

4 LAKE MARGARET

Length: 5 miles round-trip

Hiking time: 3 hours or overnight

High point: 7,725 feet

Total elevation gain: 550 feet

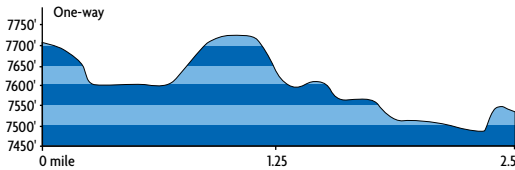
Difficulty: easy

Season: early July through late October

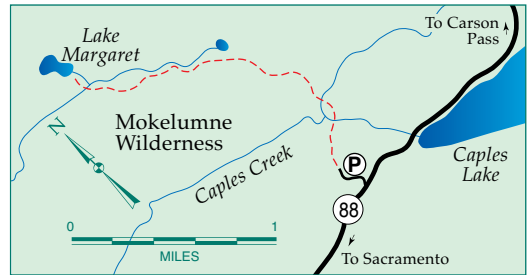
Water: available from streams and Lake Margaret (purify first)

Maps: USGS 7.5' Caples Lake, USFS Mokelumne Wilderness

Information: Amador Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest



This hike's gentle trail takes you near the lush green banks of Caples Creek and past huge slabs of granite to Lake Margaret, where you can picnic, swim, and enjoy the mountain scenery. It's a good outing for those wanting a lot of nature for only a little effort. Feel free to contact the Amador Ranger Station (209-295-4251; www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado) for more information about campfire permits and fire restrictions (stove



use recommended). During summer, you can also call the Carson Pass Information Station (209-258-8606).

Take the turnoff on the north side of Highway 88 about 0.2 mile west of the Caples Lake Dam

Juniper tree above Lake Margaret



(the trailhead for Hike 3: Emigrant Lake) and 0.5 mile east of the turnoff for the Kirkwood Ski Area. Follow the short road 150 yards to its end.

The signed trail begins at the west end of the parking area, just north of the road. Descend through a lodgepole pine and red fir forest at a moderate pitch, and then cross a seasonal creek at 0.2 mile. The trail heads east briefly; look straight ahead for glimpses of the high mountain ridge just north of Caples Lake.

The path briefly parallels and then crosses another seasonal creek. A good picnic spot lies just to the left of the trail as you near the banks of Caples Creek at 0.6 mile, where there's green grass and the creek's clear waters are deep enough for wading.

The trail quickly reaches the creek itself and crosses it on a fallen tree. You soon begin a gentle

Huge slabs of granite stretch high above and far below the surface of Lake Margaret.

climb through a gully bordered by huge granite hillocks. After the path levels, it skirts a small, lodgepole pine- and willow-ringed pond on the left at 1.2 miles and then crosses some granite.

A much larger pond, surrounded by lodgepole pine and red fir, awaits on the right at 1.6 miles. You soon cross a stream, pass through a large thicket of mountain alder, and then note that western white pine has joined the forest cover.

Quaking aspen, with their tremulous green leaves and bright white bark, begin to border the trail at 2.2 miles; they accompany you for 300 yards to a stream, which you cross on a log. You now begin the final ascent to your destination, following rock ducks (cairns) up the gently sloping granite.

After the brief climb, you reach the deep waters of Lake Margaret. Numerous granite slabs stretch from high above to far below the lake's surface. You'll find many places to swim, either near the shore or out to some of the small granite islands that dot the lake's surface. Campers will find two sites along the east shore and two more near the west shore.

For more information, contact:

Amador Ranger District
Eldorado National Forest
26820 Silver Drive
Pioneer, CA 95666
209-295-4251

www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado

www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/recreation/wild/moke (for permits and other information)