



Most Memorable Hikes, Idaho & Oregon

by Larry Robinson, Summer 2019

*Maps & Photos are in the Second Section of this Document. **The bold-faced list is hyperlinked to description of the area in Question.** Maps/Photos are hyperlinked from each location.*

Also, if you plan on trying any of the hikes listed here, Margaret Fuller's books are a necessity for Idaho hiking. She produced 4 books that I am aware of:

- 1) *Trails of the Sawtooths & White Clouds*
- 2) *Trails of Western Idaho*
- 3) *Trails of Eastern Idaho*
- 4) *Trails of the Frank Church*

For hiking the Eagle Cap, the best resource/guide is: Hiking Oregon's Eagle Cap Wilderness

- #1) Eagle Cap Wilderness, OR**
- #2) White Cloud Mountains, ID**
- #3) Sawtooth Mountains, ID**
- #4) Crimson - Tango Lakes, ID (Western Edge Frank Church Wilderness)**
- #5) Iris Lakes - Lost Lake, ID (Southwestern Edge Frank Church Wilderness)**
- #6) Bighorn Crag, ID (Frank Church Wilderness)**
- #7) Copper Basin, ID (Pioneer Mountains)**
- #8) Merriam-Pass Lakes, ID (Lost River Range)**
- #9) Kelly-Marten-Elizabeth Lakes, ID (Sawtooth Basin)**
- #10) Lynx Creek Lakes, ID (Southwest Sawtooth Wilderness)**
- #11) Moon Lake, ID (Southwest Edge Frank Church Wilderness)**
- #12) Bernard Lake, ID (Northwest Corner Bear Valley, Central Idaho)**

(I have to place a caveat here, and that is, that from the pictures I have seen of the Bridger-Teton/Wind River Range in Wyoming, hiking there would have to be at the top of the list for most beautiful territory. The High Uintas in Utah is another spectacular area that deserves honorable mention.)

- #1) Eagle Cap Wilderness, OR.** <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2011/eaglecap/eaglecap.html>
Maps/Pictures, Page 14 <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2015/eaglecap/eaglecap.html>
<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/eaglecap/eaglecaporegon.html>

[My favorite/recommended way to see this area is the loop I describe]

The Eagle Cap wilderness contains a cluster of lakes that are not only spectacular in their own right, but also because there is so much granite/granite shelves in this particular area. Although Mirror and Glacier Lakes are likely to have a lot of company, there are a whole lot more lakes to see that are usually quite lonely. There are three access points into the Eagle Cap, the Two Pan TH from Lostine, the Hurricane Creek TH from Hurricane Creek road, near the south end of the Joseph, OR airport, and the Wallowa Lake TH at the end of Power House road, near the Wallowa Lake SP. It is the TH of choice if

your destination is Ice Lake, but to access the main body of Eagle Cap lakes, it would involve a whole lot of steep climbing going and coming. The Hurricane Creek TH I am not familiar with, as the only time I planned on taking it, it was closed by a fire the night before I hit the trail. I have hiked several times from the Two Pan TH, and it is a relatively easy way to access the lakes, a couple of climbs up shelves, then a long journey up the East Fork Lostine River drainage, then up another shelf to come out at Mirror Lake. Mirror Lake is indeed spectacular, but like Glacier Lake, loved a bit too much, and therefore not really a good camping destination if one is into solitude.

My route around this area after coming out at Mirror Lake, is to follow the trail to the east round Mirror Lake, down to Moccasin Lake, past the Glacier Lake intersection, on around Moccasin Lake, on to Douglas Lake (good camping), past Douglas Lake, past the intersection to Crescent Lake, to the intersection for Lee and Horseshoe Lakes, take the left (north) branch up and around the basin to the poorly marked intersection with the Razz Lake trail. Now, that having been said, if you are going to tackle Razz Lake, which I consider a must see, it is not only a 800' climb, but pretty much a commitment to an overnight. It is also a 'hiker's' trail, not always distinct, and therefore requires good navigation skills. From the Razz Lake intersection, the trail curls around above Horseshoe Lake, and comes out at the east end of Horseshoe. Another good camping location (possibly a bit more busy). The trail continues around Horseshoe Lake up and pass Lee Lake, back up to Douglas, and on to the Moccasin Lake intersection for Glacier Lake. The trail to Glacier goes up about 2 miles and over a ridge, then with a fairly short downhill to Glacier. As I have noted before, Glacier is likely to be busy, and a good option for camping, if camping spots are in short supply, is the pothole lake around Glacier to the south side and up a bit. It is almost never used because you can't directly see Glacier from this point. In this area are Prospect, Frazier and Little Frazier Lakes. Neither Frazier lake is worth the effort, but Prospect is a spectacular scenic wonder. The downside it is terminally difficult to access. From the pothole south of Glacier, one has to scramble up a very steep scree slope to a ridge, then down a short way to the lake. In short, it is worth the effort. The one other must-see destination is Pocket Lake. However, the down side, is that to visit this one, you will earn it! It is off-trail, and can be accessed from a couple of directions, but from the very definite shelf you reach coming down from the ridge north of Glacier, around the granite cliffs, then up the drainage to Pocket seems to be the optimal approach.

This pretty much sums up the best of the Eagle Cap, but there are others to be sure. Moon, Hidden, Minam and Blue lake(s) can be accessed from Upper Mirror Lake and over the ridge, but you have already seen the best of the best and anything else would be an anti-climax. ☺

#2) White Cloud Mountains, ID. <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2008/whclouds/whclouds.html>

Maps/Pictures Page 18 <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2009/wc2009/wc2009.html>

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2011/whiteclouds/whiteclouds.html>

[My favorite/recommended way to see this area is the loop I describe]

(The best reference material for this area is Margaret Fuller's book, *Trails of the Sawtooth and White Clouds*) The White Cloud Mountains are one of 4 distinct mountainous areas in the vicinity of Stanley, ID. In essence, they form a circle around the Stanley basin, one of the most spectacularly beautiful areas in Idaho. Each of these distinctive areas have must-see attractions, but the Sawtooths and the White Clouds are the premier destinations. The Smoky & Boulder Mountains are on the south end of the Sawtooth and White Cloud mountain areas respectively. The White Cloud mountains areas deserving a visit are bounded by 4th of July/Washington Lakes on the south end, and the Big Boulder Basin on the north. Of all the areas, the Boulder Chain Lakes basin probably has the most lakes and most scenic potential. If one has the time, the best way to take it all in, is beginning at the 4th of July TH, over to Born Lakes, then by a hiker's trail over a ridge into the 4 Lakes Basin, down to Quiet Lake, a side trip down to Noisy Lake, then back up to Quiet and the trail up to Scree & Shallow lakes. From the north side of Shallow Lake up into

a ledge above, over Windy Devil Pass, down into the Boulder Chain Lakes Basin. The upper end of this basin has Hummock, Hidden, Headwall & Scoop Lakes (and Lonesome Lake also, but a real grunt to get up to, and it is a more or less featureless scree lake that will have you wondering, "What was I thinking?" At least I was ☺) The trail from there goes east down the basin past Lodgepole, Sliderock, Shelf and Hatchet Lakes (Hatchet is a common horse camp and marginal camping location) and then Willow Lake, where the trail intersects with the trail north past Frog lakes, via a steep climb over to the intersection with the trail that goes up into the Big Boulder Basin. From the intersection it is about a 5-mile hike up to Walker Lake which is the entry point into the Big Boulder Basin as well as the campsite for the day hikes in this basin. There are three distinct basins of their own within the larger Big Boulder Basin, the north, middle & lower basins (my terms, see the map). The north basin is an unadulterated grunt and takes 1 full day to access. Another day can be spent seeing the middle basin, then over the ridge down into the lower basin and the 7 lakes in this basin. From there back to Walker Lake and the campsite. An option, instead of using the trail to get to Island Lake, is to go south from Cove Lake, down the scree slope down to Island Lake and the good camping there. From there, back down to the intersection, back past Frog Lakes, past the trail up to the Boulder Chain Lakes basin, over the pass into the Chamberlain Basin, see the lakes in this basin, of which the Arrowhead lake up the basin is the best camping, then back down to the bottom of the basin, where the trail crosses a pass, then travels up to Washington Lake, then 4th of July lake, and the trailhead.

There are two common access points into this area. The one I described, and the other at Livingston Mill on the east side of this area. It is accessed via the East Fork Salmon River road, and is quite an effort to get to coming from the Boise area, and a whole lot of extra miles. Forth-of-July is clearly the best option.

#3) Sawtooth Mountains, ID. <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2018/sawtooth/sawtooth.html>

(The best reference material for this area is Margaret Fuller's book, *Trails of the Sawtooth and White Clouds*)

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My favorites:

Lake Kathryn

Alpine Creek Lakes Area

Sawtooth Lake and 8489

Braxxon Lake

Timpa Lake

Cramer Lakes (Too much love here. Way beautiful, but normally crowded. See them & move on. ☺)

Imogene

Alice-Twin lakes

Ardeth Lake

10 Lakes Basin

(I heartily suspect that the Goat Creek drainage, 13 or more lakes, would have easily made the list, but it is wildly difficult to access, and doesn't allow stock, which stops me and my goats cold)

(It is also my belief that 8771 below Sawtooth Lake deserves an Honorable Mention, I just haven't been able to see it... yet)

The Sawtooths as a whole has dozens and dozens of lakes and doesn't lend itself well to circle routes. I will list the best I have seen in my opinion.

Redfish Area: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2007/baron827/baron827.html>

The trail actually begins at the Transfer Camp (TC) at the south end of Redfish Lake. Transportation to the TC is via a frequent launch from the Redfish Lodge. Not sure how much it costs now as it has been many years since the last time I took it. From there the trail goes to an intersection. **The right-hand**

branch goes up to one of three Alpine Lakes, Alpine Lk (8331) then over the ridge into the Baron Lakes drainage. The Baron Lakes are waaay too loved, but there is a wonderful camping area right in the middle of this area that is virtually untraveled: Braxxon Lake. It is reached up a short off-trail jaunt up a drainage just prior to the first Baron Lake (Baron Lakes are also reached from Grandjean CG TH).

The left-hand branch of the previously mentioned intersection begins a loop, that travels up to the Cramer Lakes area, one of the more beautiful locations, and just one more too-much-loved area. From there it crosses a pass, travels down past Hidden Lake (good camping option), then down to Virginia Lake, then Edna Lake to an intersection. From the left hand branch of that intersection it climbs a long and very arduous climb up to another intersection, the right-hand branch takes you down to Toxaway Lake, the right-hand branch up to a high meadow, then another climb up and over to a long downhill set of switchbacks to another junction, the left goes to Imogene Lake, and the right down to Edith, Farley and to a TH at Alice Lake. From Imogene Lake, the trail continues down to Hell Roaring. At the end of HRoaring (the only ho-hum I am aware of in the Sawtooths) another intersection. The left-hand branch takes you across the Sawtooth front past the Decker Creek drainage, and eventually down the south side of Redfish Lake, and around the end back to the Transfer Camp. The right hand takes you a short hike to the HRoaring TH.

Upper Redfish Lakes-Lake Kathryn:

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<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2006/Upper%20Redfish/upredf8-11.html>

From Alpine Lake (8331) mentioned above, traveling up the drainage on the southwest end of the lake, up and over the top of the ridge will take you to the Upper Redfish Lakes. Continuing on to the southernmost lake takes you to Lake Kathryn, potentially one of the most beautiful lakes in the Sawtooths.

Sawtooth-Alpine (7823)-Goat Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2004/hkswthlk/hkswthlk.html>

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These lakes are all in much the same area and accessed via the Iron Creek TH. Sawtooth Lake is astoundingly beautiful, but you will have plenty of company. The other two, not so much. If you should happen to go to Sawtooth Lake, one of the best camping areas I have found is on the south end of Sawtooth Lake, about a mile down the drainage, at a lake labeled 8271 on the Topo. On the northwest end of this lake is a camping area that sits about 30-40 feet above the lake, and gives a wonderful catbird seat over the lake and activity therein. Since I like to sit into the dusk and watch the bats do their thing it was as good a camping spot as I have found. In this same area are McGown Lakes. Don't bother. They are in the center of an area devastated by fire, they are not only are definitely *NOT* attractive at this time, there is no place to camp that wouldn't expose you to one of the dead trees giving up the ghost and falling as they do with great regularity. Better to camp with the 'thundering hordes' than at one of these lakes.

Sawtooth-McGown-Trail Creek Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2018/sawtooth/sawtooth.html>

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This is a reverse loop that began in Grandjean, went up the Baron Creek drainage to the junction of Baron Creek and North Fork Baron Creek, then up the North Fork to Sawtooth Lake, then up to McGown Lakes, on down to the Trail Creek Lakes intersection, up to Trail Creek Lakes and overnight, then back to Grandjean. An ambitious undertaking, and one that sucked my energy reserves dry. From the top of the ridge on the northwest side of Sawtooth Lake, it was a burn area, and a burn area that was completely devoid of any trees whatsoever, and a great number of trees that had elected to lie down to rest. SO much so that the intersection of this trail and the Trail Creek Lakes trail was nearly inaccessible. On the way out we passed a trail crew that was doing their best to clean up this incredible mess, but it was a herculean job to be sure.

Trail Creek Lakes: These are in the same general area as Sawtooth, but are very difficult to access and in the same burn as well. Better to access these from the TH at the Grandjean CG. But beware, it is approximately a 2800' climb from Grandjean to the Trail Creek Lakes.

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Ardeth-Edna-Vernon-Virginia Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2015/sawtoothsedna/sawtoothsedna.html>

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These are all in the same general area. Edna is the go-to destination, plus a possible horse camp, leaving the others begging for company. Virginia is one of the other best camping spots I have seen. Most of it is on scrub grass, and not on the usual dirt. Ardeth is probably the prettiest of all of them as it has a decided deep turquoise tint, and that plus it's well defined cirque location. Coming up the trail from Granjean to Ardeth is a long, but gradual, climb that isn't really that difficult. On the other hand, coming up and over from Vernon is a real grunt. Lousy footing makes it real difficult travel.

10 Lakes Basin: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2015/grandjean-tenlkbasin/grandjean-tenlkbasin.html>

Pictures/Maps: Page 27 <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2018/10lakebasin/10lakebasin.html>

Many folks looking at the Topo consider 'Edna & company' as the '10 Lakes Basin'. It is not. The 10 lakes basin is actually on a shelf up and above Ardeth, and in my mind a very special place. Not only is it waaay off the beaten path, and an off-trail venture, but I am absolutely fascinated by it. Can't 'splain that, but I just love it. Maybe it is the almost complete lack of company.

Spangle-Ingeborg-Rockslide-Three Island-Everly-Plummer Lakes:

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2007/wsawtooth/wsawtooth.html>

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These are in the same general area of the Sawtooths. They can be accessed over the pass above the 10 Lakes Basin, but more traditionally are found by traveling up the Powerplant Trail out of Atlanta, ID. It is a long grunt with significant climbing.

Timpa-Surprise-Chickadee-Confusion Lakes:

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<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2007/wsawtooth/wsawtooth.html>

are also in the above area. They are accessed via the Powerplant Trail out of Atlanta, trekking 10 miles, and then taking the left-hand branch at an intersection where you cross, then leave, the middle fork of the Boise River, which the Powerplant Trail follows to that point. The wonderful thing about Timpa Lake is that it has GREAT camping, and if you asked 99.87% of the hikers you ran into about Timpa Lake, they would say, "Where's that??" That, is a good thing, I'm thinkin. From Timpa, you can cross Low Pass, above Low Pass Lake, which puts you right in the center of the Spangle-Ingeborg-Rock Slide Lake area.

Flytrip Lakes: Another relatively unknown and little-travelled area, via the Powerplant Trail again, is south of 10 Lakes Basin-Toxaway and over ridges into this area. Not seen much of this area, but it is lonely, and that is good. Camp Lake (the normal camping) had a trout with a completely black tail. What's up with that?

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Alice-Twin-Toxaway Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2006/alice606/alice606.html>

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These are very popular locations, with a lot of the traffic doing an Alice to Twin Lakes to Toxaway Loop back to Alice. Twin Lakes is so-so camping, but a heck of a lot less popular as a campsite than either of the others in this area. The TH is found at the west end of Pettit Lake.

Alpine Creek Lakes Area: (No actual Lake names here. All lakes have to be referenced by their altitude)

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2004/mklralpine/mklralpine.html>

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<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2006/alklk91006/alklk91006.html>

This is an astounding area that has few competitors for all around beauty. It is a special area in that it prohibits both stock and fires, and depending on how you count them, upwards of 20 lakes. As well as some great fishing. This area is accessed from just beyond the west end of Alturas Lake. The first 3 miles of the trails is beautiful and decidedly unthreatening. Then you arrive at the point where the trail splits and goes to either the north or the west basins. The more popular is the west basin. The trail split is at: 43.90646, 114.95835.

If you are going to the west basin, then you are at the point where the work begins. The trail goes up around 900' in just .6 of a mile. Anything more and you would need ropes, carabiners and pitons. The good news is that since it is so short, if you are in good shape, it goes quite quickly. The first lake you arrive at is 8522. The best camping is about 1/3 of the way around the lake on the south side. BTW: Someone has put up a sign at 8522 that calls this lake, 'Leah Lake', but that is hardly official. I have always done a loop here, going up to 8527, then up and over a small ridge, around clockwise to 8662 and back to camp. Another lake that is frequently accessed from here is 8980. It is around the ridge to the north, and quite dicey to find, or get back from, for that matter. The thing with 8980 is that it is extremely clear, and you can watch the fish as they take your bait.

A better plan is to take your camp around and into the north basin, camping at 8523. In this basin, I found 9050 to be the best fishing. 9167 seemed to be sterile when I was there last. For me it is beautiful enough that I didn't really even mind if I didn't even catch anything.

Queens River-Little Queens River Area: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2010/queens/queens.html>

[My favorite/recommended way to see this area is the loop I describe]

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This is an area of the Sawtooths that is a world unto itself. It is pretty much separate from the rest of the Sawtooths destinations, but it has a world of wonders to be discovered if you have the time and the energy.

The loop I describe is certainly not the only way to do this area, but it worked from me and we saw a whole lot of the unmitigated beauty that was available. The TH is off the Boise (Spring Shores)-Atlanta road to a point about 5 miles south of Atlanta itself. There is a CG called Queens River CG and a road to the north across from the CG. About 7 miles up this road is the Queens River TH & another camping area. From the TH, the trail crosses the Queens River, then splits, with the Little Queens River Trail angling to the west. Doing this trail clockwise seems a better option. The first lake of note is Scenic Lake, which splits off the main trail to the east, just past the large man-made reservoir about 6 miles up this trail. Scenic Lake was quite a grunt, that assessment could have been because we were both very tired. We camped at the first water we saw, and in the morning we climbed up to the real Scenic Lake and beyond, going up the drainage as far as 8676. After lunch back down and on in somewhat of a clockwise circle to 8850, then down the slope stopping eventually at 8375. We were entertained that night by a t-storm that waited to begin until everyone was blissfully on their way to dreamland. Forget that! And since I was stupid enough to not put up a tarp for the goats, now I gotta do it in and amongst the lightning bolts and panicked goats. In what was a major blessing, the rain didn't begin until I was back inside my rainshelter (tent). Morning we headed northeast down the drainage, then in a counterclockwise circle around the steep stuff in order to eventually come out at 8901, which we did, but late enough in the day that it was time to pack it in. Morning's plan was to hike to Triangle lake, then to Diamond Lake, and on to Brown's Lake. But weather intervened. On the way to the top of the ridge over Triangle Lake, after having had lightning at 8am, and noticing a continuing buildup of severe-looking weather, we decided to let discretion be the better part of valor, and bagged the top of the ridge, and headed for the campsites at Brown's lake. We set up our camp, the weather turned severe sunny, so we hoofed it over to Triangle and Diamond Lakes. Morning we headed out for the top of the ridge. We had planned on hitting Johnson Lake, but missed the turnoff (trail was in dire need of maintenance), and so kept on down the trail. This trail was heading down through an old burn, and therefore there were trees on top of trees, on top of trees... ad nauseum. At one point I fell into this mess and was stuck with my head down, and legs pointed straight up. I suppose it was entertaining. I was not correspondingly entertained. Shortly after, and long before the intersection to Pat's Lake, the rain began. How special. This trail had lots and lots of bushes that had overtaken the trail, and by the time we finally did make it to Pats Lake, we were wet up to about the earlobes. Then the sun came out. *Mother nature is a...* We did take advantage of the sun, hung up the wet stuff, and were able to get it, and ourselves, largely dry. Bedtime arrived, things looked

reasonably placid. So dreamland it is. **Then...** sometime well after snoozeville, I began hearing thunder off to the west. Soon it was clear that this unpleasantness was getting closer. WONDERFUL! Then it was overhead. Lightning is crashing, and crashing, and crashing, hitting the hills around us, dislodging rocks which are then a prisoner of gravity. Even the word chaos doesn't really do it justice. Finally it seemed to weary of scaring us to death and moved on towards Plummer Lake. At last one could breathe a sigh of relief, or could one? Began hearing more thunder to the west. And so, lightning, you know, that stuff that never hits the same place twice? Was hitting the same place again, and again. Oh joy. Well, as they all do, it finally wearied of the fun and moved on. But... what is that? Am I hearing thunder again? Yep, you are. When it was all finally over, we had had 3 complete waves of this (original word was censored) stuff, and in the morning I tripped over to hiking partner's tent, and said; "June?", her reply, "Yes?", "Larry consulted Oracle. Oracle said Get Outta Dodge." And we did. We had had 8 days of lightning, in August, twice before 8am. I was fed up. I postulated that I would come back another time, hopefully a time with better weather. We packed up, traveled on up past Arrowhead Lake, over the ridge and down to 8696, then down to the intersection with the Queens River trail (A review: memberize the other trail was the Little Queens River trail). We didn't make it all the way out that night, we had to camp along the trail, but during the night I faintly heard thunder from up where we had been the night before. At that point, it seemed like bailing had been a good decision since our friendly lakes to the north were still playing electrical fun and games.

Baron Lake Drainage-Braxxon Lake

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The Baron Lakes are certainly spectacular, but like the Cramer Lakes, they are loved to the point of squeezing the very life out of them. Like I said before, they are a place to see... and then move on. Braxxon Lake, however, is completely off the radar, and what a blessing that is. Right on the doorstep of the Baron Lakes, but about 1/8th mile off the trail, Braxxon offers primo camping, and the solitude we go into the mountains in search of (and yes, I know I'm not supposed to end a sentence with a preposition). The trail to Braxxon begins at Grandjean, goes up the Baron Creek drainage, and just .9mi before you get to Big Baron Lake, the Braxxon drainage becomes clear. Leave the trail at this point, follow Braxxon Creek about .9mi, and voila! Primo camping. Deer for company.

Cramer Lakes

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These little series of three lakes in the Redfish Lake drainage are some of the prettiest in the Sawtooths. Unfortunately, that simple fact is known throughout the known universe, and as a consequence the crowds descend on this area in the summer. Worth seeing? Unquestionably, but plan so you don't have to camp here. Hidden Lake just up across the ridge and down a ways is a very good off-the-radar option. Getting to Cramer Lakes is via the Redfish Lodge launch to the transfer camp, up to the Alpine Lake intersection and then on the left branch. 8 miles or so brings you to these scenic lakes.

#4) Crimson/Tango Lakes, ID. <http://www.boiselarry.com/recents/2017/crimsonlk/crimsonlk.html>

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These lakes are sort of by themselves in this section of the FC-RONR wilderness (barely, as in barely in the wilderness), and the TH is near the Yankee Fork Dredge, one of Idaho's Historic Landmarks. This lake is in the vicinity of a true 'Red Mountain', as the top of the nearby peak is very red. Interestingly, this group of lakes is right across a 9400' ridge from Knapp Lakes, a group of 15 or so lakes, Fish Lake (8284) & Horseshoe Lake (7994). However the ridge pretty much puts Crimson and Tango Lakes by themselves. The trail begins by descending a ways, then no more than you get down to that level, then the trail climbs up and over a granite promontory, goes for a ways, then back down to river level, the river in question being the west fork of the Yankee Fork. It then goes quite a ways along river level, in just one more of Idaho's burn areas, which makes for very uncomfortable hiking. It then turns and goes up Cabin Creek, climbing gently for quite a ways. At the point where the trail splits, one section going to Crimson Lake, and the other up and over the ridge and eventually down to Loon Creek, the trail to Crimson begins to climb with great enthusiasm. And basically continues somewhat aggressively climbing until you arrive at the lake. There are other very pristine lakes in this cirque that demand exploration, and therefore one needs at least a day to see the rest of this beautiful area.

