



The Twin Lakes Recreation Area at a glance

Twin Lakes are natural glacial lakes which have been enlarged for water diversion storage. By way of tunnels under the Continental Divide, water is diverted from the Roaring Fork River on the West/Aspen side of Independence Pass. Further North, the Frying Pan River is diverted and stored in Turquoise Lake and moved by conduit to the Mt. Elbert Forebay above Twin Lakes. Water is cycled through the Mt. Elbert Power Plant to generate electric power.

History

The Historic Interlaken site, on the south shore of the lower Twin Lake, was a turn-of-the-century Resort for overnight guests. Fishing, mountaineering, winter ice skating, horse rides, food, music and dance were available. The areas heritage is documented at the town park in Twin Lakes Village. Restored buildings and an interpretive trail are available for visitors to explore.

Highway 82 over Independence Pass is not open in the winter because of frequent snow slides. Homes have begun to spring up in the Lake Creek valley in recent years. About 1960, a few homes in west Twin Lakes were swept into the meadow by a rare avalanche from Parry Peak (the south shoulder of Mt. Elbert). In the summer, highway 82 is one of the highest and most scenic paved roads in America.

Hiking & Mountaineering

These mountains are big and they are a tease. It is a challenge to attain the summit of one of these big peaks yet it is equally inspiring to be in the back country on any trail. Be patient and realistic about your abilities. It is about a vertical mile (5,000'±) from Twin Lakes to the top of Mt. Elbert. In the summer, electrical storms and freezing rains are likely in the afternoon. Storms come from the west and north so their approach is hidden from the east flank trails. Be informed and wise - retreat humbly and come back to climb another day. Take good care of the National Forest trails - leave no trace. Step lightly taking care to avoid delicate plants and roots that help resist trail erosion. Go out and find yourself. Share it all with the other creatures.

Extreme Adventure

Since the 1970's, Lake Creek has been floated by expert kayakers and a rare raft - never commercially. Intermountain water diversions have made it possible for kayakers to put-in at 10,500'. There are spectacular class 6 cascades with names like Tombstone, the Toaster, the Paralyzer and the Cauldron. The rest is log choked continuous class 5 whitewater - best for its scenic value. Monitor Rock, 4.9 miles west of Twin Lakes, is an immense granite monolith with beginner climbs and multi-pitch expert routs.

Since 1982, the Leadville Trail 100 (mile) ultra-marathon has been passing through Twin Lakes as it winds across the front of both Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive. 10 trail miles south of Twin Lakes, in the next valley, the race gets to its half way point in the old mining village of Winfield. Twin lakes provides a festive aid station at both 40 and 60 miles into the race. Since 1990, a 100 mile bike race has also been held with a halfway point at the Columbine mine near the summit of Quail Mountain.

Fishing, Boating & Skating

Twin Lakes boasts some of the largest fish in the region. Trophy Mackinaw Lake Trout have been caught that exceed 43" and 30 pounds - they are the exception. Anglers enjoy ice fishing (after November or December) with a spectacular view. Boat ramps exist on both lakes. Kayaks and canoes are also a great way to tour the far beaches. Ice boats and skaters know how the lake surface becomes smooth as glass in the early winter. Many come on week ends for pick-up hockey games at the Lakota Ice Rink.

So come and play, enjoy your stay, be safe and considerate of others. We all share the same resources and forest.

ALL OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLES (O.H.V.) MUST STAY ON DESIGNATED ROADS AND TRAILS.

Twin Lakes Area Map

SEE US AT CAMPGROUND MAPS FOR MORE DETAIL
SEE THE MIDDLE OF COLORADO MAP FOR LAKE COUNTY DETAIL

