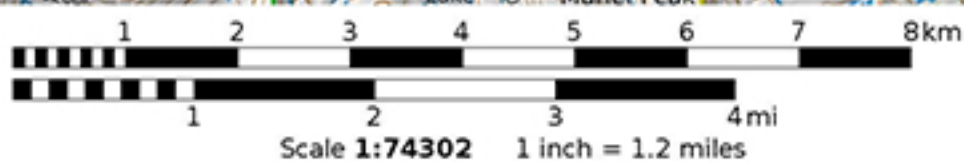
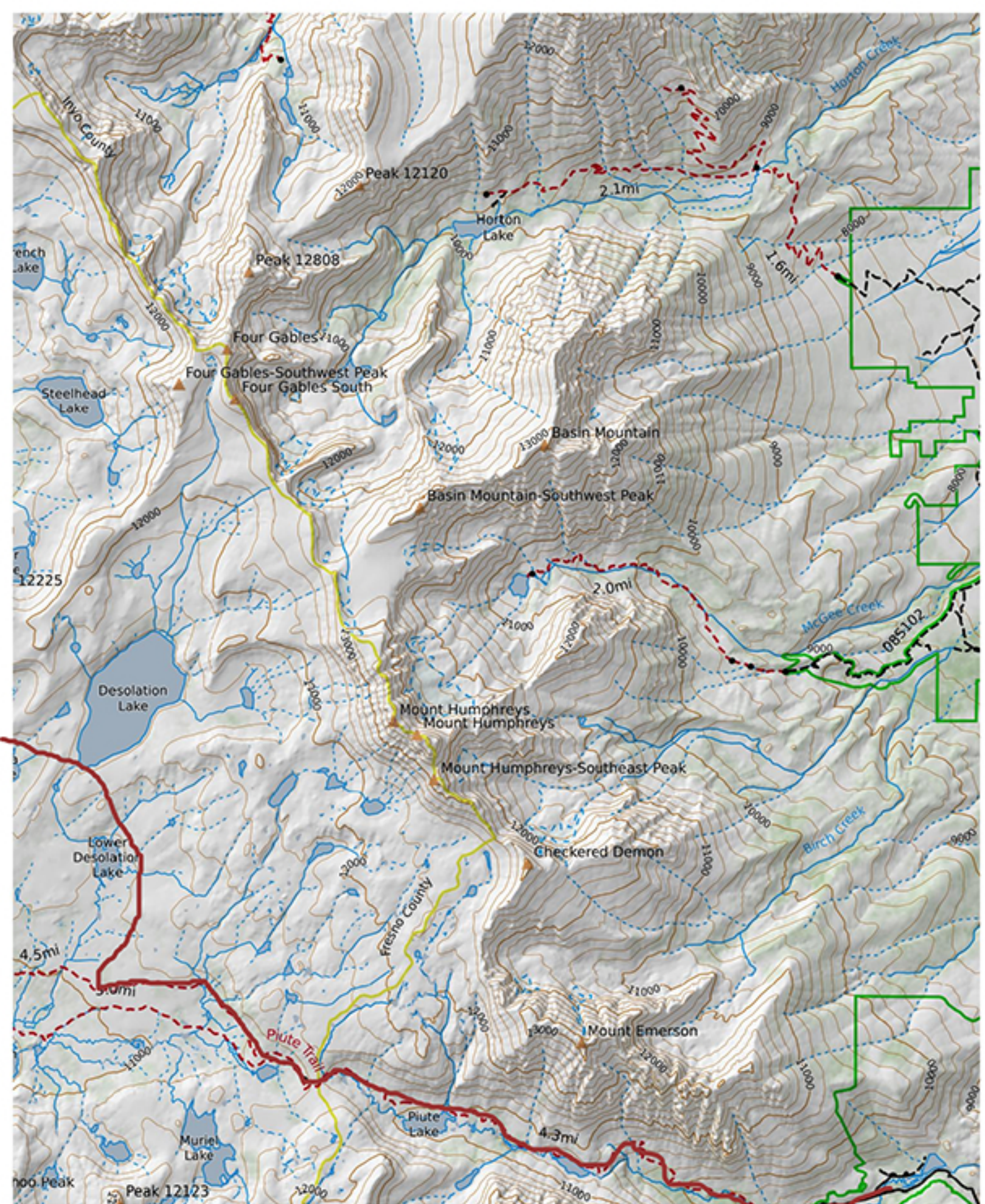


