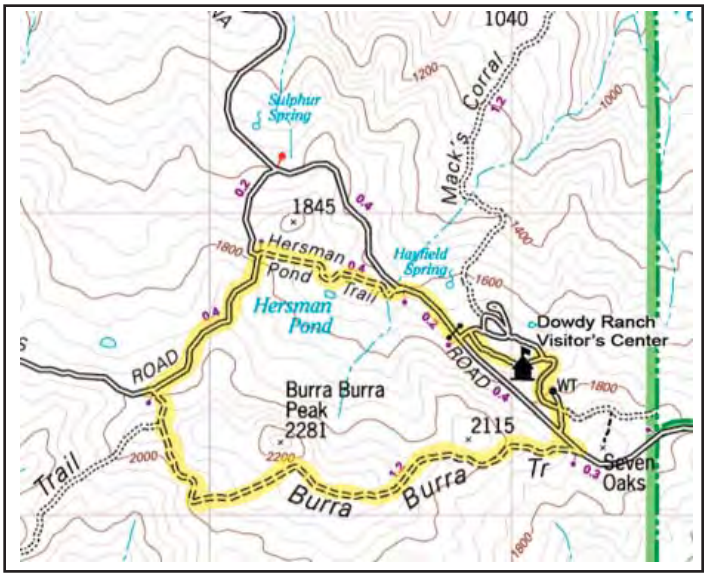
Henry W. Coe State Park
Dowdy Ranch Visitor Center

Burra Burra loop

Short hike : 2.5-3 miles, 1.5-3 hours
Burra Burra Trail-Center Flats Road-Hersman Pond Trail

The origin of the name Burra Burra is a mystery but, per Teddy Goodrich in Names on the Land. A History of Henry W. Coe State Park, " 'burren' means a place of rock in Gaelic. The Burren is a rocky limestone region in western Ireland."

Optional: Pick up a copy of the geology brochure in the visitor center and watch for the geologic features described as you hike around Burra Burra.



Follow the trail up the hill behind the Dowdy Ranch visitor center. The trail is quite steep, so take your time. When you get to the road, walk up to the top of the hill where a trail sign marks the beginning of the Burra Burra Trail and turn right (west). The first mile is steadily uphill, with gorgeous views of the San Carlos range to the south. Just before the trail turns left (west) and drops downhill, you'll see ahead an open track up the slope to the top of Burra Burra. This is an optional side trip, a short, steep scramble to the top of Burra Burra where you can sign the peak register and enjoy views in all directions, including the Dunne Avenue visitor center visible on Pine Ridge in the distance to the northwest. When you get back down from Burra Burra Peak, the trail drops steadily downhill, curves to the north, and then climbs to the west shoulder of Burra Burra. There's another optional side trip from here to the lower of the two Burra Burra Peaks.

From the west shoulder of Burra Burra, the trail drops down to Center Flats Road where you turn right (east), climb a little, then drop downhill to a trail junction. Rather than following Center Flats Road, turn right (east) on to Hersman Pond Trail and drop downhill back toward Kaiser-Aetna Road. It's fun to take a very short side trip to Hersman Pond to see if there's any water in it. Some years the pond is full, other years it's mud and reeds. When the trail reaches the road, you can either walk up the road and back to the visitor center or you can turn left (east), cross the field, and visit the oak "cathedral," which is a cool leafy retreat even on the hottest days, before climbing back up the hill to the Dowdy Ranch visitor center. You can do this hike either clockwise or counterclockwise; this description describes the clockwise loop.

