



## Heart Lake (Trout Creek):

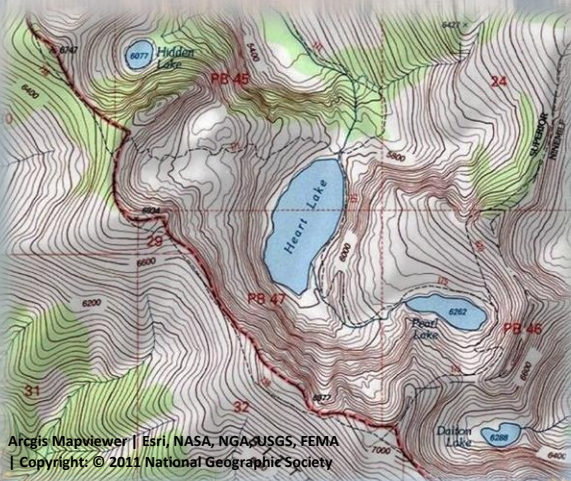
**Distance:** 3.0 miles

**Trailhead Elevation:** 4675 feet; **Trailhead Lat/Long:** 46°59'0.91"N / 114°58'41.86"W

**Lake Elevation:** 5750 feet; **Lake Lat/Long:** 46°57'9.17"N / 114°58'8.46"W



**Getting There:** At Superior, take Diamond Road east past the Town Pump Gas Station for 6 miles; passing the Bark mill and the Magone Ranches to the end of the pavement where the road changes to Trout Creek Road (#250). Continue up Trout Creek Road (~14 miles) to the Heart Lake Trailhead. There is a vault toilet and parking for over 20 vehicles; and that capacity is needed on most summer weekends. Trail #171 takes off on the far side of the parking area. The trail wanders gently through the bottoms, gradually climbing up the valley for 2+ miles. Then the trail turns up the hill and climbs much steeper for the next 3/4 mile to Heart Lake.



ArcGIS Mapviewer | Esri, NASA, NOAA, USGS, FEMA  
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**At the Lake:** Heart Lake is the second biggest lake in the Great Burn area next to Fish Lake.

There are a number of battered campsites scattered to the right of the outlet and along the left shoreline. There is a reason why there is a vault toilet and parking for 20-30 vehicles at the trailhead. There are also 2 back county toilets at the lake. One near the outlet and the other near the far end of the lake off trail #175.

This lake is a classic example of being overused and degraded by too many people. Kathy and I went for a day hike to the lake several years ago and there were at least a dozen (if not



Heart Lake 2019





more) parties camped around the lake. One fellow had his tent set up on the main trail, it was a convenient flat spot. Overall, we saw at least 50 people that day on the trail and near the outlet and there must have been 30 vehicles parked at or near the trailhead. The scenery is still spectacular and yes, it is a wonderful location, but it was like going to Priest Lake.



Heart Lake 1981

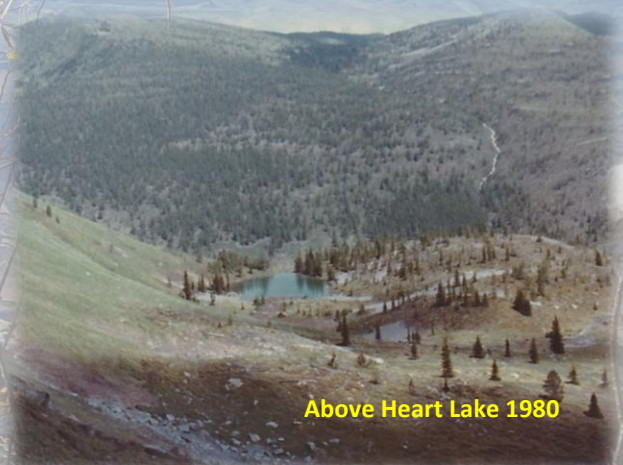
Because the lake is so big, the fishing remains adequate for brook trout. Don't be surprised to see goats hanging around the campsites during the day, they are not very wild. Part of the reason for this lake and trail guide is to help spread some of the pressure to other lesser known but equally spectacular areas.



Heart Lake 2024

In high school we used to ride our motorcycles up to Heart Lake. The old trail had 2 crossings of the main creek in the first 1/2 mile and they could be difficult crossing even during the summer. Chuck Bauer once dumped his bike in the creek. He proceeded to take the engine apart using the little tool kit that sat under the seat so he could drain the water out of the motor.

Because the Diamond Match Mill had a logging camp over in Idaho at the Cedars, they plowed Trout Creek Road for much of the winter. This provided some exceptional winter access to the lakes and backcountry along the state line during the winter. I skied into Heart Lake multiple times during high school and my early 20's. Back in those days my ski equipment was rather lacking in quality and my skiing skills were similar. I solo'd into the lake one day and as I was putting my skis back on after lunch; the bale on the classic 3 pin binding snapped in half. No amount of duct tape could properly hold my shoe in what was left of my binding. I ended up skiing the 3 miles out on one ski. As luck would have it, Chuck



Above Heart Lake 1980





Above Heart Lake 1985, looking at Crater Mtn & Goose Lake



*Bauer and I skied into the lake the next weekend and his binding broke in the same manner at the lake. He fussed with it for 10 minutes or so, then suddenly looked at me and noted that since this just happened to me, I probably had a spare. Which I did, but I wanted to let him work some frustrations out.*

**Heart / Pearl Lake Loop:** A popular day hike option is to complete a loop to the state line trail and then back to Heart

*Lake. Once at Heart Lake, cross the outlet and continue around the left side of the lake on trail #175. Continue on Trail #175 past Pearl Lake to the saddle between Pearl and Dalton, then head right up the ridge to connect up with the state line trail #738. Follow the state line trail north for about 1.6 miles where you will connect with Trail #171 that will take you into the basin above Heart Lake and eventually back down to Heart Lake. I completed this loop in 2023 and the trail was in good shape. Take Trail #171 back to the trailhead for a total of 10.5 miles for the day. Add to your day by dropping into Dalton Lake before heading up to the state line trail.*



Heart Lake Oct 6, 2023

*I have been hiking and camping along the state line for more than 50 years, but I find there are times that still*

Kathy @ Heart Lake 2019



*defy proper description for its beauty. The weekend of October 6 & 7, 2023, was one of those times. Usually, by this date the state line already has some snow and winter is well on its way. The year of 2023 though provided one of the grandest October weekends that I can ever remember. On the 6th I did a day hike into Heart, Pearl and Dalton Lakes and a side trip to the top of Fletcher Gulch. On the 7th, I hiked into Hidden Lake.*





Lakes of the Great Burn & More



Heart Lake 2025



Heart Lake 1982



Heart Lake 1981



Heart Lake 2024



Heart Lake 2024





*Lakes of the Great Burn & More*



Heart Lake Oct 22, 2025



Heart Lake Oct 6, 2023



Heart Lake Oct 22, 2025

