California State Route 20

State Route 20 (SR 20) is a state highway in the northern central region of the U.S. state of California , running east ? west across the state north of Sacramento . Its west end is at SR 1 in Fort Bragg , from where it heads east past Clear Lake , Colusa , Yuba City , Marysville , and Nevada City to I @-@ 80 near Emigrant Gap , where eastbound traffic can continue on other routes to Lake Tahoe or Nevada .

Portions of SR 20 are built near the routing of what was first a wagon road and later a turnpike in the late nineteenth century . This road was extended through the state highway system all the way to Ukiah in the early twentieth century , and the missing link near Clear Lake was completed in 1932 before the official designation of this highway as SR 20 in 1934 . There have been subsequent improvements to the road , such as the conversion of the Grass Valley portion of the route to freeway standards .

Route description

State Route 20 east of US 101 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System , although it is mostly a two @-@ lane surface road . All of SR 20 is on the Interregional Road System , a highway system that connects major economic centers of the state , and has been selected by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a High Emphasis Route and Focus Route from US 101 to SR 29 and SR 53 to I @-@ 80 , with the designated corridor following SR 29 and SR 53 around the south side of Clear Lake . It is also eligible for the State Scenic Highway System from SR 1 to SR 16 and SR 49 to I @-@ 80 , and has been designated as such for 6 miles (10 km) near the east end ; this is part of the federally designated Yuba @-@ Donner Scenic Byway , a National Scenic Byway that uses SR 20 east of SR 49 .

State Route 20 begins at SR 1 in southern Fort Bragg , under a mile (1 / 2 km) from the Pacific Ocean . It heads east , quickly climbing into the Mendocino Range along a ridge and crossing through Dunlap Pass . The highway continues to rise alongside the North Fork Big River and tributaries , crossing another summit and then descending to Willits in the Little Lake Valley via Broaddus Creek . An overlap with US 101 begins in Willits and heads southeasterly to Calpella , north of Ukiah in Redwood Valley . There SR 20 turns east again , crossing the Russian River , passing the north shore of Lake Mendocino , and rising to a summit via the East Fork Russian River and Cold Creek . The roadway again descends alongside the Blue Lakes and Scotts Creek to the junction with SR 29 and the settlement of Upper Lake in the Clear Lake Basin . SR 20 closely follows the northeast shore of Clear Lake , staying right above the water line to avoid the adjacent hills . Where the lake ends , SR 20 continues east , intersecting SR 53 and then following the North Fork Cache Creek and tributaries to the Lake @-@ Colusa County line . During its final descent into the Sacramento Valley , SR 20 intersects SR 16 and curves north and back east , entering the valley via Salt Creek .

Once it enters the flat Sacramento Valley , SR 20 takes a generally straight path , crossing I @-@ 5 in Williams , overlapping SR 45 near the west bank of the Sacramento River southeast from Colusa , and then turning back east to cross the Sacramento River and Sutter Bypass on its way to Yuba City . The route crosses SR 99 west of central Yuba City , and runs east through northern Yuba City to the Feather River , which it crosses on the 10th Street Bridge into Marysville . Within the central part of that city , SR 20 makes several turns , first turning south from 10th Street onto E Street , then east on 9th Street (overlapping SR 70) , north on B Street , and east on 12th Street (splitting from SR 70) . The highway leaves Marysville to the northeast , paralleling the Yuba River on its north side as it enters the foothills of the Sierra Nevada .

SR 20 rises into the Sierras along the north side of the Yuba River , crossing to the south side near Smartsville and then climbing through several ravines to the Penn Valley . The current alignment , built in the mid @-@ 1980s as a mostly two @-@ lane freeway , continues east across rugged terrain to the city of Grass Valley , where it joins SR 49 on the Golden Center Freeway . The two routes travel northeast to Nevada City , where SR 49 turns northwest and SR 20 resumes its

eastward course as a two @-@ lane highway . The roadway climbs from Nevada City and follows Harmony Ridge and Washington Ridge before descending into the Bear Valley via a series of hairpin turns , and then climbing , just north of Emigrant Gap , to its end at I @-@ 80 at Yuba Pass . The Pioneer Trail , a National Recreation Trail , parallels SR 20 from a point on Harmony Ridge to the Bear Valley , and includes parts of a branch of the California Trail first used in 1850 .

History

The east end of SR 20 , from Bear Valley (just below Emigrant Gap) to Nevada City , closely follows a branch of the Truckee Route of the California Trail , first used by California @-@ bound emigrants in 1850 . Later a turnpike was built here by the same company that opened the Pacific Turnpike (Culbertson Road and Bowman Lake Road between Dutch Flat and Bowman Lake) in 1864 .
By the end of the 1910s , a passable dirt and gravel road connected Ukiah and Nevada City via the south side of Clear Lake and Marysville . The portion between Lower Lake and Wilbur Springs was impassable in wet weather , at which times the Bartlett Springs and Bear Valley Toll @-@ road via Upper Lake and Bartlett Springs was available for $ 1 @.@ 50 each way or $ 2 @.@ 50 round trip . This route generally followed the present SR 20 , except around Clear Lake and between Marysville and Rough and Ready (where it used Spenceville Road) . Beyond Nevada City to Emigrant Gap , the old turnpike was not passable ; instead the present SR 174 was available for eastward drivers . Between Williams and Colusa , the road was paved in concrete , as it had been added to the state highway system as part of the first (1910) bond issue , specifically as Route 15 , connecting the west Sacramento Valley trunk (Route 7 , now I @-@ 5) with the county seat of Colusa .
This state highway was significantly extended in both directions in 1919 , west to Ukiah and east to Emigrant Gap , creating what was known as the Tahoe @-@ Ukiah Highway , connecting Ukiah and Lake Tahoe in combination with Route 37 (now I @-@ 80) and Route 38 (now SR 89) . The law that defined the extension simply stated that it would connect " Ukiah to Tahoe City " ; the state decided in September 1925 that it would run the highway along the north shore of Clear Lake , combining with the planned Rumsey @-@ Lower Lake Highway (Route 50 , now SR 53 and SR 16) east to Wilbur Springs . With the completion of this segment in mid @-@ 1932 , the highway was ready for heavy travel , and became Sign Route 20 in 1934 as part of the initial signed state route system .
In 1953 , the legislature added an extension of Route 15 from US 101 at Willits (north of Ukiah) west to SR 1 near Fort Bragg . This was constructed (over an existing county road) and became part of Sign Route 20 prior to 1964 , when the Route 20 designation was legislatively adopted . Subsequent improvements include the construction of the Golden Center Freeway , connecting Grass Valley with Nevada City , in the late 1960s , and a new alignment of SR 20 west from Grass Valley , bypassing Rough and Ready , in the mid @-@ 1980s .

Major intersections

Except where prefixed with a letter , postmiles were measured on the road as it was in 1964 , based on the alignment that existed at the time , and do not necessarily reflect current mileage . R reflects a realignment in the route since then , M indicates a second realignment , L refers an overlap due to a correction or change , and T indicates postmiles classified as temporary (for a full list of prefixes , see the list of postmile definitions) . Segments that remain unconstructed or have been relinquished to local control may be omitted . The numbers reset at county lines ; the start and end postmiles in each county are given in the county column .