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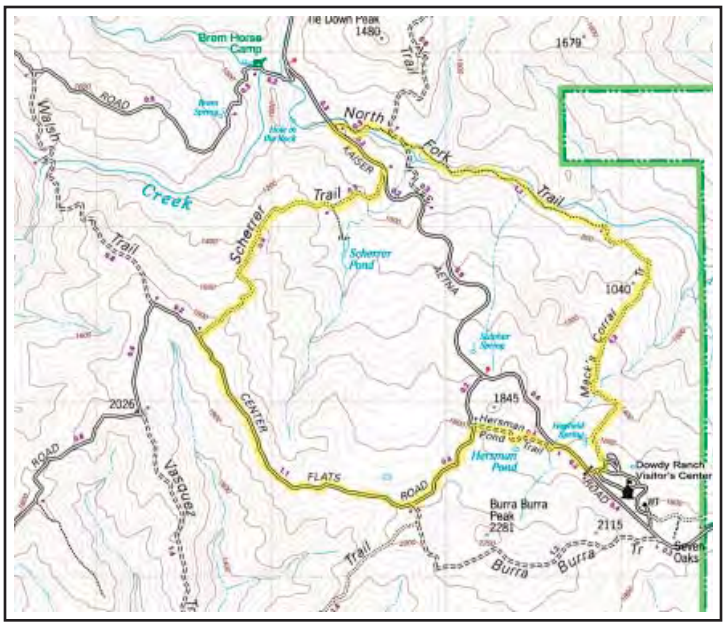
Pacheco Creek loop

Medium hike: 6.3 miles, 4-6 hours
Hersman Pond Trail-Center Flats Road-Scherrer Trail-North Fork Trail-Mack's Corral Trail

This is a moderately strenuous hike. We recommend that you do this loop in the clockwise direction so you hike down the Scherrer Trail (which is very, very steep) and back up the Mack's Corral Trail, which is not quite as steep and is more shaded.

From the Dowdy Ranch visitor center area, follow Kaiser-Aetna Road downhill, north, a short way from the visitor center and turn left (west) on Hersman Pond Trail, which winds uphill to meet Center Flats Road. It's fun to take a short side trip to Hersman Pond to see if there's any water in it. Some years the pond is full, other years it's mud and reeds. At the end of Hersman Pond Trail, turn left (southwest) on to Center Flats Road and follow it uphill for a short way and then along the ridgetop for about a mile, where you can enjoy great views of Coe Park to the north, east, and west.



Turn right (east) at the junction of the Scherrer Trail, which is signposted. The trail drops very steeply almost straight downhill, so walk carefully and watch your step. After almost a mile, you'll see a trail to the right (south), which leads to Scherrer Pond. This is a delightful place to visit and linger to enjoy the beauty of the water, the birds, the wildflowers in spring, and even take a dip. Hike back up to the Scherrer Trail and follow it another .3 of a mile downhill until it ends at Kaiser-Aetna Road. Turn left, downhill, on Kaiser-Aetna Road and hike to the bottom of the hill to the area called Pacheco Creek Crossing where the road crosses Pacheco Creek over a giant culvert. There are two great swimming holes here, one is visible from the road and is below the culvert on east side of the culvert crossing; the other swimming hole is a little way upstream. Follow Pacheco Creek west, upstream, for a couple of hundred yards until it curves to the right (north), keep following the creek a little way, and you'll come to Hole in the Rock, which is full of clear, flowing water many months of the year.

After lingering for lunch and a dip, follow the North Fork Trail east and downstream along Pacheco Creek. The trail becomes faint and crosses the creek two or three times. At 1.2 miles you'll see the remnants of Mack's Corral in a wide, grassy meadow, and the trail sign for Mack's Corral Trail. The trail, like many of the trails in Coe Park, is an old 4WD trail and it winds steeply uphill through a delight of grassland and blue oaks on this north-facing slope. In spring, there's an amazing display of baby blue eyes on this trail. The trail is 1.2 miles long, stays mostly steep as you head uphill until you arrive on the ridgetop at the ramadas and picnic tables near the Dowdy Ranch visitor center. You can relax and enjoy another break before stopping into the visitor center or heading home.

