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Bullpen Lake - Tahoe National Forest



Fishing: 5/10

Hiking: 3/10

Scenery: 8/10

Solitude: 9/10

Distance: 2.52 mi 1-way

Map:

Elevation Profile:

Gallery:

See a short video of this lake.

Bullpen Lake - (Nevada County)

Tahoe National Forest

September 23, 2016

Like 0

Getting There

To reach Bullpen Lake in Nevada County, drive to the [Lindsey Lakes trailhead](#) by taking Highway 20 from [Highway 80 at Yuba Pass](#). Take Highway 20 west until you can turn right on Bowman Lake Road. From Bowman Lake Road, follow the signs to the turnoff for Lindsey Lakes Road. This road is an unimproved dirt road that is moderately rough but still manageable in a 2-wheel drive vehicle with modest clearance. We were the only car in the parking area on a Friday morning.

The Hike

The hike to Bullpen Lake starts in the parking area just below Lower Lindsey Lake and makes its way past Lower Lindsey Lake and the campground on the north side. This is a 4WD road that passes several lakes along the way including Upper Lindsey Lake and Culbertson Lake. The hike is moderate with only a few hills to hike up until you reach the Bullpen Lake turnoff after passing the outlet creek of Culbertson Lake. Construction crews were repairing the dam at Culbertson Lake when we were there and the lake had been drawn down significantly. The trail leading to Bullpen Lake starts about 100 yards after crossing the outlet creek of Culbertson Lake. We took another route on this trip that followed an old road that paralleled the creek on the south side until Bullpen Lake came into view below us. From there, we bushwacked down the hill until we reached the south side of the Lake. I do not recommend this route as it was more difficult than taking the maintained trail that parallels the creek on the north side. Camp sites

can be found on the northwest side of the lake.

The Fishing

We saw fish jumping out of the water even from a distance as we approached Bullpen Lake. When we reached the shore we took note that the lake was very shallow and had significant algae and Hydrilla growth at the bottom. Despite the shallow depths, small trout were jumping everywhere so we assumed the middle of the lake must be deep enough to accommodate trout during the winter. We found a fisherman's trail that circled the lake and took it around the west side until we found an opening in the brush that provided good fishing access.

We cast out some Night Crawlers on a sliding sinker rig and waited for a bite. At first nothing happened and we sat and watched fish jump, teasing us. I cast out as far as I could and that seemed to put the presentation into the fish zone. After that, I got a strike right as the weight hit the bottom. The trout were difficult to hook and we failed at many opportunities to hook fish. We decided to put only half a worm on, inflated it and chucked it out there. Soon, we landed our first trout out of Bullpen Lake which turned out to be a small Rainbow measuring 10 inches or so. It was not the Arctic Grayling rumored to be in Bullpen Lake, but we were happy to finally see what was jumping out there. We landed a couple more Rainbows and then one Brookie before packing up and heading back to our packs waiting for us at the Culbertson creek crossing.

Bullpen Lake is not an ideal place to fly fish unless you have a floatation device. The entire lake shore is teeming with thick brush preventing all access to the shore save one or two very small openings. The east side is a shallow marsh that you will sink into if you were to attempt to step into it.

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