



Blue Lake Trail (#959)

Canyon Lakes Ranger District
Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests
2150 Centre Ave., Bldg. E, Ft. Collins, CO 80526
www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/clrdrecreation (970) 295-6700

Wilderness: Rawah

Difficulty Rating: moderate

One-way Length: 7.41 miles

Use: heavy

Beginning Elevation: 9,520 feet

Quadrangle Map: Chambers Lake and Clark Peak

Peak Elevation: 11,020 feet

Access: Travel 11 miles northwest of Fort Collins on U.S. Highway 287 to Colorado Highway 14. Turn left on CO 14, and travel 54 miles west to the Blue Lake trailhead parking lot on the right, located across the highway from Forest Road 156, Long Draw Road.

Trail Information: The first two miles of the trail follows an old wagon trail crossing footbridges over Joe Wright Creek and Fall Creek before entering the Rawah Wilderness. The trail continues to climb toward Blue Lake and Hang Lake. Blue Lake, which is five miles from the trailhead, is a very popular destination or turn-around point. Both lakes are surrounded and protected by a ¼-mile camping closure zone. A short 2.4 mile climb to the north past Blue Lake and a descent to a junction with West Branch trail (#960) allow easy access to Island and Carey Lakes, the Rawah trail (#961), Twin Crater Lakes, and Grassy Pass. Backpackers often arrange shuttles, entering by the Blue Lake trail and leaving via the West Branch or Rawah trails.

Trail Regulations

- Dogs must be on a hand held leash

General Wilderness Regulations

- No motorized or mechanized equipment
- Camps, campfires, and stock, where allowed, at least 200 feet from water and trails
- Group size limited to 12 people or stock animals combined

Closure Regulations

- ¼ mile closure zone around Blue and Hang Lakes
- Alpine area closure, stoves only above 10,800 feet elevation (tree line)
- Stock and pack animal use is prohibited between May 15th and September 15th. Between September 16th and May 14th overnight stock use is prohibited.