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## **Downieville California Downieville Downhill (Advanced)**

The Downieville Downhill is one of the premier rides of the area. It is about a 3 hour drive from Reno, and offers about 20 miles of downhill single track. Now matter which option you choose, they are all rocky with many rocky drops. Although many riders opt for a full suspension cross country bike, a downhill bike will give you much more stability and control for this ride. Please ride slow the first time as many unforeseen obstacles wait around every blind turn. This includes Bears. From Reno, take Interstate 80 west to Truckee Ca. At Truckee, take Hwy 89 south towards Sierraville. At Sierraville, you will come to a "T" intersection. Turn left on Hwy 49. A couple of miles up the road you will come to a "Y" intersection. Stay left towards Sierra City on Hwy. 49. Drive up and over Yuba Pass and continue towards Sierra City. You have three potential starting points for the Downieville Downhill.

- 1: Turn right at Bassetts Junction and continue to Gold Lake on Gold Lake Hwy. .
- 2: Turn right at Bassetts Junction and follow the road 1.3 miles and take a left on County Hwy 621. This paved road will take you to Packers Saddle which is the main start for the downhill. This single track goes down Butcher Ranch Creek. This ride can also be done with a shuttle from <http://www.downievilleoutfitters.com>.
- 3: Continue down Hwy. 49 to Sierra City. ½ way through the city you can park on the right to start your ride. Take a right on Sierra Buttes Road. This is the longest, and hardest of the routes.

Each option is highlighted below.

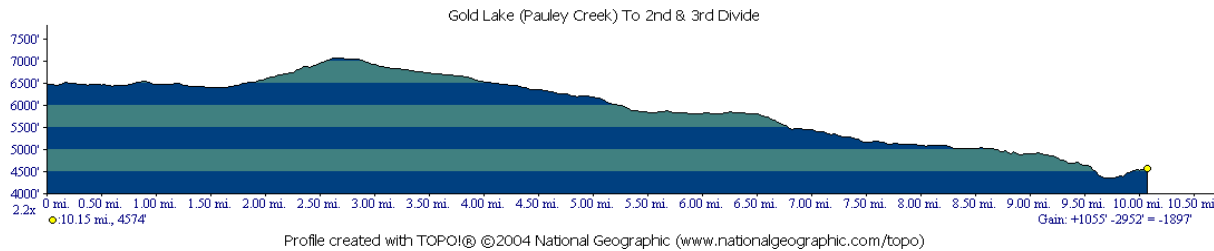


Rich Staley  
Focus on You Photography

## Option 1: Downieville Downhill (Advanced) (Orange Trail)

### Gold Lake (Pauley Creek) to the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divide

#### 10.15 miles -2952 ft. total elevation loss (Advanced)

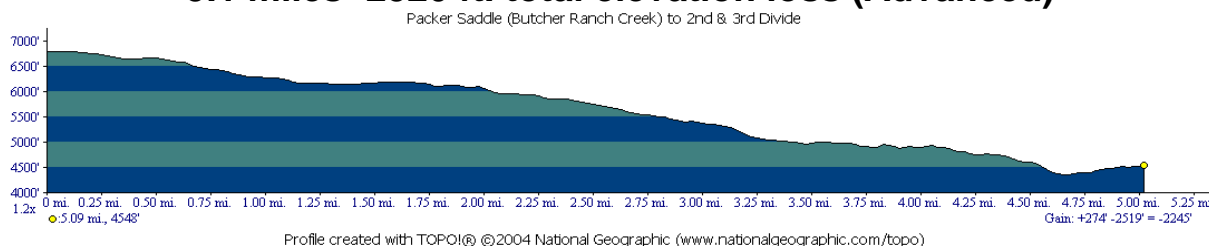


From Bassetts Junction, take a right on Gold Lake Hwy. and follow it for just under 7 miles where you will take a left at Gold Lake. Follow the dirt road around the left side of the lake, and it will more or less dead end at a large parking area. The road does continue from here, but once you see the road you will understand why it more or less dead ends here. This is the start of your ride. Most people who do the ride from this start point take two or more cars. Drop all riders off at Gold Lake while you and another driver shuttle one car down to Downieville for the return trip, then both of you pile into the second car and return to Gold Lake where hopefully the others are still waiting for you. Once back at Gold Lake, head back to the road from the parking area and take a right. As you look at the road, you realize why the road more or less ended here. Climb up the very rocky section of this jeep road and follow the road for 1.5 miles around the west side of the lake. Once at the west end of the lake, you will have to take a right and climb west away from the lake. If you miss this turn, the road just dead ends, so you will have to turn around. Once you take a left, the real climb starts. This climb is a 1.1 mile, 650 ft climb that is rocky and relentless. However, once at the top it is mainly downhill from here. Continue west over the top of the climb and pass the road on your right. Follow the jeep road west, downhill for 1.55 miles (4.15 miles from the start). At this "Y" intersection, take a right and follow this jeep road for 1.1 miles (5.25 miles) where you take a left. Follow this jeep road for .65 miles (5.9 miles) where the road will dead end into the single track. From here it is almost impossible to get lost. You are going to be following Pauley Creek almost all of the way down to Downieville. From the start of the single track, you are going to follow it downhill for 2.25 miles (8.15 miles) where you will see the single track from Packers Saddle (Option 2 & 3) coming down Butcher Ranch Creek. Stay straight following Pauley Creek. Continue down hill for 2 miles (10.15 miles) where you have your first real option. You can turn left and head down the Second Divide, or continue straight on the Third Divide. See Below.

