

Pine Forest Wilderness Area or a Long Drive and a Short Hike

If you like far-away places, then this drive and hike are for you. If you don't like the sound of your undercarriage being mauled, then perhaps you should avoid this trip. This little visited wilderness area is tucked into the northwest corner of Nevada and is one of a handful of wilderness areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Probably the most used route to this area is via Winnemucca, Nevada and highways 95 and 140. You can also get to it from California or Oregon. Plug in "Denio Junction", which has the only gas station for a long ways, and it should direct you to the general area.

Even though the surrounding area is a typical Great Basin landscape with few trees or water, this little bit of high country supports a small population of limber and whitebark pine. Quaking aspen and mountain mahogany also fill in some of the, respectively, wetter and drier spots surrounding the pines.

Probably the highlight of the area are the Blue Lakes, nestled in a glacial cirque surrounded by lots of granite boulders. It is only about a half mile hike from the trailhead, and well worth the mild climb to get there. Blue Lake and the other lakes in the area have planted trout. Also reported are mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, mountain lion, and chukar.

The trailhead is also a nice campground with a decent pit toilet, but no water. It's a nice reprise from the very long, rugged access road. It has several nice, flat spots and a few picnic tables, and a fantastic view to the west.



The larger of the Blue Lakes



The trail winds through a grove of quaking aspen



A nice, old Quaking aspen



Whitebark pine along the trail



Mountain Mahogany



The start of the trail



One of the nice campsites at the trailhead

