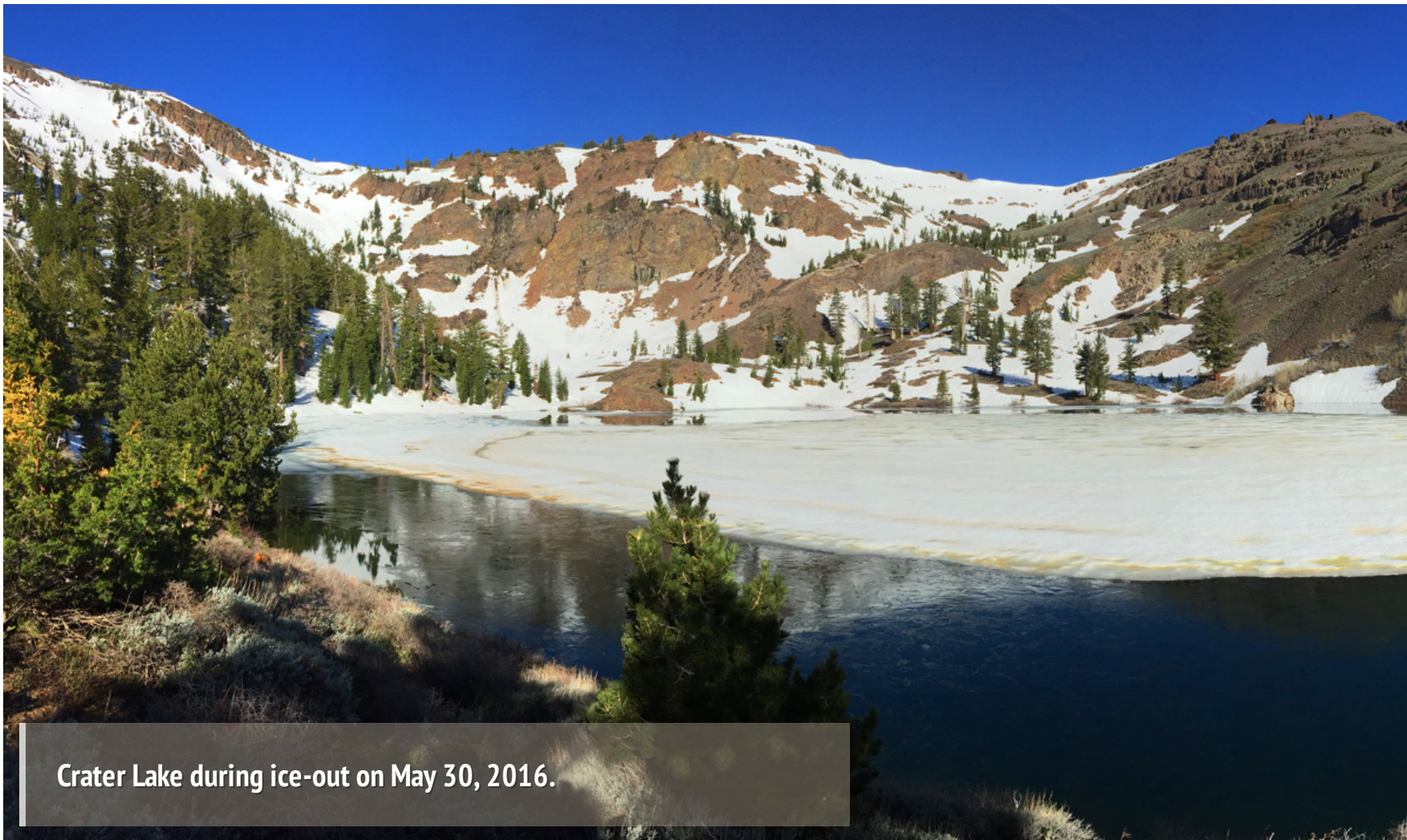





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Crater Lake during ice-out on May 30, 2016.

