



Trail 41--Red Pine Lake

Duration: 5 hours

Distance: 8 miles out-and-back

Difficulty: Difficult

Trailhead: White Pine trailhead

Elevation: White Pine trailhead: 7700'; Red Pine Lake: 9700'

Avalanche: High

Map: Dromedary Peak; UT 7.5' quadrangle

GPS Coordinates: Red Pine Lake--12 T 0441333/4488233; Maybird and Red Pine junction--12 T 0441182/4489210

Dogs: Not allowed in Little Cottonwood Canyon

Introduction: See White Pine Lake. Red Pine Lake is a gorgeous but rigorous climb up Red Pine Canyon in a southerly direction. The trail passes peaceful mountain streams, and at the top you are rewarded with views of some of the highest peaks in the range: Pfeifferhorn Peak – 11326 ft. juts out to the southwest; across Little Cottonwood to the north is Dromedary Peak-11,107 ft., and Superior Peak – 11,132 ft. The Lake itself may be covered with snow, but it sits at the base of the steep chutes and canyon walls at the top. It's a beautiful area, but one to be tackled only when avalanche conditions are stable.

How to get there: See White Pine Lake

Trail description: The trail begins over the berm on the south side of the parking area by the restrooms. The trail is popular, well defined, and crosses a bridge over Little Cottonwood Creek just after leaving the trailhead. The first section of trail ends at approximately 1 mile where you reach a 'Y' known as White Pine Fork. This junction finds many a resting skier and snowshoer. The left leg of the 'Y' turns east and takes you to White Pine, but you will take the right branch toward Maybird Lakes and Red Pine Lake. Shortly after heading west, at a total of 1.25 miles up the trail, the view opens down Little Cottonwood Canyon, across the Salt Lake Valley, and to the Oquirrh in the west. It's a grand view as the trail traverses along this north facing slope of the mountain. At times, while you travel this section of trail, views of the steep chutes down the north side of Little Cottonwood Canyon also become visible. The second leg of the trail concludes at 2.23 miles and 8854' where a small wooden bridge crosses Red Pine stream as it dumps out of Red Pine Canyon. Keep your eyes open for the bridge as it will be covered in deep snow. The trail breaks here for the second time. Crossing the bridge and heading west will take you to Maybird Lakes, but for Red Pine continue straight, up Red Pine Canyon, on the east side of the stream. Red Pine Lake sits just below the ridge that separates Little Cottonwood Canyon from American Fork Canyon. The jagged rock edges that form the peripheral ledge remind me of movies portraying the jagged surface of Mars. The slopes and chutes are steep. It's not a place to come when conditions are dicey, but the evergreens, the claw-like rock ledges, the magnificent peaks and the lake make the destination worth the journey. Snowshoe south up this canyon to the top. Upper Red Pine Lake is not visible, but sits another 400' and ¼ mile up the slope to the southeast. This smaller lake sits just below the ridge. The return trip requires you to follow your path out.