BIERSTADT LAKE (IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK)

Bierstadt Lake, when translated from German, means "Beer City Lake," although the Wikipedia article for the city of Bierstadt in Germany states that the name of the city comes from Saint Brigid of Kildare, Ireland, instead of the literal translation (so perhaps the name of the lake comes from Saint Brigid as well). The lake is located 1.5 miles from either the Bierstadt Trailhead or the Park and Ride, both located along the road to Bear Lake. We decided to do the short hike to this lake on the day we drove in to Rocky Mountain National Park, as we had received reports from the park rangers that the Bear Lake parking area was almost certainly full. We chose to hike in from the Park and Ride as we figured there would be less other hikers on this route than from the Bierstadt Trailhead. Bierstand Lake is a nice lake which is not high up in the mountains but can be photographed with (sometimes snowy) peaks in the background.
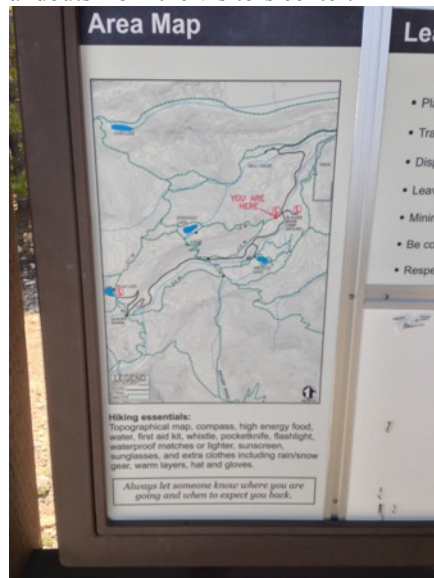
On the drive up to Rocky Mountain National Park, we passed this interesting building which is located just before the turnoff to the Longs Peak Trailhead:

Arriving at the (park and ride) trailhead to Bierstadt Lake:

In Rocky Mountain, most trailheads have a topographical map on the information board; typically the trail route drawn on these maps is more accurate than the routes drawn on the handouts from the visitors center:

The trail started out relatively level, passed through a small meadow, then continued on somewhat rocky and steep, as in the photo below:

Arriving at the loop around the lake; we decided to do the loop in a clockwise fashion (note that you can't see the lake from a large portion of the loop trail, and due to snow in the area it wasn't easy to get close to the edge of the lake when we were there):

The first appearance of the lake when taking the clockwise loop; despite not being surrounded by mountains, it is surprisingly photogenic:

The bridge over the inlet to the lake; before reaching here, we passed the trail from the main Bierstadt Lake trailhead, and the route to Bear Lake:

Reaching a junction of trails; there are a lot of very nice trails in the Bear Lake section of the park, though many of them reach high elevations and thus had substantial snow when we were visiting the park:

Continuing along the relatively flat loop trail around the lake; the lake was again not visible from here:
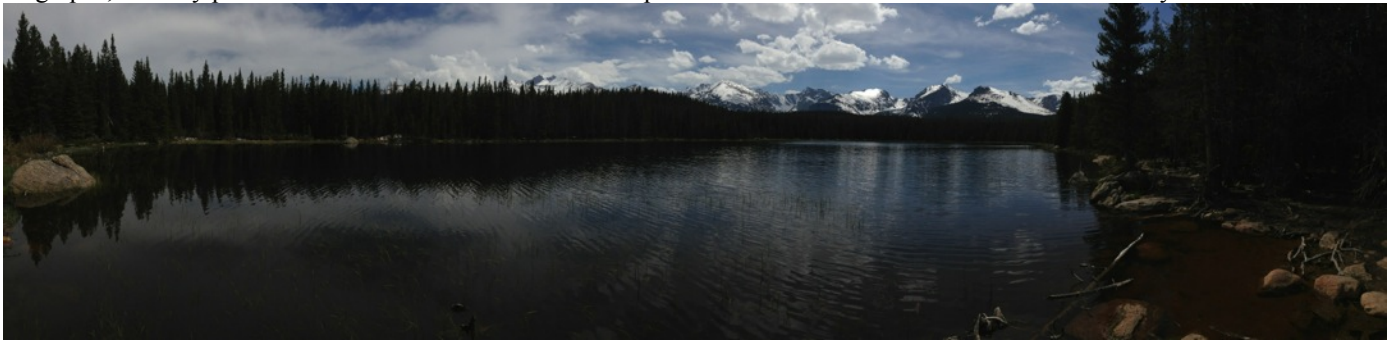
Arriving at the spur trail which goes out to the best viewpoint of the lake:

As can be seen in the photo, the lake is not up in the mountains, but it is very photogenic with the snowy peaks in the background:

Panorama of Bierstadt Lake from this viewpoint; since we were doing this hike later in the day, we didn't have an ideal sun angle for photographs, thus my photos didn't turn out as well as I had hoped because I couldn't see the camera screen very well:

Upon returning to the main trail, we continued along the loop; there is a use trail following the outlet of the lake which leads back to the lake; however, due to lots of water on the trail (likely from all the snow melting), we weren't able to get all the way back up to the lake on this use trail:

Heading back down one of the steeper stretches on the trail back to the "park and ride" trailhead:

Panorama looking towards nearby Sprague Lake from a section of the nice meadow we crossed before reaching the trailhead:

Another photo from near this nice meadow area, where the trail becomes flatter shortly before reaching the parking area: