

17 Eldridge Grade to East Peak Loop

Distance: 17.7 miles

Riding Time: 2.5-3 hours

Elevation Change: 2800' **Difficulty:** Moderate to strenuous

Technical Rating: 8 Some technical climbing over rocky terrain.

Ride up rugged Eldridge Grade to the top of Mt. Tam. The long climb has wilderness appeal and panoramic views of the bay. The ride down is steep and fast. Lake and meadow rest stops. Some paved road.

0.0 From Ross Common, take Lagunitas Rd. left to Natalie Coffin Greene Park. Continue up the dirt road and head right at the dam.

2.0 Four-way junction ❶. Take the left FR to go up Eldridge Grade. This begins your long, but moderately-graded climb through redwood forests and chaparral. At **2.8** miles, turn left at the T-junction with Filter Plant FR (water available here).

4.1 Junction ❷ with Lakeview Rd. Continue up Eldridge to the left.

5.2 Junction with Indian FR. Go right. Rocky terrain ahead.

7.7 Junction ❸ with Ridgecrest Blvd. You made it! You should definitely head left up to East Peak, where there are incredible views and a snack shop (open on weekends) or a coke machine to treat yourself. The actual pinnacle is a short hike from the snack bar. Bring a bike lock if you plan to do this, no bikes are allowed on the trail. When ready, head back along Ridgecrest Blvd. past Eldridge to follow the paved road as it rolls up and down. Watch for cars here.

9.1 Junction ❹ of Rock Spring-Lagunitas FR. This is an easy junction to miss because it's off a fast downhill section. So keep your eye out for a short single track on the right that climbs to a knoll where the FR is marked by an old wooden sign. Ahead, pass by Laurel Dell FR on the left to enter Portrero Meadow (**9.9** mi.). Continue around the meadow to Rifle Camp. The FR from Rifle Camp starts steeply down the mountain. Stay in control. Be sure to stay right all the way down. The FR ends at Lake Lagunitas.

12.4 Junction ❺ with Lake Lagunitas FR. Turn left to ride to Lagunitas Dam. Cross the dam, ride down the FR to the parking lot and out along the paved road.

14.0 Junction ❻ with Shaver Grade. Turn right to go around a gate, then down Shaver Grade FR. This sends you back to Phoenix Lake.

14.6 Five Corners. Take the right FR and in 0.2 mi. veer left downhill.

15.7 Junction ❼. Go left to backtrack to the parking area at **17.7** mi.