

Boulder Lakes and Tapie Peak

4 Hikes

Easy to Moderate (Boulder Lakes), 3.5 miles

Strenuous (Found, Lost, Tapie), 6.5 - 7.5 miles



Boulder Lake is a serene lake set amid meadows and forest with Tapie Peak in the background. Little Boulder Lake (pictured) is very pretty with a granite slope on its south side. The two Boulder Lakes are mellow and laid-back, easily within reach for most hikers. The trail is a fairly easy, quick trip to wonderful lunch spots for the family, or for the hiker with not a lot of time. Many backpackers make Boulder Lake a base camp for more aggressive day-hikes.

Beyond the well-known Boulder Lakes, the Tracy Trail offers access to three less-well-known lakes: Found Lake, Lost Lake and Tapie Lake. These lakes are accessed by hiking off trail from near the base of the very pretty, treed Tapie Peak. And once arriving at Found Lake, the ascent to the summit of Tapie Peak is well within reach as a somewhat strenuous scramble. The vista from the top is spectacular, especially the view of nearby Ycatapom Peak.

Hikes:

- ◆ **Little Boulder Lake (Elev. 6,328', 41° 2.860'N, 122° 47.805'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 3.5 miles
Maximum Elevation Gain: 687'
Difficulty: Easy-to-moderate
- ◆ **Big Boulder Lake (Elev. 6,070', 41° 3.011'N, 122° 48.418'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 3.5 miles
Maximum Elevation Gain: 586'
Difficulty: Easy-to-moderate
- ◆ **Lost, Found and Tapie Lakes (Found Lake Elev. 6,866', 41° 2.608'N, 122° 48.986'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 6.5 miles via Boulder Lake
Maximum Elevation Gain: 1,060'
Difficulty: Strenuous
- ◆ **Tapie Summit (Elev. 7,435', 41° 2.381'N, 122° 48.856'W)**
Total Length (round-trip): 7.5 miles via Boulder Lake
Maximum Elevation Gain: 1,650'
Difficulty: Strenuous

Topo Map:

- ◆ *Ycatapom Peak*

Directions to trailhead from Welcome Center:

17.8 miles to Boulder Lakes Trailhead

Take Hwy 3 north from Trinity Center, about 7.6 miles to the Boulder Lakes Road (USFS Road 37N52). Watch for the brown USFS road sign. Turn left onto 37N52, and in about 3.3 miles, make a sharp right onto 37N53. Continue 6.8 miles to the trailhead.



Little Boulder Lake

The Trails

The trail begins on the south side of the large parking area. The trail heads south, initially following an abandoned jeep trail. The grade is very mild and occasional views to the south are possible. After about 0.6 miles the jeep trail ends at the entrance to the Trinity Alps Wilderness, and the trail passes into a dense forest canopy under which you will remain for most of the trip to Boulder Lake. After a little over a mile the route makes a switchback, heading north before rounding the top of a bluff. About 1.3 miles from the trailhead, a cairn found on the left side of the trail and a sign up in a tree mark the intersection with the trail to Little Boulder Lake. From this fork it is ½ mile to either lake, with only about 100' more elevation gain to pretty Little Boulder Lake.

Little Boulder Lake is a very nice lunch spot. There are a couple campsites available if Boulder Lake is occupied. You will enjoy adding Little Boulder Lake to your collection.

If you take the trail to Boulder Lake at the fork, the trail descends about ½ mile to the lake. The fork is the high point on the trail to the lake. You arrive at the outlet of the lake where the trail intersects with the Boulder Creek trail that comes up Boulder Creek from Coffee Creek Road. There are at least a half-dozen good campsites at this spot and in the south meadow.

Boulder Lake is a restful spot rather than an alpine lake that awes one with the vista. It is ringed with lush meadow and forest. Above the southwest side of the lake are a series of granite cliffs, topped off by the 7,435' summit of Tapie Peak. Beyond the peak is a ragged ridge that forms the divide between the Boulder Lakes



Boulder Lakes and Tapie Peak *(continued)*

Basin and Poison Canyon, headwaters of the North Fork of Swift Creek.

Beyond Boulder Lake

Tapie Peak is not named on the topo maps, but has been generally named after an early family in the area. Many of the peaks in the Alps are nameless, even though many are significant prominences. In the picture to the right, you can see that from Boulder Lake, the peak appears as a treed dome. The south face is rugged, but the west flank is definitely climbable, making 7,435-foot Tapie Peak one of the most accessible summits in the Alps.

Found Lake and Tapie Lake are found on the topo map immediately to the northwest of Tapie Peak. The map shows a small, unnamed lake between the two, and most folks call it Lost Lake. Lost Lake is small and shallow, but it has old growth trees nearby. Tapie Lake is below Lost Lake and can be viewed by walking to the rim northeast of Lost Lake. Tapie Lake is tucked into a narrow granite trough, and is a very pretty lake. The view from this rim is spectacular, with Billys Peak, Ycatapom Peak and the Boulder Lakes basin before you. Mt. Shasta is in the distance.