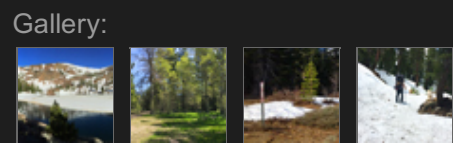
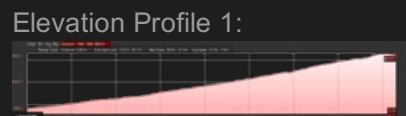
Fishing:
 4/10


Hiking:
 2/10


Scenery:
 7/10

Solitude:
 5/10

Distance:
 2.03 mi 1-way



 See a short video of this lake
(1).

 See a short video of this lake
(2).

Crater Lake - (Alpine County)

Toiyabe Forest

May 30, 2016

 Like 0

Getting There

Crater Lake in Alpine County, California is located off of [Highway 88](#) near Carson Pass. While a wilderness permit is not required for this area, a fire permit must be obtained if you wish to have a fire. There are no signs designating this as a trailhead so you will have to look carefully for the road (Alpine Mine Rd) that comes directly off the highway. [Here](#) is a photo of the road. It is approximately 2.20 miles east of Red Vista Road on Highway 88. The road is not maintained and only the first few hundred yards are approachable in non 4WD vehicles. There is room to park past the gate which is about 50 yards from the highway.


The Hike

The hike is mild but all uphill. The trail is an old road that winds half way up the mountain before forking into two roads. Stay to the left on road 31091 as the road on the right takes you down and across the creek to a couple of old mines on the hillside. If you cross any creeks, you have missed the turn. Another mile of hiking takes you up to Crater Lake. There are a couple snow fields at this time of year so beware. They both require good footholds to cross as they lie on steep banks.

The Fishing

REPORT - May 30, 2016

Reaching Crater Lake this year required more snow traveling than two years ago. I

 See a short video of this lake
(3).

expected this as Alpine County had a much wetter winter than the previous years. The two snow crossings that posed the most danger turned out to be really tricky due to me having to make good footholds for my wife and two kids and then having to go back and forth to get them across on occasion. At last we came around the last snow patch at the top of the hill and dropped down into the lake basin. The ice-out pattern was perfect for our camp location as there was 30 feet of water between the shore and ice sheet. We chose the site on the north-eastern side with the large campfire ring, close to the dam and outlet creek.

We went down to the shore to start fishing Crater Lake right away. I set my kids up with powerbait and we casted the lines as close to the ice sheet as we could, sometimes just rolling the rig right off the ice sheet. Meanwhile, I worked the outlet area and outlet creek with dry flies. My grasshopper and mayfly emerger patterns failed to bring any fish to the surface. I continued to work southward along the eastern bank and did not get any bites or see fish rising. I suspect the fish are holding deep and avoiding the 32 degree surface.

At last, a fish bit on some green powerbait that my son was fishing with and a 12 inch Brookie was fighting it's way away from us. At the last moment, the fish popped of the hook and took off for the deep again.

I stopped fly fishing early as the wind was howling on our side of Crater Lake, but we left some poles in the water and went up to camp to put on some layers and returned to a Brook Trout biting our bait again. We fought this Brookie for a short while and wrestled it all the way to the shore where it jumped off of our barbless hook with ease.

I still do not know what it would be like to fish Crater Lake in the Summer/Fall period when the snow is not an obstacle. I have always found that fishing a lake during ice-out is much more difficult. Some people say it's better. I can say that the fishing is better on the west side but you will have to cross the outlet creek and then a treacherous snow patch on the north-western shore.

REPORT - May 16, 2014

I made camp on the west side of the lake due to the ice covering the entire eastern side. The best looking campsite is situated on the eastern side but the wind was blowing too hard there.

The fishing is fair for small Eastern Brook Trout at Crater Lake. I visited Crater Lake in mid May, during ice-out, and found there to be significant inversion due to thermocline. While a few brave fish were foraging at the surface, most of the fish were deep. I found Crater Lake to be very deep and most of the fish were holding at the bottom.

I had luck using dry flies like Humpys with a slow, almost motionless retrieve. I had also had luck using orange powerbait. I did not have any luck using spinners and kastmasters. The fish are not apt to expend too much energy while the water temperature is near freezing. In summer, Crater Lake is probably a fast-action lake that is easy to fish.

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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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