

Hike # 6

Gold Hill Hotel

V & T R.R. Circuit

Begin & end at Gold Hill Hotel

Altitude:
5,800 ft to
6,200 ft. &
back down

Distance:
3 mile
circuit

TIME:
1.5 hrs to
2 hours

This hike will take you through the heart of the Comstock Lode area. The Gold Hill Hotel is a good starting point. It is also the best place in Virginia City for a great dinner and a quaint and comfortable overnight stay. The Gold Hill Hotel is the oldest continuously operated hotel in the State of Nevada. It even has it's own special "ghosts"...but they are nice ones.

As the miners worked their way up Gold Canyon from what would become Dayton, Silver City, Gold Hill then Virginia City they left their mark all over the hills. You can see the small "glory holes" pockmarking the hillsides with yellow/beige dirt. This is the dirt that was dug from underground and piled at the mouth of a short tunnel to test the area for gold or silver bearing ore.

You will be walking on the roadbed for the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, the railroad that made the possible the Big Bonanza. It was once the richest railroad in the world measured in terms of return upon its investment and in the tangible assets it transported.

It became a problem to get sufficient power sources to operate mills to process the ore out of the mines. The Carson River through Brunswick Canyon near Carson City offered that source of power. Mills began being built along the river but getting the ore there by freight wagon raised other problems.

William Sharon, the Virginia City representative for the Bank of California came up with the idea of building a railroad from Virginia City to Carson City to transport the ore to the mills (15 miles) and return to Virginia City with wood for timbering the mines and powering the hoisting equipment. Sharon met with William Ralston and Darius O. Mills the primaries in the Bank of California. So in 1868 Sharon contracted with I.E. James, a surveyor, to locate a railroad from Virginia City to the Carson River. Grading began in 1869 with 450 Chinese workers. The first train arrived in Gold Hill on Nov. 12, 1869 right behind the Gold Hill Hotel. The V& T operated until 1950.

Looking out to the south/south east you will see many "glory holes" as well as walk past several mine and mill foundations along the track bed.

Feel the history as you walk the railbed of the most famous short line RR to ever exist.

I PLEDGE TO STAY OUT OF ABANDONED MINES

HIKE # 6



Facilities:

None

Bring Water & TP

V.C.

SR 342

SR 341 - Truck Route

Toll Road

Go up the
hill to Toll
Road

V & T RR roadbed

Gold Hill
Depot

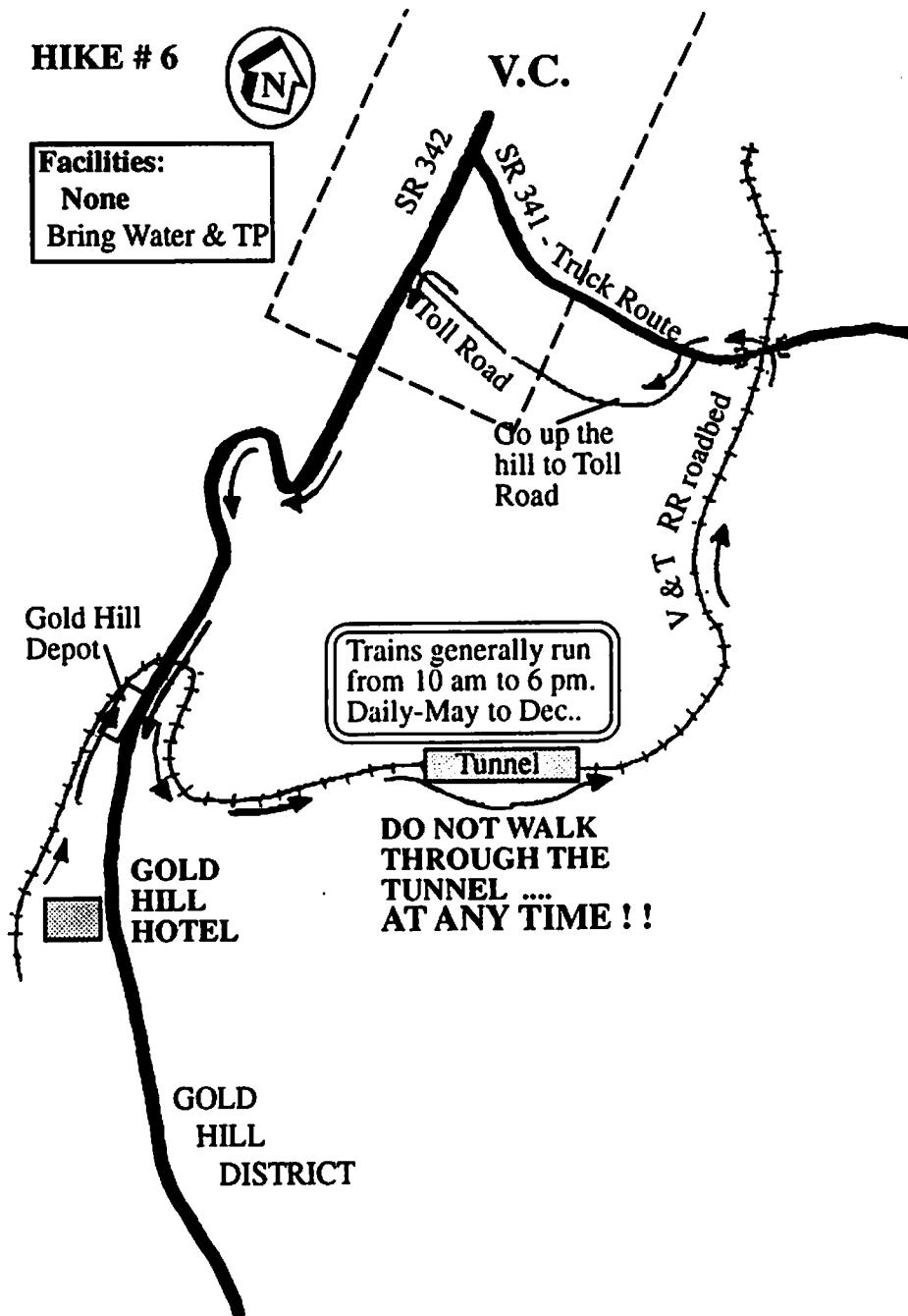
Trains generally run
from 10 am to 6 pm.
Daily-May to Dec..

