



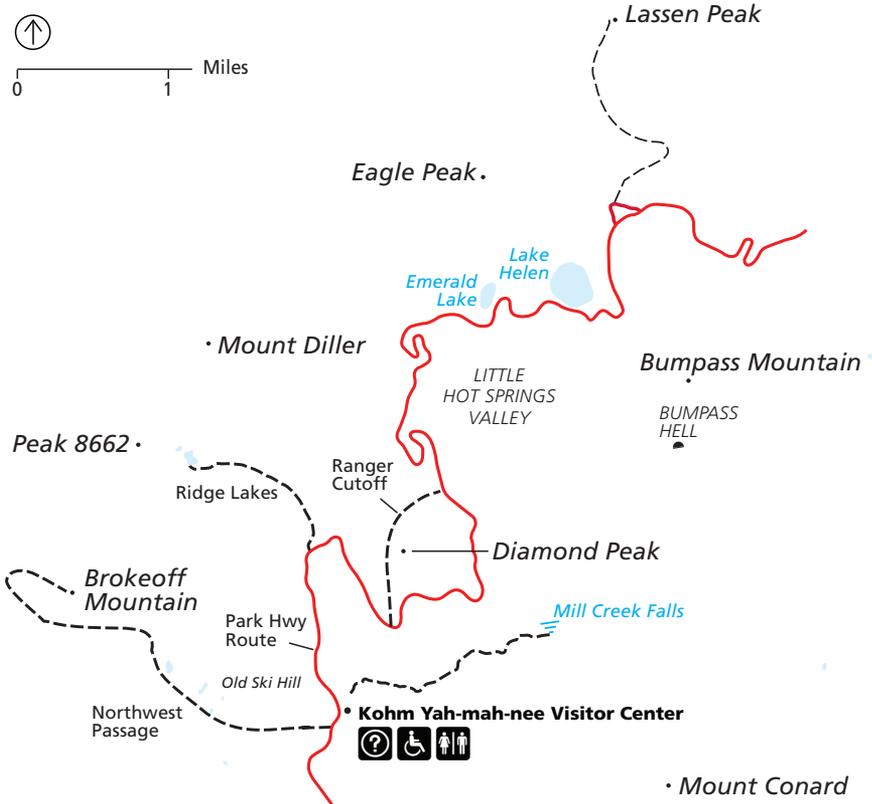
Lassen Volcanic National Park

Southwest Winter Routes



A group of snowshoers sets off from the visitor center

Winter snowfall transforms Lassen Volcanic National Park into a vast playground for backcountry skiers and snowshoers. On the south side of the park, steep slopes and expansive views create excellent intermediate and advanced touring routes. Ensure that you have a solid understanding of avalanche awareness and carry avalanche gear including a shovel, probe, and transceiver (beacon).



• Mount Conard



Beginner Routes

Sulphur Works

Distance: 2 miles round-trip

Elevation: 6,700 feet to 7,000 feet

Average Skiing Time: 1 hour

The boiling mudpots and steam vents at Sulphur Works are active year-round. Follow the park highway route northwest from the southwest parking area. The left side of the route is bordered by steep side hills, be aware of avalanche danger. For your safety, do not travel or camp in or near hydrothermal areas. The snow surrounding these areas may look solid, but may actually be a weak snow layer hiding pools of acidic boiling water. Traveling too close to hydrothermal areas has resulted in severe injuries for previous visitors.

Nanny Creek via McGowan Ski Trail

Located in adjacent Lassen National Forest

Distance: 5 miles to Nanny Creek one-way

Elevation: 6,080 feet to 5,110 feet

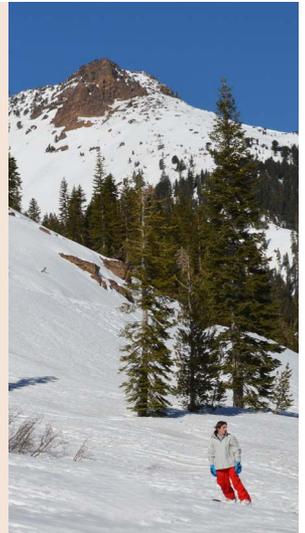
Average Skiing Time: 4 hours

The McGowan Ski Trail is located in Lassen National Forest, 3.5 miles south of the southwest entrance. Marked with blue and white ski touring signs, the route travels across a flat and slightly descending landscape. Skiers will pass through largely forested areas with some meadow clearings, ending at Highway 36 at Nanny Creek. The trail does not go to McGowan Lake, which is on private property. This trail makes for a good one-way ski route if a car shuttle is possible.