For Tango Lakes, one must return to where the trail splits, turn north (up), and proceed to 44.43520, 114.85484 where you leave the trail and head up this drainage, looking for a small lake, 8598 on your right, then eventually for 44.44341, 114.87175, which is the low pass into the Tango Lakes drainage. From there, circling clockwise around the cirque, attempting to remain at 8600' or so, should eventually bring one to Lake 8649. After that, down to 8448, then up again to Lake 8730. After that, back down to 8500 or so, skirt the steepness to the left (west), and back up to Lake 8767. After that, back through the low pass, to the trail, and out. There is, in case it is needed, a primo camping area around 44.39122, 114.80094. It is about 3 miles from the TH, and even coming in, it would make sense to camp here, and not have so far to go in the morning.

#5) Iris/Lost Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recents/2011/irislake/irislake.html>.

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<http://www.boiselarry.com/recents/2013/ moonsoldirislk/irislake/irislk.html>

These lakes are on the 'special' list, in part because they are so bloody hard to access, and therefore so bloody devoid of other hikers. They are located just over a tall ridge south of the Soldier Lakes area, which is generally south of the Cape Horn on the way to Stanley, ID, from Boise. There are actually 3 lakes in this chain, but the most southern lake is somewhat of an afterthought, and it appears to not have much of a fishery, if at all. The top lake, the northern one, is the one that some years ago had a fishery. To the degree that fish pushing 20" or more were cruising around the shore. The next time I was in there, there were two of the largest otters I have ever seen in there, and they were literally cleaning house, in terms of the fishery. As a result, the fish I observed the first time were not in evidence. But the fish that the female otter was dragging up and giving to the male were definitely ones I woulda liked to catch. It is definitely time for another visit.

This location is **NOT** accessed up the drainage, which is off the Fall Creek (44.4971, 115.19546). I tried a couple of times and got nowhere. I finally was told to go into the Soldier Lakes area, to this lake (44.52630, 115.20167), then climb up the ridge to (44.52244, 115.20967), then it is a short hop to the south (don't lose any altitude), and then down the steep cirque to the lakes. There is very little chance that you will ever run into any other hikers at this location simply because it is so intimidating to get to. FYI: I have tried other ways to approach this location, but none have proved to be any better than the one I outlined.

Lost Lake: Is in somewhat the same area as Iris Lakes, being up above Helldiver Lake which is on the trail to the Soldier Lakes basin, which originates at Josephus Lake. It is located (44.52894, 115.15939), and from the lake, the trail eventually runs into an old road, that I crosses between the two pieces of Josephus Lake on the Topo. No idea what the fishing is like, but camping is limited. The road to Josephus Lake is not a good road to be sure. It is the same road that exits ID21 at Cape Horn, and goes to Beaver Creek CG, and on to the Langer Lakes TH.

Pictures/Maps: Page 45

#6) Big Horn Crag: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2005/bhc805/bhc805.html>

Map/Pictures 51 <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2014/bighorncrag/bighorncrag.html>

Favorites: Terrace Lakes, Harbor/Wilson, Glacier, the unmarked Lake due south of the SE end of SI

The Big Horn Crag is one of Idaho's finer hiking locations. It is actually located approximately 33 miles due west of Salmon, ID. But the initial turnoff of US93 to gain access is just outside of Challis on Morgan Creek Road. And it is in excess of 60 miles to the Crag CG & TH (I noticed as I was putting this all together that there is a road just south of Salmon that turns west, follows Williams Creek, over Williams Creek Summit, then follows Moccasin Creek and intersects Panther Creek Road [Morgan Creek Road becomes Panther Creek Road after Morgan Summit] just about 6 miles before the turn off to Bighorn Crag CG on Big Deer Creek Road. Possible this might be a better way to access this area, but I have never tried it). FYI: The layout of the trails in this area on the USGS Topo are clearly completely inaccurate, so if you are using a Topo, take the trails, and intersections with a grain of salt... and suspicion. Also, there are two distinct sections to this area. The north which contains Birdbill Lake (the usual camp spot), Ship Island Lake and others, and the south section which is comprised of Welcome Lake (home for every biting bug in this part of Idaho), Terrace & Heart Lakes to the west, and Skyhigh, Reflection, Twin Cove, Fawn and Buck Lakes to the south. The north section is much heavier traveled than the south to be sure. Want solitude? Go south.

The trail begins at the Crag CG. It initially climbs for a ways, goes up and around the mountain then down a ways, back up and over then back down. It intersects with the trail to the south section at a point where there is a depression and marshy area on the east side of the trail*. It is easy to miss, and if you do, you will end up at Welcome Lake (a Horse Outfitters Location and bug central) and will have to do a major climb back to where you can access the north section. At this point, you turn to the right, circling around the base of Cathedral Rock. Remember, the Topo is completely in error in this area and the trails indicated are a far cry from what actually exists.

The North Section:

If you make the turn at the intersection noted, it goes down for a ways, then up a solid climb, and then back down to the next intersection, which is notable as it is like a large notch in the ridge and you can just see Harbor/Wilson Lakes in the distance to the west. Harbor/Wilson need to be visited either coming and going, but the trail to Birdbill Lake turns north at this intersection, steps down the side of the ridge to the east, then across the drainage, up the side of the ridge to the east of Birdbill, around the end to the north and down to Birdbill. The trail marked on the Topo showed the trail going through the notch and hugging Fishfin Ridge very tight. This was impossible to maintain because of insistent rockfalls, and was abandoned for the trail as it exists now.

There are two trails from Birdbill, one to the drainage that Ship Island Lake sits in, and the other which goes over to Glacier, Gooseneck, Crater and Big Clear Lake. Each demand a full day of day hiking. Take a lunch each day.

The trail to Ship Island (SI)(the most common location visited by hikers) crosses the northeast end of Birdbill, climbs the ridge to the west, wanders all over the other side of that ridge on the way down to

SI. The Topo shows the trail going to about the middle of SI, and ending. That is where I stopped, but I am sure that continuing further would be worth the effort. The steep crags at the end of SI are incredibly picturesque, and would probably be even better up close. After SI Lake, there is a teardrop shaped lake in a drainage directly to the south of the southeast end of SI. Don't overlook this one. It is worth the trek up to see it. On the way back, after looking over Sheepeater, Shoban & Airplane Lakes, the climb directly up the center of the drainage that is at the east end of Airplane Lake is relatively easily doable, and saves the wandering around that the official trail does. Back to Birdbill, and camp. One of the seeming constants with this area is later afternoon thundershowers. A tarp is a necessity unless you like being wet. ☺

The other trail over to Crater and Big Clear Lakes gets ignored by some. It shouldn't be! These lakes are well worth seeing. It is another hike that will consume a good part of the day, but these lakes, especially Glacier Lake are very picturesque. The trail on the Topo, northeast past Birdbill and Gentian Lakes then over the ridge to the northeast is accurate. After seeing Big Clear Lake, head up to Pothole Lake, then skirt the intense part of the ridge to the northeast up and over the ridge to Glacier Lake (a beauty), then progress down the drainage to the other two lakes... and back to camp.

The South Section:

Even if you *are* going to the south section, if you haven't seen Harbor & Wilson, it would make sense to go via the route noted above, then down from Harbor/Wilson to Welcome, then on from there.

[FYI: It would be tempting to climb up to the top of the cirque to camp in order to get away from the bugs. **DON'T DO IT!** Remember this area has frequent thunderstorms. The night I was there it was well beyond WILD, and the top of the ridge to the south of Welcome Lake took a lot of lightning strikes.]

At the intersection noted above with a star*, continue straight ahead instead of the right turn to the north section, and this trail will wind around and down for a long ways and eventually come out at Welcome Lake. There is a turn off to the right near Welcome, but that takes up back up to Harbor/Wilson. Just before Welcome, there is a turn off to the left, and that will take you up the east side of the Welcome Lake cirque on a trail that is NOT marked on the Topo. This trail will 'summit' at the top of the cirque, cross a flat area, then begin to step down the side of the ridge in a long series of switchbacks. (Remember, this trail is not on the Topo) After getting off the ridge, this trail will switchback some, then circle around this basin, eventually coming out at Reflection Lake, where I made camp in 2014. I dayhiked to Twin Cove, Fawn Doe and Buck Lake the day I arrived. The next day I made a stab at Tip Top, Paragon and Ramshorn, but that venture turned out to be more intimidating than I wanted to take on, so left it for another time... or maybe someone else to attempt.

To exit this area, instead of repeating all those switchbacks, I chose to bushwhack up past Echo, Turquoise and Skyhigh Lakes, then climb up to the low pass above Skyhigh, and down to Barking Fox Lake. That was a good decision as from there you access the main trail down the drainage from Barking Fox, then pass the Terrace Lakes, which are photogenic in the extreme.

From there, the trail switchbacks to the top of the ridge, past Heart Lake, and back to Welcome.

#7) Copper Basin, ID: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recents/2018/idahoscopperbasin/copperbasin.html>
Map/Pictures 55

The Copper Basin in Idaho contains some of the highest lakes in Idaho. One night we camped at 10200'. Not a place for someone susceptible to altitude sickness. This area is accessed normally from Ketchum, ID, on Sun Valley Road, which becomes Trail Creek Road. Cross Trail Creek Summit at 12 miles, turn right onto Copper Basin Road at 21.8 miles, and angle left at the next intersection (approximately 3 miles), then turn right (south) on the Copper Basin Loop Road. Many of the Trailheads are located off this road.

The two sets of lakes I am most familiar with are Bellas Lakes (a Ho-Hum), and the Betty-Baptie-Goat

Lake Basin (Beautiful). From the turn in Ketchum, it is 12 miles to Trail Creek Summit, 22.5 miles to the Copper Basin Road, and 35.5 miles to the turn onto Copper Basin Loop Road.

Bellas Lakes TH is 6.2 miles from the turn onto Copper Basin Loop Road, and up a short dirt road to the parking area. It is a textbook straight line trail up the drainage 3.1 miles to the largest of the Bellas Lakes. This is in a burn area so the picture-worthiness is dampened considerably.

Bellas-Baptie-Betty-Goat Lakes Maps/Pictures: Page 52

Betty-Baptie-Goat Lakes TH is 7.7 miles from the Copper Basin Loop Road turnoff, or another 1.5 miles from the Bellas Lakes TH. The TH is located in Broad Canyon Horse CG and Rec Site. Once again, the Topo will leave you with question marks above your head if you try to take it as gospel. In reality, there are two completely separate trails that lead into this area. One will take you directly to Betty Lake, the other will take you to the intersection of the trails to Baptie-Goat and/or Betty Lakes. It would make sense to take the one up and the other back, at least that is what I did last summer (2018).

For the trail that takes you direct to Betty Lake, leave the CG at the information sign, cross the meadow on a trail to the north, and a bridge across the creek. This trail climbs fairly intense in the beginning, then the grade eases up a bit, and climbs fairly steady to Betty Lake. On the way this trail will pass right by Clear Lake, well to the northeast of Round Lake, right to the directional sign at Betty. Betty Lake is beautiful, but... no trees, ergo, no shade. However, if you back down the slope a short ways there is a small copse of trees, and a small place to camp.

For the other trail, one that climbs all the way, more or less in the drainage, or nearly so until you begin to get really high, there is a short road spur from the Broad Canyon Rec Site to the west. It quickly terminates at the other TH, which as I said will take you up the drainage to a campsite at the point where the trail starts up a short climb up to Baptie-Goat Lakes. There is also suitable camping at Baptie Lake. All of these lakes have signs of a very active fishery. *(BTW: If you are using Margaret Fuller's guidebooks, she is 100% wrong about the trails in this area as well. I suspect that these trails have been rerouted since she did her research in this area.)*

There are quite a number of other lakes in the Copper Basin area that I suspect are well-worth the climb as well.

Big-Rough-Long-Golden-Round Lakes in the Lake Creek Drainage (Scheduled 2019)	<u>Page 58</u>	Arrowhead-Wildhorse Lakes	<u>Page 63</u>
Brockie Lake	<u>Page 61</u>	Angel-Moose Lake	<u>Page 62</u>
Iron Bog-Fishpole Lakes	<u>Page 60</u>	Boulder Lake	<u>Page 61</u>
Windy-Lower Box Canyon Lakes	<u>Page 64</u>	Kane Lake	<u>Page 61</u>

#8) Merriam-Pass Lakes:

Map/Pictures 65

These are two co-located lakes in the Lost River Range that are blindingly spectacular. I confess that I have not been to these two, but between listening to those that have sung their praises, plus seeing them in a recent Outdoor Idaho presentation, I have become convinced that they are an Idaho must-see.

The road to the trail begins at a turn-off of US93, 24 miles south of Challis, or 16 miles north of Mackay east onto the Doublesprings Pass Road, 10.5 miles to the primitive Horseheaven Pass Road. From there I would suggest Margaret Fuller's Book, trails of Eastern Idaho. According to those that have done this, the most difficult part is finding the TH. Once you find the TH, the hike is 2-3 miles depending on where you give up driving these poor roads, and begin walking. Pass Lake is the next major drainage to the south, and will be a bit shorter from Merriam if you bushwhack around the end of the steep mountain ridge to the south of Merriam Lake. A Topo would be a necessity here.

#9) Kelly-Marten-Elizabeth Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2006/martin701/martin701.html>

Map/Pictures 67

To be sure these would not be on any hiker's must see list, but they lend themselves to a bit of an early season hike, and they are bloody pretty in their own right. They also have a suitable fishery. This is a relatively easy hike, and the most difficult part of this hike is finding the TH. The signs that used to be up by ID21 are gone, and so one has to use a little dead reckoning plus GPS coordinates.

The TH: 44.33212, 115.11922, the TH is at 6730 and so it is about a 800' elevation gain, and approximately 4 miles one way. Last time I was there, the trail was in good condition, with a few blowdowns.

#10) Lynx Creek Lakes: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2008/lynxcreek/lynxck1018.html>

Map/Pictures 70

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2011/lynxlake/lynxlake.html>

This is a 'not for the faint of heart' one. It is more or less a bushwhack all of the way, and climbs steeply 2600' all the way up the drainage to the lakes. The trail begins at the Atlanta, ID, Powerplant Trail TH, and follows that trail for approximately 3 miles. At that point just after the trail turns and abruptly starts uphill, it is necessary to leave the trail and bushwhack to 43.83207, 115.05937 in order to cross the river. This is made difficult by the amount of marshy territory between the trail and the bend in the river where you need to cross. After crossing the river, the trail/route remains fairly close to the river, skirts a granite outcropping near the river and you continue to here 43.833402, 115.056392. Camping is possible here. From here this will be the coordinates to follow. You will be going up the Lynx Creek drainage all the way. Also, directly across the river from this point is a very hot, hot spring. But it needs a lot of setup work before it can be used for soaking.

43.834106, 115.056533

43.834457, 115.057039

43.835634, 115.057228

43.836898, 115.058559

43.837616, 115.059803

43.840119, 115.058968

This will put you in the drainage, and it is up the drainage all the way to where the drainage begins to split off to the various lakes. The best camping is at the lake marked 8426 and is the largest of the three lakes. Fishery is so-so, as the fish are small, as they don't get to grow much in such a sterile and cold environment.

#11) Moon Lake, ID: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2011/moonlake/moonlake.html>

Map/Pictures 72

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2010/mablelake/Moon%20Lake/moonlk.html>

Moon Lake is a small round lake directly to the northeast of the Ruffneck Peak/Lookout in the Langer Lakes area of Idaho, between the top of the ridge and Finger Lakes. Don't go searching for a lake by that name, as that is the name that George Bogdan and I gave it because it is round (Yes, I know, very original). The attraction of Moon Lake is not only that it is very picturesque, but it is a very good fishery with larger than normal trout. It is very lightly traveled as well because it is off the beaten path, and apparently not discovered. The down side is that it got hammered by the Halstead Fire several years ago, and at least for a time the only camping area was unusable. It may have recovered now, but likely has trees all around the campsite that are in danger of losing their grip on the ground, and potentially sending unwary hikers to their reward. The last time I was there, right after the fire, I finally had to climb south a ways up the side of the cirque to find a suitable site, and it was small.

#12) Bernard Lake: <http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2012/vanitybernardlks/bernardlk/bernardlk.html>

Map/Pictures 74

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2013/bernardlk,6-13/bernardlk.html>

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2013/bernardlk,7-12/bernardlk.html>

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/bernardtenmile/cranemeadow/cranemeadow.html>

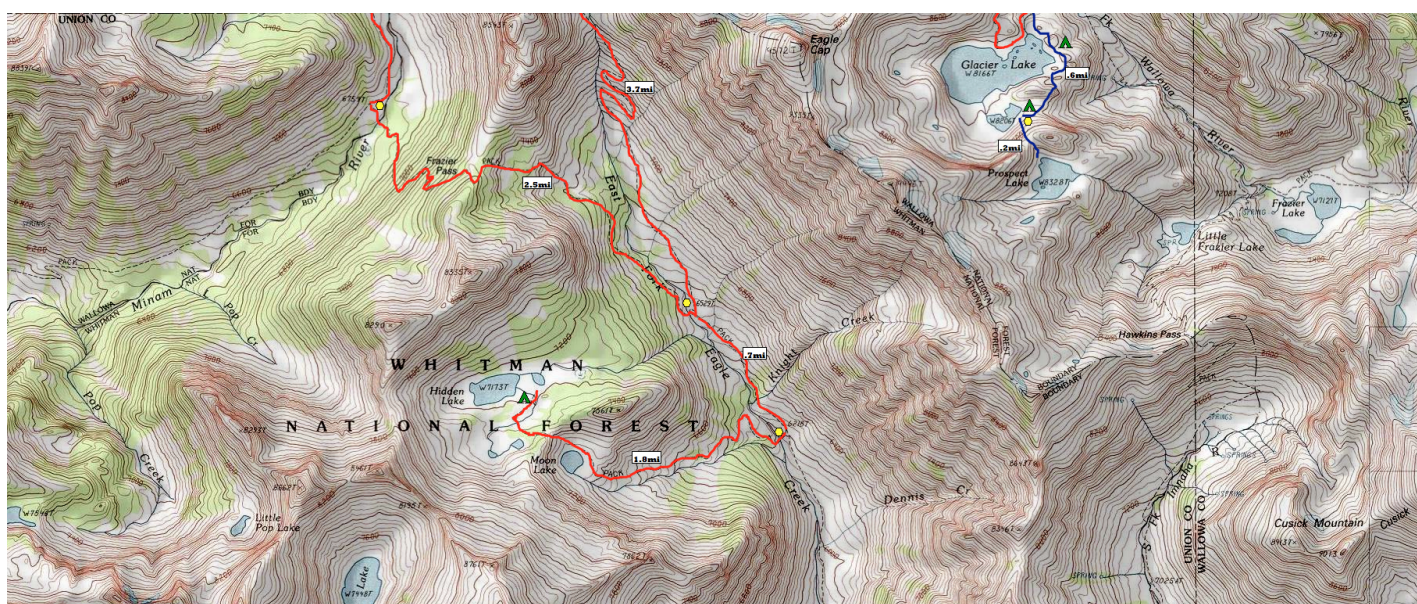
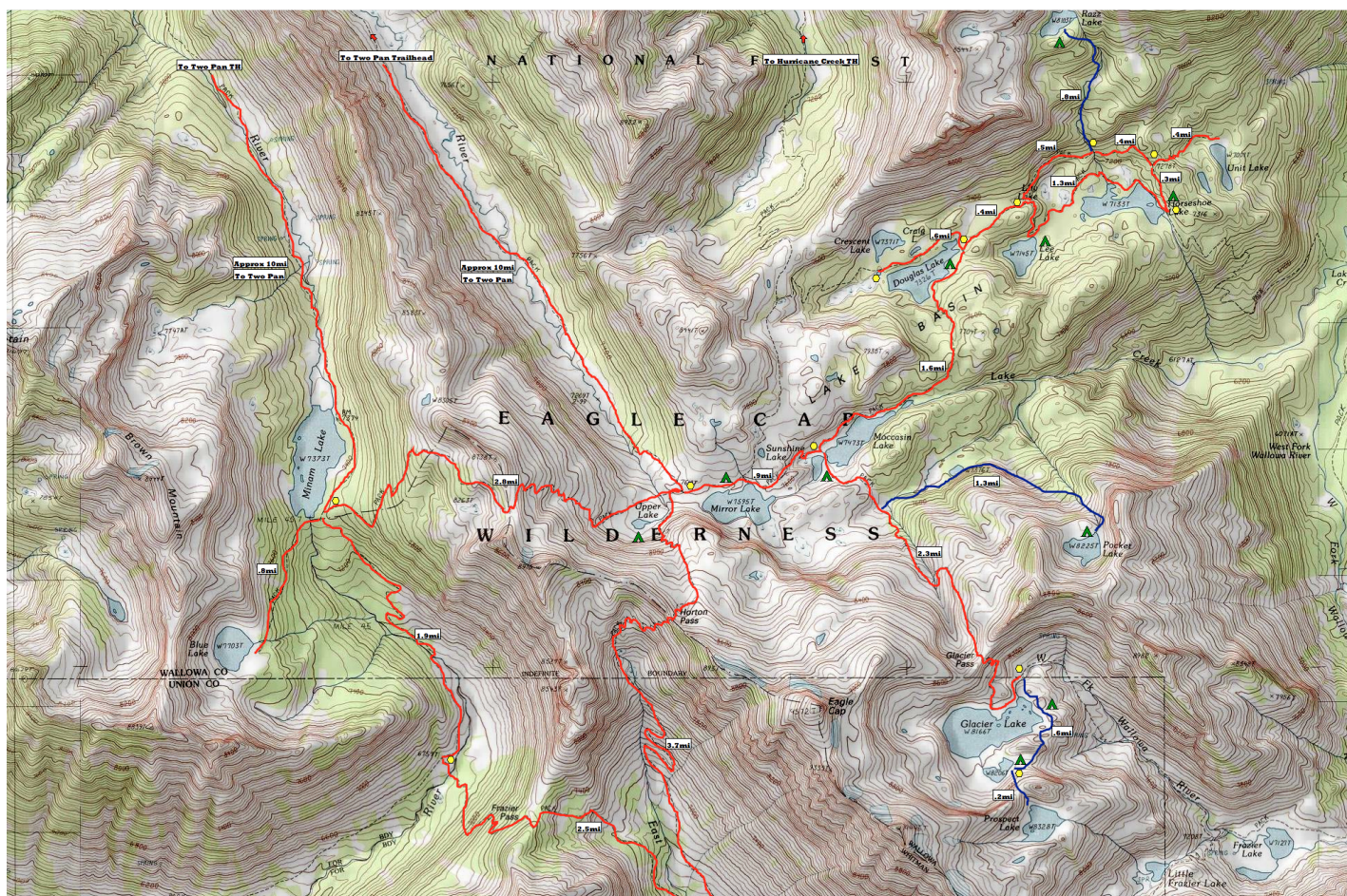
<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/bernardtenmile/bernardjune/bernardlk.html>

Bernard Lake is a very beautiful lake in a very steep cirque that is all by itself in the upper northwest corner of Idaho's Bear Valley. (44.44893, 115.51599). The attraction, aside from its natural beauty, is that it is lower than most high mountain lakes, 7200', which makes it accessible a little earlier than most of the high country lakes. On top of that, it is one of the best fisheries that I am aware of. It consistently produces large, great tasting fish that give you a run for your money when you tie into one.

However, and this is a very large 'HOWEVER', the access to Bernard is virtually surrounded by either swamp, or burn areas of different ages. The 'official' trail takes you on such a roundabout walk that one has to wonder, 'what was the trail crew thinking'. On the other hand, I have tried a number of different ways to access this wonderful lake, and haven't found a good one yet. A burn area is profoundly difficult to cross, but if you should happen to stumble into one of the oldest burn areas, where all the trees are now down on the ground, be prepared to work yourself to death. Twice I have had to RON on the way to Bernard, just because it was so slow going, and because I/we were simply out of energy from trying to transit an area that was 100% roadblocks. On one occasion, when I did a dayhike into Bernard, by the time I got back to the truck, after 10 miles of fighting blowdowns, I couldn't get into the truck as my legs were charlie-horsing so badly. I had to take a muscle relaxer, and then I was so loopy that I couldn't consider actually piloting my vehicle. An extreme level of fatigue, and a muscle relaxer makes for an ultimate 'high'.

On the map in the maps/photos section, I have a map with an outline of a new way that I haven't tried (a 'Blue' route), but a route that I sent a man and his son on, who had contacted me looking for directions. He gave it flying colors, so that will have to be the way I try the next time I attempt to access Bernard.

