

Nelson Lake #5633 & #135

(Moderate to Strenuous – walking sticks recommended)

DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD: From Triple Creek Ranch driveway, turn right and head up the West Fork Road for approximately 8 miles and take the right fork at the "Magruder-Elk City, Idaho" sign. Proceed 3 miles and turn right at the "Gommel Creek-Nelson Lake" sign. Go 2.7 miles and turn right. Drive .3 miles to the Nelson Lake sign. Again turn right and drive 2.4 miles to the Nelson Lake trailhead sign. This is a good road. Trailhead parking is limited, however, and there are no facilities.

ELEVATIONS: Trailhead – 5900 ft. Lake – 7300 ft.

MILEAGE: Nelson Lake – 5 ½ miles

TRAIL DESCRIPTION: At first the trail follows an old skid road, climbing steadily. Then it forks left and continues to climb through tree-shaded huckleberry patches. An invigorating (steep) two-mile uphill walk leads to the ridge crest.

After taking in the lovely view of Nelson Canyon and the high peaks, you can follow the trail along the ridge for another half mile, then watch for tree blazes and cairns (mound of stones) that indicate a trail junction. The right fork descends along the right side of the ridge to the canyon and Nelson Lake - If you have trouble finding the trail just follow the edge on the lakeside of the ridge until you pick it up again. (Note: the left fork continues three miles along the ridge to a point directly above Nelson Lake. This is not the route to the lake!).

The trail into the canyon is not well maintained and is a little hard to find in places. The trail continues along an open hillside, affording a continuous vista of the surrounding area. Especially interesting is a prehistoric rockslide at the head of the canyon. You can reach the lake via a trail through the boulders along the west side of the slide. Nelson Lake is surrounded by heavy timber and by steep, rocky walls, which ascend to the high peaks immediately above.

Somehow the trail is harder to find going out than coming in, especially where it threads through the boulders. Watch for the cairns atop the boulders! This will help.

Have Fun & ENJOY!