crossing a bridge that is really an old rail-road car on private property. On the way back from the mine, this is a nice spot to stop and climb down to the water. A cool refresher on the way home.

The trail follows a road about 1.3 miles to the Wilderness boundary. A broken down, green gate just past an earthen mound marks the entrance. Though it is not obvious here, this route was also at one time a dirt road but nature has been chipping away at it long enough that it looks like normal single-track at this point. The creek, still off to the right of the trail, is accessible via easy scrambles down a 10-foot embankment to swimming holes and rapids.

Shortly after becoming a regular trail, the route enters a small but scenic meadow, though the trail skirts the northern edge of the grassy area rather than crossing through it. After crossing a few small, spring-fed streams and reaching the far end of the



*Grand National Mine*

meadow, but just before the descent to the creek crossing (about 1.8 miles from the trailhead,) there is a fork with the remnants of a road heading uphill to the left. That is the road to the mine.

Take the road to the left, but at about 100 yards, there is a somewhat hidden fork to the right. That is actually the old road, which becomes obvious in a few dozen yards. Continue following the road uphill until it ends at the mine.

Just below the mine is a side trail to the rubble below the mine's processing building. There you will find the remnants of the old stamp mill and other hardware from the building.

The Grand National Mine produced about 1,500 ounces of gold, 2,200 ounces of silver, and 1,900 pounds of copper between 1934 and 1937. A few ounces of gold and silver were produced in 1930 and 1931. Nearly 54 percent of the gold was from quartz veins, which assayed at an average value of \$23 per ton.

The owner estimated that some 22,600 tons of material was in the three veins of the main mine diggings as of the late 1960s. At some \$20 per ton, that was a value worth pursuing. Of course, now that the mine is wholly within the Trinity Alps Wilderness, it has been retired for all practical purposes.

The hike to the Grand National Mine is well worth exploring this corner of history to see how mining was accomplished. There is plenty of quartz on the hill to hint at the gold. Just imagine how all the machinery was hauled up to this point in the 1930s!



# Grand National Mine (continued)

