

# Horse Camp Trails: Helen Lake and Hidden Valley Camp



Sources: Bubba Seuss, **Hike Mt Shasta**

Visit at **Hike Mt Shasta**: [www.hikemtshasta.com](http://www.hikemtshasta.com)

*Map property and courtesy of the Mt Shasta Visitors Center*

Horse Camp sits at 7,885' ft in elevation and is the stopping point for adventurers seeking to get into the upper elevations of Mt Shasta, whether to summit or to simply explore the mountain and wilderness. 90% of summit attempts occur along the route to Horse Camp. Horse Camp is a historic site managed by the Sierra Club. Horse Camp, called the Shasta Alpine Hut, is a cabin built in 1922 and still exists as a rest stop for hikers heading up to greater heights in the Mt Shasta Wilderness. The route to Horse Camp (see Bunny Flat pamphlet) leads adventurers to several hiking destinations—Helen Lake Campsite and Hidden Valley Camp (as well as a few other unofficial sites). Both are routes that can potentially be used to summit.

## PUBLIC RESTROOMS AND WILDERNESS PERMITS

There is a vault toilet at Horse Camp. If headed higher up, campers/day hikers need to bring their own disposable waste pack out bags. To hike Horse Camp, you need to fill out a (free) wilderness permit at the Bunny Flat trailhead. If hiking above 10,000' ft, a summit pass is required (day passes are \$25, year passes are \$30 and people under 16 years do not need a pass). Summit passes can be purchased at the USDA Shasta Trinity National Forest Service (ranger station) or at select trailheads.

## CAMPING AND DAY USE

Camping fees for Horse Camp are \$5.00 per tent and \$3.00 per solo bivy. The suggested day-use donation is \$1.00 per person. There is opportunity to camp at Helen Lake Campsite and Hidden Valley Camp. Dispersed camping is allowed in the Mt Shasta Wilderness. See USDA Shasta Trinity National Forest Service (ranger station) restrictions and limitations for camping in the wilderness and fire restrictions. Fire permits (free) are required for campfires/stove use. Restrictions apply.

## IMPORTANT ROUTES

### Helen Lake Campsite

**Distance from Horse Camp:** 1.75 Miles

**Distance from Bunny Flat:** 3.5 Miles

**Elevation Gain from Horse Camp:** 2,565' ft

**Elevation Gain from Bunny Flat:** 3,500' ft

Helen Lake is a popular destination for adventurers wishing to summit Mt Shasta along the Avalanche Gulch route from Horse Camp. For much of the year, crampons and ice axe are required to reach this destination. To reach Helen Lake from Horse Camp, once arriving at Horse Camp, “depart from near the fountain. [The trail] consists of large rocks lined up to form stepping stones. This is known as Olberman’s Causeway, built by the Lodge’s first caretaker, Joseph Olberman. The causeway extends almost 0.5 miles up the mountain and connects to the use trail that leads to Helen Lake. Beyond the causeway, the trail climbs steeply over loose sand and rock. Nearer to Lake Helen the trail becomes harder to make out. Snow often covers this area” (Bubba Seuss, *Hike Mt Shasta*).

### Hidden Valley Camp

**Distance from Horse Camp:** 1.2 Miles

**Distance from Bunny Flat:** 2.95 Miles

**Elevation Gain from Horse Camp:** 1,335' ft

**Elevation Gain from Bunny Flat:** 2,270' ft

“The trail to Hidden Valley departs Horse Camp to the north. To find the trail, walk to the northeast corner of the cabin. From there the trail heads out toward the base of Casaval Ridge, passing a few campsites along the way.” The trail proceeds through the forest for a short distance before reaching steeper and more rugged terrain. Near the end of the route, “the route traverses a final, steep talus slope that rises above the lower portions of Cascade Gulch. As it climbs, the trail is angling for an obvious notch. During much of the season water melting high above the valley is funneled through this notch and cascades down the gulch. Hidden Valley, at 9,200' ft is almost 5,000' ft below the summit of Mt Shasta. The summit itself is not visible from the valley and the highest point above the area is only 4,000' ft overhead. On the north side of the valley is Shastina, Mt Shasta’s great secondary cone. Campsites are found on both sides of the notch. From here routes up Mt Shasta include Casaval Ridge, West Face Gully, and Cascade Gulch. The primary route up Shastina begins here as well” (*Hike Mt Shasta*, Bubba Seuss).

## HORSE CAMP TRAILS: HIDDEN VALLEY CAMP HELEN LAKE CAMP SITE

