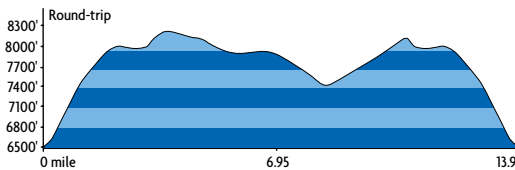


12

LAKE ALOHA, LAKE OF THE WOODS, AND ROPI LAKE

Length: 13.9 miles round-trip**Hiking time:** 2 to 3 days**High point:** 8,400 feet**Total elevation gain:** 2,800 feet**Difficulty:** strenuous**Season:** early July to late September**Water:** available from lakes and streams (purify first)**Maps:** USGS 7.5' Echo Lake, USGS 7.5' Pyramid Peak, USGS 7.5' Emerald Bay, USFS Desolation Wilderness**Information:** Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

This hike offers extensive views of high Sierra peaks as it takes you to five beautiful lakes. You must obtain a permit for this hike. Day hikers can get a free permit at the trailhead. Overnight hikers need to contact the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (530-543-2694; www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu) for more information on overnight quotas, obtaining a permit, and paying overnight camping fees.

From the Lake Tahoe Visitor Center on Highway 89 (3.1 miles northwest of the junction of Highways 89 and 50), drive east 0.1 mile and turn right (south) on Fallen Leaf Road. Go 4.6 miles to the former Fallen Leaf Lodge. Watch closely for the signed trailhead on the left, 0.1 mile past the lodge.

The initial 3.2 miles of this hike travel a rugged, unmaintained trail—watch your step. For the first 1.9 miles, the trail (17E10) often crosses Lily Lake's inlet streams as it steeply ascends rocky switchbacks that necessitate the use of occasional handholds. The next 0.5 mile, level or slightly downhill, passes sulfur flower and sage with great views to the left of rocky Angora Peak. At 2.4 miles head straight at a trail intersection.

At 2.8 miles you reach the highest elevation of this journey, 8,400 feet, which features a panorama of nearby high Sierra lakes and mountains, including Echo Lakes to the east and an open

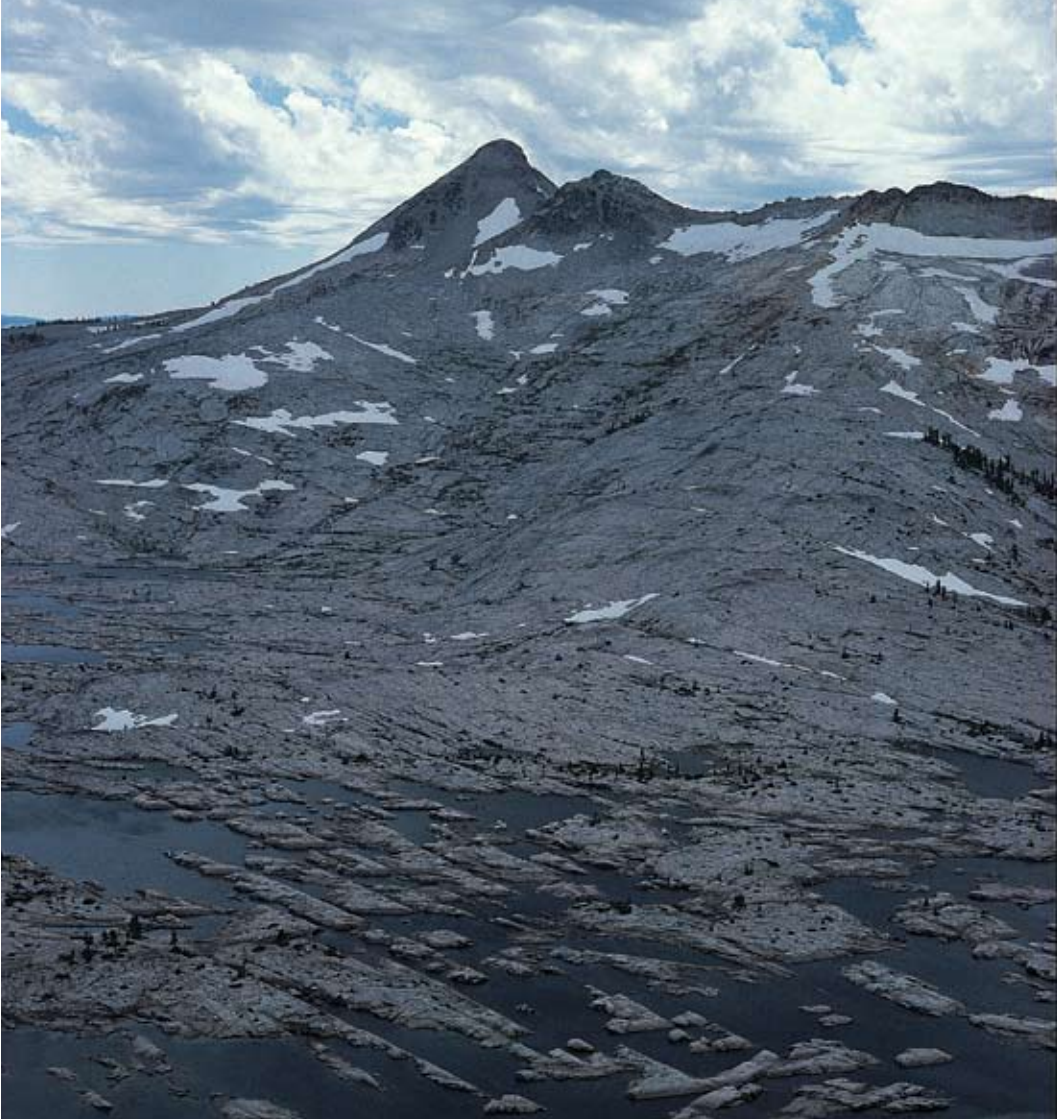
display of Desolation Wilderness scenery to the south and west. The next 0.4 mile reveals many odd-shaped Sierra juniper growing in exposed spots, with the steep Sierra slopes beyond. Tamarack Lake, Ralston Lake, and Ralston Peak lie to the south, and the upper 500 feet of Pyramid Peak rises to the west.

