Henry W. Coe Backcountry Weekend
Backpacking Destination hikes and Day hikes from them

Destination Hikes listed below start at the Orestimba Corral. The related Day Hikes start from their respective destinations.

Destination Hike to Jackrabbit Lake

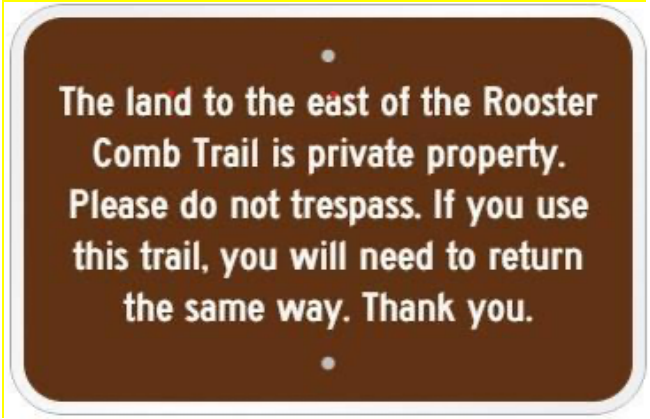
Jackrabbit Lake - This gem of a lake is not easy to get to unless you're willing to do a multi-day backpack trip. But during Backcountry Weekend, it's a relatively flat 12-mile round trip hike from the Orestimba Corral. To get there, take Orestimba Creek Road north, keep an eye out for the right turn on to Long Ridge Road, then proceed up this road and take a left at the next junction up to the lake. This location is in a hanging valley several hundred feet above and a mile or so east of Orestimba Creek and provides excellent views to the west. The lake is very pretty and attracts plenty of birds. Largemouth bass are very active so bring your fishing license and pole. One visitor stated, “During our last visit, my friend Craig could not make a cast without having a largemouth bass hit it (and now he’s mad at me for divulging his favorite fishing spot).”

Total Miles: 12 miles RT

Day Hikes from Jackrabbit Lake

Rooster Comb - Most visitors to Coe have probably not even heard of, much less seen this prominent landmark. But for Coe aficionados, topping out on this gnarly uplifted rock ridge overlooking Paradise Flat is a must-do. As with most hikes in Coe, this requires some effort and climbing. It is most easily accessed from Jack Rabbit Lake as an 8-mile round trip day hike. To get there, proceed north on Orestimba Creek Road, take a left on to the Rooster Comb Trail and contour around the east and then northeast side of Rooster Comb, and then take a left on the Rooster Comb Summit Trail which climbs steeply up to the very top. What awaits you are commanding 270-degree views of the south, west, and east portions of the park.

Watch for the Private Property Warning Sign. Always stay on the trail.



Total Miles: 8 miles RT from Jackrabbit Lake

Day Hikes from Jackrabbit Lake (Continued)

Paradise Lake – This lake, settled in a deep recess just north of Paradise Flat, was a true gem. Time has not been kind to it, with floods that destroyed the earthen dam and fires that torched many of the trees on the surrounding slopes. The lake is still there but more like a small pond now. This is a 6-mile round trip from Jackrabbit Lake and a 13-mile round trip from Orestimba Corral. To get there, proceed north on Orestimba Creek Road, turn left on to Red Creek Road, and then take a right up to the lake. Backpackers occasionally stay here during Backcountry Weekend to enjoy the solitude and views.

Total Miles: 6 miles RT from Jack Rabbit Lake / 13 miles RT from Orestimba Corral

Destination Hike to Mustang Pond

Mustang Pond – A wonderful get-a-way spot for a multi-day backpack trip, great views, and wonderful fishing. Easily accessible during Backcountry Weekend from Orestimba Corral, it's a relatively flat, 4-mile one-way hike, except for one uphill segment From Mustang Pond you get excellent views of Mustang Peak to the south, and Long Ridge to the east. There's plenty of great fishing with possibly the largest bass on the east side of the park.

