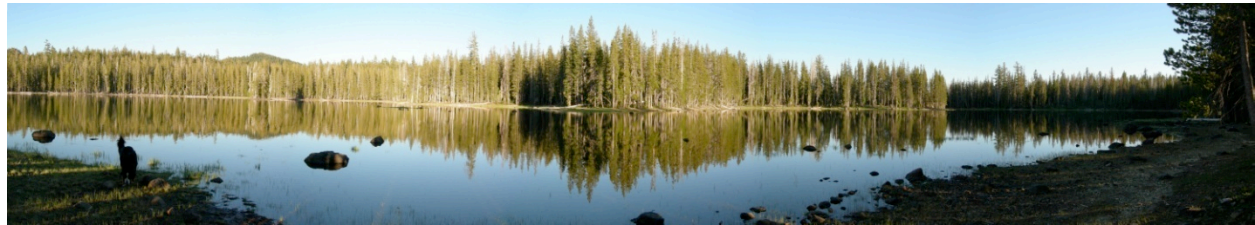




Trip Description: Exploring Lakes of The Caribou Wilderness



Long Lake, Caribou Wilderness

Overview

Trip Length: Three days two nights

Activity Level: Easy

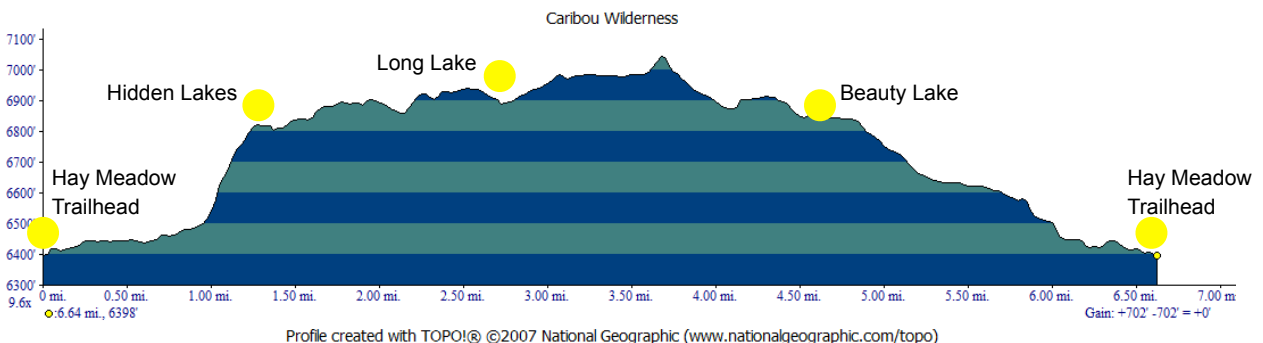
Description Summary:

Gear: See the link to the backpack gear and dog pack list. Bear canisters are not required. If you want your furry friend to carry her kibble, etc. you may want to bring an appropriate sized dog pack.

The Trip: The 20,625 acre Caribou Wilderness lies on the eastern slope of Mt. Tehama, a volcano on the eastern border of Lassen National Park. The Caribou Wilderness is a gentle rolling, lake dotted and forested plateau, predominately covered with lodgepole pine. The average wilderness elevation is 7000 feet, so some level of snow usually stays into July. The Caribou Wilderness offers a perfect location for the beginners backpacking experience. This is a three day, two night trip that includes minimal backpacking distance, yet introduces you to several of the over 20 scenic Caribou Wilderness Lakes and picturesque mountain scenery within easy hiking distances.