Reach the Pacific Crest Trail at 3.2 miles. A left turn leads to Tamarack, Ralston, and Echo Lakes (see Hike 6: Tamarack and Ralston Lakes via Echo Lakes). Go right and gently climb for 0.3 mile along a plateau sporting scattered sage, native fescue grasses, red fir, and tall western white pine to scenic Haypress Meadows. Bear right 0.1 mile farther at a signed trail intersection. Go right at 3.8 miles, left 100 yards farther, and then look right for a view of a green pond and Lake Margery.

At 4.1 miles the path leads through a meadow highlighted by blue lupine and red mountain heather. Bear right at a trail fork 0.1 mile farther, followed shortly by your first full view of Pyramid Peak.

Reach a trail fork near the middle of Lake Aloha's east shoreline at 5.3 miles (a right turn leads to Heather and Susie Lakes; see Hike 15: Dicks Lake, Gilmore Lake, Lake Aloha, and Middle Velma Lake). Go left for a scenic shoreline stroll. Note the western white pine and mountain

Dozens of granite islets punctuate the surface of Lake Aloha.



Pyramid Peak and Lake Aloha

hemlock thriving on the countless granite rock islands that highlight shallow Lake Aloha. Also note campsites a short distance from the lake.

Bear right at 5.8 miles and then left 100 yards farther at an unsigned junction. Follow the faint trail as it skirts the northeast flank of Peak 8383. At 5.9 miles a crest affords a view of aptly named Lake of the Woods, which rivals Lake Aloha in

popularity because of the numerous campsites. The path drops to the north shore and two campsites before it heads east.

At 6.2 miles note the return trail on the left at the northeast corner of Lake of the Woods and proceed straight. At 6.7 miles the trail departs Lake of the Woods and heads south 0.3 mile onto a flat. You soon cross Lake of the Woods's outlet



stream. Head due west, just south of a steep cliff. At 7.6 miles arrive at rocky Ropi Lake, which has several places to camp. This uniquely shaped, snag-covered lake invites a circumnavigating trek highlighted by views of Pyramid Peak. Consider easy cross-country walks to Toem Lake (west) and Avalanche Lake (south).

To return to the trailhead, retrace your steps to the junction at the northeast tip of Lake of the Woods. Turn right here and climb for 0.5 mile, and then go straight at a trail intersection. Hike down into Haypress Meadows, and then head right 0.2 mile farther at the signed trail junction onto previously trekked trails.

Here's the details for getting information, including permits:

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

35 College Drive

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

530-543-2694

www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu

www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/recreation/wilderness/desowild (for permits and other information)