

Lake Como Loop #502 & #580

(Easy to Moderate)

DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD:

Drive down Triple Creek Ranch's driveway to the West Fork Road and turn left onto the West Fork Road, to the end, approximately 7.5 miles. Turn left (north) onto Highway 93, towards Darby. From Darby, continue north on Hwy. 93 for approximately 4 miles. Turn left (west) onto Lake Como Road. Proceed for 3 miles to the road junction to Lake Como. Stay to the right following the hiker and swimming signs. Drive .6 miles past the beach to the north shore trailhead (#502 & #580). Hiker signs will point the way. There is plenty of parking at the trailhead. Kramis pond will be on your right, which can present a unique opportunity to see moose. A day pass is needed to park anywhere around Lake Como. In the parking lot you will find a Forest Service box for Day Passes. Simply fill out the form, put nominal fee into the envelope and place the tear-off form on your dashboard in plain sight.

ELEVATION: Como Lake – 4,245 ft.

MILEAGE: Rock Creek Bridge 3 ½ miles
Complete Lake Loop 7 miles

TRAIL DESCRIPTION:

This is an easy, picturesque hike. It is well marked and well maintained, with few changes in elevation. The first quarter mile is paved for handicapped use (Trail #502). The trail offers magnificent views of the lake and of the Como Peaks, and there are numerous wildflowers in the area. The trail crosses several small creeks and provides good access to the lake for fishing at a variety of locations (a Montana Fishing License is required for fishing). At the west-end the trail joins Rock Creek trail (#580) and a bridge crosses the creek below the falls. Don't miss the trail that veers to the left to the bridge (if you continue straight, you will come to the wilderness boundary in less than 1-mile). There is a nice flat area around the falls to enjoy a break and have lunch. From here you may choose to double back or continue around the lake. To continue, take the left fork across the bridge to complete the lake loop to the south shore trailhead. The south shore trail is another excellent, well-used track. It is used heavily by horse packers and occasionally by bicyclists. The end of the trail is reached at the southeast corner of the lake. If you left a car at the north shore campground, you can just walk across the dam to the swimming beach and follow the road back to your car.

Special notes: Trail #502 to #580 does not offer much shade. The South shore trail has many trees and will provide more shade. On particularly hot days, either hike the north side early in the morning, or simply start at the south side trail head (near the boat launch) and double back from the falls.

South Shore trailhead: To reach the south end trailhead follow the paved road below the dam to the sign for "Rock Creek Trailhead - #580 (same area as boat launch) instead of following the swimming signs.

- The large earth-filled dam and the excessive late-season (late August) draw-down on the lake for irrigation purposes, tends to detract from the natural beauty on the west-end of the lake.

Have Fun & ENJOY!

