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Cliff Lake - Desolation Wilderness

Fishing:

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Hiking:

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Scenery:

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Cliff Lake - (El Dorado County)

Desolation Wilderness

June, 1999

Like 0

G+1

Solitude:

 9/10

Distance:

 7 mi 1-way

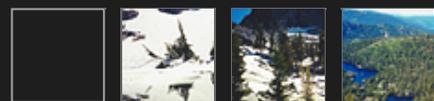
Map:



Elevation Profile:

Elevation Profile of Cliff Lake hike

Gallery:



Getting There

To reach Cliff Lake in Desolation Wilderness, park at the [Meeks Bay Trailhead](#). Meeks Bay is located on the south western shore of Lake Tahoe, California. The trail to Cliff Lake leads to a pater noster string of lakes including Lake Genevieve, Crag Lake, Hidden Lake, Shadow Lake and Stony Ridge Lake. Wilderness permits are required in Desolation Wilderness and can be reserved online at [recreation.gov](#).

The Hike

The trail to Cliff Lake starts on a dirt road and stays flat for the first 1.6 miles. There is ample shade for the majority of this hike. There are only two steep climbs and before you know it, you will be at Lake Genevieve. You may find yourself alone at Lake Genevieve as Crag Lake makes a much better camping experience and people tend to stay there. I recommend staying at Hidden Lake just above Crag Lake for the night and day hiking up to Cliff from there. Once at Hidden Lake, walk up the hill directly south until you reach Cliff Lake, nestled against the east side of Crag Peak. An alternate route can be made by following the outlet creek of Cliff Lake which flows into the west side of Stony Ridge Lake. So, you could hike to Stony Ridge Lake and follow the western shoreline until you find the creek coming from Cliff.

The Fishing

Cliff Lake is listed as a Brook Trout water in northeastern Desolation Wilderness. It is a very small lake and relatively easy to access. We visited Cliff Lake during ice-out and it was one of the coolest sights I have ever seen. The shore on the north side consisted of half-frozen slush that was a neon aqua blue. The lake seemed very small but it was hard to gauge where the water started or ended on the east side because everything was under a foot of snow.

As for the fishing, it seemed very lifeless. I saw no signs of life but I rarely do when I come across half-frozen lakes. Our trip was in early June so you might have better luck later in the season; July or August. All in all, it isn't one of the most popular destinations in Desolation Wilderness so you can probably find yourself alone here most of the time. We

couldn't really make a judgment call on the camping situation due to the deep snow.

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About

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

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