

7 SYLVIA AND LYONS LAKES

Length: 10 miles round-trip

Hiking time: 6 hours or overnight

High point: 8,380 feet

Total elevation gain: 1,700 feet

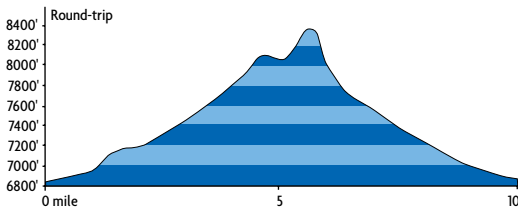
Difficulty: easy to Lake Sylvia, moderate to Lyons Lake

Season: early July through mid-October

Water: available from lakes and Lyons Creek (purify first)

Maps: USGS 7.5' Pyramid Peak, USFS Desolation Wilderness

Information: Pacific Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest

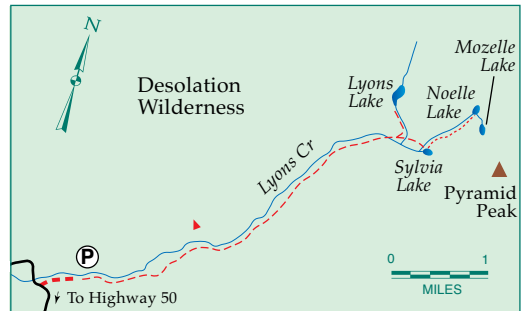


This hike takes you along the waters of Lyons Creek to some of the most beautiful territory in Desolation Wilderness: the Crystal Range and Pyramid Peak, and also Lyons Lake. Day hikers can get a free permit at the trailhead. Overnight hikers need to contact the Pacific Ranger District (530-647-5415; www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado) for more information on overnight quotas, obtaining a permit, and paying overnight camping fees.

Take the paved road signed for Wrights Lake, which is on the north side of Highway 50 about 46 miles east of Placerville and 17 miles west of the junction of Highways 50 and 89. Follow Wrights Lake Road (Road 11N26) 4 miles and turn right at a dirt road signed for the Lyons Creek Trail for the final 0.4 mile.

The trail travels most of its length near the granite- and mountain alder-lined banks of Lyons Creek. Lodgepole pine is the primary tree species, and as you continue you'll pass by several meadows and seasonal streams. Numerous wildflowers provide a multihued display in mid-summer; look for corn lily, brodiaea, and lupine.

Glimpses of 9,983-foot Pyramid Peak lead you onward. Bear right at a trail junction at 1.5 miles and continue on to the Desolation Wilderness



boundary at 2.8 miles. If you want to cool off on a warm day, look for some small pools in the creek about 100 yards past the boundary. The path then climbs past granite boulders and hills to a crossing of Lyons Creek at 4 miles and to a trail junction at 4.1 miles.

Sylvia Lake lies 0.4 mile up the right fork. Several campsites lie between lodgepole pine and mountain hemlock near the west shore. From the lake's edges you can see mighty Pyramid Peak and its accompanying granite ridges. Consider the 1-mile cross-country hike northeast along a small creek to granite-encased Noelle and Mozelle Lakes. Here, nestled under Pyramid Peak's shoulder, you're much more likely to find solitude.

A left turn at the trail fork will take you 0.5 mile up a steep granitic ridge to Lyons Lake.

A short, cross-country hike leads to solitude at Noelle and Mozelle Lakes.



This large, deep, granite-ringed body of water ranks as one of the prettiest anywhere. The Crystal Range's exfoliated granite rises over 1,500 steep feet on the east side, and more moderately sloping granite lies to the north and west. Granite slabs and granite sand beaches surround the entire lake, making for easy access to an invigorating swim in the deep cold water. Look for campsites on the southeast side of the lake, or search near the lake's perimeter for a level granite slab. An easy northwesterly cross-country scramble up the rock of at least 150 vertical feet will reward you with southward views of Round Top (Hike 2: Winnemucca Lake and Round Top) and other peaks in Mokelumne Wilderness.

Glacially carved peaks in Desolation Wilderness

Here's the contact info you need:

Pacific Ranger District
Eldorado National Forest
7887 Highway 50
Pollock Pines, CA 95726
530-647-5415

www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado

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

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/recreation/wild/deso/permit/> (specifically for permits)