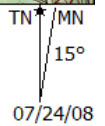
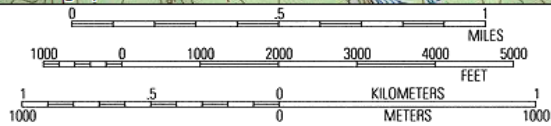
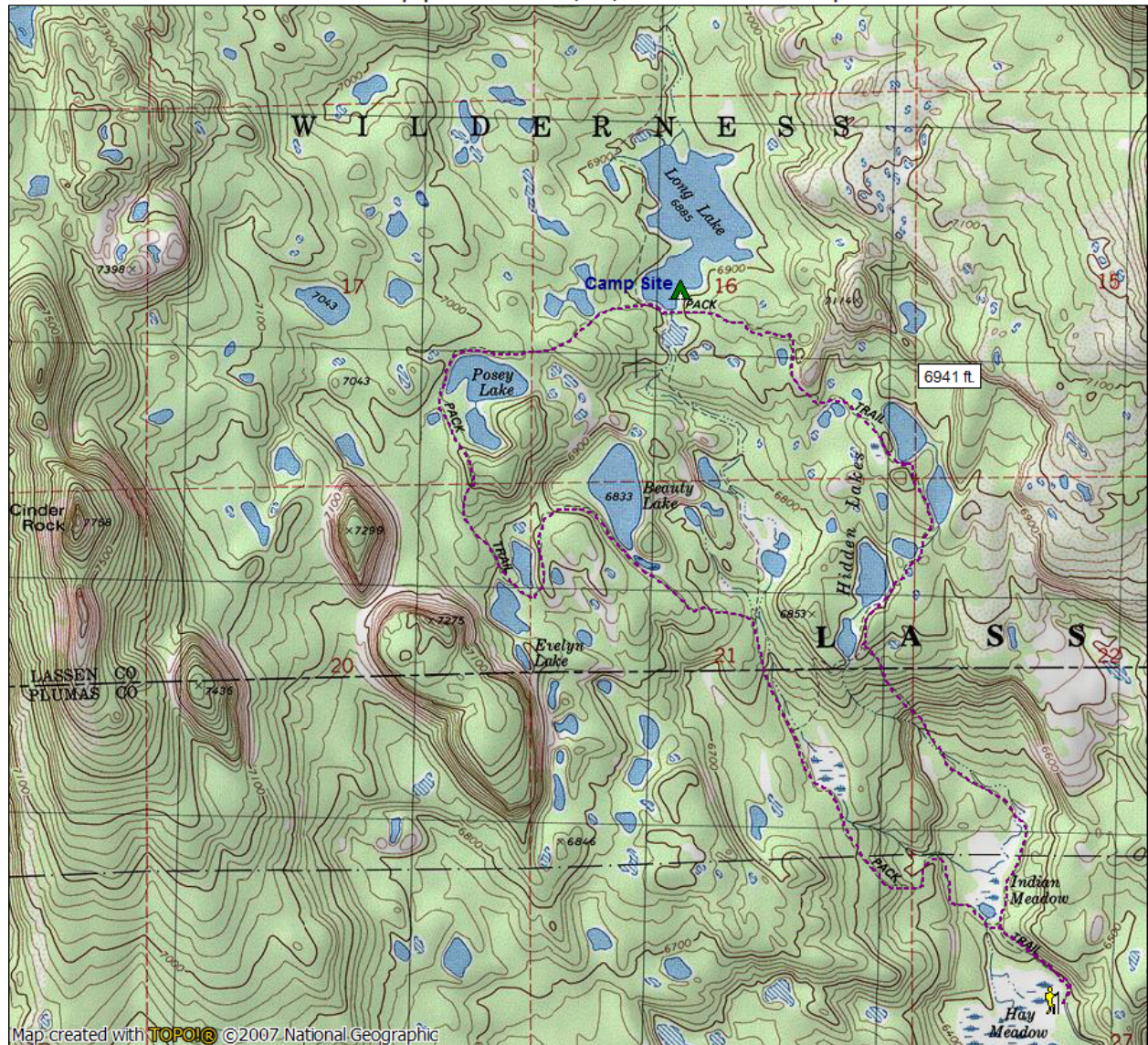
Trip Elevation Profile

The trailhead starts at 6400 feet at Hay Meadows and climbs to 6900 feet at the Long Lake Camp. From the Long Lake camp day hiking to surrounding lakes remains at about 7000 foot elevation.



