



Heart Lake (Dry Creek):

Dry Creek Trail 151 Route:

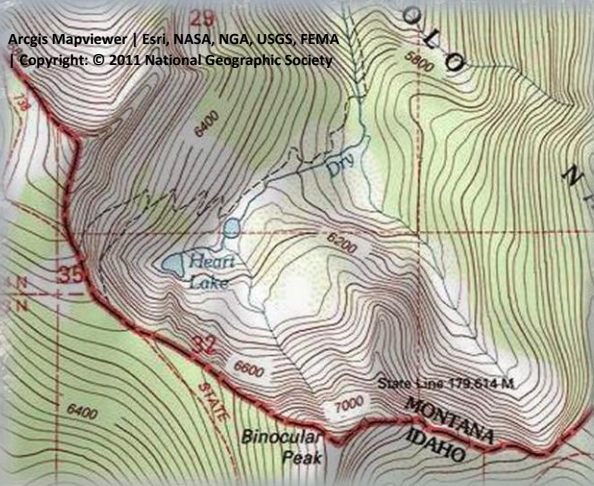
Difficulty: *Challenger (due to some brushy cross country and route finding)*

Distance: 6.0 miles

Trailhead Elevation: 3825 feet; Trailhead Lat/Long: 47°10'21.87"N / 115° 7'44.33"W

Lake Elevation: 6190 feet; Lake Lat/Long: 47° 6'30.79"N / 115°10'4.79"W

Getting There: Take the Dry Creek Road exit off I-90, about 5 miles West of Superior. Cross the railroad tracks on the Southside Highway (#69); after about 3/4 mile, hang a right on Dry Creek Road #342. After about 8 miles there will be a large pull out and a prominent sign for the Dry Creek Trail #151. There is a 2-log bridge across the creek, I wouldn't cross more than 1 person at a time; it is about an 8–10-foot drop into the creek, and I don't think it is totally stable.



You will follow trail #151 all the way to the small lake / pond below Heart Lake and then is a short but brushy 100-foot climb to the Lake. The trail is in good condition for most of its length. It is used fairly heavily by hunters and other horse packers. There are a number of short but steep climbs followed by nice stretches of level or downhill grades. However, there are a couple spots in the upper part of the drainage above the main



Heart Lake 2023

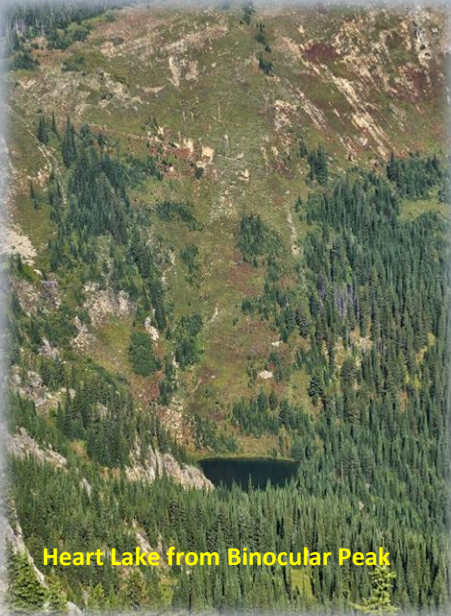


Heart Lake 2023, Lower Pond

hunters' camp where the trail disappears for short distances. These are in a couple of open areas. It can take a few minutes to decipher where the trail goes to.

The first disappearance isn't too hard to find as the trail fades after crossing an open slope, but head for a large, downed tree on the edge of the open area and the trail picks up just after that. The second disappearance is about a mile later. The trail appears to become part of a dry stream, it does. Look for set water bars in the dry water course to keep you on the right track. When the





Heart Lake from Binocular Peak

trail appears to completely disappear, angle to your left into the trees. It becomes well-defined and you cross the creek shortly.

The last push (mile) up to the lower pond is a steep climb that switchbacks up the hill. I took the trail that crosses the pond outlet and goes around the left side, it ends abruptly at the head of the pond. From there I traversed around the swampy area and climbed up through the rocks to Heart Lake.

On the way back, I traversed the hillside on the opposite side and down to the pond outlet, picking up the trail after crossing the outlet stream at the pond.