Henry W. Coe State Park
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Kelly Lake, Coit Lake

Long hike, 13-14 miles, 6-8 hours
Hersman Pond Trail-Center Flats Road-Wagon Road

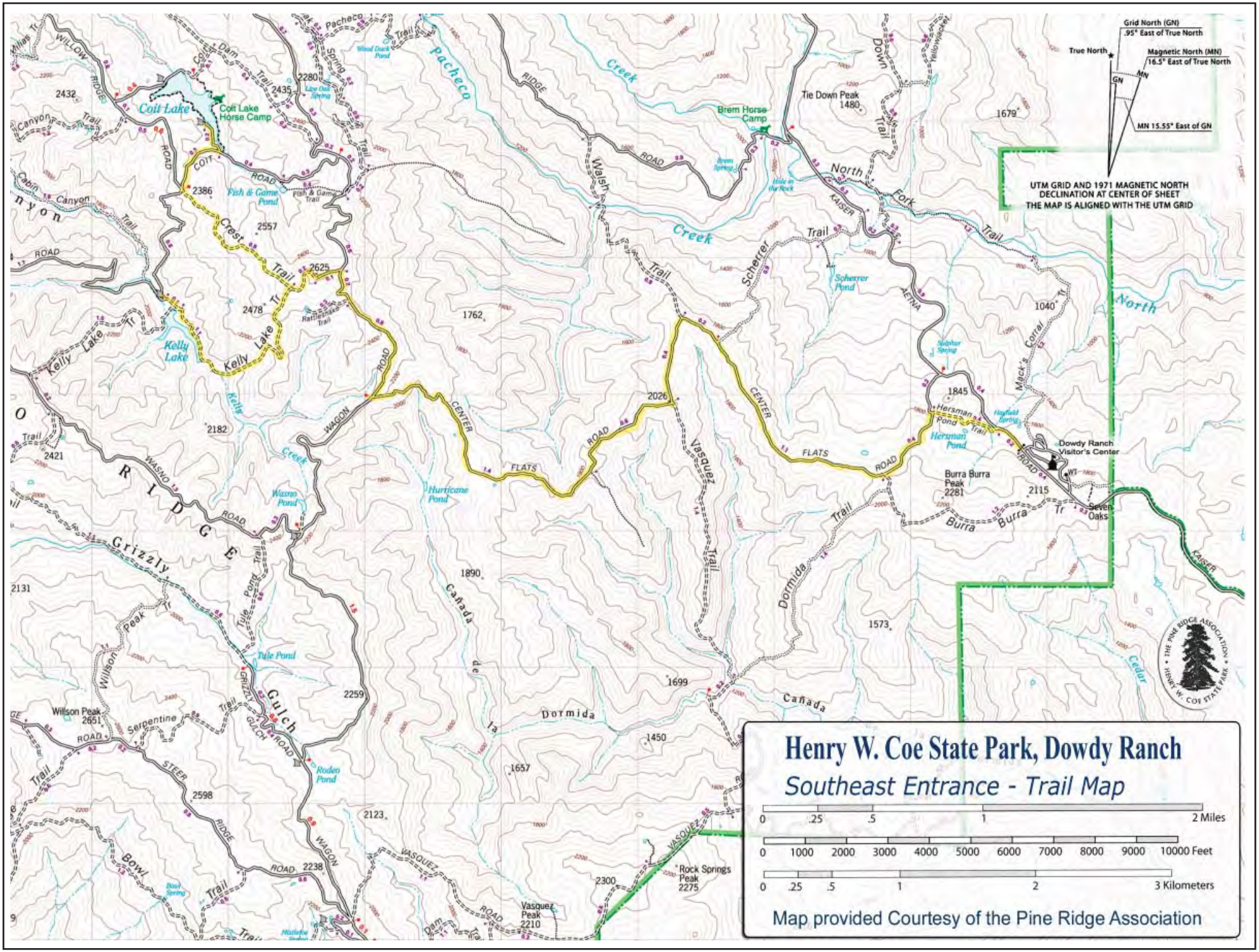
This is a very strenuous hike; we recommend it only if you're in good physical condition and can carry lots of water. There is no water between the Dowdy area and the lakes, and there's not much shade in hot weather along the two miles of Center Flats Road between Vasquez Road and Wagon Road—and it's a rollercoaster, up and down for the two miles.

