



Trail 40--White Pine Lake

Duration: 6 hours

Distance: 10 miles out-and-back

The Forest Service sign at the trailhead says it's only 4.1 miles to the lake, but GPS tracking registers it as 5 miles each way.

Difficulty: Difficult

Trailhead: White Pine trailhead

Elevation: White Pine trailhead 7700'; White Pine Lake 10137'

Avalanche: High

Map: Dromedary Peak 7.5' quadrangle

GPS Coordinates: White Pine Lake--12 T 0442727/4487680

Dogs: Not allowed in Little Cottonwood Canyon

Introduction: The White Pine area is a favorite winter recreation spot. It is also one of the most dangerous. This trailhead is maintained for winter users, a parking lot and bathroom give it appeal, but it's used because of its access to some of the best backcountry skiing and snowshoeing available. The steeps make for a vigorous climb up, and the trail is lengthy, but the scenery is divine, and on a safe day there are fun powder descent options. This trail requires an early start on a day where the avalanche probability is low.

How to get there: The White Pine trailhead sits on the south side of the road 5.6 miles up Little Cottonwood Canyon, past Tanner's Campground.

Trail description: The trail begins on the south side of the trailhead parking lot behind the restrooms. Begin by crossing the bridge over Little Cottonwood Creek and following the trail approximately 1 mile to the "Y" where the trail to White Pine Lake takes a sharp left and heads east, and the trails to

Red Pine and Maybird head west. A sign points the way, and because these trails are heavily used in the winter, they will be easily distinguishable. The trail to White Pine winds up canyon to the south beneath many a steep slope, through evergreens, and toward the end of the trail--over huge granite boulders that may be completely covered in snow. If the trail becomes hard to pinpoint after the 'Y' remember that you are heading south to nearly the top of White Pine. The Lake itself sits up and over a ridge near the top of the canyon. It does not become visible until you have climbed right to it, and even then may not be visible due to the snow. Sitting at the base of steep, sheer granite cliffs and rock beds, it snuggles into the top of the canyon, but you can snowshoe right to it. At times the view on the way up opens to the other side of Little Cottonwood Canyon with its sheer cliffs and the colorful strata near the top of the walls. Enjoy the journey. White Baldy and Pfeifferhorn sit above the Lake. On the return trip you can cut off sections of trail switchbacks by cutting down powder slopes, but make sure you can always hook up with the trail below you so you don't get lost.