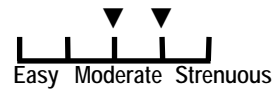


# Kidd Creek Basin & Ward Lake

Moderate-to-Strenuous, 9.2 miles



The Kidd Creek basin is a beautiful location in the heart of the Trinity Alps. Kidd Creek is a tributary to the South Fork of the Salmon River accessible from Big Flat at the end of Coffee Creek Road. The basin itself, tucked between the stunning rock formations of Black Mountain and Red Rock Mountain, is filled with gorgeous meadows reached after climbing through the canopied forest. The basin is itself a spectacular destination; however, once reaching the top of the basin, it is not much further over a saddle between the Kidd Creek and Swift Creek drainages to gorgeous Ward and Horseshoe Lakes, the headwaters of Swift Creek.

## Hikes

- ◆ **Kidd Creek Basin** (41° 11.736'N, 122° 42.760'W)  
Total Length (round-trip): 9.2 miles  
Elevation Gain: 1,580' to the meadow  
Difficulty: Moderate
- ◆ **Ward Lake** (41° 00.225'N, 122° 54.460'W)  
Total Length (round-trip): 12 miles  
Elevation Gain: 2,549' to the saddle, then -460' down to the lake  
Difficulty: Moderate-to-Strenuous
- ◆ **Horseshoe Lake** 40° 59.615'N, 122° 54.592'W)  
Total Length (round-trip): 14 miles  
Elevation Gain: 2,549' to the saddle, then -750' down to the lake  
Difficulty: Moderate beyond Ward Lake

## Topo Maps

- ◆ *Caribou Lake*
- ◆ *Siligo Peak* (for Horseshoe Lake)

## Directions to Trailhead

27 miles to Big Flat Campground and Trailhead

Take Hwy 3 north from Trinity Center 8 miles to Coffee Creek Road. Turn left and take Coffee Creek Road about 19 miles to its end at Big Flat campground. The first 6.3 miles are paved, after which the road is mostly gravel and rocky dirt. The road is generally in fair to good condition — it is a county road and a U.S. Postal Route — but watch out for potholes and significant washboarding. Check conditions in the spring since Big Flat is over 5,000' elevation — the road is closed by snow most of the winter. Most street vehicles and horse trailers will have no problem.



Ward Lake

## The Trail

The Kidd Basin trail starts at an intersection with the valley trail some 3 miles from the Big Flat parking area. The easiest way is to hike the old road past the green gate at the end of Coffee Creek Road. Follow the road 2 1/3 miles to the trail sign to Ward Lake. This is where the valley trail crosses the road. The valley trail from Big Flat to this point is not well maintained.

Turn onto the Ward Creek, Upper Valley Access trail. The sign says 3 miles to Ward Lake. That is a bit optimistic. Follow the trail about a mile to the intersection with the Kidd Basin trail. This leg of the hike is fairly easy. After a couple of switchbacks, the trail is fairly flat to the intersection. Shortly before the intersection, you will cross Kidd Creek.

At the intersection you will find a couple old signs and a new one pointing the way to Kidd Basin. Take the trail to the left and start your ascent of Kidd Basin. The trail climbs in the forest for about 3/4 mile and then starts to break out into meadow.

You will continue the climb in and out of meadow for another half mile until you are above the tree line in this basin. As you continue south, Black Mountain comes into view south and a bit west of you. Depending on the time of year, you will hear the creek along the way.

About two miles from the intersection you'll enter the rocky ascent to the saddle. The trail is well marked and you should have no problem finding your way to the top. Once at the saddle you are rewarded with spectacular views of the Swift Creek drainage



## Kidd Creek Basin and Ward Lake *(continued)*

to the east. This is the highest point on the trail.

You will see Ward Lake some 460' below you to the south. Just follow the trail 1/2 mile down to the shore of Ward Lake and then relax, or take a swim. This is a beautiful Alpine lake, and especially on a weekday, you will likely have this lake to yourself. If you are ready to continue, Horseshoe Lake is not too far!

Get back on the trail you followed to Ward Lake and follow it past the outlet of the lake and down the drainage 7/10 mile to the intersection with the Swift Creek trail. Turn right and follow the trail sign toward Horseshoe Lake. It's about 1/3 mile up a slight slope to Horseshoe Lake.

These lakes are the headwaters of Swift Creek, and are more frequently accessed from the Swift Creek trailhead. Also, the lakes are stocked by the Back Country Horsemen, and you may see some people with livestock in the area. There is a Bald Eagle that lives near Horseshoe Lake so you may see it fishing. If you are lucky, you will have these lakes to yourself.

To return to Big Flat, just follow the trail in reverse. From Horseshoe, it's downhill to the intersection with the Swift Creek trail, but then it's uphill to the top of the saddle dividing Swift Creek from Kidd Creek. This is therefore the divide between the Trinity River and the Salmon River.

Because of the beauty of these lakes and Kidd Creek Basin, this could easily become one of your favorite hikes!



*Kidd Basin from the Saddle*



*Horseshoe Lake*



*Swift Creek Drainage from the Saddle*

# Kidd Creek Basin and Ward Lake (continued)