Eagle Cap Wilderness





The 'Cap' Itself



Mirror Lake, Jewel of the Eagle Cap Wilderness



Glacier Lake, Eagle Cap Wilderness



Prospect Lake, Eagle Cap Wilderness

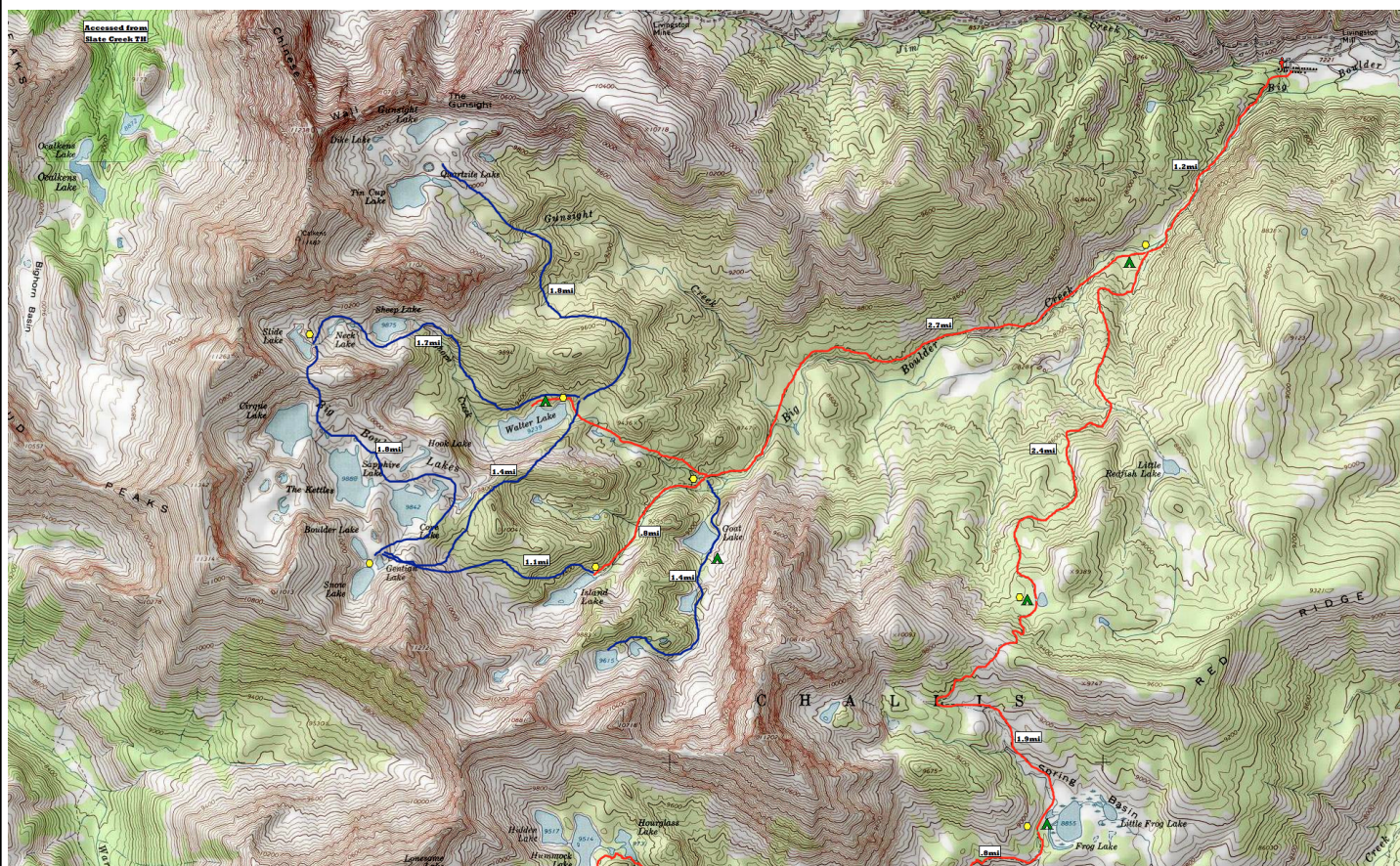


Pocket Lake, Jewel of the Eagle Cap Wilderness



Moccasin Lake, Eagle Cap Wilderness

White Clouds Wilderness





Sheep Lake, White Clouds Wilderness



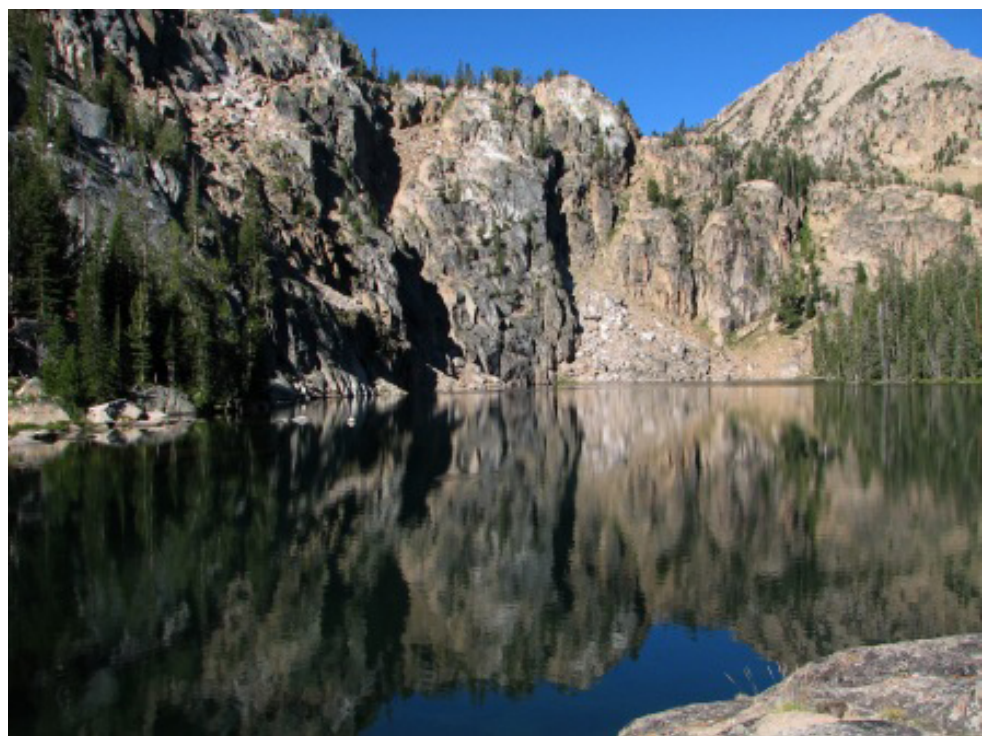
Sheep Lake, White Clouds Wilderness



Cove Lake, White Clouds Wilderness

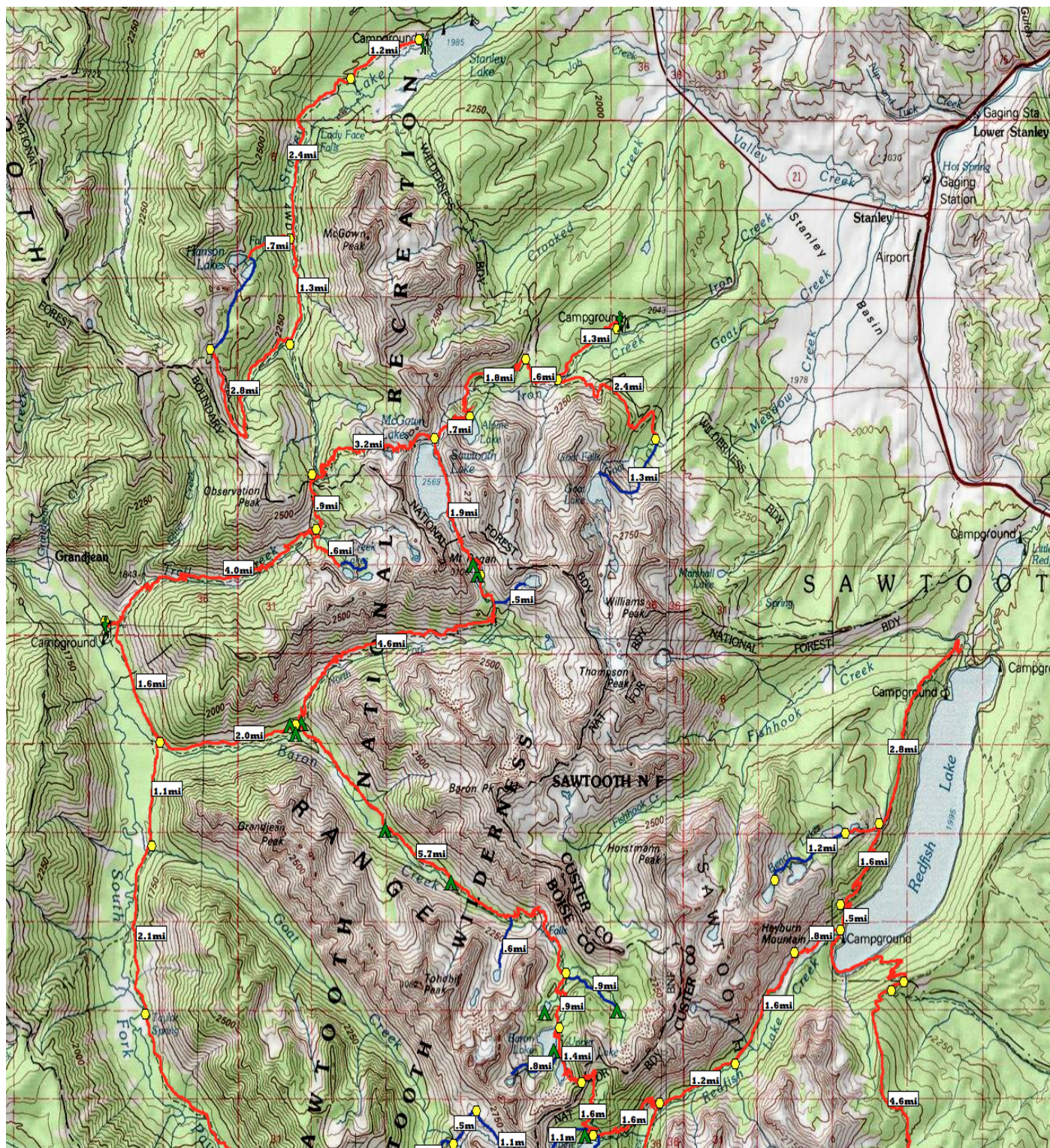


Hook Lake, White Clouds Wilderness

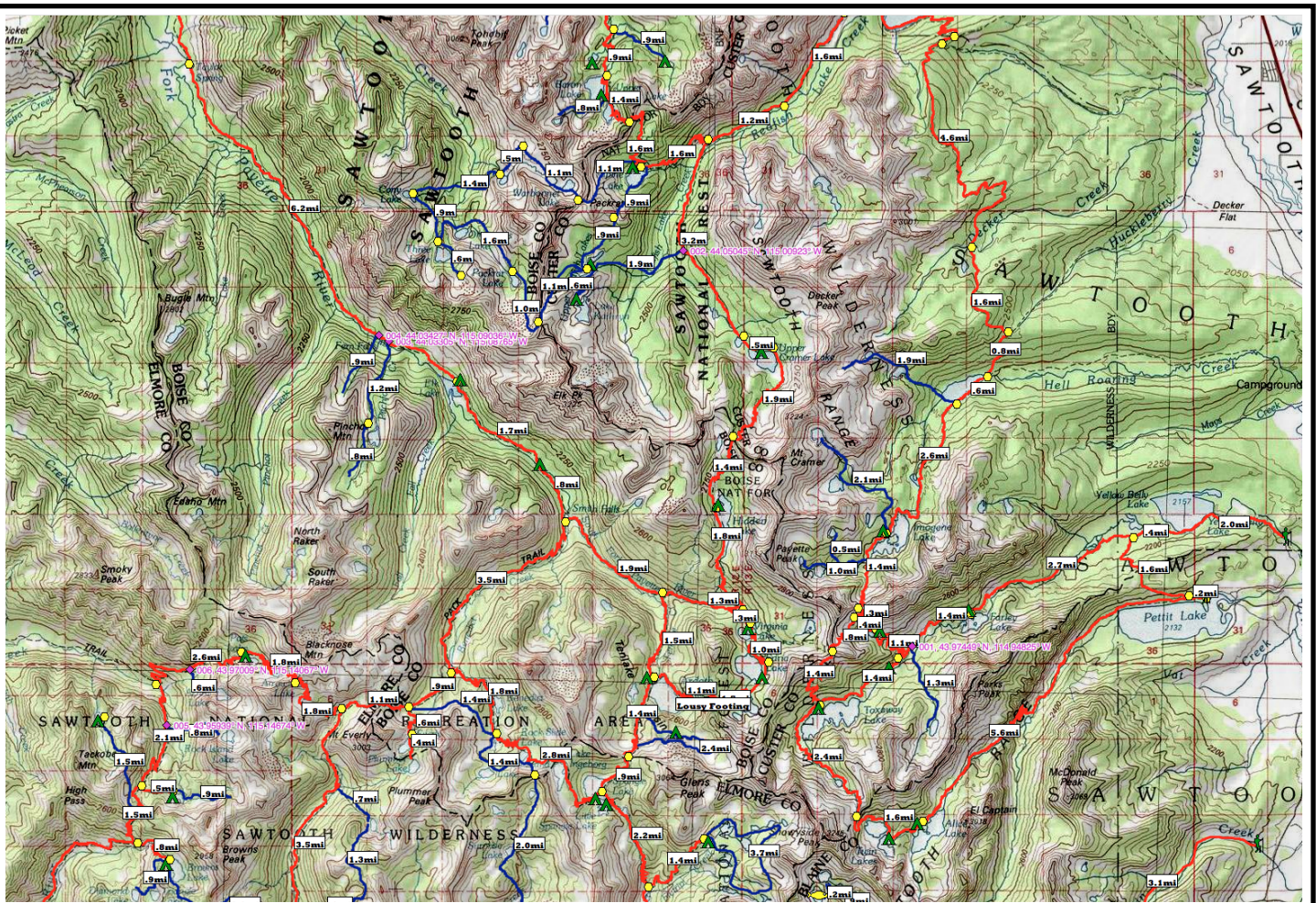


Noisy Lake, White Clouds Wilderness

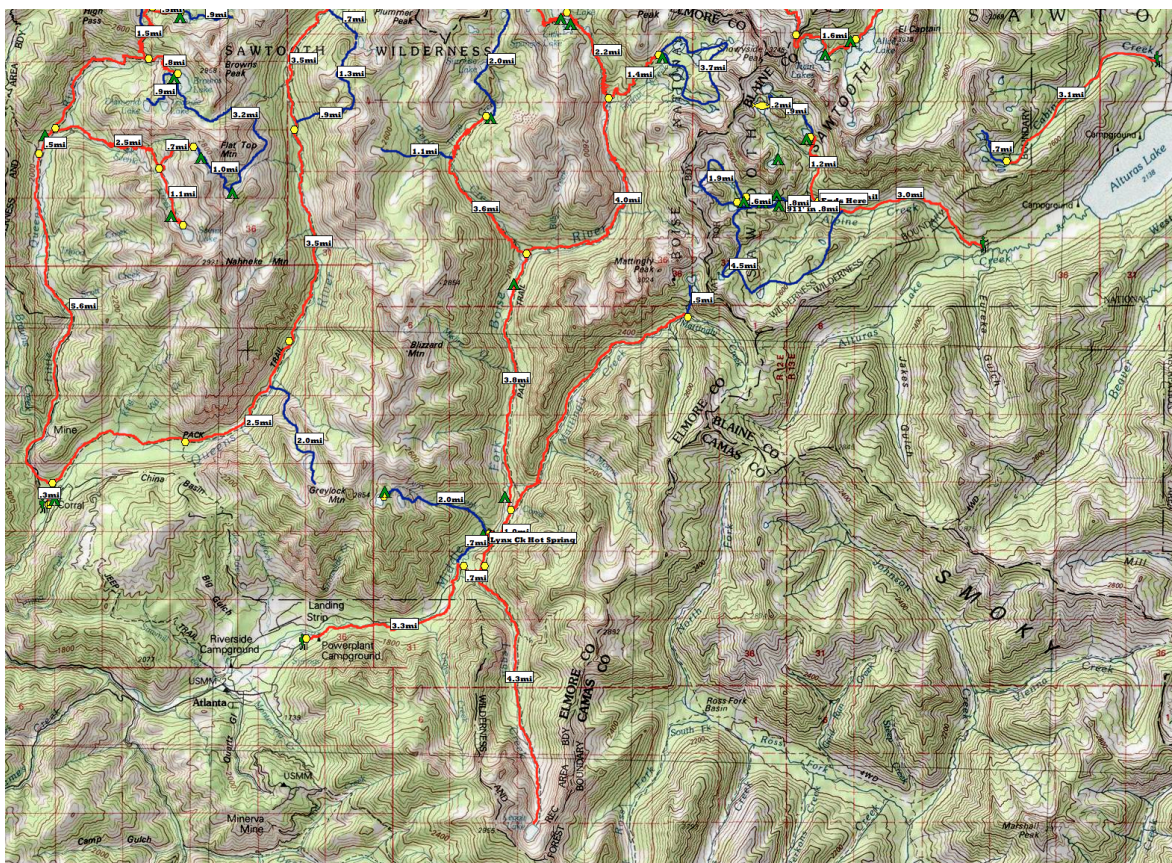
Sawtooth Mountains Wilderness



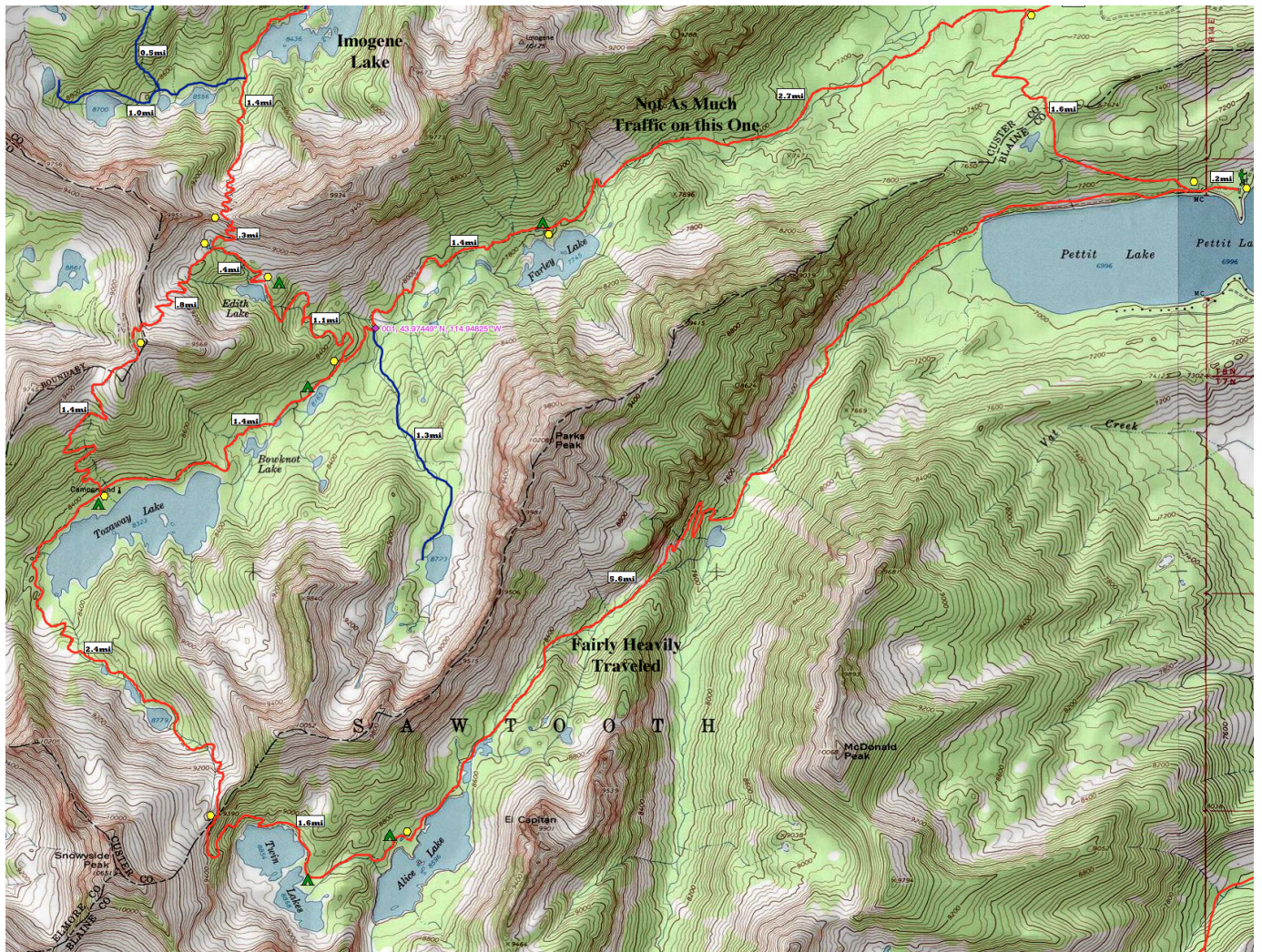
Northern Section



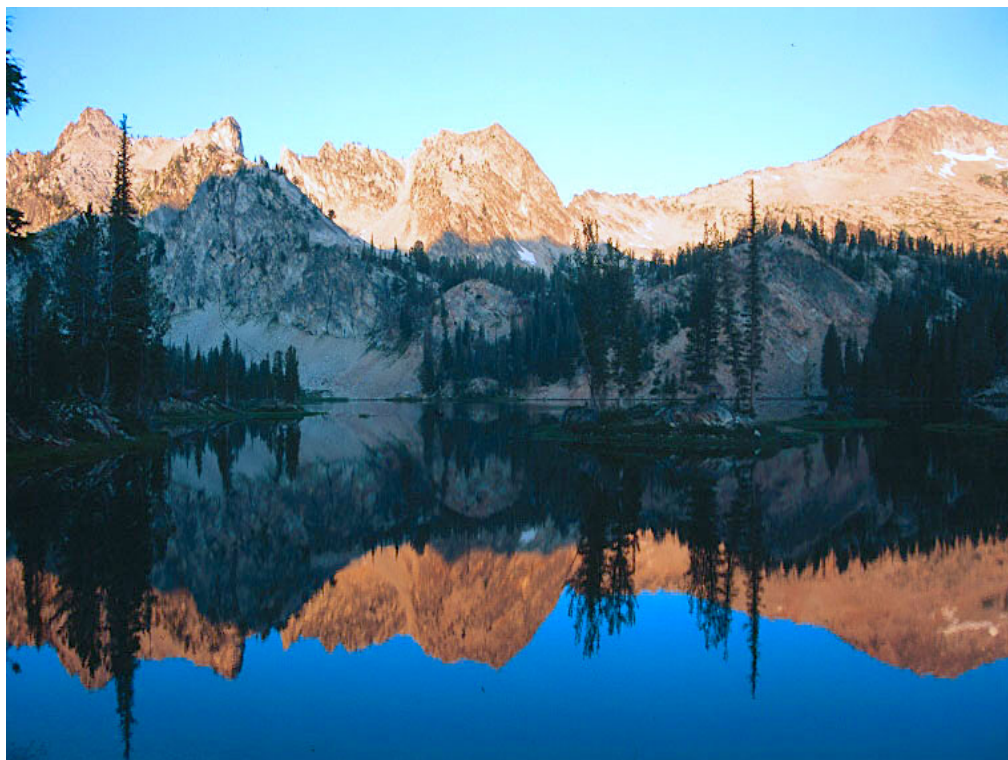
Central Section



Southern Section



Alice - Twin - Toxaway - Farley Lakes

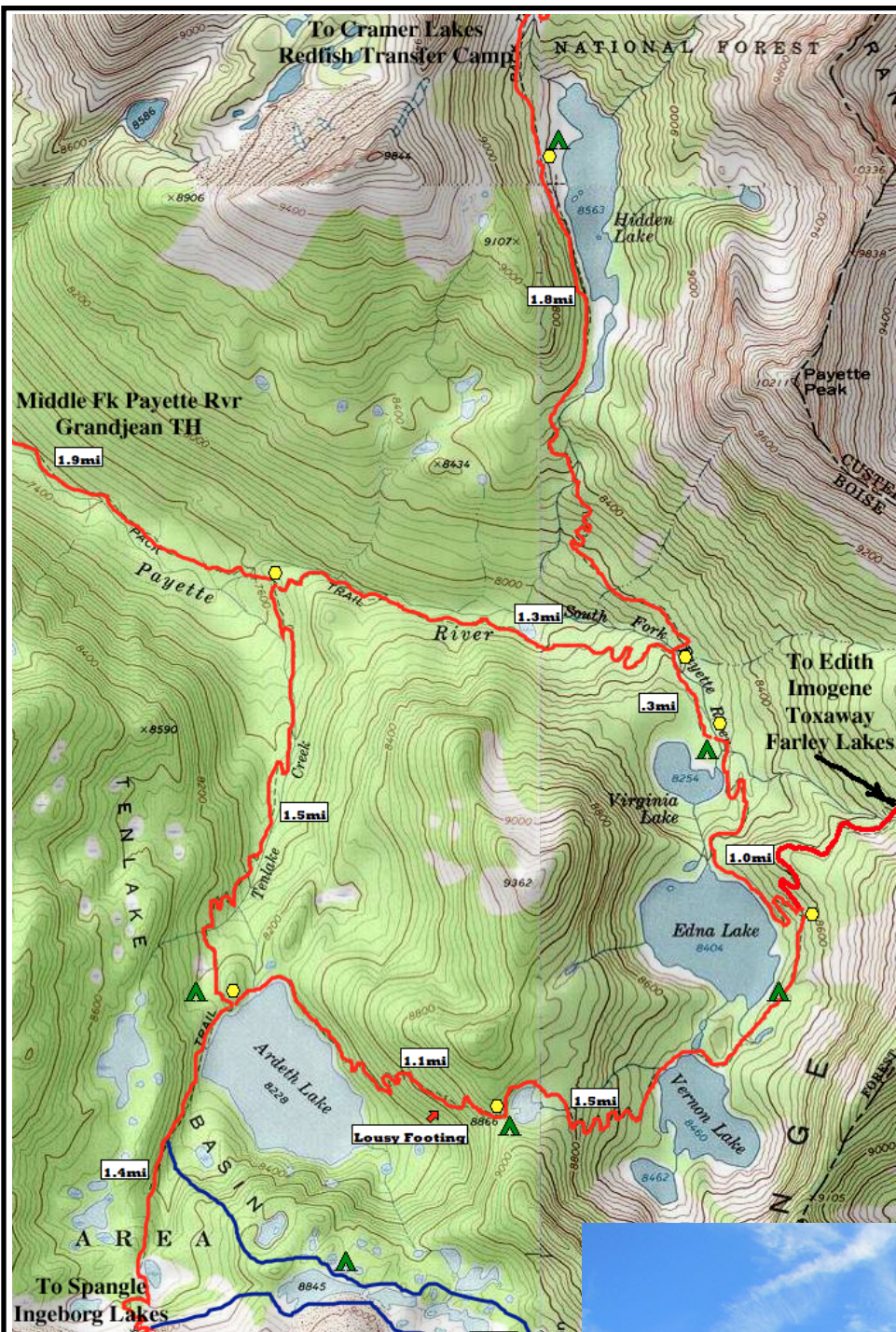


Alice Lake, early AM

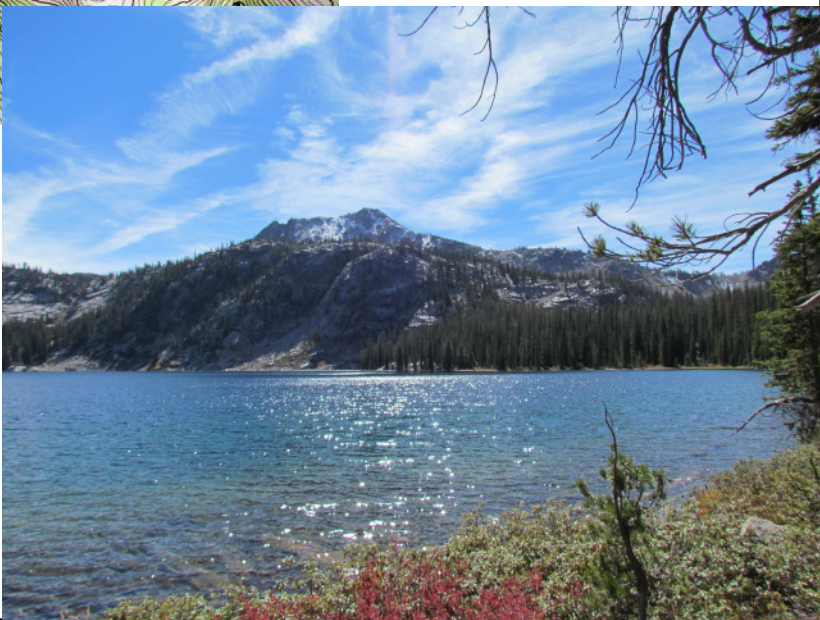


Alpine Creek Lakes Area





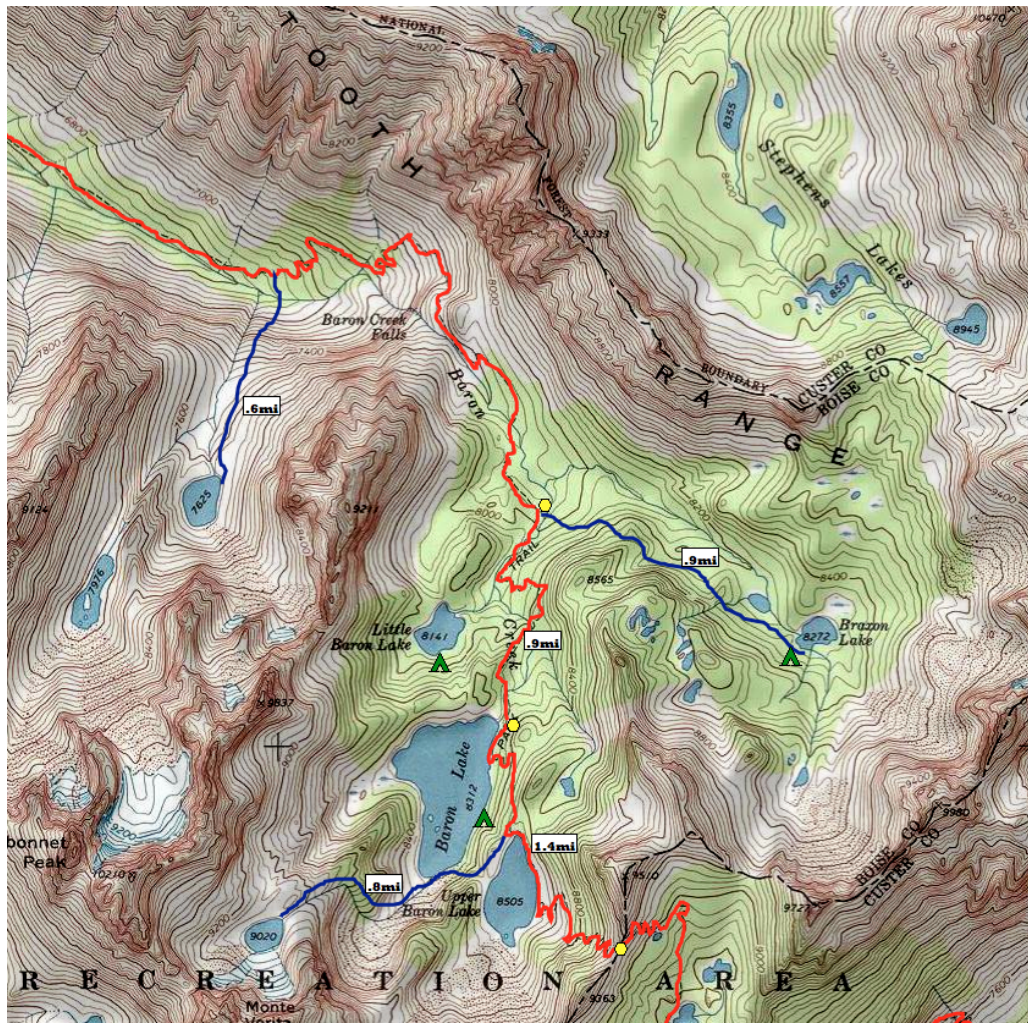
**Ardeth - Edna - Vernon - Virginia
Ten Lakes Basin**





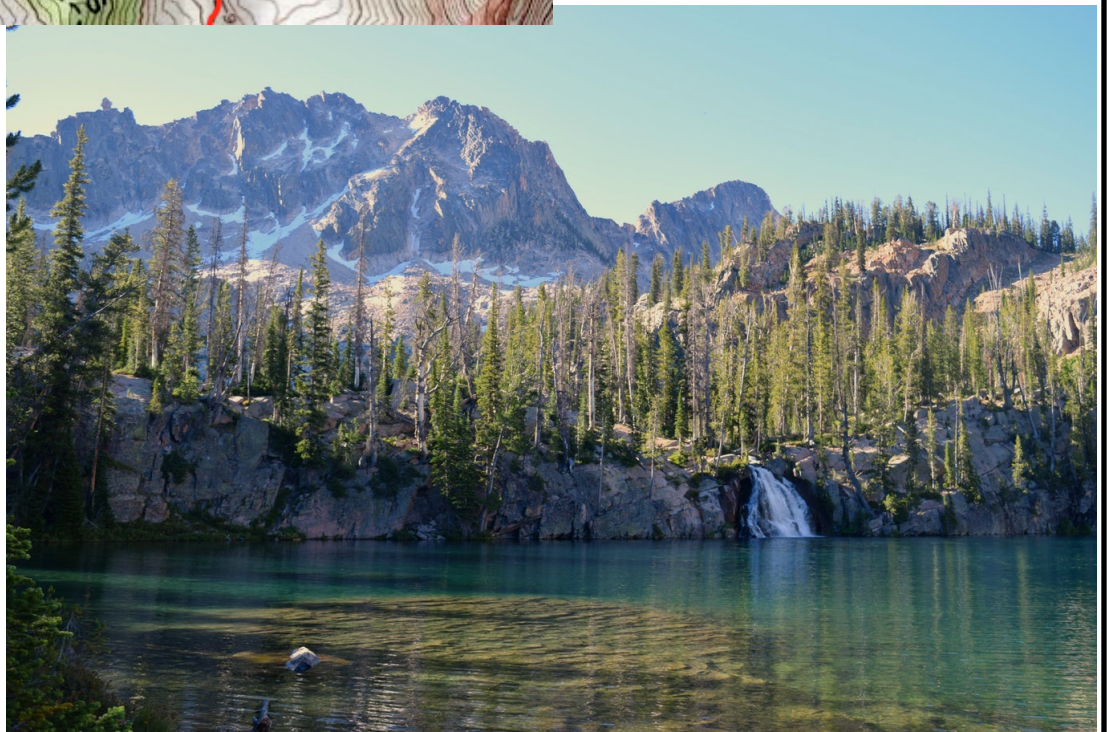
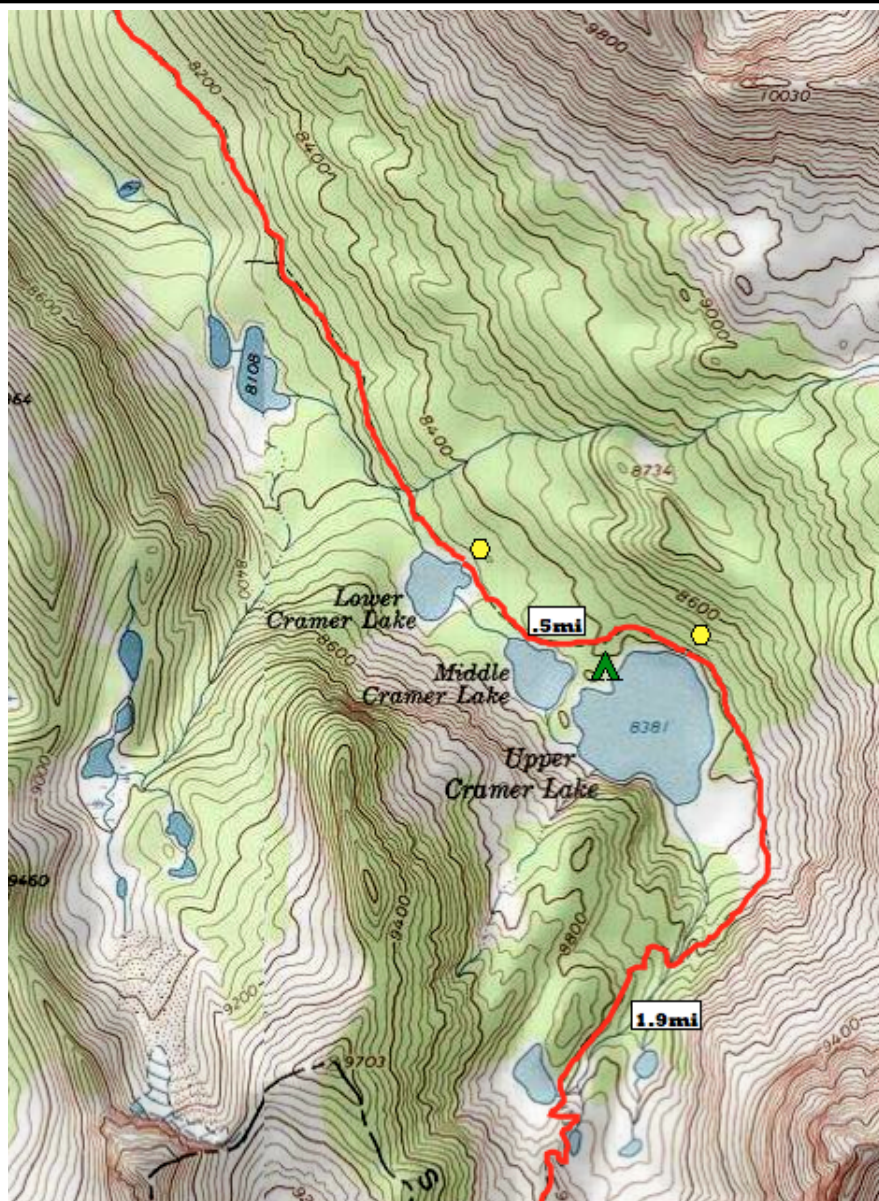
Ten Lakes Basin above Ardeth Lake

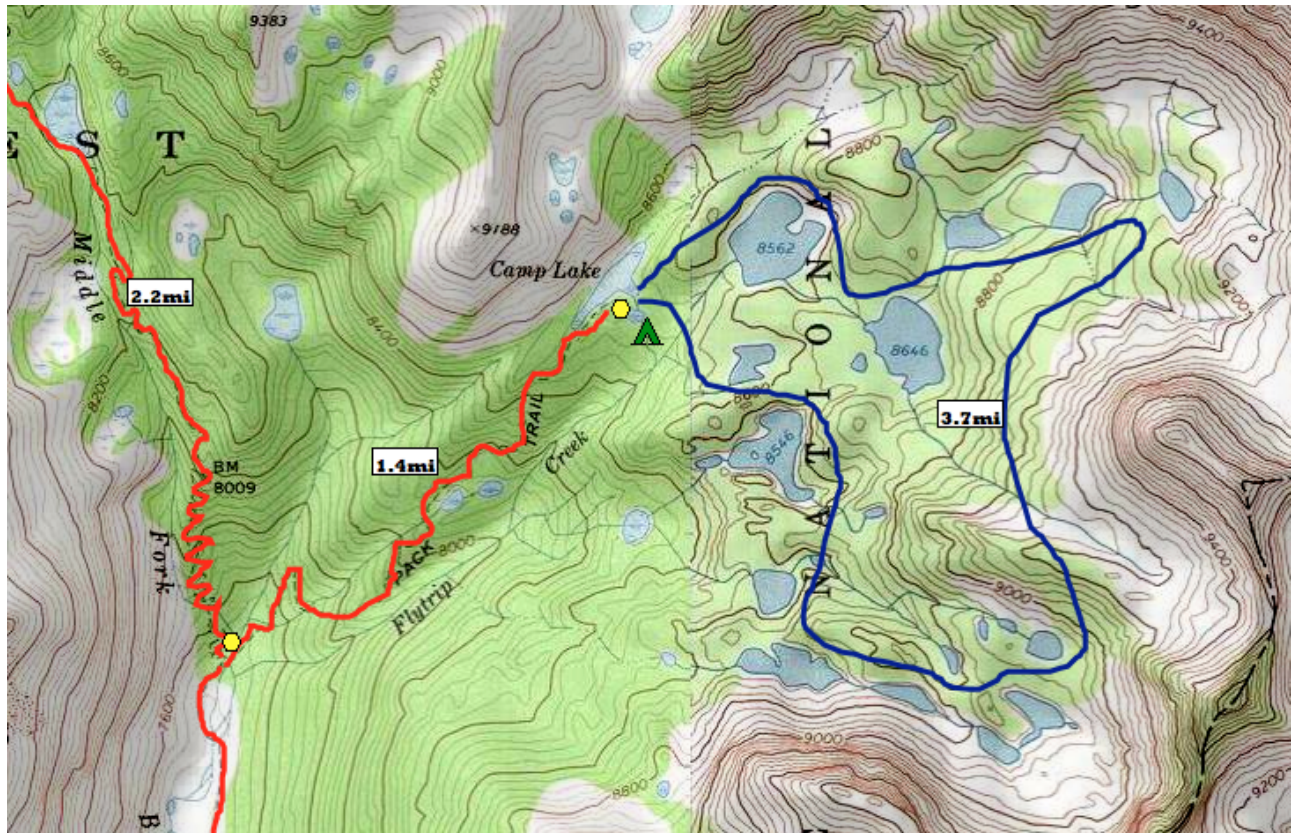




**Baron Lakes Drainage
Braxxon Lake**







Flytrip Lakes Basin



Camp Lake (the normal camping location)

Lake 8562

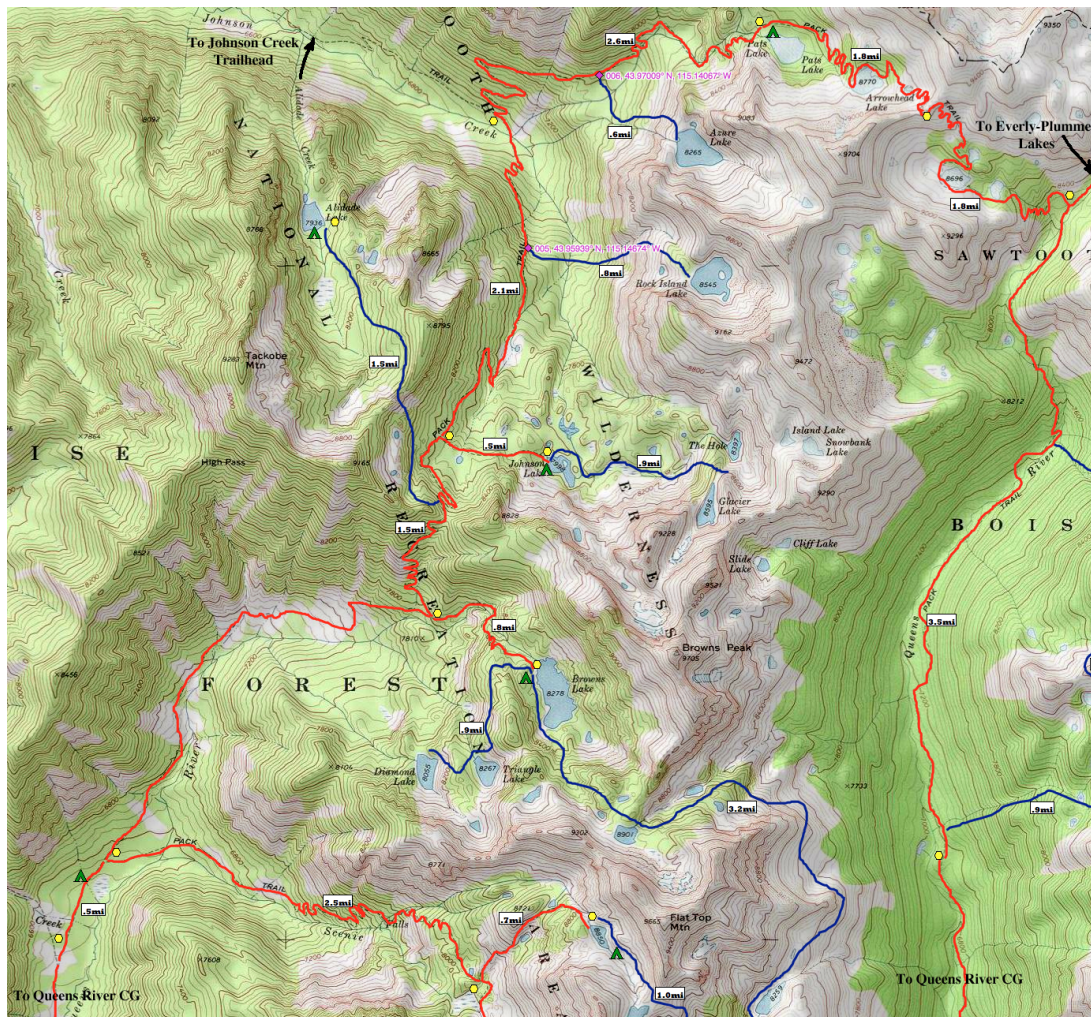




Goat Creek Drainage - No Dogs, no goats, i.e., no fun. Well, at least not as much

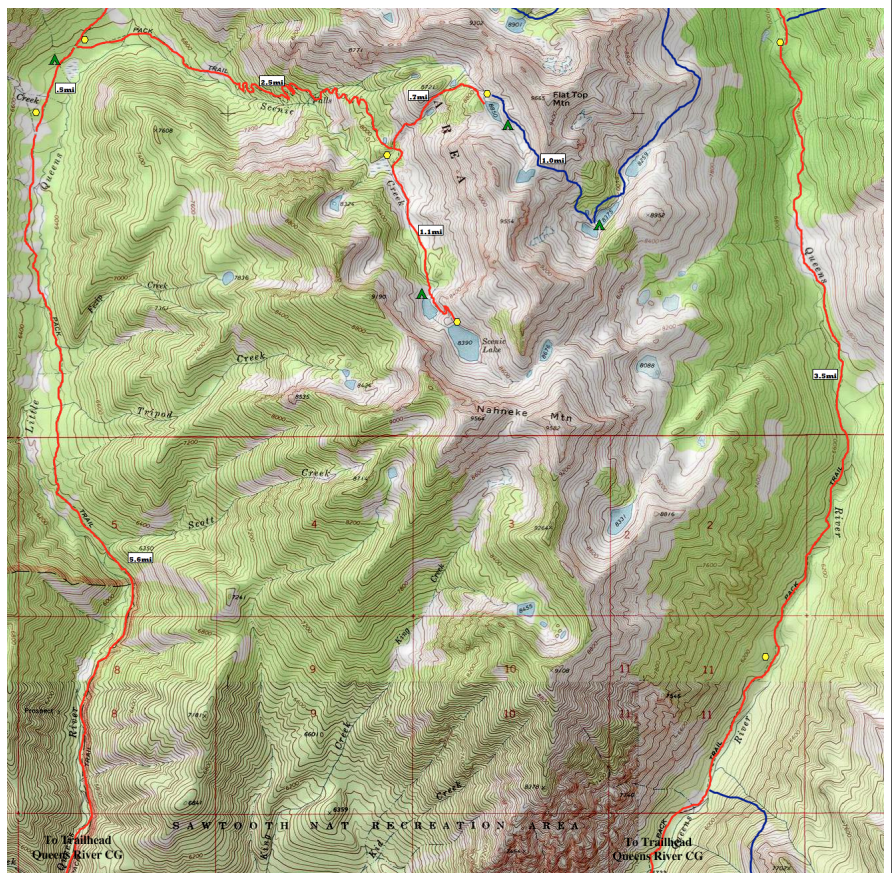


On the way out of the Goat Creek drainage



Queens River - North Section

**Queens River
South Section**





Upper Scenic Lake



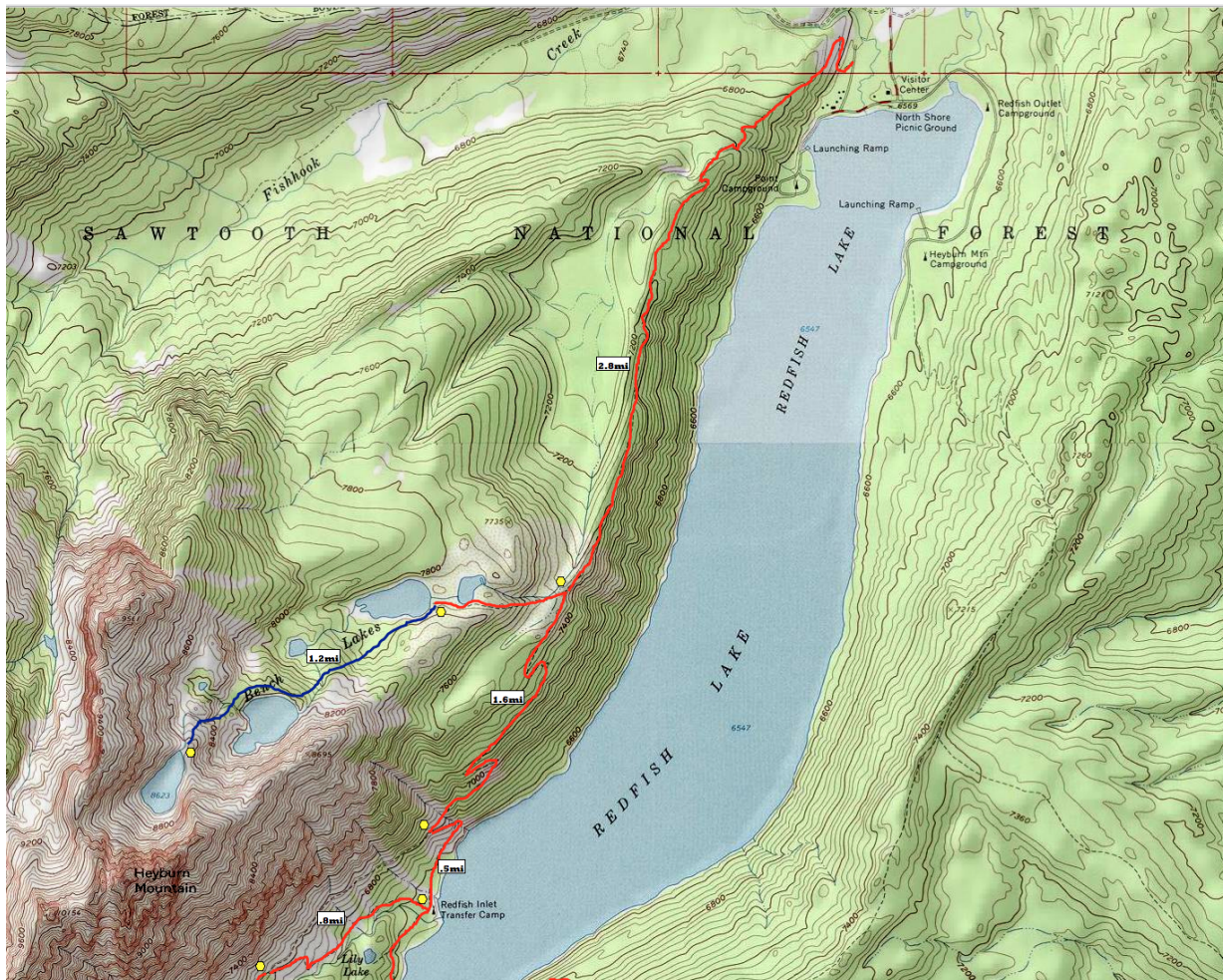
Lower Scenic Lake



Lake 8375, from southwest end

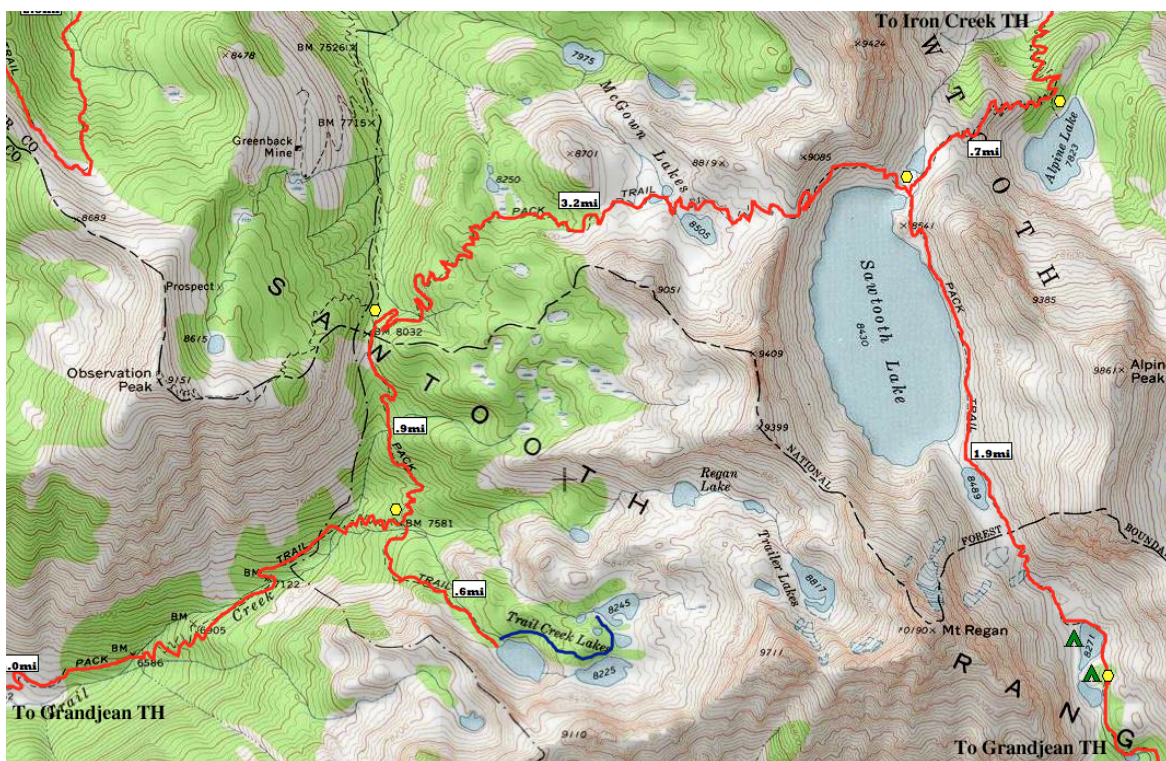


Lake 8375, from northwest end





Sawtooth, Alpine, Goat Lakes



Sawtooth, McGown, Trail Creek Lakes



Sawtooth Lake from the trail around the east side of the lake



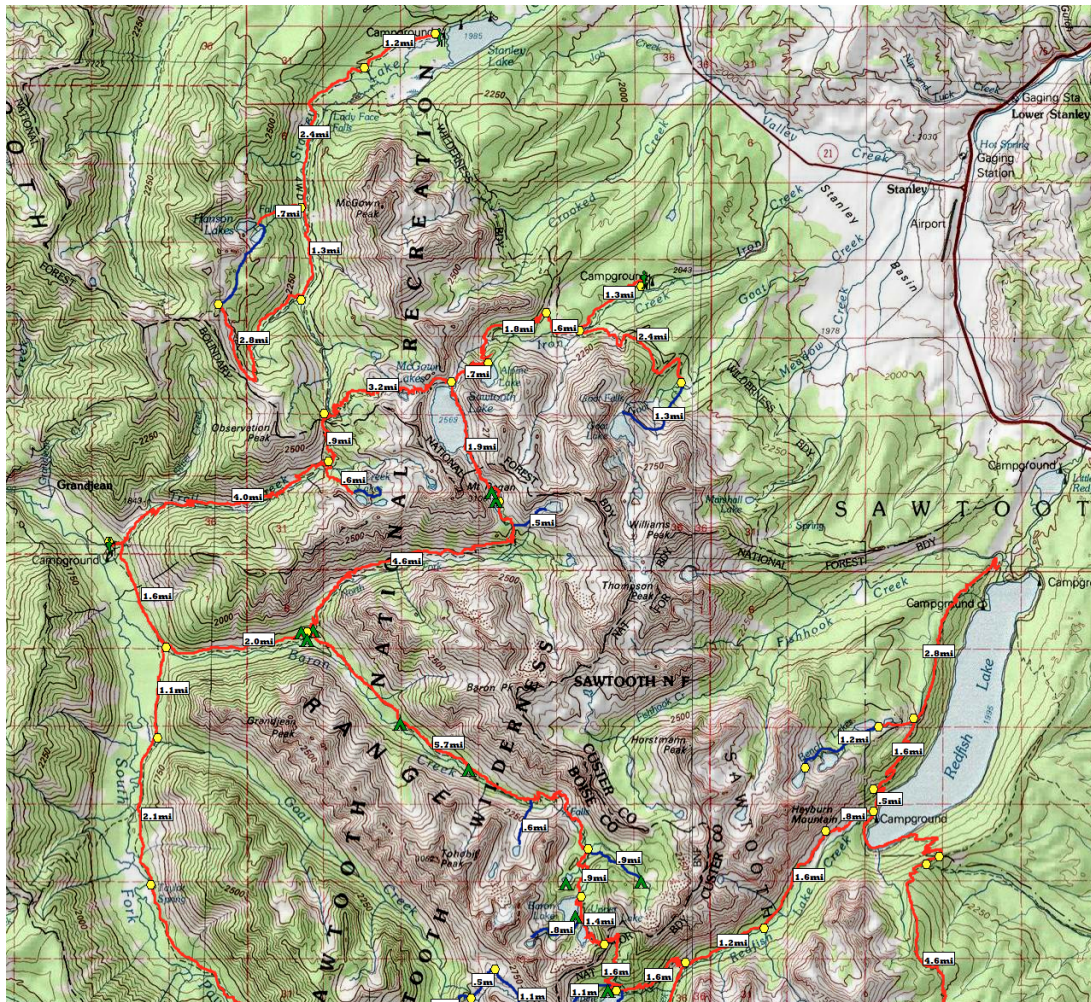
Sawtooth Lake from the trail heading up and over the ridge on the northwest side of the lake, headed to McGown & Trail Creek Lakes



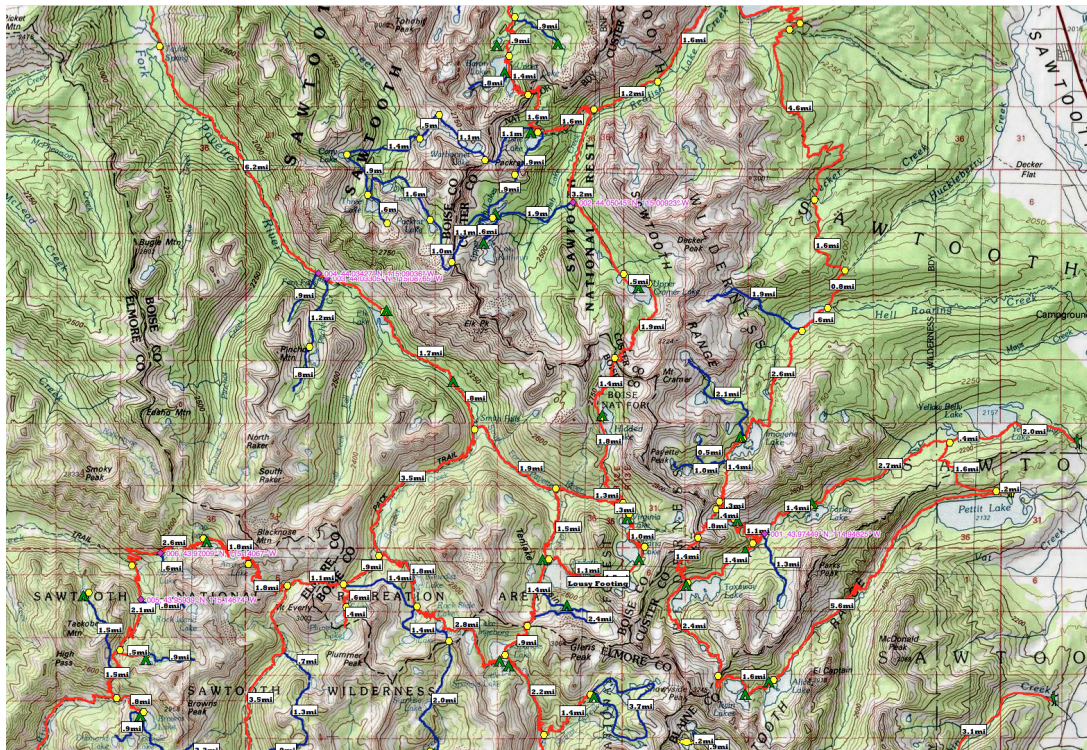
Probably one of the prettiest pictures ever taken of Sawtooth Lake (not my picture)



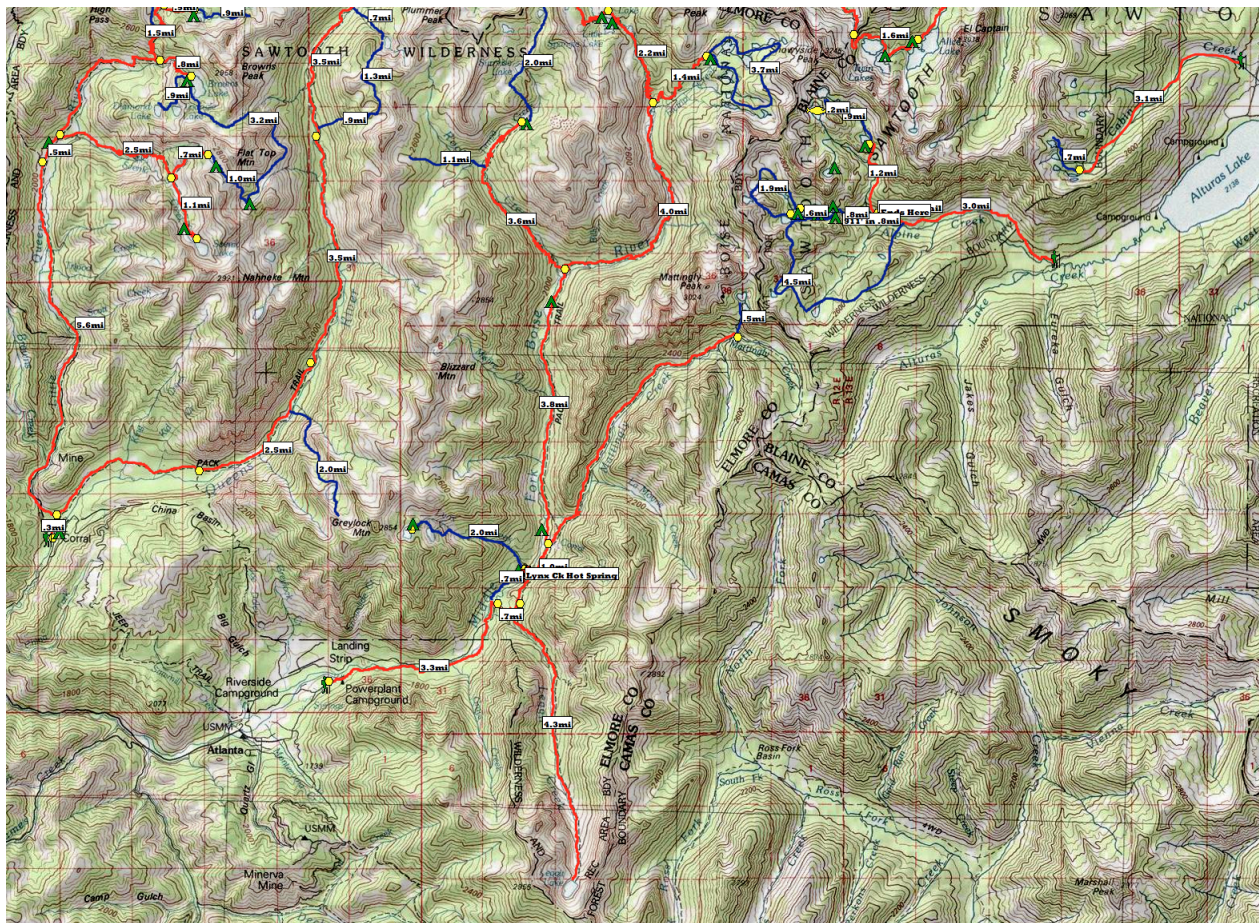
Lake 8271 from the campsite above the lake... beautiful!



