



Granite Lake, Desolation Wilderness

Fishing:

Granite Lake - (Eldorado County)

2/10

Hiking:

2/10

Scenery:

6/10

Solitude:

1/10

Distance:

1 mi 1-way

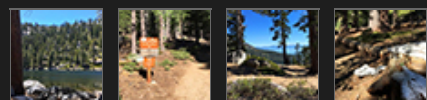
Map:



Elevation Profile:



Gallery:



See a short video of this lake (1).

See a short video of this lake (2).

See a short video of this lake (3).

Desolation Wilderness

June 16, 2017

Like 1

G+1

Getting There

To reach Granite Lake in Desolation Wilderness, start at the [Bayview trailhead](#) near Emerald Bay at Lake Tahoe. If the campground is open, you might be able to park close to the trail as there are a few spots up next to the actual trailhead. The trailhead serves the Granite Lake route and the Cascade Falls trail. If the campground is closed, park on the dirt near the gate, on the highway. This can be a busy area during peak season so expect to see a lot of people.

The Hike

The hike is a short and steep venture winding through shaded woods. The trail switches back a few times before you reach the wilderness boundary and soon after that, Emerald Bay comes into view offering picturesque scenery. After you climb the long, northbound switch and cross into Desolation Wilderness, the trail mellows out as you approach the lake through shady forest. After one mile of hiking you will drop down into the Granite Lake bowl. Although short, the incline may be challenging for unseasoned hikers. If you bring kids, take a lot of breaks and you'll be fine.

The Fishing

When I reached the lake I wanted to get away from the north side of the lake where the trail meets the water. People tend to flock to a few spots on the north side directly after arriving at the lake. I decided to head around the east side of the lake, through trees and over deadfall, across the outlet creek which required some log crossings - nothing serious. I settled on the southeast corner where I set up a tent and had an open space to myself, away from the day hikers. I had only 2 groups come by my campsite. Even though I had set up a tent and was readied for an overnight stay, I chose to leave by early evening as the fishing was slow and the fish were wary.

I tossed out a nightcrawler upon arrival but, like many heavily trafficked areas in Desolation Wilderness, the fish weren't falling for that old trick. I wondered if the lake had been fished



See a short video of this lake (4).

out due to pressure but I put that theory to rest after seeing schools of Brook Trout fry zipping around the shallows close to shore. Soon I began to see an aggressive trout plucking insects from the surface near the outlet and I set up my fly rod and readied myself for some fly fishing. I made my way over to some protruding rocks near the outlet and began casting a green humpy with a hare's ear dropper. At first my well-placed casts garnered no attention but eventually I had an interested fish take a whack at my humpy. I missed the hookup but didn't give up.

I noticed a remarkable event: a Flying Carpenter Ant fallout occurred leaving dozens of stranded insects scattered across the outlet area. After casting to a what appeared to be a sizable trout for a while, he eventually gave a hard strike on my humpy and ant dropper and the hookup was a success.

I felt the strength and weight of the fish on my 5 weight rod and the fight was on! After only a few moments of fighting, this Brookie broke my line, making off with my humpy and dropper. It was hard to tell if I would get another shot at a fish in this spot but I gave it a great number of casts as the casting location was prime, allowing me to fan cast over a large area. It dawned on me that there were only two fish working the outlet and I had probably dealt with both if them at this point. I decided to wait for sundown, hoping for a good midge hatch. Sundown came, and I saw no more rises, although I sent a great number of casts, I saw no ripples or otherwise. I packed up and hit the trail out. On the way out I hit prime photograph time on Emerald Bay, a thousand feet below.

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This site was created to provide information on fishing the lakes and streams in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains.

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