

SUBWAY CAVE, LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST

Our first stop after arriving in the Lassen National Forest area was to check out the Subway Cave Lava Tube. This is where the staircase descends into the lava tube:



The walls of the lava tube were very smooth; I'm not particularly familiar with lava tubes, but I think this smooth-walled type of lava tube is in general more common than the rougher-walled ones I've seen in other parts of California:



The trail descended into the lava tube where there had been a collapse of the rock above the tube:



This was the last good photo of the lava tube I could get before it became too dark. I only brought my iPhone on this hike, and I was surprised at how well the iPhone did in this low lighting, even with the built-in flash:



Here's the view looking back at the entrance to the lava tube:



It is highly recommended that each visitor to this lava tube carries a good light. We had one large flashlight and one small LED flashlight for three people, and this was certainly not ideal lighting (three large flashlights would have been better—you need to be able to see your footing so that you don't trip, the ceiling so you don't hit your head, and where you are going because there are some large alcoves in the lava tube where the route could become confusing, as seen in the picture below; the small LED flashlight could only do one of these at once):



There are multiple small informative signs in the lava tube that explain some of the features of this lava tube; the one below has a map of the lava tube as well:



This iPhone flash photo turned out better than most:



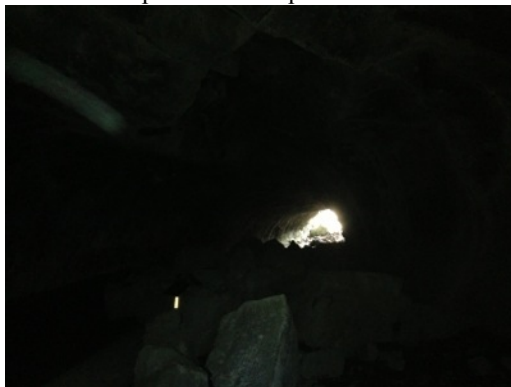
There was quite a bit of water dripping down the walls of the lava tube while we were there:



Up ahead is another place where the ceiling of the lava tube collapsed:



This is where a good light becomes very helpful, because there are some large rocks in this part of the lava tube which one must navigate around, and the light from the end of the tube up ahead isn't quite sufficient to avoid tripping:



This is the exit to the lava tube; notice how dark it is inside without a flashlight on in this photo:



Just past the rock pile where the trail exits the lava tube, the lava tube appears to reach a dead end:



We exited the lava tube and admired the nice view of the Lassen National Forest:



From here, we headed back to the beginning of the lava tube to see if it continued in the other direction. It does indeed continue, and it in fact splits into two directions almost immediately. First, however, I should note that we inquired about this part of the lava tube at the rangers' station afterwards and found the following important information:

- 1) For the safety of the bats which live in this part of the lava tube, the right fork has been closed off (as seen in the picture below). This is because of the risk of white nose syndrome for the resident bats (so, if entering the lava tube, please make sure that any clothing, footwear, etc. which has previously been in a cave or lava tube has been thoroughly cleaned before entering this lava tube—this decreases the risk of transmitting the disease to these bats).
- 2) The left fork soon becomes smaller, so that it is easy for one to get injured (or potentially lost) if exploring this part of the lava tube.

Consequently, exploring this part of the lava tube is not recommended. We only briefly checked out the fork in the lava tube, where we could still easily see light from the outside, and did not continue further due to safety concerns:



This is the view looking back out of this part of the lava tube from the fork; notice the old rock staircase to the right in the photo. Prior to the construction of the newer concrete staircase which now leads only to the other part of the lava tube, the trail also went into this part of the lava tube:

