

Secret Pass Route

Time: 80 minutes

Distance: 147 miles

Description:

This loop trip east, south and north of Elko takes you through two valleys. At the start of the trip you'll visit Ruby Valley, bordered by the East Humboldt Range in the distance and the Ruby Mountains that in some places appear close enough to touch. You'll also pass through Clover Valley before arriving in the town of Wells.

Directions:

Take Idaho Street west to Mountain City Highway, heading north. Turn on to I-80 East. The Ruby Mountains will be on your right and then straight ahead as the interstate curves.

Take the Halleck/Ruby Valley Exit #321 south to Highway 229. Please note, from this point on, there are no services for 70 miles. Though the bustling saloon in the once-booming railroad town of Halleck is no more, its ten-ft bar, once so popular with travelers and railway workers, may be seen in the Elko's Northeastern Nevada Museum. Fort Halleck was established in 1867 to protect the California emigrant trail and work on the Central Pacific Railroad.

Heading into the Ruby Valley, you'll start to view ranches and wide open spaces. Though you'll pass a turn-off to the Lamoille Highway, while tempting, it is not paved. As the elevation increases, a scenic creek borders the road. At Mile 31 is the summit of Secret Pass (elevation 6,457 ft) where a paved look-out offers panoramic views.

Cautiously approach Mile 55, as you will need to turn left onto Highway 229 heading northeast.

At Mile 63, turn left on to Highway 93 North. Though a picturesque country road, Highway 93 is the major north-south route between Twin Falls and Las Vegas, so you'll be sharing the road with semis.

When you reach Wells, after the underpass, turn left onto 6th Street. You'll find good coffee at Bellas (just off 6th).

(Quick) Detour: Continue up 6th Street and turn right on Lake Street and right at the end of the block onto "historic" Front Street for a glimpse of the town during its more prosperous past.

The Sports Bar on the north side of 6th has good food and friendly service. To return to Elko, take I-80 West.

Detour: Instead of heading onto I-80 West, go straight to view wildlife or turn left and go 1.6 miles on paved road to Angel Lake in the Humboldt National Forest for some fishing.

