



## Heart Lake (Big Creek):

**Difficulty:** *Challenger*

**Distance:** 1.0 miles

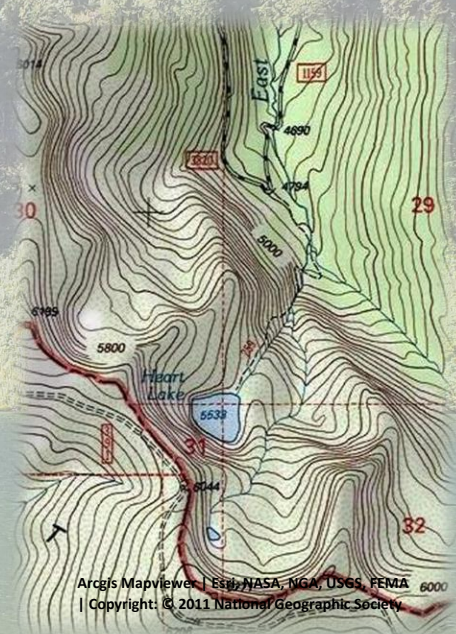
**Trailhead Elevation:** 4800 feet; **Trailhead Lat/Long:** 47°17'32.42"N / 115°27'9.92"W

**Lake Elevation:** 5555 feet; **Lake Lat/Long:** 47°17'5.89"N / 115°27'16.85"W



**Getting There:** Take the Haugen (\$50,000 Bar) exit and head up Big Creek (#386) south of the interstate. Big Creek Road is the paved road that goes left around the fireworks stands. There are several roads in the first 3 miles that take off to the left and cross Big Creek. Stay straight on the main road up the East Fork of Big Creek, it can be a bit rough the further up you go but is car passable.

At the 6-mile mark you will encounter 2 short switchbacks. Take both switchbacks where road #1159 starts and continues up the East Fork of Big Creek. At 8.0 miles, there is a relatively new gate that was open in October of 2024, 0.5 miles down from the trailhead. The unmarked trailhead is 2 tenths of a mile past the small bridge crossing the East Fork of Big Creek on a steep corner, but there is a good place to park.



Heart Lake 1984

There is no signage for the trail but is #259 on topo maps. The trail starts out as an old road with a gentle grade (just to fool you); after a 1/4 mile the old road turns right and quickly becomes a trail and heads right up the hill. The trail is very steep and sometimes slick as you follow the outlet creek closely up the drainage headwall. The whole





Kelly & Myself Heart Lake 2020



*distance to the lake is less than a mile but a tough go.*

*It will take 30-45 minutes to make the climb, the hotter the day the worse it is. Be careful coming down the trail as there are sections with loose rocks that like to roll under your boot and the section by the outlet creek is always greasy slick. It may actually take you longer to come down from the lake than to go to Heart Lake.*



Heart Lake 2020

**At the Lake:** *The lake itself is not large, but with a marginal trail around the lake, a lot of brush and deadfalls it is hard to get around. There is a*

*campsite to the right of the outlet as the trail arrives at the lake. The site looks to be hammock friendly for those that use them instead of ground tents as there is a little band of trees that would look to fill that purpose. Fishing is usually good for Cutthroats as I catch fish every time I have fished this lake. Stocking is on a 7-year interval and 2019 was the last stocking. Generally speaking, this is a lake you can get away from everybody else as it is out of the way and a difficult climb. The trail has changed over the years as I remember the first time (1984), I went into the lake the trail itself did not follow the outlet stream straight up the hill.*



Catch in October 2024





*Lakes of the Great Burn & More*



**Heart Lake 1984**



**Heart Lake 2024**



**Heart Lake 2024**



**Heart Lake 2024**





*Lakes of the Great Burn & More*



**Skye Taking a Swim**



**Heart Lake 2025**



**Heart Lake 2025**



**Heart Lake 2024**