SNRA Wilderness - North Section



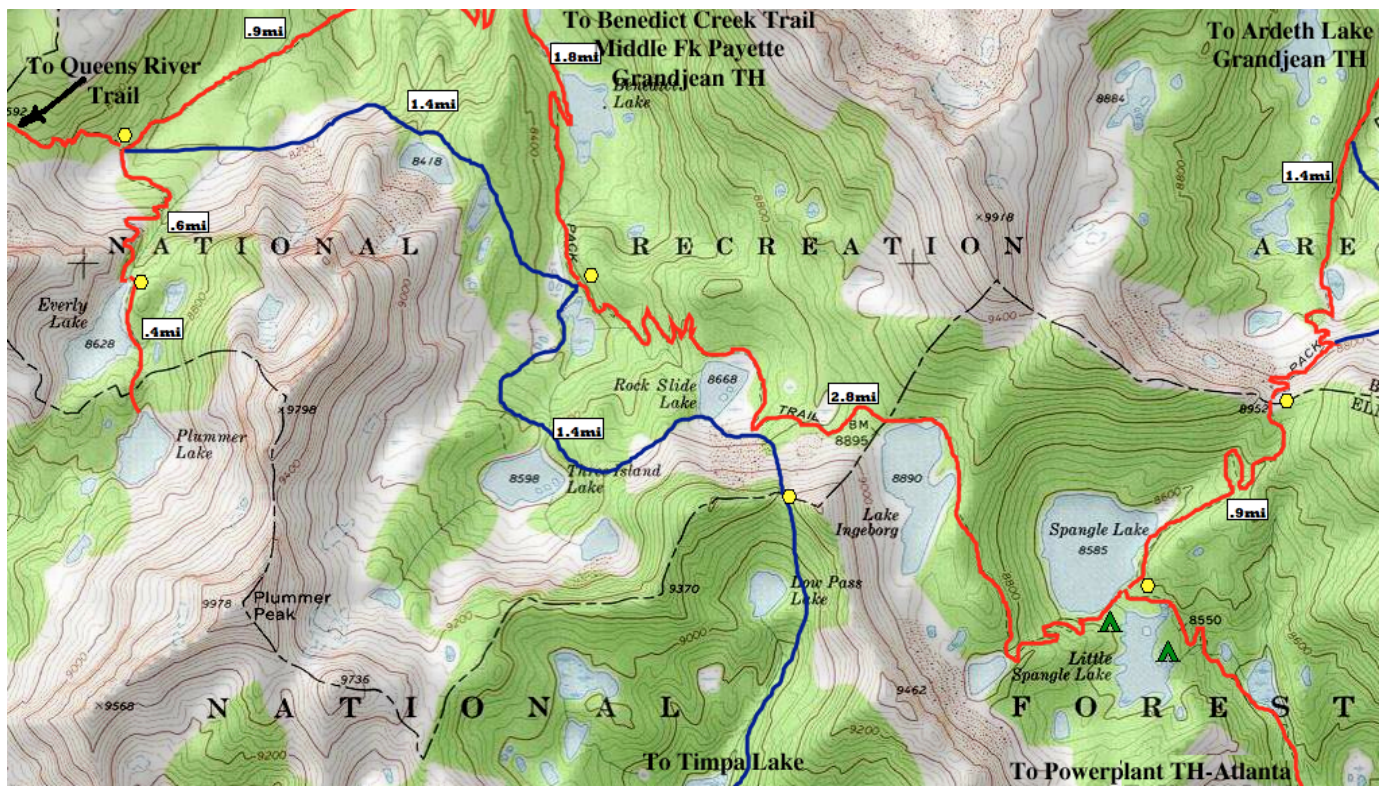
SNRA Wilderness - Central Section

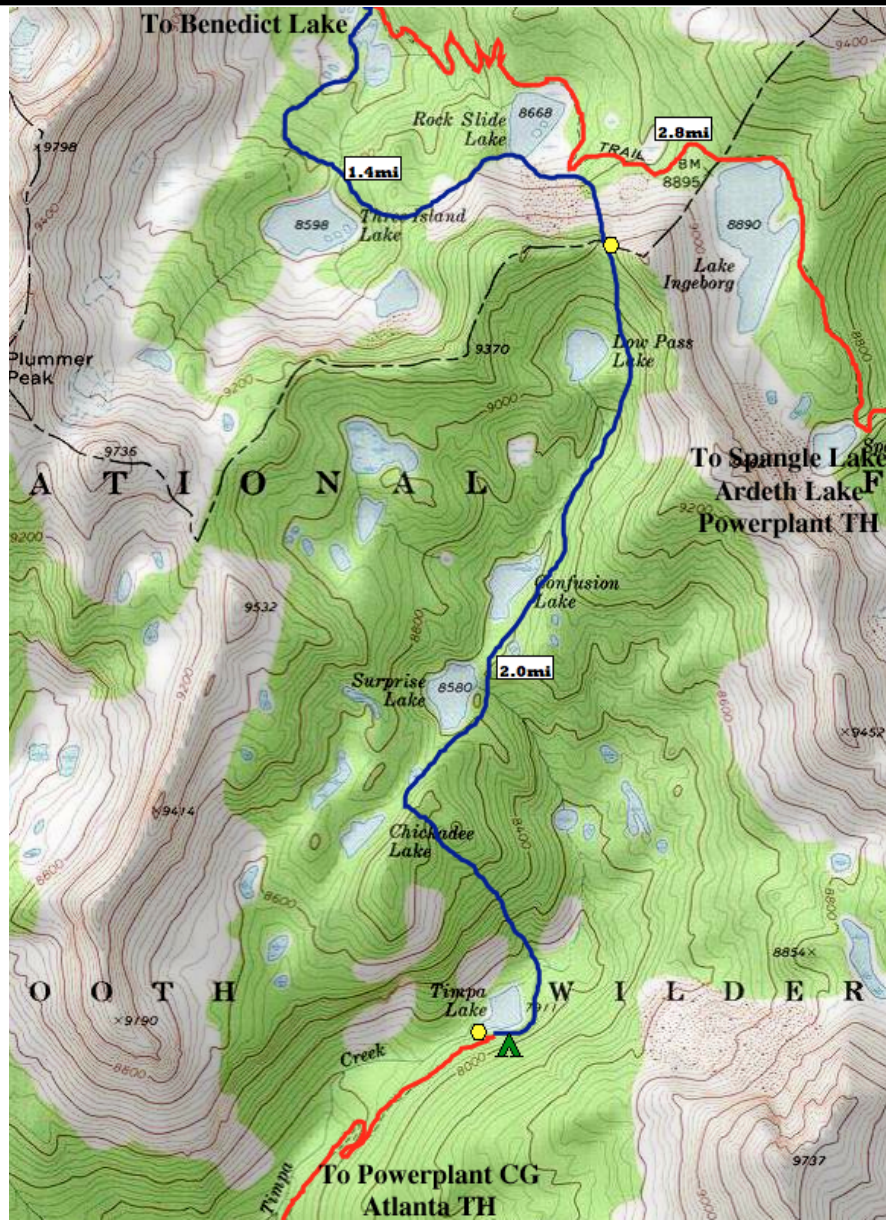


SNRA Wilderness - South Section



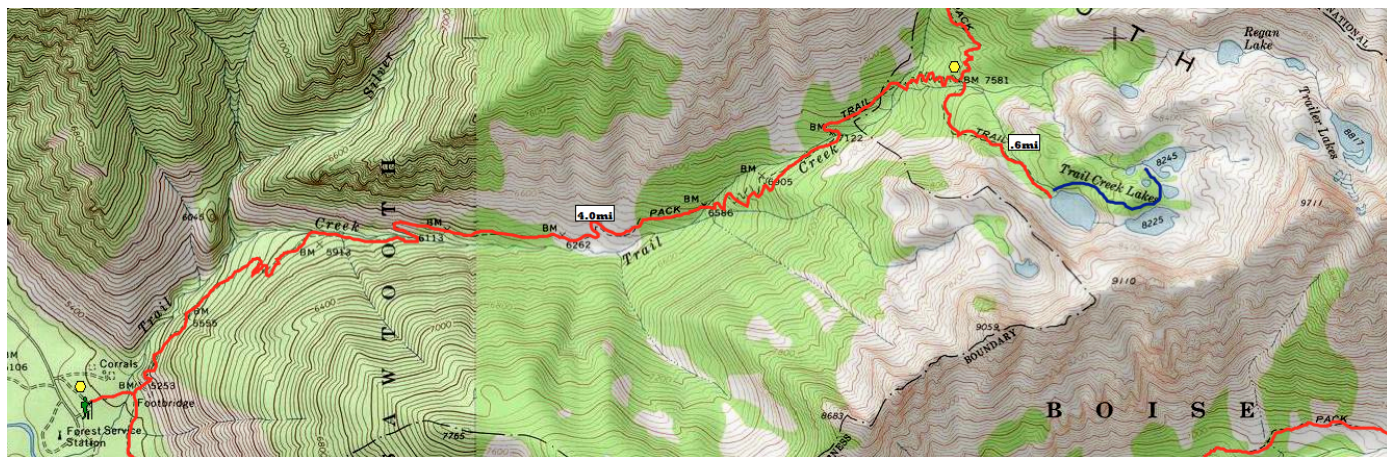
Timpa Lake





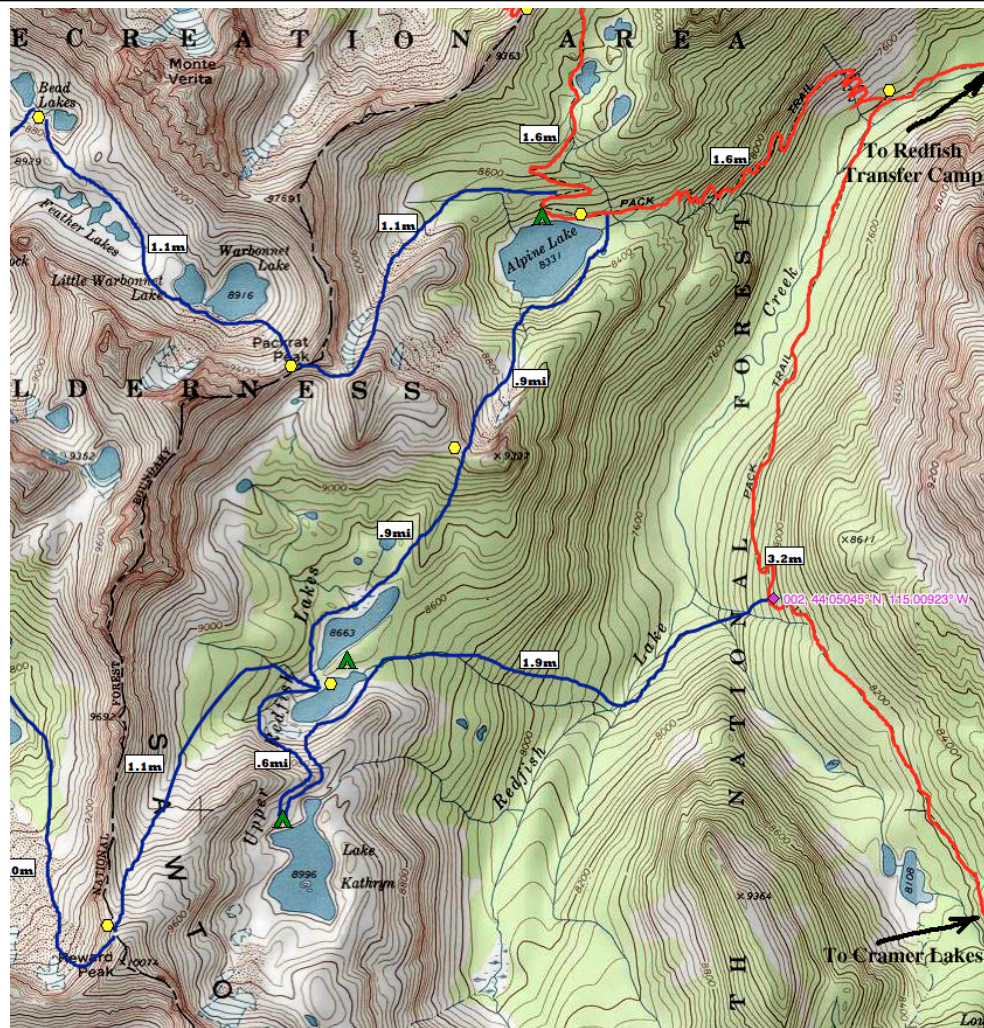
Timpa Lake





Trail Creek Lakes

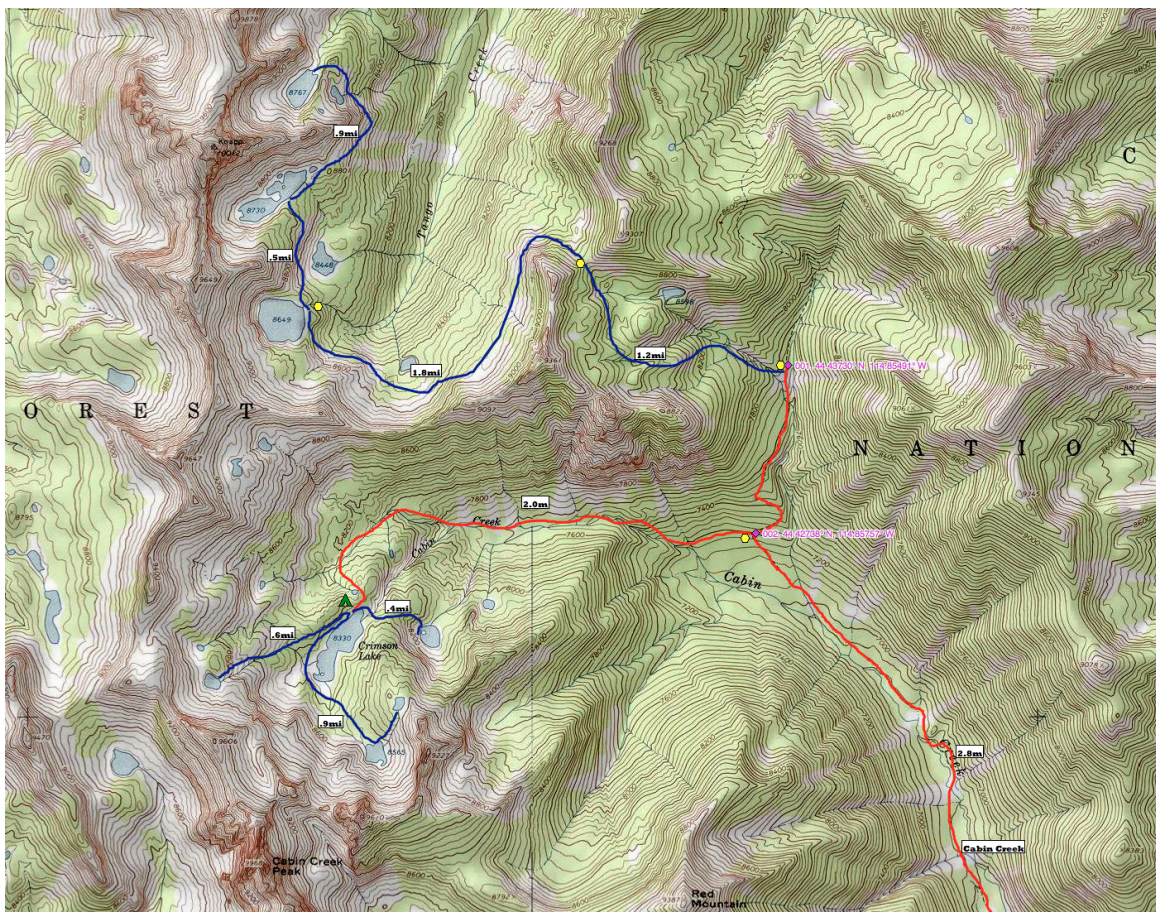




Crimson-Tango lakes, frank Church Wilderness



Trailhead to Cabin Creek



Cabin Creek to Lakes & Beyond



Crimson Lake



Crimson Lake

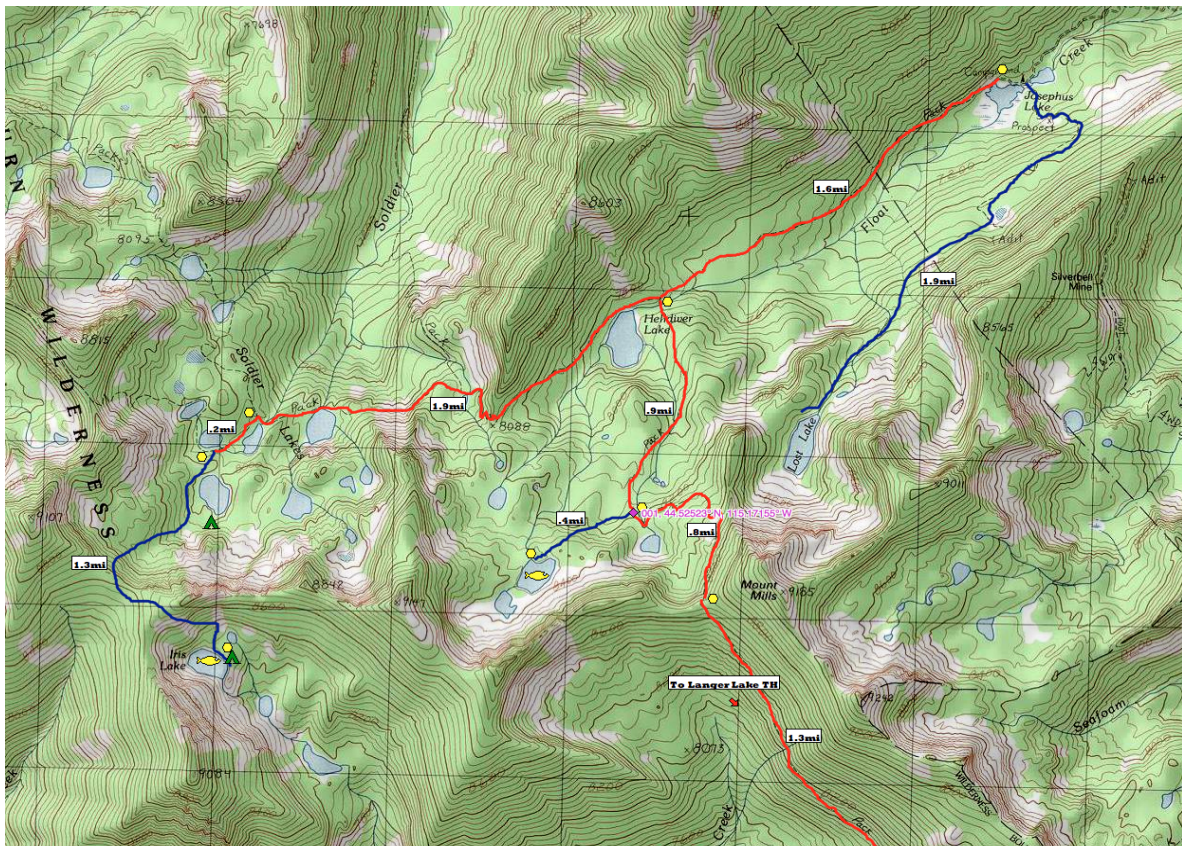
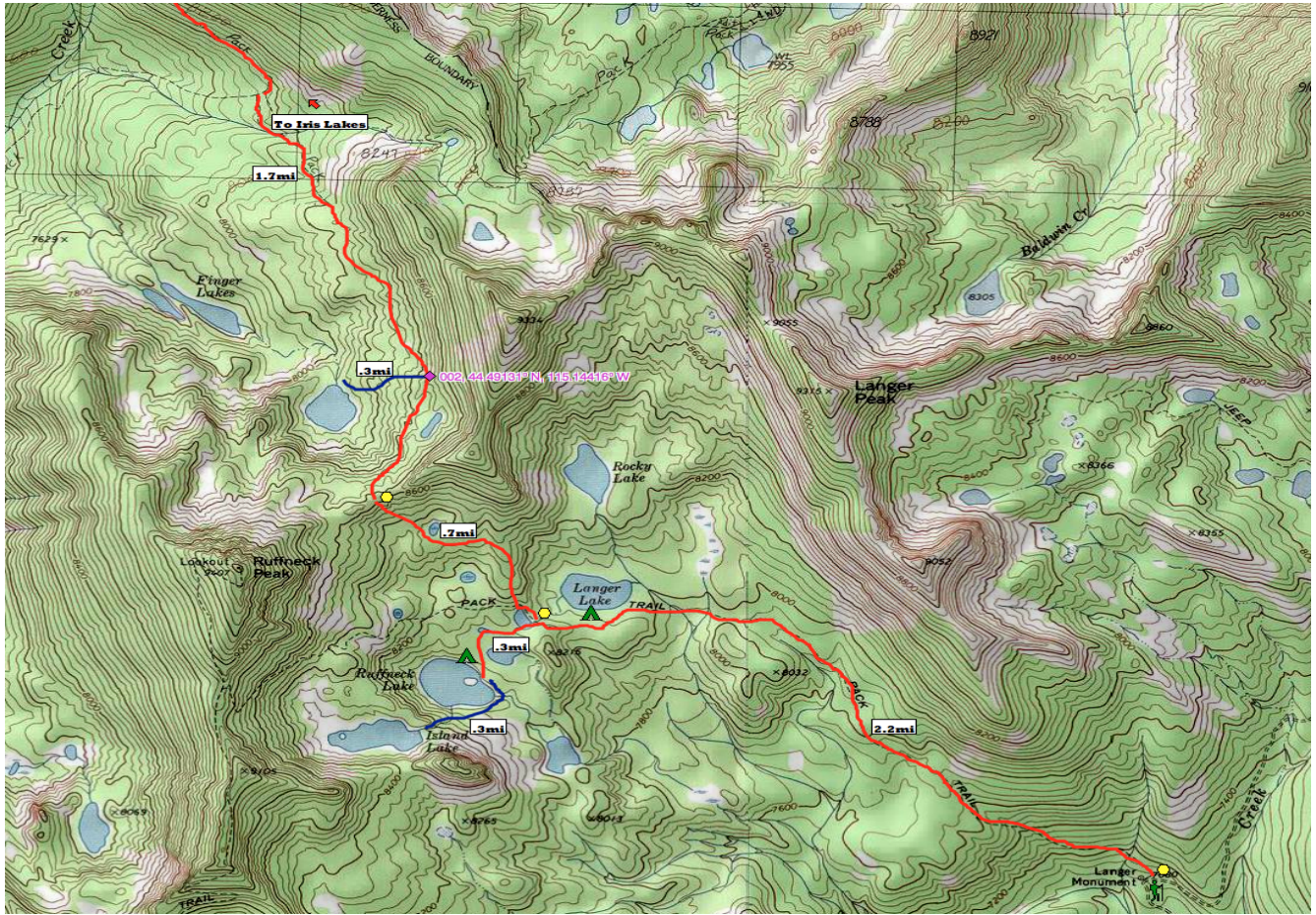


Lake 8565, Crimson Lake Basin



No-Name Lake, Southwest Crimson Lake Basin

Iris - Moon - lost lakes, Soldier lakes Basin





Iris Lake #1



Iris Lake #1

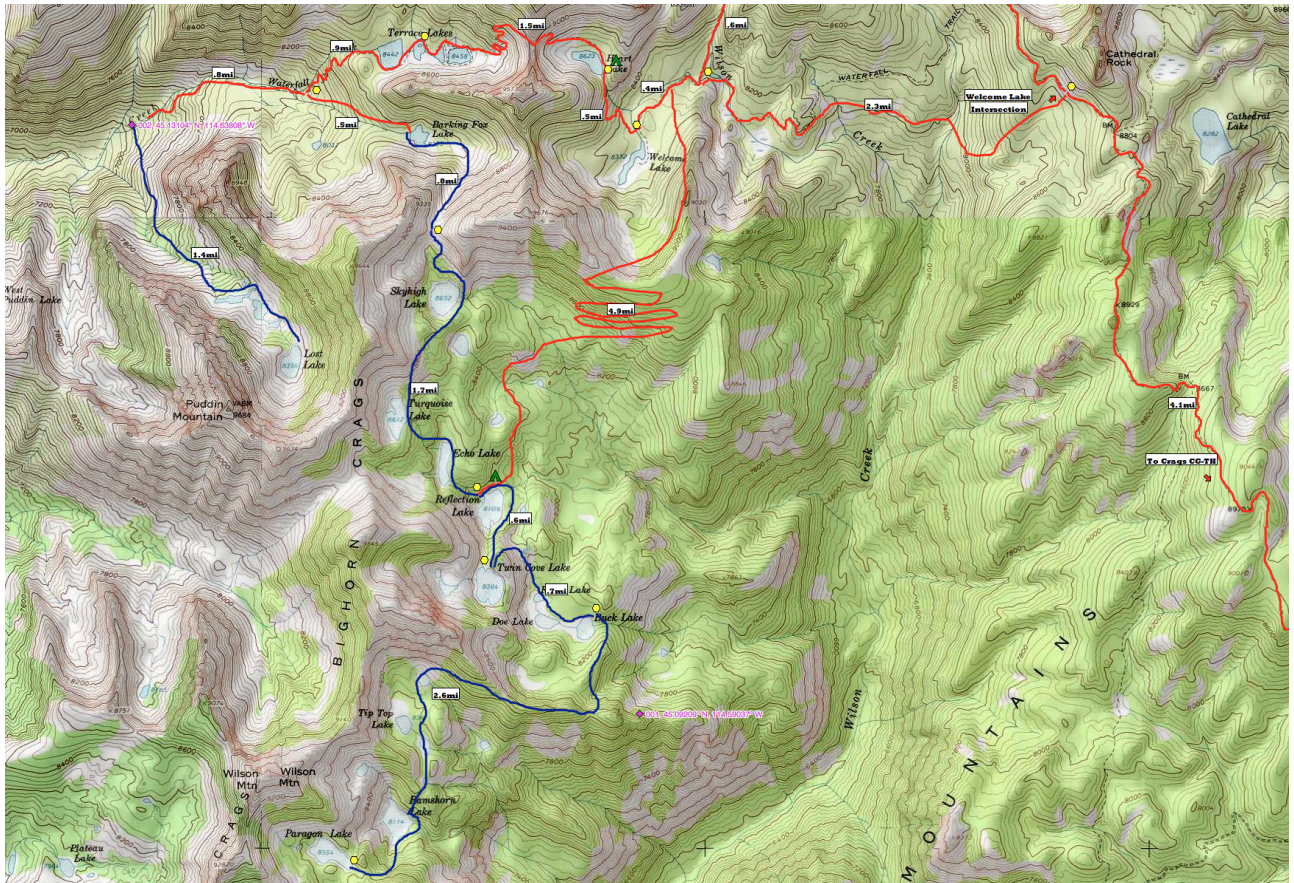
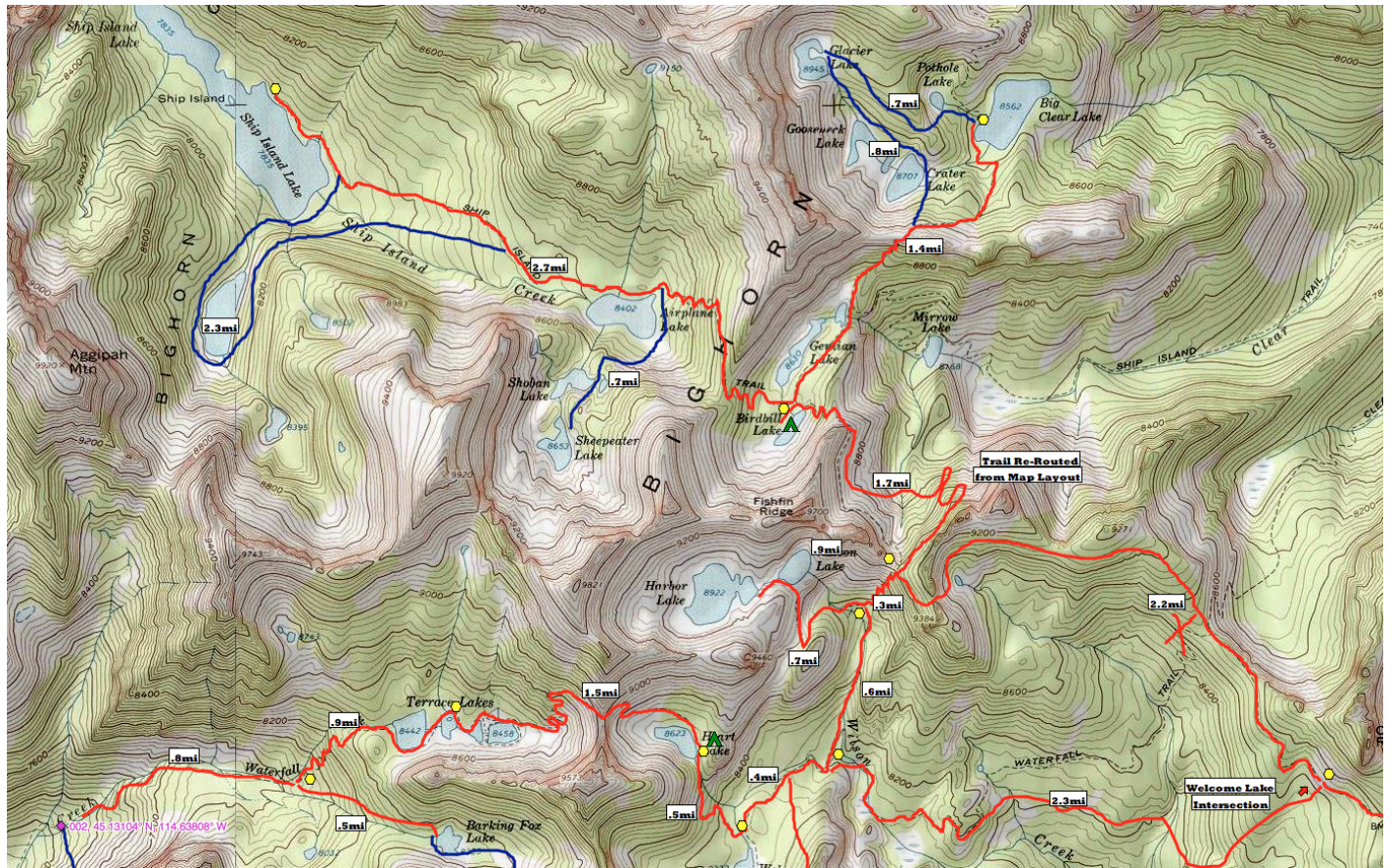


Lost Lake, Josephus-Helldiver Lakes Basin



Lost Lake, Josephus-Helldiver Lakes Basin

Big Horn Crags, Frank Church Wilderness, ID





Birdbill Lake, Big Horn Crag, ID



Harbor Lake, Big Horn Crag, ID



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Ship Island Lake, Big Horn Crag, ID



Ship Island Lake, Big Horn Crag, ID

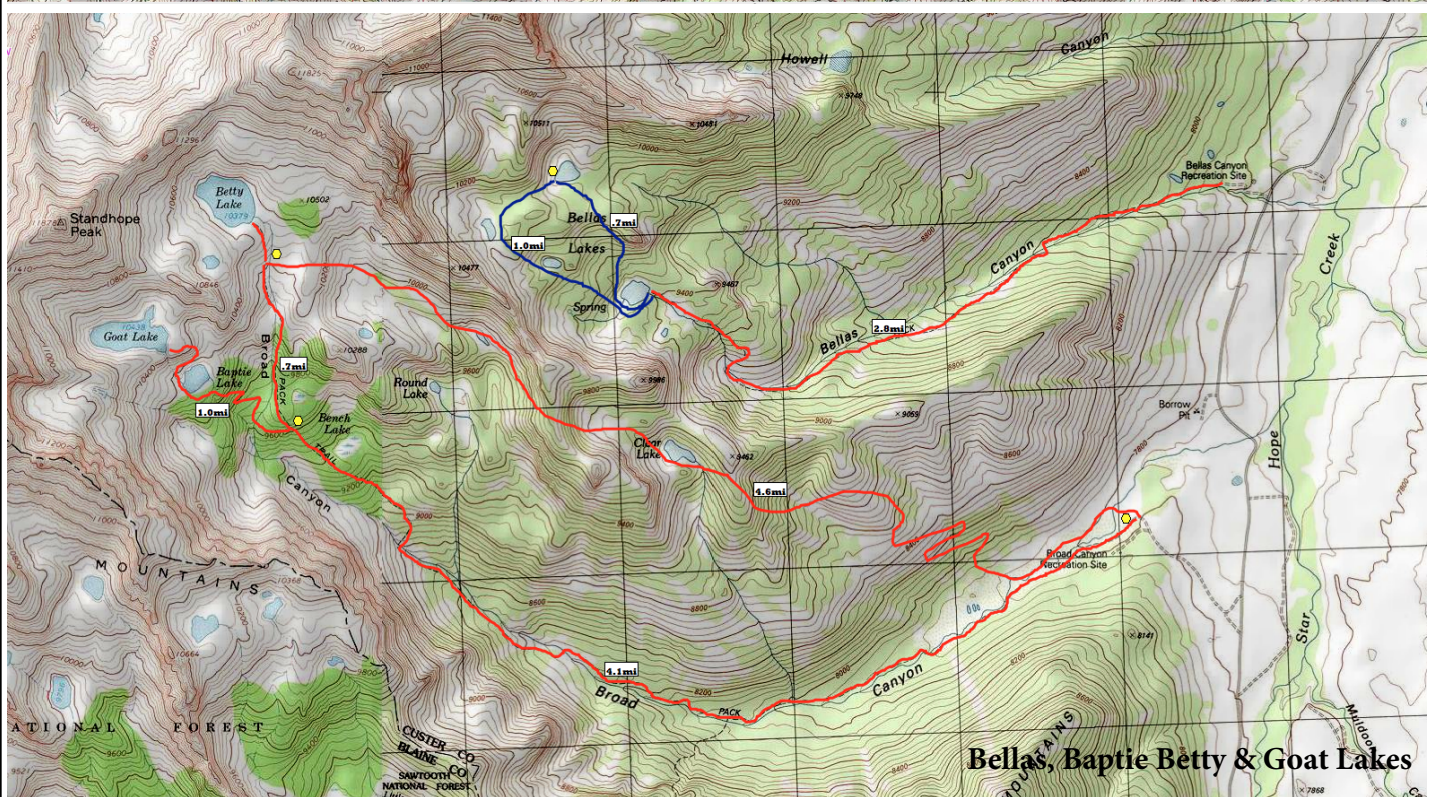
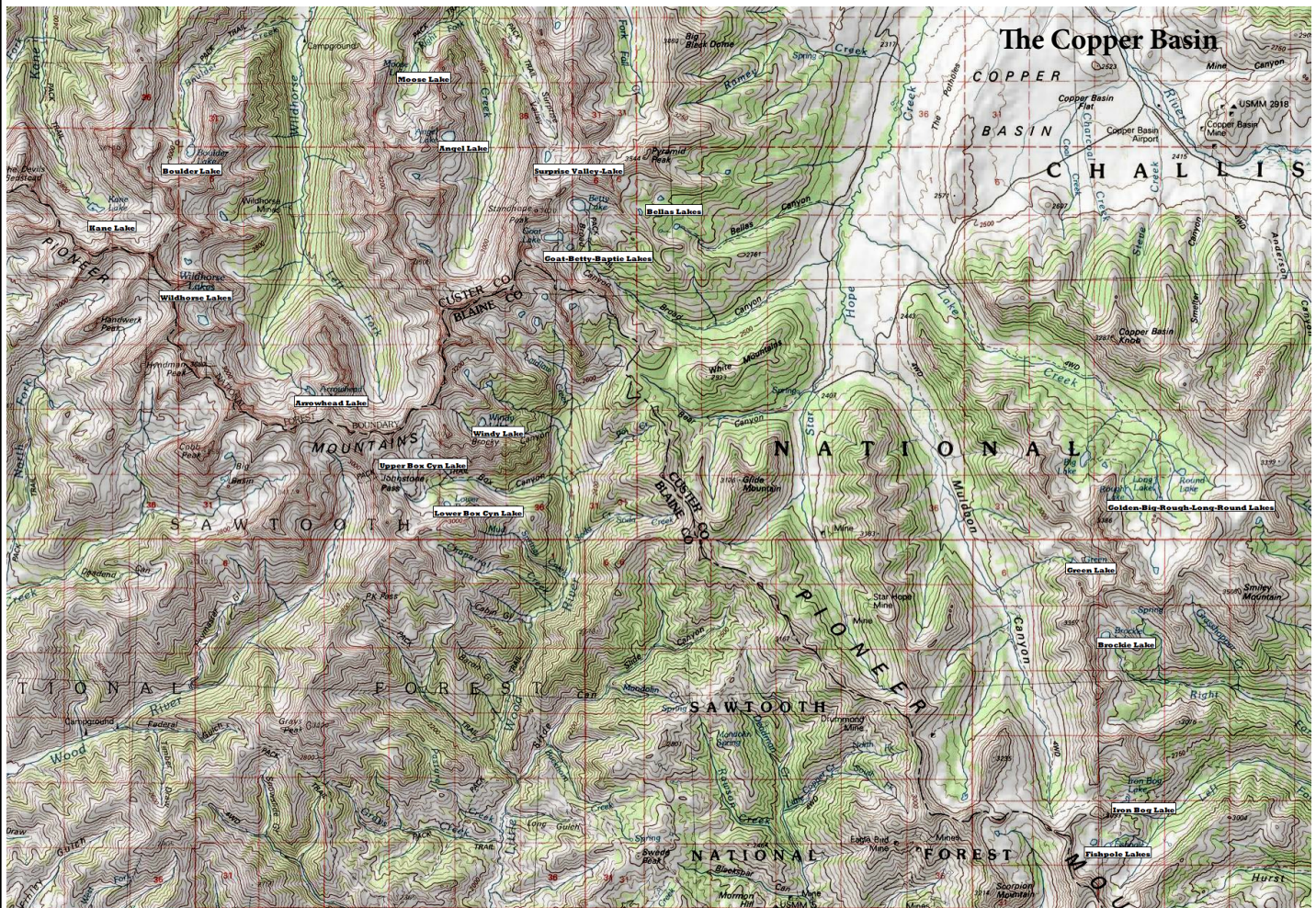