Tunnel

**DO NOT WALK
THROUGH THE
TUNNEL
AT ANY TIME !!**

**GOLD
HILL
HOTEL**

**GOLD
HILL
DISTRICT**



HIKE # 7

GOLD HILL HOTEL to AMERICAN FLAT and back

**START & End at Gold Hill Hotel, Main St. Gold Hill
following the old "haul" road into American Flat.**

Altitude:
drop to 5,500
then return to
5,900'

Distance:
3.5 miles
round trip

Time:
Somewhere
between 2 hrs
and 4 hrs.
depending on
how much
you look
around
in awe of this
magnificent
and historic
area.

Gold Hill is the community just to the South of Virginia City separated by "the Divide", where the hill crests. It was never an actual separate community but considered as part of Virginia City. In 1877 it had a population of 8,000 people. Gold Hill was a mining "district". This is the south end of the body of ore known as the "Comstock Lode" and to top of Gold Canyon. It was identified as Gold Hill as early as May, 1859. It was here that James Finney and three others first found gold on the side of a hill. In the 1870's the largest producers of the district were the Crown Point, Belcher and Yellow Jacket mines. (see map) The Crown Point operated until 1940. The Overmine was founded in 1859 and worked regularly until 1940 when it was open pit mined. All around this area are the clearly visible remains of ore wagon loading chutes, shaft head frames and various mine and milling operations buildings. The Crown Point Mill is located just south of the Gold Hill Hotel.

The yellowish dirt residue "dumps" taken from beneath the ground clearly marks the area all along your walk route.

The Gold Hill cemeteries, located south west of Gold Hill are very historic and represents one of the earliest established cemeteries on the Comstock. The first burial here was in 1859. It is made up of a Catholic section and a Masonic section. The cemeteries are very vulnerable to vandalism. Please enjoy them and protect them.

American Flat, which is the valley or "flat" that you enter to the south west of Gold Hill was a minor producing area of precious metals. American City, a small mining camp, was located in the NE corner. Laid out in 1864 its post office operated from Mar. 1866 to Feb. 1868. In 1865 the town offered the State \$50,000 to move the capital from Carson City to American Flat.

In 1921 the United Comstock Merger Mill, (1) a cyanide mill, was built at the east end of American Flat. It closed in 1926 due to falling silver prices. You can see the concrete structure remains. Don't explore...they are dangerous. In the 1970's a new mill (2) was built, which you go around, to process ore from several open pit operations to obtain both gold and silver in the Gold Canyon area (along SR 342).

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Hike #7

This is all good 4wd road

To V.C.

Facilities:

NONE except at the
Gold Hill Hotel.
BRING WATER &
(thats right) **T.P.**