From the Dowdy Ranch visitor center area, follow Kaiser-Aetna Road downhill, north, a short way from the visitor center and turn left (west) on Hersman Pond Trail, which winds uphill to meet Center Flats Road. It's fun to take a short side trip to Hersman Pond to see if there's any water in it—some years the pond is full, other years it's mud and reeds—but maybe save this short side trip until you return when you can see how much energy you have left!

At the end of Hersman Pond Trail, turn left (southwest) on to Center Flats Road and follow it uphill for a short way and then 1.7 miles along the ridgetop, where you can enjoy great views of Coe Park to the north, east, and west. At the high point where Center Flats meets Vasquez Road, turn west and head downhill (for now) on Center Flats Road. This is the two miles of the hike that are strenuous hiking because of all the ups and downs, some of them quite steep. Be especially careful in hot weather because there's very little shade here.

Center Flats Road ends after a last climb up to Wagon Road. Turn right (northeast) on Wagon Road and hike 0.8 mile to the junction where you can either go straight or turn left up the hill. Turn left and go up the hill toward the repeater tower on top of the hill. From that point, you can either hike the Kelly Lake Trail down to Kelly Lake or the Crest Trail down to Coit Road and Coit Lake. Kelly Lake is a little closer than Coit Lake, but Coit Lake is larger. You can swim or fish (if you have a current California fishing license) in both lakes. If you have time and energy, you can visit both lakes via Coit Road. There's a backcountry outhouse on the dam end of Kelly Lake and there are two at Coit Lake, one at each end. You'll need to purify water in the lakes before drinking it. There's also a ramada and picnic table at the south end of Coit Lake, near the outhouse.

Take the same route back to the Dowdy Ranch visitor center—back up the hill past the repeater tower, then Wagon Road to Center Flats Road to Hersman Pond Trail and back up the hill to the parking area and Dowdy Ranch visitor center. You've earned a nice break and a cold soda!


Grid North (GN)
.95° East of True North
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UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET
THE MAP IS ALIGNED WITH THE UTM GRID
Henry W. Coe State Park, Dowdy Ranch
Southeast Entrance - Trail Map
0 .25 .5 1 2 Miles
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000 Feet
0 .25 .5 1 2 3 Kilometers
Map provided Courtesy of the Pine Ridge Association
Coit Lake
Coit Lake Horse Camp
Brem Horse Camp
Tie Down Peak 1480
Fish & Game Pond
Kelly Lake
Hurricane Pond
Wasno Pond
Tule Pond
Rodeo Pond
Scherrer Pond
Hersman Pond
Dowdy Ranch Visitor's Center
Burra Burra Peak 2281
Seven Oaks
Wilson Peak 2651
Rock Springs Peak 2275
Vasquez Peak 2210
Pacheco Creek
Walsh Creek
North Fork Kaiser Creek
Cañada de la Dormida
Cedar
Grizzly Gulch
RIDGE
Trail
ROAD
FLATS
CENTER
WAGON
VASQUEZ
KAISER
AETNA
Mack's Corral
Sulphur Spring
Hayfield Spring
Bowl Spring
Lake Ohlone
Wood Duck Pond
Live Oak Spring
Rattlesnake Trail
Fish & Game Trail
Hole in the Rock
Brem Spring
Book Spring
Headache Springs
Yellowjacket
Down
Cabin Canyon
Willow Ridge
Pacheco Pass
Dam
Spring
Pond
Creek
Canyon
Peak
Gulch
Ridge
Flats
Corral
Springs
Lake
Bowl
Steer
Serpentine
Willson
Grizzly
Tule
Kelly
Wasno
Hurricane
Scherrer
Hersman
Burra
Dormida
Cañada
Vasquez
Kaiser
Aetna
Mack's
Sulphur
Hayfield
Rattlesnake
Fish & Game
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Headache
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THE PINE RIDGE ASSOCIATION
HENRY W. COE STATE PARK