Are You Ready for Winter Conditions?

Safety is *Your* Responsibility

- Water: Exercising in dry high-elevation air makes one particularly susceptible to dehydration
- Waterproof Gear: Always carry waterproof cold weather gear, even on sunny days
- Layers: Maintain an even temperature, as excessive perspiration can lead to hypothermia
- Map and Compass: Carry a topographic map and compass and know how to use them





Intermediate Routes

Ridge Lakes

Distance: 4 miles round-trip

Elevation: 7,000 feet to 8,000 feet

Average Skiing Time: 4 hours

Follow the park highway from the southwest parking area about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and cross the bridge before Sulphur Works. The route begins at the north end of the flat area to the left. The route climbs rapidly along the east side of West Sulphur Creek to the Ridge Lakes basin. Several good camping spots can be found on the north shore of Ridge Lakes. If weather is severe, more protected camping can be found about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile below Ridge Lakes along its outlet creek. Avoid the area south of Ridge Lakes during periods of avalanche danger.

Mill Creek Falls

Distance: 3.2 miles round-trip

Elevation: 6,700 feet to 6,600 feet

Average Skiing Time: 3 hours

This route is marked with tree markers, however the route is difficult to follow if you are unfamiliar with the summer trail. Travel east of the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center toward West Sulphur Creek. In about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile a bridge crosses the creek and should be avoided when snow-covered. The route climbs steeply before veering right (south) into the red fir forest. In another $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, the trail turns left (east) and continues through a series of rises and dips parallel to East Sulphur Creek. Two bridges cross above the waterfall and should be avoided during the winter season.

Park Highway Route to Lake Helen

Distance: 12.4 miles round-trip

Elevation: 6,700 feet to 8,200 feet

Average Skiing Time: 6 hours

From the southwest parking area, follow the park highway route. Hazardous, steep side hills with icy conditions may be encountered. The Diamond Peak area has a history of avalanches. This area should be avoided by using the marked "Ranger Cutoff" trail just north of Windy Point. By mid-winter it is difficult to find any trace of the road between the head of Little Hot Springs Valley and Reading Peak. High winds and white out conditions are common in this area during winter storms. The road crosses several avalanche paths. Good overnight snow camping areas can be found a short distance from the road north of Diamond Peak and near Emerald Lake and Lake Helen.

Advanced Routes

Brokeoff Mountain

Distance: 7 miles round-trip

Elevation: 6,650 feet to 9,250 feet

Average Skiing Time: 8 hours

Most skiers access the summit via the southwest ridge. Getting onto this ridge can be difficult as the various routes pass through hazardous canyons. Traditional routes use the Forest Lake trail or the summer trail that begins near the park entrance. Numerous avalanche paths exist on all aspects of the mountain. Travelers should use extreme caution. Many skiers reserve travel on Brokeoff Mountain for spring when snow conditions traditionally stabilize. Summit conditions during inclement weather often include high winds with little or no visibility. Be cautious of overhanging cornices at the summit.

Lassen Peak

Distance: 20 miles round-trip

Elevation: 6,700 feet to 10,457 feet

Average Skiing Time: 3 days

Most skiers and snowshoers allow three days to summit Lassen Peak in the winter. A possible itinerary includes Lake Helen, summit Lassen, and return. Be prepared for high winds in the Lassen Peak and Lake Helen areas. Conditions on the mountain are most stable in early morning hours; afternoon travel is not recommended. The safest route up the mountain follows the summer trail through the forested section and continues on the southeast ridge to the summit. Weather conditions on Lassen Peak can deteriorate rapidly, creating white out conditions and high winds.