Neither of these routes are especially easy, the traverse over and down to the pond was steep and brushy. I could not identify the last part of trail #151 that climbs up to the state line from the pond outlet stream, but the upper parts of the trail are easily visible from below.



No Trail Sign

State Line Trail 738 Route

Distance: 5.0 miles

Trailhead Elevation: 6300 feet; **Trailhead Lat/Long:** 47° 8'55.87"N / 115°13'34.02"W

Lake Elevation: 6190 feet; **Lake Lat/Long:** 47° 6'30.79"N / 115°10'4.79"W

Getting There: Instead of taking Dry Creek Trail 151, continue up Dry Creek Road #342 staying right at the fork to Diamond and Cliff Lakes to the Idaho / Montana state line, an additional 10 miles. From there head south on the state line trail #738 for a little over 4 miles. Don't mistake the small tarn just past Eagle Cliff as Heart Lake, Heart Lake rests below Binocular Peak a mile or



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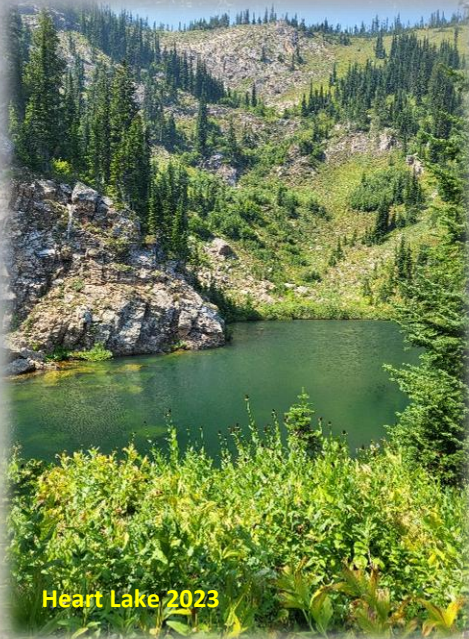




so further. As you head down the hill to the low saddle before Binocular Peak you will hit a trail junction. This is the junction for Dry Creek trail #151 and USFS trail #77, which theoretically will get you Heller Creek Campground on the St Joe River. Trail #151 has (or had) a sign saying No Trail (see picture), it is the correct trail that angles across the slope above Heart Lake. Once on the Dry Creek Trail #151, I would suggest leaving the trail after a couple hundred yards and head straight down the hill to Heart Lake



Heart Lake from Binocular Peak



Heart Lake 2023

as the trail itself does not go to the lake but should end up just below the unnamed pond below Heart Lake. The open hillside, although steep, is easy to climb down and back up from the lake and not brushy. Like a lot of stretches along the state line it is mostly dry. The small tarn on the Montana side at mile 3 and the small basin above Feather Lake on the Idaho side at mile 3.5 can potentially provide water after a short but steep climb down. If you are hiking through to Bonanza Lakes or Cascade Pass there is a year-round stream about 1.5 miles down the trail on the southwest side of Binocular Peak. This stream crossing is also the point where the old trail to Frog Lake splits off from the main trail.

At the Lake: Heart Lake is very small; much like Lenore Lake but the shoreline is easily accessible but a bit brushy on the left side. To the right of the outlet is a small campsite that will hold 1 tent and fire ring. There were just some remnants of a fire there on the day I visited the lake. There are no fish in the lake, but it is a lake to get away from everyone for a couple days; chances are that I was the only human visitor in 2023. There is a nice place to camp on the right side of the Lower Pond outlet that is quite a bit larger than at the actual Heart Lake. This might be a better option.



Heart Lake 2023





Lakes of the Great Burn & More

Bonus Route: *If a group wanted to do a point-to-point hike and shuttle vehicles, it is possible to go from start of the state line trail at the top of Dry Creek and then continue down trail #151 all the way back to Dry Creek Road. The upper part of 151 is very primitive and hard to find but it should come out near the unnamed pond below Heart Lake. I could not find the trail, but I was able to head to the pond outlet and then picked up a trail on the other side of the stream that I came in on. If you are doing this route, you might as well drop into Heart Lake and go from there. Apart from the 2 areas where the trail vanishes for 100 yards or so, the trail is good all the way. This would be approximately 12 miles in total length.*