Found Lake is southwest of Lost Lake, and it is also very pretty, ringed by granite boulders and some small granite benches, and it has rock islands. This lake is larger and deeper than Lost Lake. Found Lake is a great spot to rest after the climb up from Boulder Lake, or to make a campsite for the night. Tapie Peak is just 570' above Found Lake, a fairly straightforward scramble to the southeast of the lake, seeming much more approachable from this side than the others.

Even if you want to save the hike to the three upper lakes and the peak for another day, the trail beyond Boulder Lake is still worth exploring. It continues along the western shore of the lake, skirting the lake's meadowy fringe while never fully emerging from the forest. The trail passes the lake's inlet at the south end, and enters the most extensive meadow in the area, extending southward from the southern end of the lake. This meadow is fun to explore, even if this is the extent of your day's journey.

If the goal is reaching Tapie, Lost and Found Lakes, continue on the trail as it proceeds south from the meadow at the inlet to Boulder Lake. It crosses the inlet's creek and passes under forest canopy. Soon the trail begins to climb, first moderately and then a bit more steeply. This section of trail is called the Tracy Trail. Ultimately, it climbs the ridge and the south end of the Boulder Lake Basin and connects to the Poison Canyon Trail. You can stop and lounge on the large boulders at the foot of Tapie Peak and enjoy the view of the basin. This could also serve as the endpoint of a day hike.

As the grade of the trail increases it crosses back over the creek. And soon passes a small, willow-choked meadow on your right. Towering overhead is ragged Tapie Peak. This rough, sheer block of granite appears far different from the gently sloped summit that rises above Boulder Lake. When the trail finally



Boulder Lake with Tapie Peak in background

makes a hard eastward turn from the meadow, this is the point one must leave the trail and begin the cross-country traverse to the trio of lakes. The spot may be marked by a cairn, and is about elevation 6,800' or so. Once off the trail, listen for the sound of running water, which should last through most of the season. Though there was a creek visible during the climb up to the small meadow, it is not readily visible at the meadow, since the meadow itself is the source of the stream. Hike toward the water. If none is heard, head northwest from the trail, and cross the boulder and brush field along the flank of Tapie Peak. The path is marked with cairns. Do your best to stay at the same elevation all the way across the face of the peak. If climbing Tapie Peak, resist the temptation to climb around to the south side and ascend directly up the southern face. Horrific brush fields bar any reasonable access to the summit. It is easier to continue to the three lakes and climb the peak from that direction.

If you have maintained your elevation across the face, then after following the boulder field, you will cross a small draw on the other side of which is Lost Lake. Again, you can view Tapie Lake from the rim just northeast of Lost Lake. Found Lake is a short walk to the south, and sitting on the warm granite after a dip into the lake is a great option after the climb up to the lakes. Tapie Peak is an attractive backdrop to this pretty lake.

Climbing to the Tapie peak is straightforward once you have reached Found Lake. Simply hike southeast from the lake and climb the tree-covered boulders to the summit. Views from the summit are good, particularly to the southeast where Ycatapom Peak stands tall and proud.

When it is time to return to Boulder Lake, there are a few choices. First is to return the way you came. The second, somewhat shorter option is to drop down to Found Lake: return to Lost Lake, hike along the rim above Tapie Lake to the tree line, and descend to the lake.

Tapie Lake is a lovely little lake in a granite bowl, and a nice rest spot on the way down. To continue on down, proceed north

Boulder Lakes and Tapie Peak *(continued)*

through the trees above the boulder line southwest of of Boulder Lake. When you can start down through the trees, pick your way eastward toward Boulder Lake. It is somewhat steep, in some spots, but you can make your own switchbacks to reduce the descent angle. Eventually, you will see Boulder Lake

through the trees. Avoid the willows close to the water by going around them to the north. Eventually, you will come to a crossing of Boulder Creek, just beyond which are the campsites near the lake. Beyond the campsites is the trail back to the Boulder Lakes trailhead. The trip to Boulder Lake and beyond to its trio



Elevation profile for the hike to Boulder Lake — a gentle elevation gain of 586' over 1.75 miles



Elevation profile for the hike to Little Boulder Lake — an elevation gain of 687' over 1.75 miles.

A *Fork between Boulder Lake and Little Boulder Lake trails*



Elevation profile for the hike to Tapie Peak — an elevation gain of over 1,650' in about 3.75 miles.

- B** *Boulder Lake*
- C** *Tapie boulder field traverse*
- D** *Found Lake*

Boulder Lakes, Found/Lost/Tapie Lakes, Tapie Peak Trail Map

