

Trip Report for Mendo BDT Trip (June 10-12, 2022)

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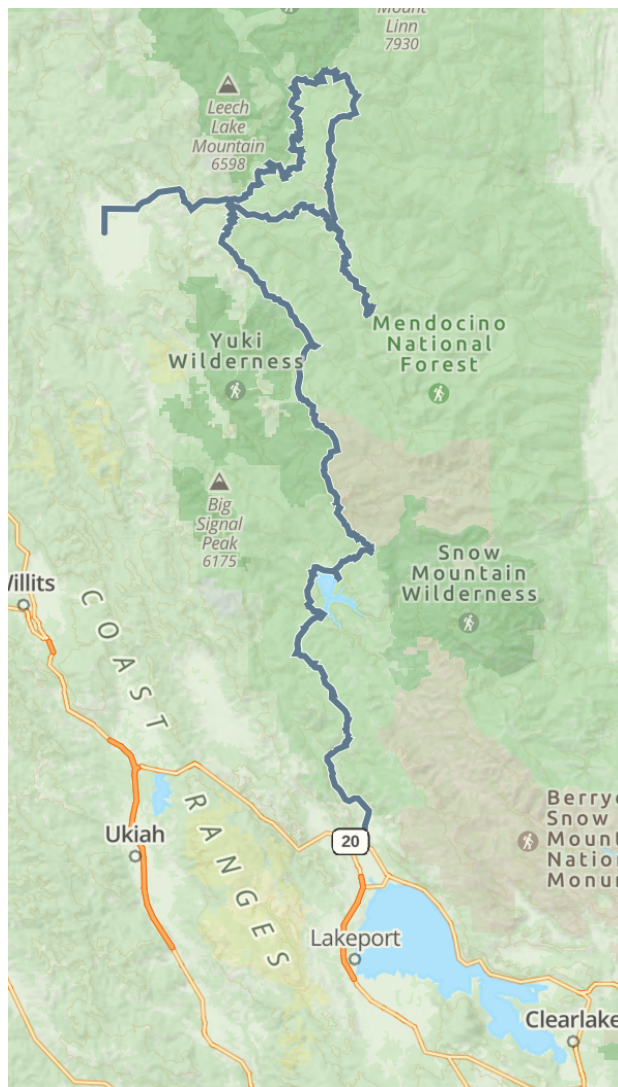
Trip Participants:

- Patrick Mueller
- Neale Wade
- Dennis Holler
- Dishaan Ahuja
- Ruel Cordero (prospective member)

I had never been to the Mendocino National Forest, and always wanted to check it out. The stars aligned and I found myself with a free weekend, and I rapidly started planning. With short notice (less than a week), I put out a call to the ED4 Facebook page to see if anyone else was interested. They were! Quickly we had our crew: me, Neale, Dennis, Dishaan, and Ruel.

I used this online [guide](#) by Overland Trail Guides and accompanying YouTube [video](#) as my main resources to help plan the route, which was focused on the **Mendocino Backcountry Discovery Trail**. Here is an overview of the entire route from the guide ([GPX link](#)), but we didn't have time to do the entire thing.

Here are the Gaia tracks for [day 1](#) (Friday), [day 2](#) (Saturday) and [day 3](#) (Sunday) of our trip.



We met in **Upper Lake** on Friday at 5pm and hit the "trail" (pavement) soon after. The trail soon turned to dirt and we started climbing into the forest. It felt great to be heading out into the wilderness on a Friday summer evening, and our crew was getting to know each other with some chatter over the radios.

We camped that night at **Lake Pillsbury**. Fortunately, there was water! Dennis had been there last year, and it was apparently bone dry.



Saturday morning we hit the trail, heading north toward Eel River. We climbed higher and higher, getting some amazing views of Lake Pillsbury and surrounding area. We then proceeded up to **Mt. Hull**, which had a few big moguls. We brought most of the rigs to the top and then walked the final bit up to check out the panoramic views.



Our map indicated the gravesite for **James Hull** (whom the mountain is named for). We hiked out pretty *close* to it, we think, but getting to the exact spot would have required more intrepid hiking... so we paid our respects and moved on. More info on Mr. Hull:

James Hull, for whom Hull Mountain over Lake Pillsbury is named, was killed by a Grizzly Bear in 1856. He had been part of a party hunting for venison and went out alone to the site they'd butchered the deer to collect brains for buckskin tanning, and vanished.

The search party looking for him found a big dead Grizzly and Hull's body. There was a shot stuck halfway down in the barrel of the gun and he'd turned the gun around and beat on the bear with the gunstock. They both died.

We found a nice spot for lunch. Ruel asked if I could put out my awning, and if I'm being honest, I was thinking... I guess so, but how long are we going to be here? My mood quickly changed as Ruel busted out a stove and heated up spiced beef, taco shells, and spread out various salsas for an amazing lunch for all!



By mid-afternoon we reached the small town of **Eel River**. Ruel and Dishaan didn't have spare gas and didn't want to chance it, so they headed east to **Covelo** to top up. The rest of us chilled out at a cafe (and I went for a quick swim in the river).

We hit the trail again, heading east on **Mendocino Pass Road**, and then north on the **M4**. At this point, we were playing it by ear for where we'd spent the night, but there were a few possibilities along the route, so we felt fine. Along the way, we saw some beautiful views, vistas, forests, and some deer. We also saw several large areas devastated by the wildfires.



By late afternoon, we made it to **Wells Cabin campground**. Sadly, most of it had been damaged by the wildfires, but we found one large group spot that was unscathed and was an amazing place to spend the night.



That night, Dishaan, Ruel, and I made the short drive up to **Anthony Peak** (~7,000 ft), hoping to catch the sunset. Clouds obscured our views but provided a beautiful, otherworldly experience (though I would like to return to see the views on a clear day).



During the day, we'd gotten some cell signal and checked the weather report, which predicted a *slight* rain. It rained some throughout the night, and continued into Sunday morning, as we had breakfast and started to break camp. The rain was more than we'd anticipated, so we decided not to head further north on the trail (which would be an out and back for us that same day). So that's as far as we made it on the Mendocino BDT. But it was an *excellent* trip and left us wanting more.



Speaking of which, please stay tuned for “Part 2” of this trip, which we hope to put together and do sometime in September. We’d like to explore the north part of the trail that we didn’t get to see, and seek out more technical challenges than we found during this trip.

Some additional pics from Ruel are available in his Facebook post [here](#).