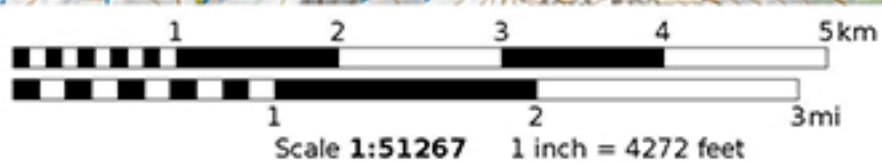


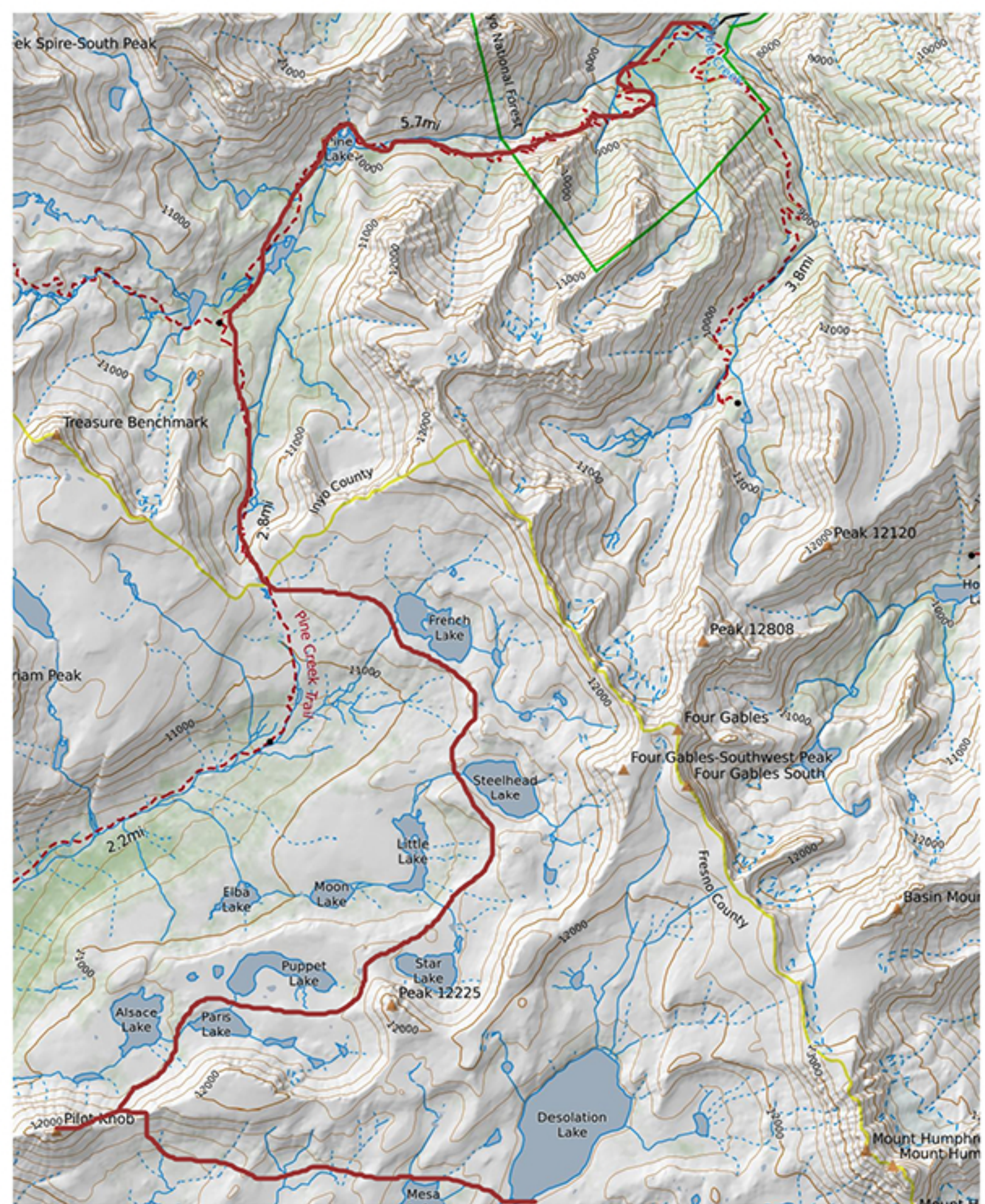
Mercator Projection
 WGS84
 USNG Zone 11SLB
 CalTopo.com





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Pilot Knob & French Canyon alpine lakes fastpack

Distance:

27 miles, point-to-point route requiring car shuttle

Elevation Gain/Loss:

5455' ascent/7235' descent

Altitude Range:

7420' - 12240'

Location:

Start: North Lake, Piute Pass t/h; Finish: Pine Creek t/h

Suggested Map:

Tom Harrison Maps 'Mono Divide High Country'

Suggested Guidebook:

RJ Secor's 'The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes & Trails'

Time Of Year:

Summer/Fall

Direction From Bishop:

To North Lake t/h: take West Line St (State Route 168W) through Aspendell then turn right, following signs to North Lake; t/h hiker parking is on the far side of North Lake near the pack station & about ¾ mile from the trailhead proper, which is next to the campground and has no hiker parking

To Pine Creek t/h: 395 North to left turn onto Pine Creek Rd. Parking is on left next to the pack station, just before the Tungsten Mine.

Route Description:

Take trail approximately 5.5 miles to 11425' Piute Pass . Descend the west side of the pass approximately 1.5 miles, crossing several creeks. After crossing these creeks the trail will climb gently onto a broad southward-sloping flat area that is part of Humphreys Basin. Begin paying attention for a trail that takes off to the right (north). This trail junction is unsigned and easy to miss. The trail is unmaintained but is quite obvious, as long as you don't miss the junction. (If you come to a more significant creek crossing this is the creek draining the Desolation Lakes and you have missed the junction and gone too far.) Take this use trail to the south shore of huge Desolation Lake at 11375'. From here contour west, cross country past and above Mesa, Square and Knob Lakes, dipping in and out of these lake's drainages just below the steeper terrain coming off of the long eastern ridge of Pilot Knob. Aim to top out on this ridge in the saddle just east of Pilot Knob at about 11600'. From this saddle it is a fun scramble on

increasingly solid rock to the summit, with tremendous 360 views. Descend back to the saddle, then drop down steep talus to Alsace Lake at 11200' on the French Canyon side. The cross country travel is very easy in the alpine terrain east of French Canyon and there are dozens of lakes to explore as you arc to the north and eventually make the short drop down to Pine Creek Pass at 11135'. The route we ended up doing went past the following lakes: Alsace, Paris, Puppet, Star, L & French. If you stay a little higher & a little further east you explore numerous other smaller lakes before reaching French Lake. From Pine Creek Pass it is about 8 miles and 3700' of descent, much of it coming after Pine Lake in the last 3 miles, to the trailhead.