



Lakes of the Great Burn & More

Pearl Lake:

Hoodoo Pass Option:

Difficulty: *Classic*

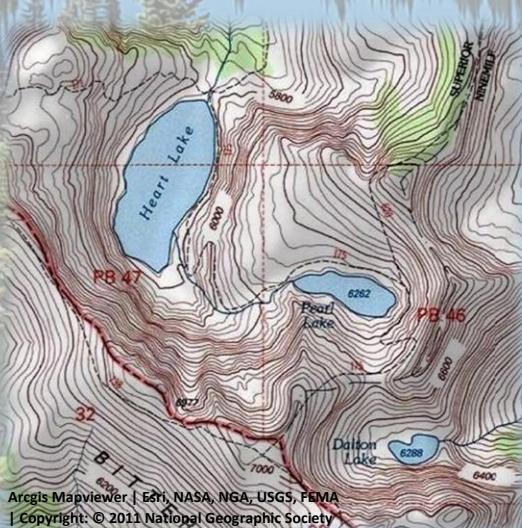
Distance: *5.5 miles*

Trailhead Elevation: *5950 feet*; Trailhead Lat/Long: *46°58'30.52"N / 115° 1'32.60"W*

Lake Elevation: *6280 feet*; Lake Lat/Long: *46°56'41.47"N / 114°57'49.83"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 (~19 miles) until you top out on Hoodoo Pass on the Idaho/Montana border. Take state line trail #738 for 4.5 miles to the split where the left fork (Trail #175) heads down to the saddle between Pearl and Dalton Lake then bear left down to Pearl Lake. The total distance to the lake is 5.5 miles. There is no water along this route so plan accordingly. Early in the summer there are a few snowbanks available, but late in the summer they all but disappear.*



Heart Lake Option:

Difficulty: *Classic*

Distance: *4.0 miles*

Trailhead Elevation: *4675 feet*; Trailhead

Lat/Long: *46°59'0.91"N / 114°58'41.86"W*

Lake Elevation: *6280 feet*; Lake Lat/Long:

46°56'41.47"N / 114°57'49.83"W





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Pearl Lake 2001

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. Trail #171 takes off on the far side of the parking area. The trail wanders 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. Cross the outlet onto trail #175 and continue around Heart Lake to the far end. The trail continues to climb and switchback up the hill for 1 mile to Pearl Lake for a total of 4.0 miles.

Even though the distance on the Heart Lake option is shorter, I still prefer hiking along the state line. This is the route we used to ride our motorcycles and the views are spectacular. It only took us 20 minutes to ride from Hoodoo Pass to the drop into the saddle. I believe Rod Ebelt owned the record of less than 15 minutes to ride the single track back to Hoodoo.

The 2 pictures looking into Pearl Lake in both the summer and winter from about the same location above Heart Lake are some of my favorites along the entire state line.



Pearl Lake 1978



Pearl Lake 2016

At the Lake: There are at least 4 campsites at Pearl Lake, one by the outlet; a grassy area and one in the trees along the left side and finally a more primitive one at the far end of the lake near the lake inlet. Cutthroats are stocked every 7 or so years, but the last time I camped at the lake I didn't see a single fish or risers in 2 days and also none during both visits in 2023. Pearl / Dalton lakes are probably the most visited by me outside of the Bonanza Lakes





submerged rocks are only a few feet underwater, so you stand on them. The goats that roam this area are not shy, the last time Kathy and I camped at Pearl we had 14 goat's hangout around camp for most of the day. They were a little bit of a nuisance looking for salt. In the 70's and 80's we only saw occasional goats along the state line. Now they are such a nuisance that there is a big sign at Heart Lake warning about them.

The route from Hoodoo Pass to Pearl Lake then Heart Lake and back to Trout Creek Road is a fantastic Mountain Bike ride. It is not easy riding across the state line. I have ridden a mountain bike along the state line a couple times, and it is difficult, best left for the younger crowd. My brother (Kelly) once rode his mountain bike from Hoodoo Pass all the way to the Clearwater Crossing in Fish Creek via the North Fork of Fish Creek trail. He said it was one of the hardest days he had ever had on a bicycle; it was approximately 20 miles of technical single tract.



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Pearl Lake used to be one of the premier fishing lakes in the 70's and early 80's along the state line. It wasn't uncommon to catch 10 fish in just an hour if you hit it right. Usually, the fish were around 12 inches but 15+ inches were occasionally caught. In the 60's and 70's Fish & Game used to stock thousands of fish in these mountain lakes, but nowadays it is only a couple hundred every 5-7 years. Swimming is good in the lake and the prominent



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. We made multiple trips across the state line from Hoodoo Pass while the mill was in operation and maintaining the road. Our parents thought that we would get hurt skiing at Lookout Pass, so they cut us loose on cross-country skis and





Pearl Lake 2024



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snowshoes in the backcountry in our teens; what could go wrong. We had no clue about avalanche safety; there were places we went where I wouldn't go today even with the best equipment and knowledge. I spent a lot of time soloing along the state line. The farthest I skied was all the way to the high point past Dalton Lake that looks down into the Trio Lakes. I started in almost 10 feet of snow at Hoodoo Pass, but by the time I got above Pearl and Dalton Lakes there was bear grass sticking up out of the snow. The wind scoured the slope so much that there was

little snow, and it was rock hard.

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



Pearl Lake Oct 6, 2023



Pearl Lake 2024



Pearl Lake 1980, post Mt St Helens





Lakes of the Great Burn & More



Pearl Lake Oct 6, 2023



Pearl Lake 2025



Pearl Lake 2024



Pearl Lake 2016



Pearl Lake



Pearl Lake 2016