Terrace Lakes, Big Horn Crag, ID



Glacier Lake, Big Horn Crag, ID

Copper Basin. Pioneer Mountains, ID





Baptie Lake, Copper Basin, ID



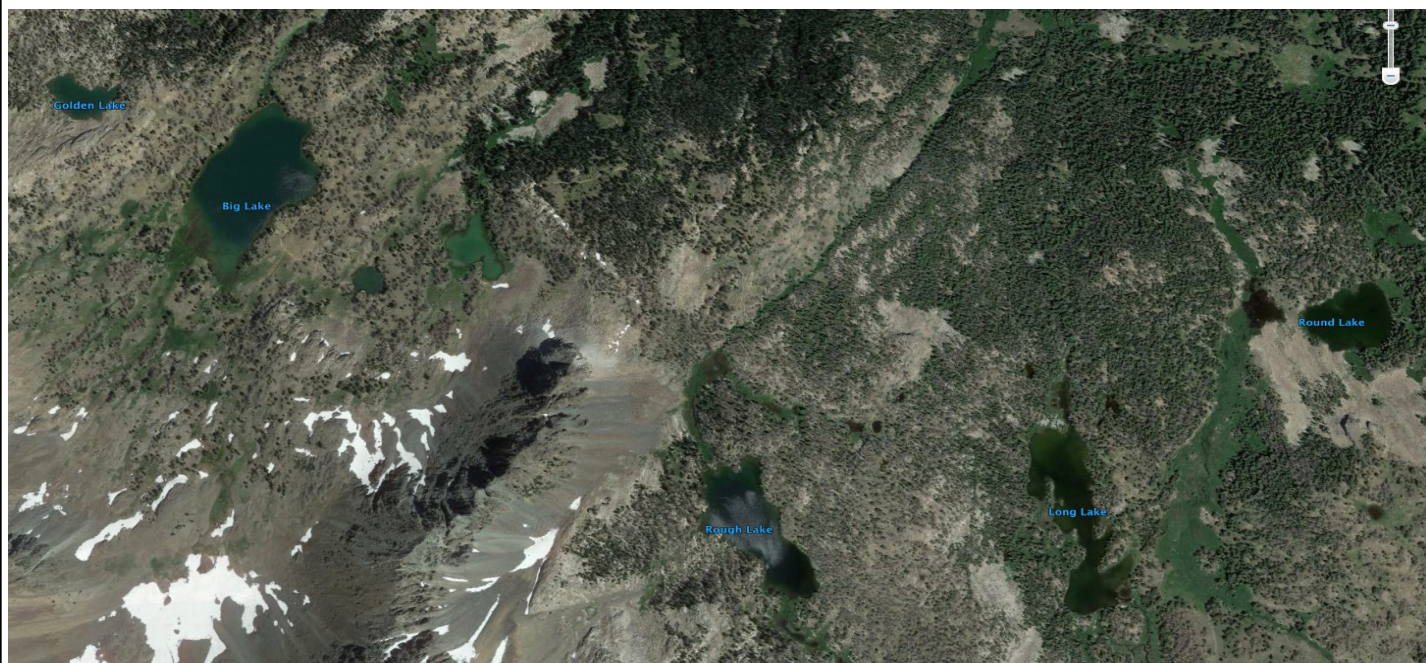
Goat Lake, Copper Basin, ID



Main Bellas Lake, Copper Basin, ID



Betty Lake, Copper Basin, ID

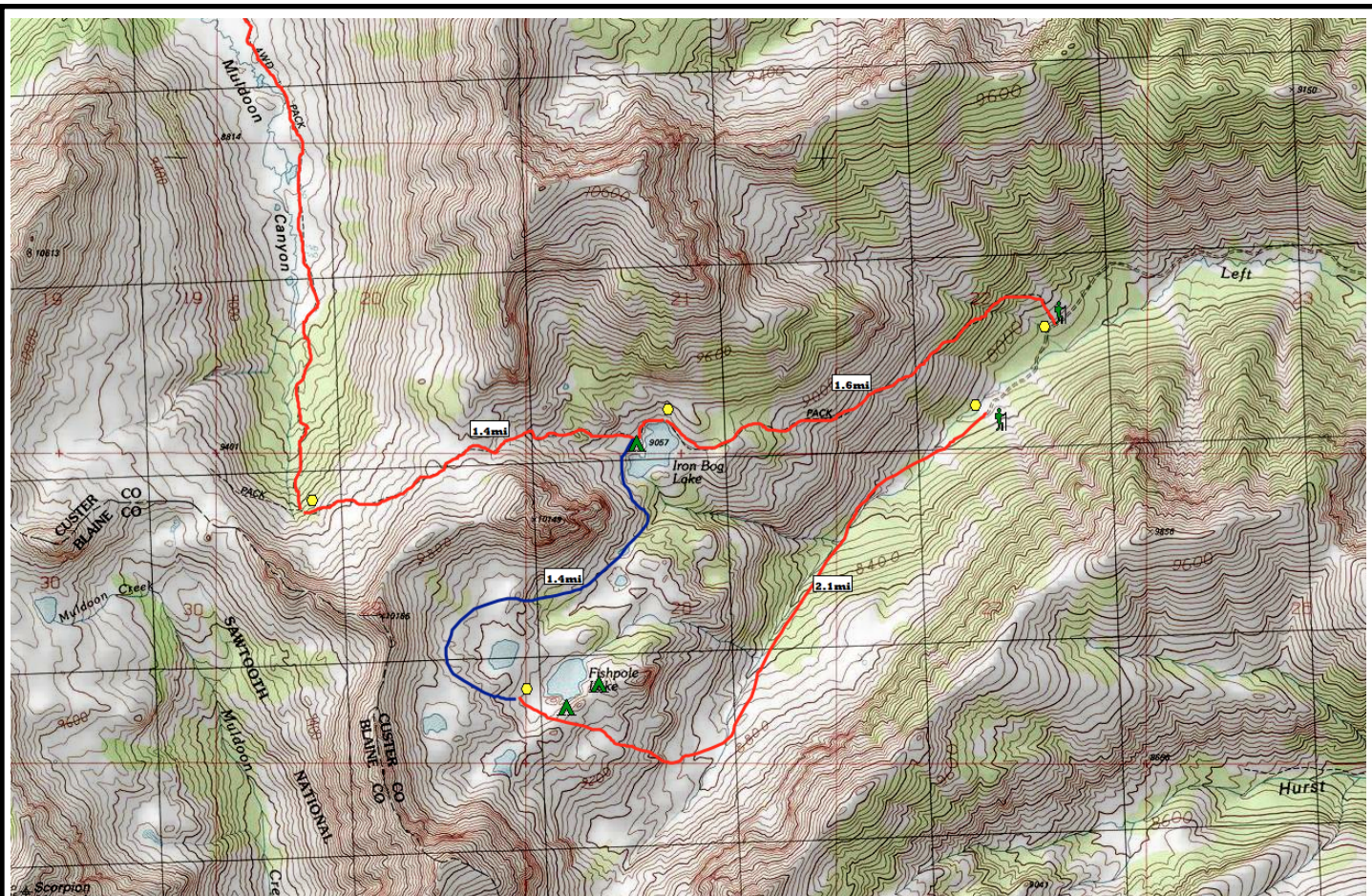




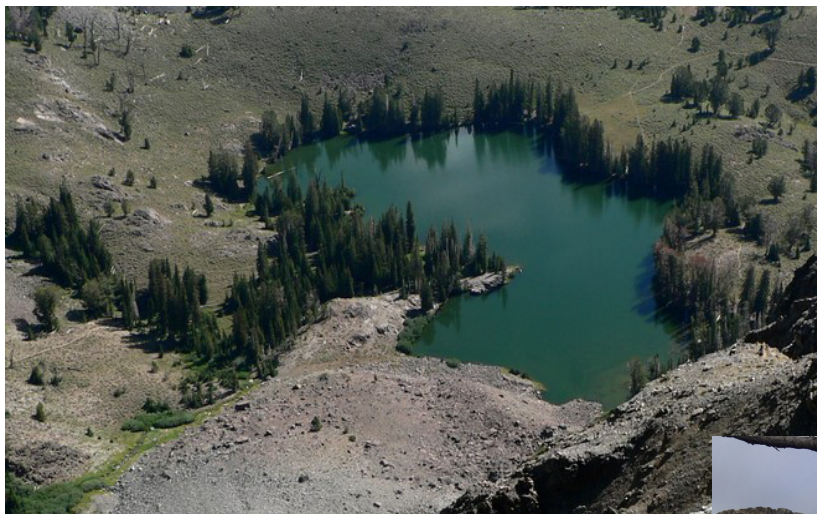
Rough Lake, Copper Basin, ID

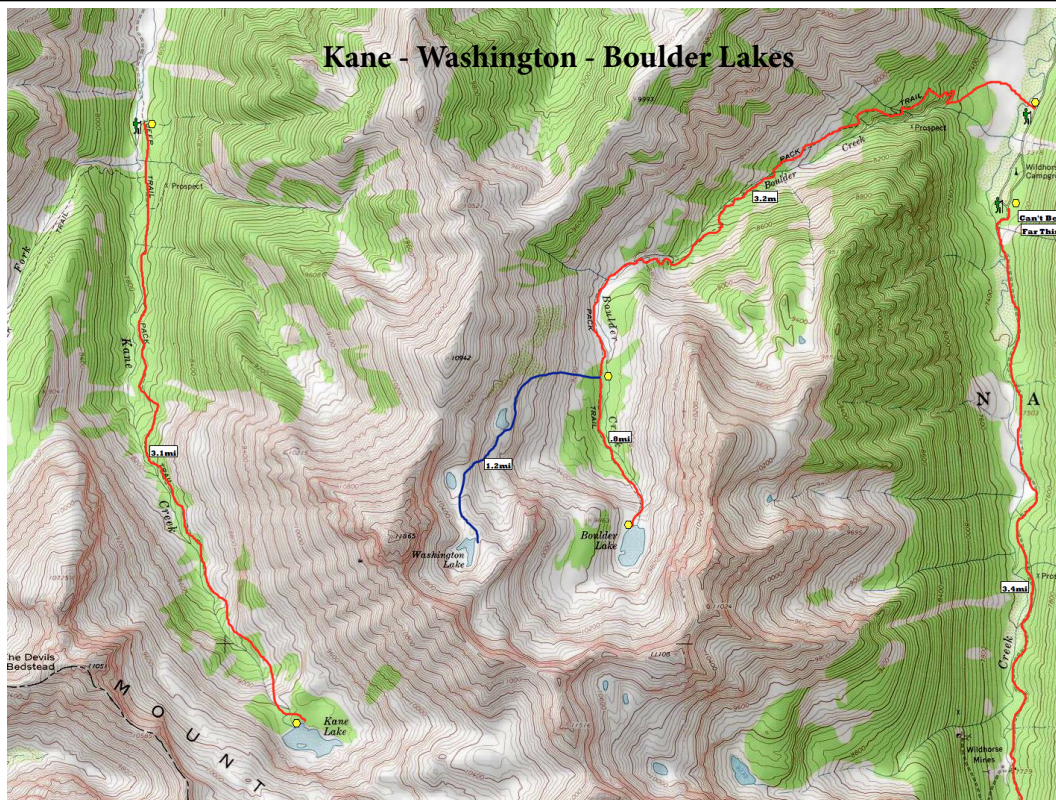


Green Lake, Copper Basin, ID

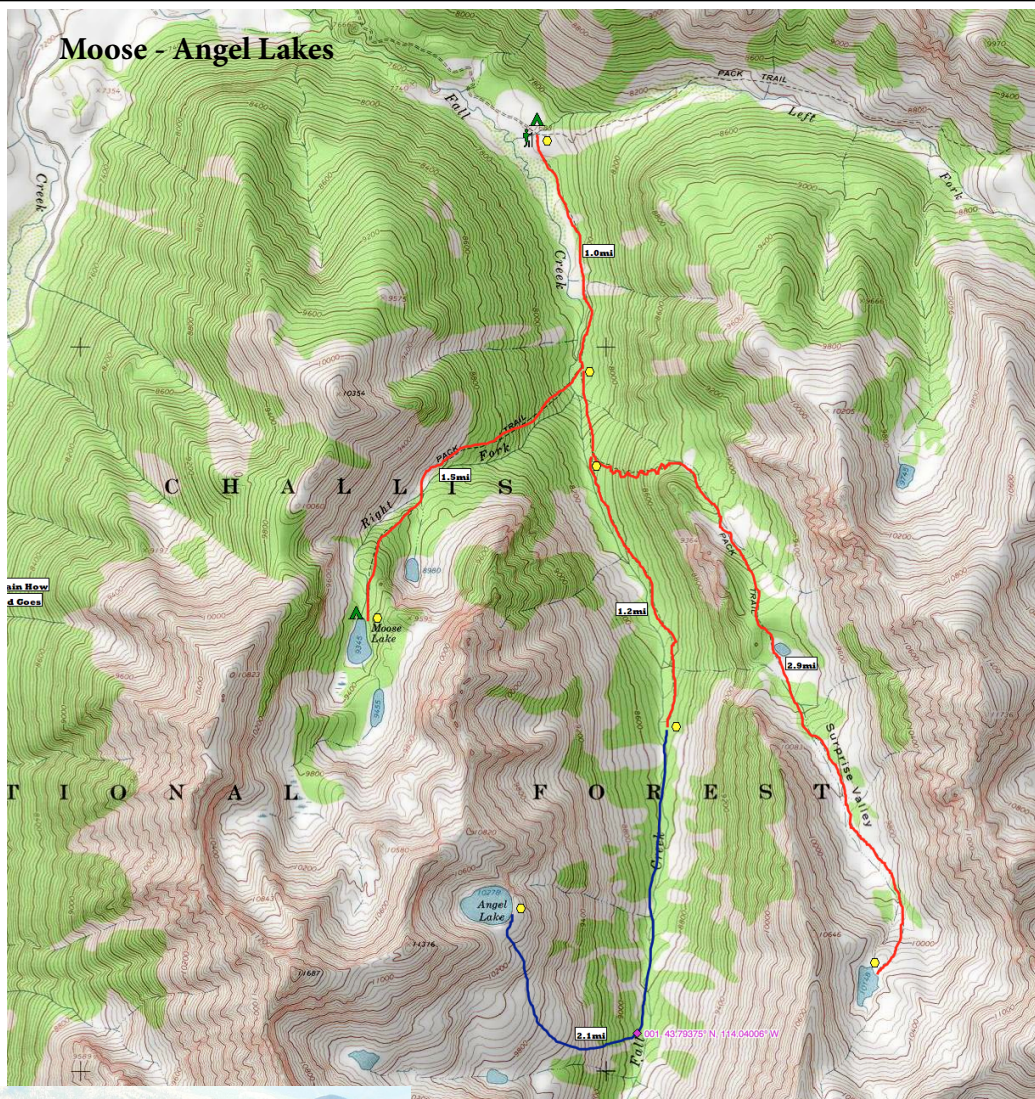


Iron Bog - Fishpole Lakes





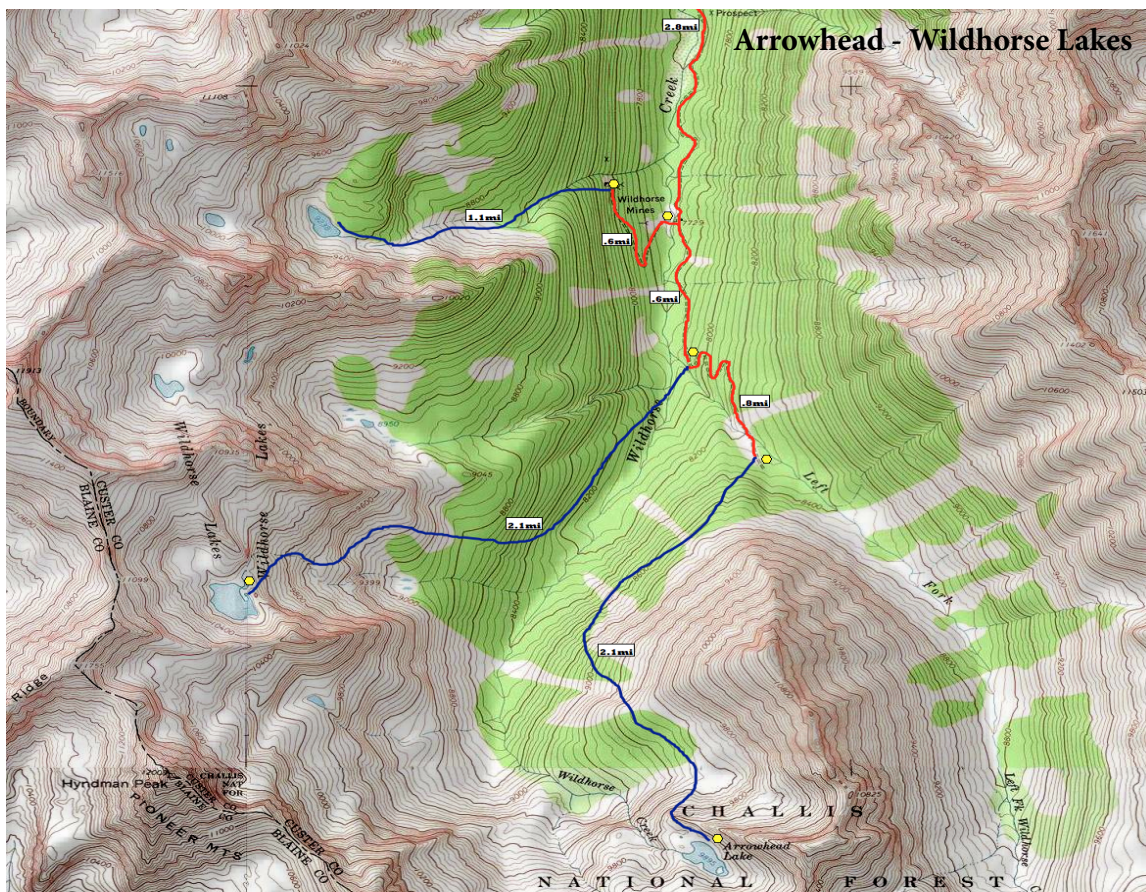
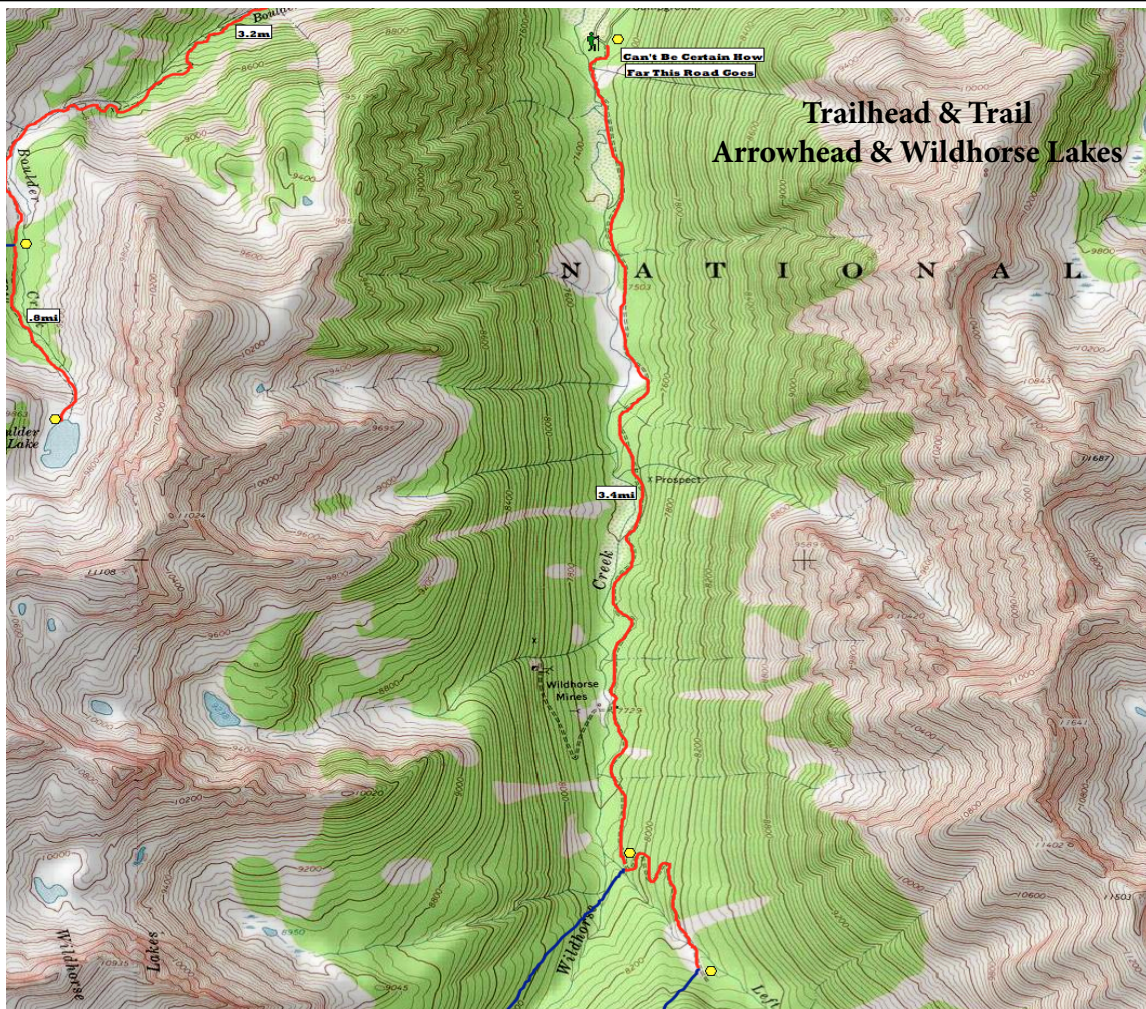
Kane Lake, Copper Basin, ID