## Option 2: Downieville Downhill (Advanced) (Blue Trail)

### Packers Saddle (Butcher Ranch Creek) to the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divide

#### 5.1 miles -2520 ft. total elevation loss (Advanced)

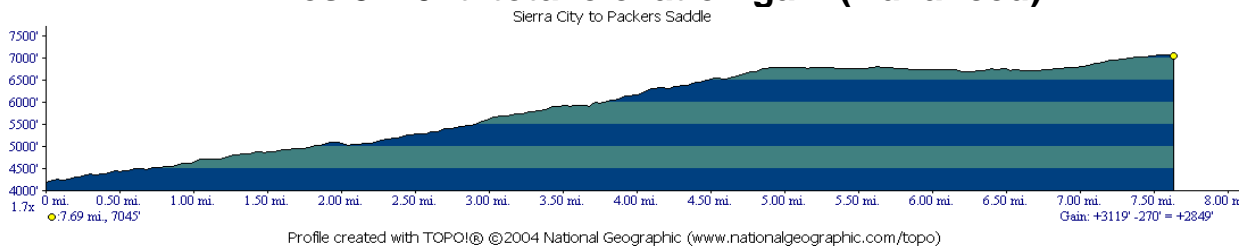


This section can also be done with two cars. One drops all riders off at Packers Saddle where everyone waits until two drivers drop one car off in Downieville and take the other back up to the start at Packers Saddle. From Bassett's, take Gold Lake Highway to the right. Follow Gold Lake Highway 1.3 miles and take a left on County Hwy 621. Follow County Hwy 621 for 4.5 miles where you will come to a large flat. There is also a "Y" in the road. You can start here or take a right and follow the pavement down to the trail. Most riders start here and ride the pavement downhill to the start of the single track. Follow the pavement downhill for .65 miles where it will drop you right into the trail. This section of single track down Butcher Ranch Creek is very technical. Many people walk the technical sections. There are big rocks, big drops and to add to the excitement, this section tends to be wet and slippery. So again, if you do not feel comfortable, walk. This is always better than a helicopter ride back to Reno or where ever they decide to take you. This section of trail from the start of the single track is 3 miles long. There is no chance of getting lost because there are no other intersecting trails or roads until you hit Pauley Creek. Once you intersect the trail at Pauley Creek, turn left and follow the single track for 2 miles (5 miles from the start) where you will have to make a choice. You can turn left and head down the Second Divide, or continue straight on the Third Divide. See below.

