

Loch Leven Lakes

Start 5820 ft, end 6770 ft (950 ft total up) going in.
3 miles each way (2 hrs in, 1.5 hrs out) on good trail (but rocky in places)



Middle Loch Leven Lake (IMG_5392.JPG)

There is parking opposite the trailhead, a couple hundred yards east of the Big Bend Ranger Station on Donner Pass Road. There are about ten paved spaces next to a restroom, and more spaces along the roadside. The trail is very popular, so an early start can be advantageous.

First half is on open rock exposures and in forested glens. There is a fair amount of up and down but only about 200 ft of net elevation increase. After about 50 minutes, cross the creek on a wooden footbridge and enter a very lush area fed by seep springs and protected by its northern exposure. There are lots of wildflowers in the ten minutes between the bridge and railroad tracks, roughly the halfway point.



Tiger lilies between Lower and Middle Loch
Leven Lakes (IMG_5390.JPG).

The trail beyond the tracks is a long set of switchbacks, also on a forested north-facing slope but not as green as before the tracks. In the final ten minutes the trail levels out, then drops steeply to Lower Loch Leven Lake.

A large granite outcrop slopes steeply into the lake where the trail first meets the lake; this is a popular spot for people interested in swimming or soaking up the sun.



Lower Loch Leven Lake showing sunning rock on northwest shore (IMG_5388.JPG)

The trail continues around the west, past some campsites, then arrives at Middle Loch Leven Lake about ¼ mile farther. Middle Loch Leven is, in some ways, nicer than Lower; it also has campsites. High Loch Leven Lake is about a mile farther.

GPS Readings				
Location	Time (UTC) 2009-07-18	Elevation	Latitude (N)	Longitude (W)
Trailhead	16:39	5820'	39° 18.548'	120° 30.946'
Bridge	17:22	6050'	39° 17.960'	120° 30.958'
RR Tracks	17:29	6120'	39° 17.920'	120° 30.750'
Lower Loch Level Lake	18:38	6761'	39° 17.328'	120° 30.306'
Middle Loch Leven Lake	19:48	6771'	39° 17.020'	120° 30.231'

20 July 2009