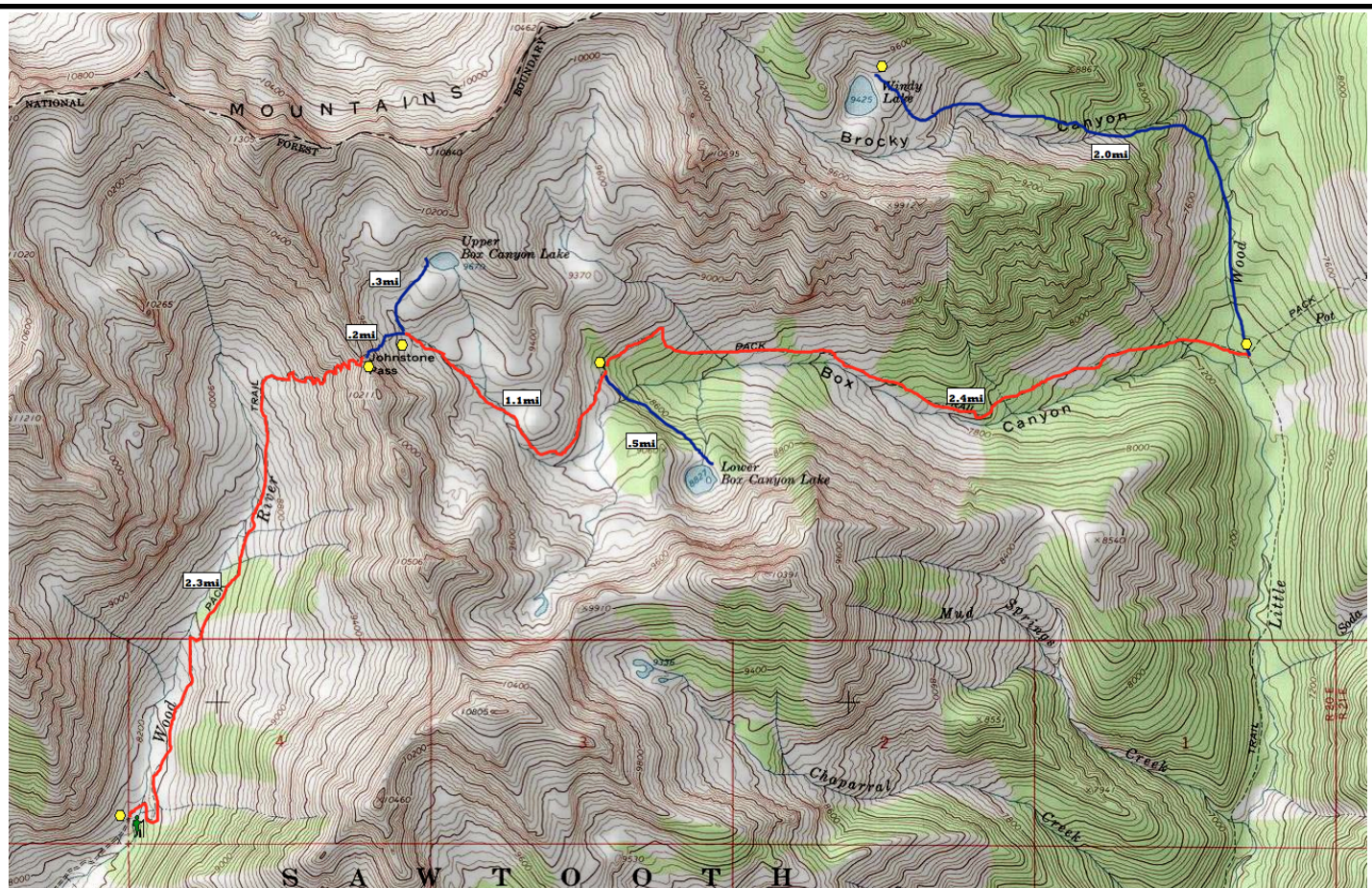


Angel Lake, Copper Basin, ID

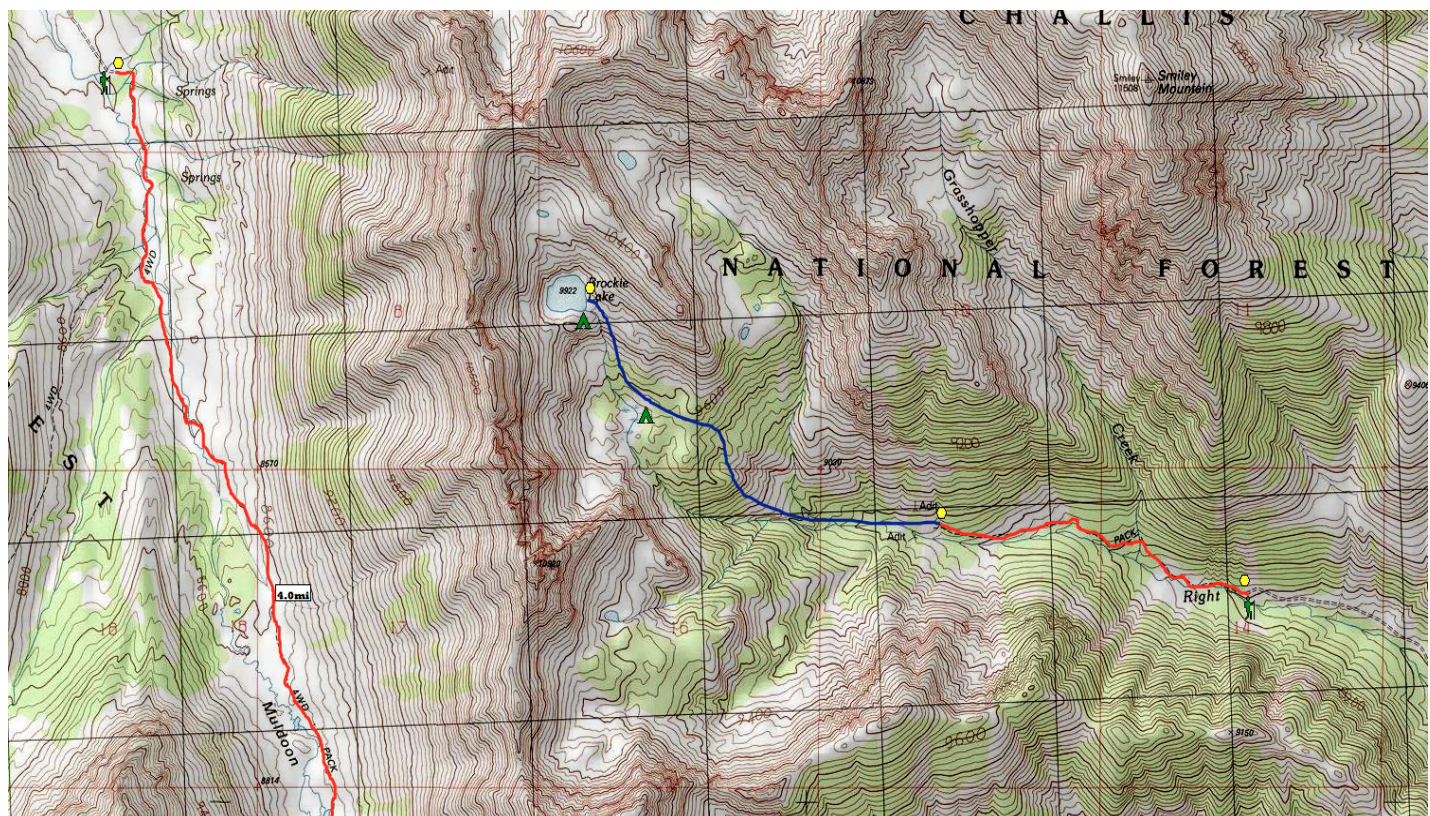
Moose Lake, Copper Basin, ID







Upper & Lower Box Canyon Lakes, Windy Lake



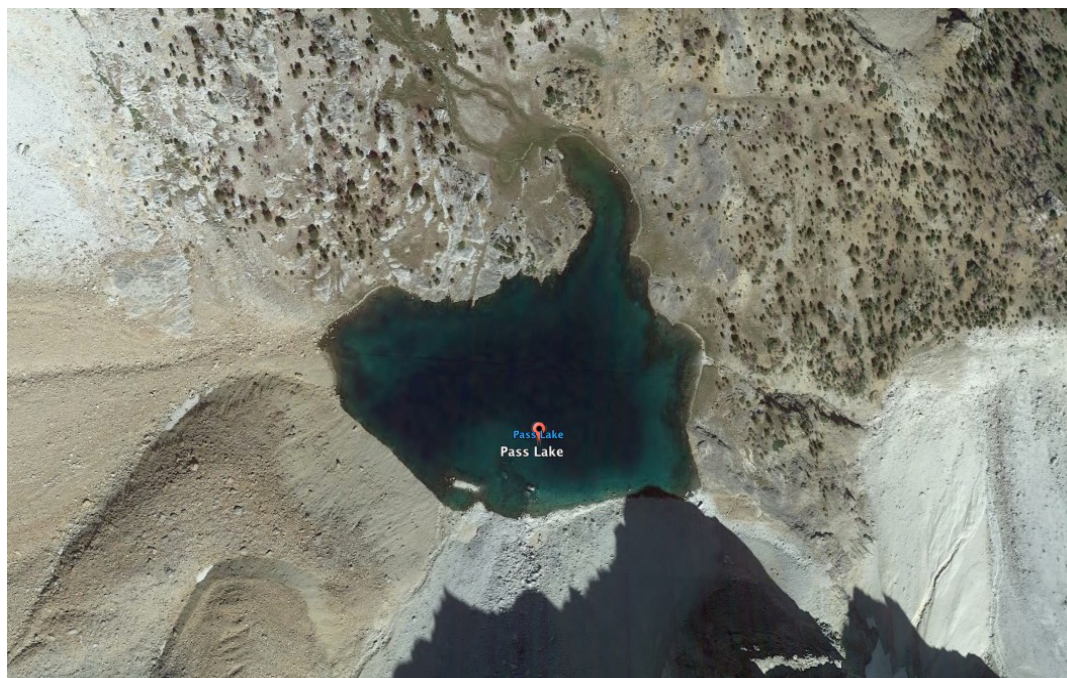
Brockie Lake

Merriam - Pass lakes, lost River Range, ID



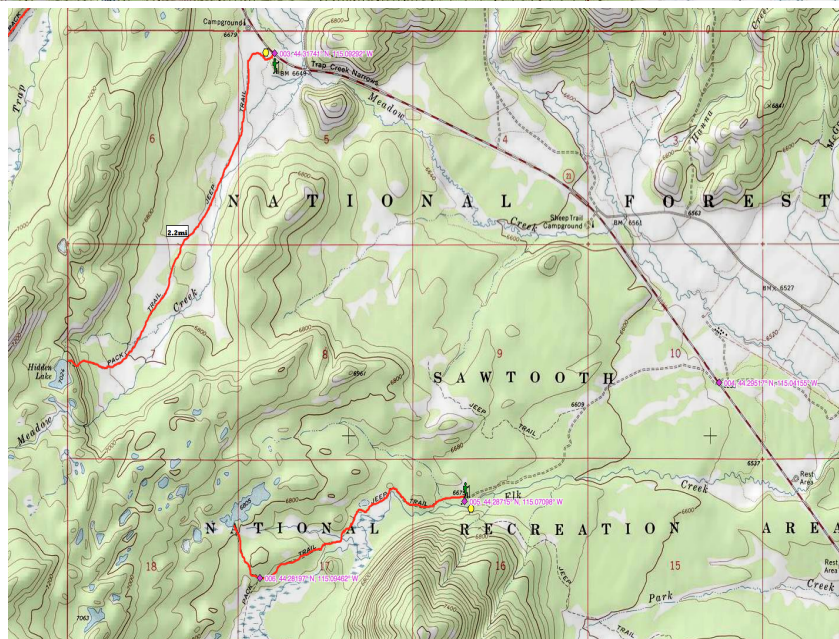
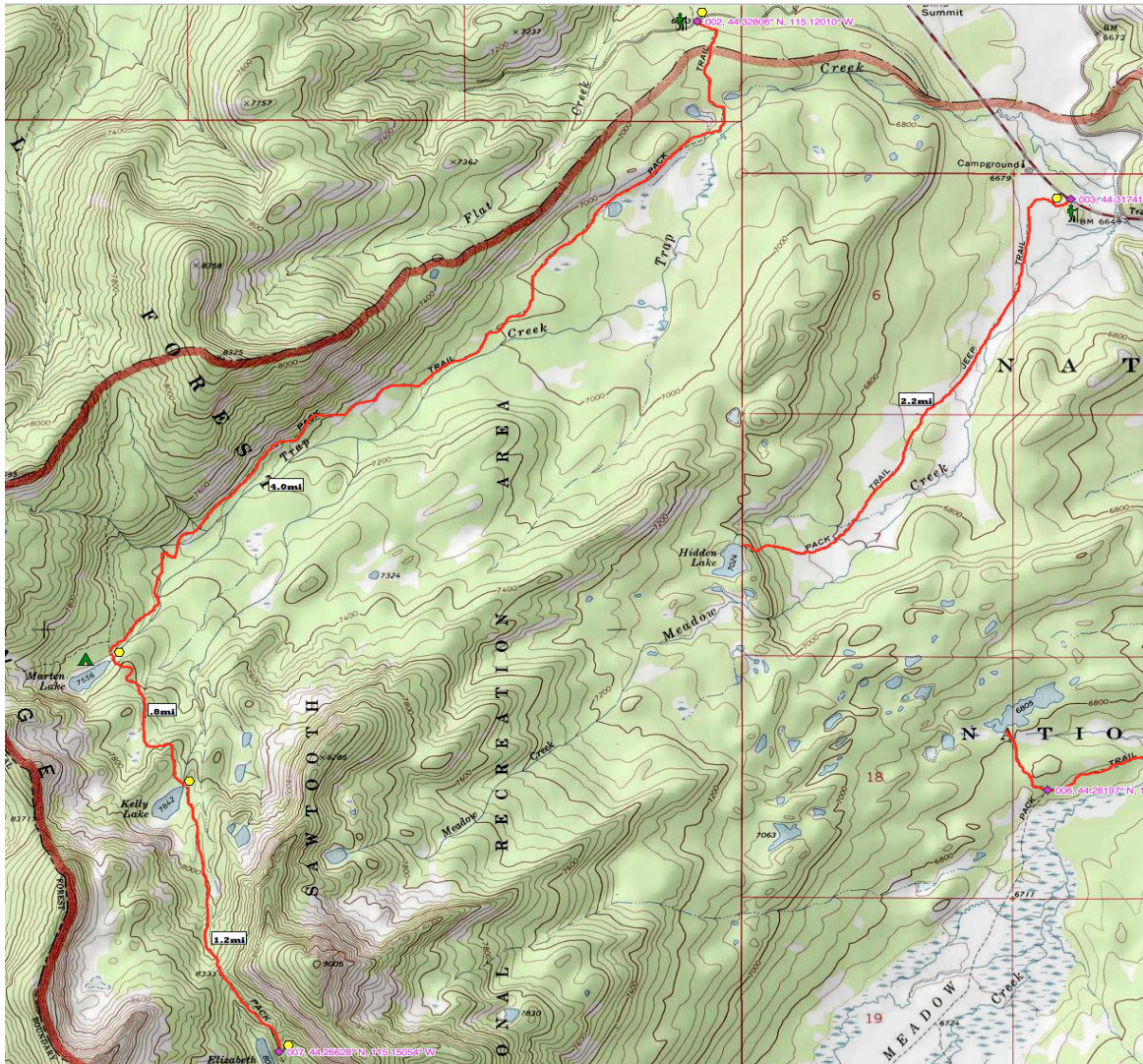


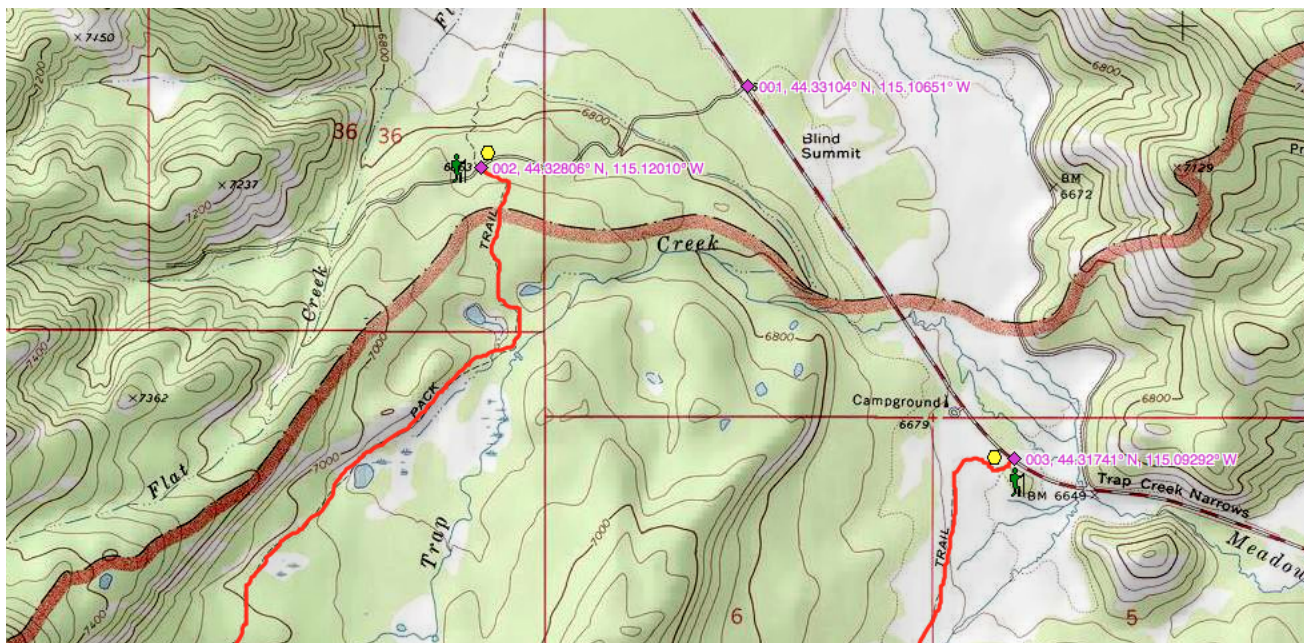
Merriam Lake



Pass Lake, from G-Earth

Marten, Kelly & Elizabeth lakes Sawtooth Wilderness, ID





Marten & Hidden, TH & Road Turn-off Coordinates



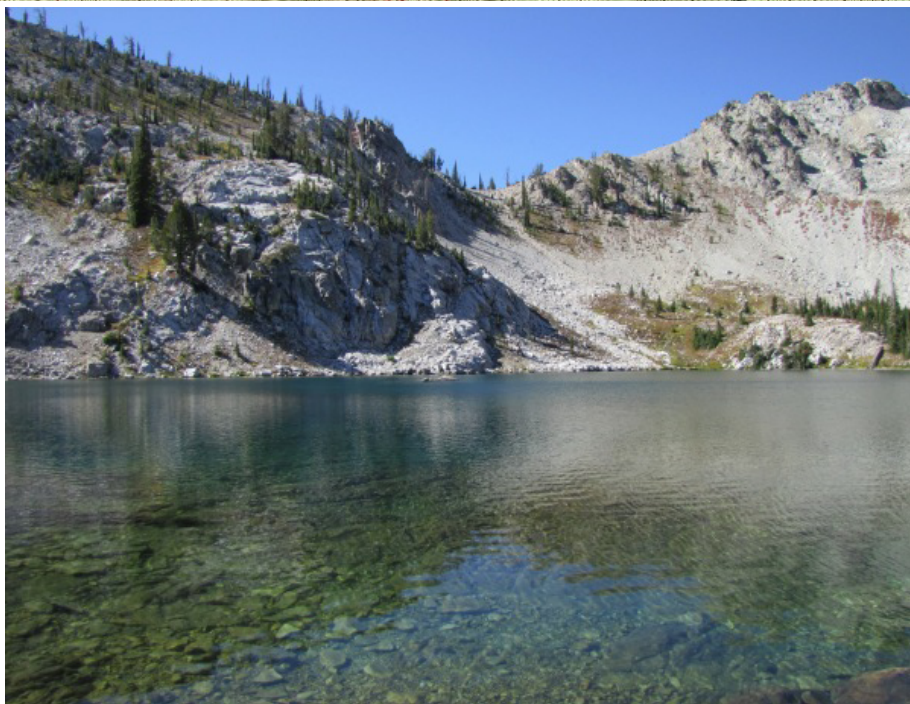
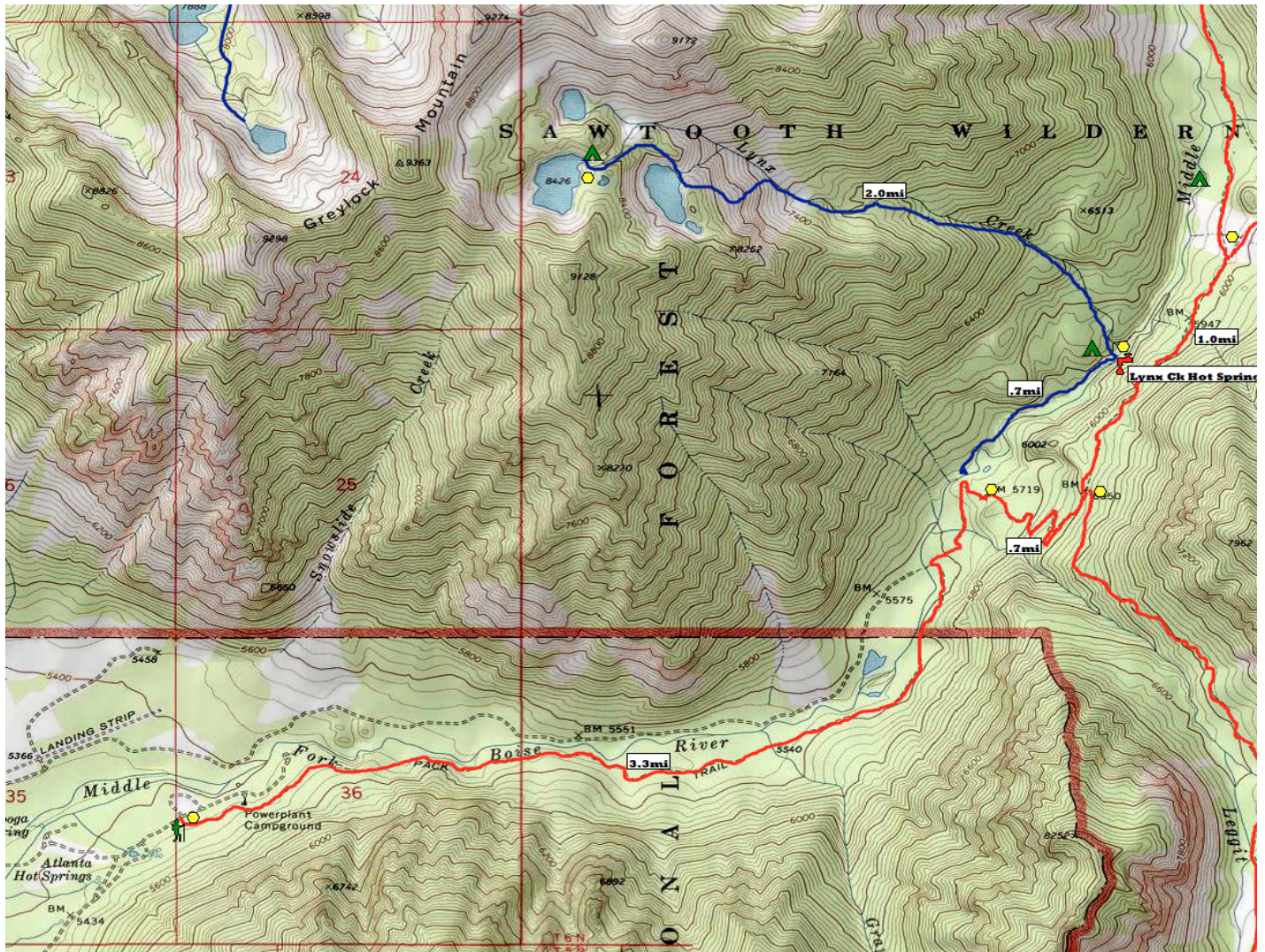
Marten Lake

Kelly Lake



Elizabeth Lake

lynx Creek lakes, Sawtooth Wilderness, ID





All pictures are of Lake 8426'

Moon lake, Sawtooth Wilderness, ID





Bernard lake. Bear Valley. ID