### Option 3: Downieville Downhill (Advanced) (Yellow Trail)

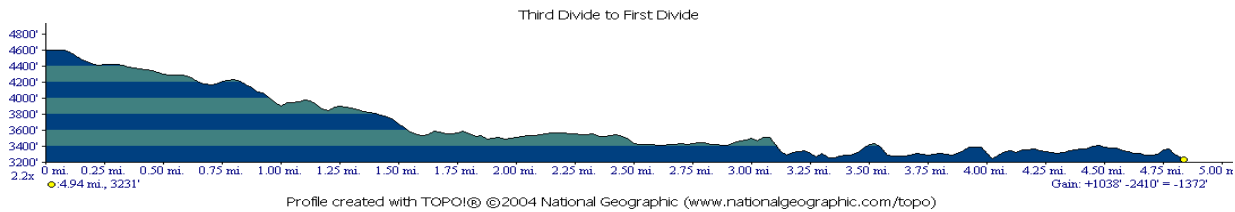
#### Sierra City to Packers Saddle

#### 7.7 miles 3120 ft. total elevation gain (Advanced)



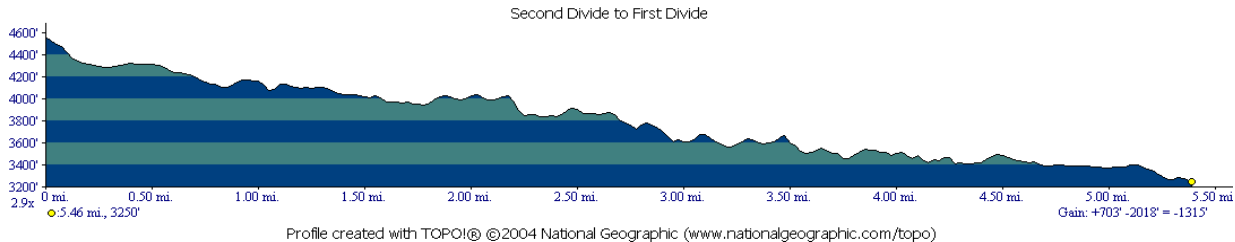
Park in Sierra City at the base of Butte Street. This is the start of your ride. You may want to do this ride with someone else so that you can leave on car in Downieville and not have to ride back up the pavement to Sierra City. Unpack your bike and follow Butte Street north, up hill. In .1 miles you will take a left on Sierra Buttes Road. Follow this road for .75 miles (.85 miles from the start) where you will pass a road on your right. Continue straight for .3 miles (1.15 miles) where you will pass a road on your right. Stay on Sierra Buttes Road which will switch back to your right. Continue for .85 miles (2 miles) where you will pass another road on your right. Continue following Sierra Buttes Road for .53 miles (2.53 miles) where you will pass Columbo Mine Road on your left. Stay right on Sierra Buttes road. This is where the climb really starts. Follow the road uphill for 2.2 miles (4.73 miles) where you will finally crest the ridge. This is a great place to take a breather and look down into the canyon where you started. Here you have a "Y" intersection. Stay hard right and follow the jeep road up hill again. Good news is that the climb is mostly done. Follow this jeep road for .45 miles (5.18 miles) where you will pass a road on the right. Continue straight for .6 miles (5.78 miles) where you will pass an intersecting road on your right. Continue straight for 1.4 miles (7.18 miles) where you will come to another "Y" intersection. Stay to the right and follow the road for .5 miles (7.68 miles) where you will pass another intersecting road on your right. Continue straight for .1 mile where you are finally at Packer Saddle. At this intersection, take a left and follow the pavement downhill to the start of **Option 2: Packers Saddle (Butcher Ranch Creek to the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divide**. See Option 2 above.

**Third Divide: Third Divide to First Divide (Intermediate)  
(Purple Trail)  
5 miles -1370 ft. total elevation loss**



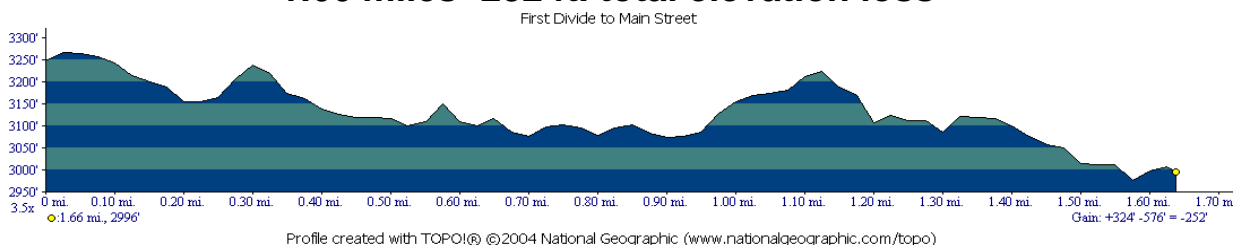
The Third Divide is the easiest of all of the Divides. It is relatively smooth with only one tricky section that can be walked. All Divides are simple to follow. There are no side trails to confuse you. Once on the trail, it funnels you down to the First Divide no matter what. This section of trail is just under 5 miles and drops 1370 feet. At this point you can cross the road and take the First Divide most of the way into Downieville, or just follow the road downhill 2.25 miles into Downieville and call it done. There are a couple of side road choices, but if you just take the downhill choice you will end up in Downieville.

**Second Divide: Second Divide to First Divide (Advanced)  
(Green Trail)  
5.5 miles -1315 ft. total elevation loss**



The Second Divide is the hardest of the divides. This single track does not follow the contours of the land very well. It will drop into a wash, then climb strait out of the wash on the other side. You must make sure that you are in the right gear, or you will not make it up the other side. Another problem is that on the top of each wash is a growing tree with tree roots that grow out on top of the single track. So, not only do you have to be in the right gear, but you have to pick the front wheel over the tree root, and then pick the rear tire over the root as well. Then prepare for the next one. The last problem is that if you loose balance; fall on the up hill side. If you fall to the left, you have a long tumble to the bottom of the creek. The lower section of this trail is very narrow and rocky. This section can be ridden, but most people walk it, then again, most people take the Third Divide instead. As you head down the trail, it is almost impossible to get lost. The single track follows the creek all the way down to the First Divide cut off. This single track section is 5.5 miles long and drops 1315 feet.

**First Divide: First Divide to Main Street (Advanced)  
(Light Green Trail)  
1.66 miles -252 ft. total elevation loss**





Once you come out on the jeep road from either the Third or Second divide, the First Divide Cut Off is on the left side of the jeep road directly across from the Third Divide. Here you can take the jeep road (Main Street) 2.25 miles back to Downieville, or take the left and head down The First Divide. This divide is easier than the Second Divide, and a little harder than the Third Divide. It rolls up and down the canyon back down to Main Street just above Downieville. Once you hit the first road (Main Street,) take a left and follow the road back into downtown Downieville.