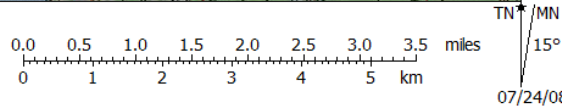
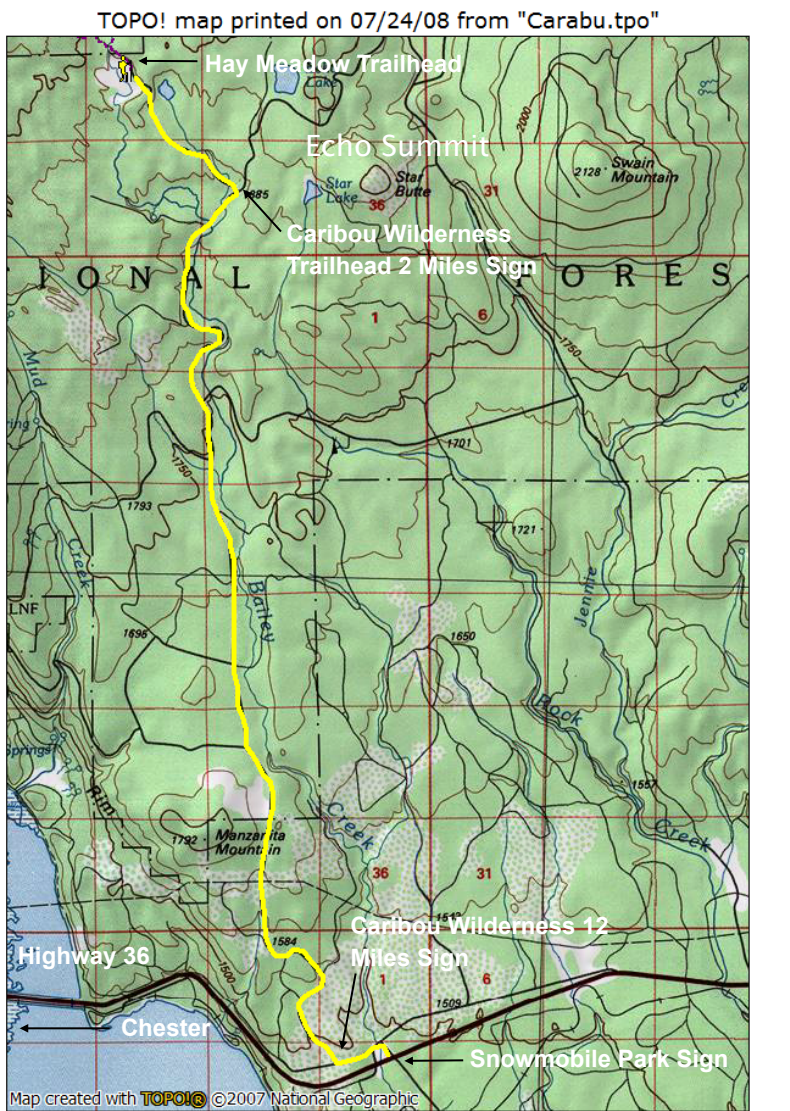
Topographical Trip Map

TOPO! map printed on 07/24/08 from "Carabu.tpo"



Trailhead

The Caribou Wilderness Hay Meadow Trailhead is 4½ to 5 hours from the San Francisco Bay Area. The best route from the Bay Area or the Sacramento Area is to travel north on I5 to Red Bluff. Turn off I5 at the Lassen National Park or highway 36 exit and travel east for approximately 50 miles going past the Lassen Park entrance on to Chester. If there are several cars with our BMDC group we probably want to meet in Chester and caravan to the trailhead. The turn off for the trailhead road is approximately 5 miles east from Chester. Watch for a snowmobile park sign that points to the left. The intersection has a left turn lane. After turning off the highway the road immediately turns left and parallels the highway for about ¾ mile, at which point you will see a road to the right. There is a sign posted here that says Caribou Wilderness 12 miles. Follow the **paved** road (semi-paved at the end) for 10 miles (ignore all dirt road junctions) and you'll see a sign indicating 2 miles to The Caribou Wilderness Trailhead. Turn left and follow the dirt road. Some spots on the road are pretty rough. At almost 2 miles from the main road a road branches to the left. Keep to the right and you'll reach The Hay Meadows trailhead parking in about 500 feet.



Day One: Hay Meadows to Long Lake



Q At The Trailhead

We start from the trailhead parking area at Hay Meadows and hike on a level trail around the eastern edge of the meadow. We enjoy the expansive views across the meadow keeping our eye out for views of the local deer population. At about .5 of a mile the trail forks. We can turn to the left and follow a slowly descending trail to Long Lake. In this case we keep to the right and head for Hidden Lakes. The trail continues to skirt the meadow and at times becomes faint. At about .6 of a mile the trail crosses the north end of the meadow and the stream coming from Hidden lakes. From this point on the trail climbs about 400 feet, the only substantial climbing on the route. We reach the first of 5 Hidden Lakes at about 1.2 mile. The lakes are placed in the rolling lodgepole pine covered terrain about 5 minutes hiking distance from each other.



Hidden Lakes

Continuing past the last Hidden Lake we hike northwest as the trail winds through the lodgepole pine accenting and descending to finally reach our camp site on Long Lake.



Early Morning Sunrise At Long Lake.

Day Two: Day Hike from Long Lake To Hidden, Bueaty and Posey Lakes

Day 2 we pack day packs with basics head south along Hidden Lakes. In early season we pass small meadows with Lupine and other wild flowers.



Q Among The Spring Caribou Flowers

At about one mile we branch right off the main trail. Making our way cross-country we reach a knoll at the end of the last Hidden Lake with views of a 7,400 ft ridge on the edge of Lassen Park. We find the remains of a trail and follow it down into the valley eventually meet the trail to Hay Meadow. We turn right and complete the loop passing Beauty and Posey Lakes on our return to camp. For those adventuresome hikers we can do an afternoon hike to Posey and Beauty Lake or choose to relax at our lakeside camp until dinner.

Day Three: Long Lake To The Hay Meadow Trailhead

The morning of day two we pack up our camp, hike west to Posey Lake making a large loop that eventually ends at the Hay Meadow Trailhead for our return to civilization.