Total Miles: 8 miles RT

Day Hikes from Mustang Pond

On either of these hikes – which can be combined – you will be rewarded with gorgeous views and the possibility of seeing Tule Elk, especially very early in the mornings. If you were to do both hikes

Paradise Lake – See description under **Jackrabbit Lake** day hikes (above). Take Mustang Pond Trail for .5 mi then right to Orestimba Creek Road and hike 1.4 miles to Red Creek Road. Turn left on Red Creek Road and hike .9 miles to Paradise Lake cutoff. The former lake is another .3 miles.

Total Miles: ~6 miles RT

Red Creek: Take Mustang Pond Trail for .5 mi then right to Orestimba Creek Road and hike 1.4 miles to Red Creek Road. Turn left onto Red Creek Road and continue approximately 2.3 miles until you come to Red Creek along the trail. Walk in the southeast direction along the creek for 1.9 miles, where you will eventually return to the Orestimba Creek Road. From here, you can continue on the unmaintained use trail to Mustang Pond (.5 miles), or head south on Orestimba Creek Road for .35 miles then take the .5 mile trail back to Mustang Pond.

Total Miles: ~7 miles RT

Destination Hike to Mississippi Lake

The largest body of water in the park is one of the more difficult but rewarding destinations for Backcountry Weekend backpackers. There are two routes, one moderate and one strenuous.

Moderate Route: This route starts from either Orestimba Corral or the intersection of Kaiser Aetna Road and County Line Road. From Orestimba Corral, head south on Orestimba Creek Road to the junction with the Alquist Trail. From County Line Road, hike northward 0.7 miles to the Alquist Trail. The Alquist trail climbs 1.1 miles to County Line Road. Turning north on County Line Road, hike 2.3 miles on the ridge to Mississippi Lake Dam road. Descend 0.3 miles to the dam.

Total Miles: 8.8 miles RT

Strenuous Route: This route starts at Orestimba Corral. At the north end of the corral area, take the Orestimba Creek Trail for 1.9 miles until it rejoins Orestimba Creek Road. Continue 0.4 miles to the Hartman Trail. Take the Hartman Trail 2.1 miles over the summit of Hartman Peak and on to County Line Road. Turn right and after 0.1 miles meet the Mississippi Lake Dam Road. Descend 0.3 miles to the dam.

Total miles: 9.6 miles RT

Day Hikes from Mississippi Lake

Easiest: Mississippi Lake Loop - This hike allows you to scout the best fishing holes and secluded campsites around the shore of Mississippi Lake. From your campsite, follow Willow Ridge Road, the Mississippi Lake Dam Road, the Mississippi Lake Trail, and the Bear Spring Trail to hike around the lake.

Total Miles: 3.3 miles RT

Moderate: Bear Spring Trail - This hike is a bit of a climb to see the main water source that feeds Mississippi Lake. From the West shore of the lake, hike north to the lake's inlet creek at the top of the lake to meet the Bear Spring Trail. Hike 1.0 miles up the trail to a fork. Head left (west) on the Divide Trail (possibly unnamed on older maps) and hike another .4 miles to Bear Spring. Return by the same route.

Total Miles: Up to 5.5 RT miles depending on start point along lake

Strenuous: Bear Mountain Loop - For stunning vistas of much of Henry Coe State Park, and sights as far as Mount Hamilton and Pacheco Pass, this 4.7 – 5.7 mile loop is worth the effort. From the inlet creek at the north end of the lake, hike the Bear Spring Trail 1.0 miles to the fork. Turn left (west) onto the Divided Trail (unnamed on older maps) and continue another 1.1 miles to Bear Mountain Road, passing Bear Spring along the way. Turn left (west) and hike 0.2 miles to the Bear Mountain Peak Trail to find a popular dry campsite at the junction. Return by hiking eastward on Bear Mountain Road 0.8 miles to the junction with County Line Road. Turn right (south) to hike on County Line Road for 2.5 miles. Return to the west shore of the lake at the Bear Spring Road junction or hike another 0.8 miles to meet the Mississippi Lake Dam Road.

Total Miles: ~6 mile loop from the north end inlet for Mississippi Lake