

There is a prominent peninsula which juts out into the southern part of Snag Lake; this is probably the best camping spot in the area because it appears that one could easily find a flat spot away from the main trail here. Notice the small island left of center in this photo:



Wildflowers were starting to appear along the trail through here, paintbrush (red) and some purple ones I couldn't identify:



This is the second Rainbow Lake junction; we are now 5.1 miles from Butte Lake, according to this sign (or 5.4 miles, according to the park map):



There were more of the purple flowers around the base of many of the trees:



Our last view of Snag Lake for about a mile:



There were some small white flowers covering the ground on both sides of the trail:



There were also lots of these small purple flowers (different from the purple flowers mentioned previously):



This is the junction with the trail to Horseshoe Lake. Notice that the Butte Lake Ranger Station via the Cinder Cone side is 5.7 miles (or 6.0 miles according to the park map), and the Butte Lake east shore is 4.6 miles (the park map gives a distance of 4.9 miles for this). An important observation is that the "Butte Lake east shore" is *not* the Butte Lake trailhead; it is the southernmost tip of the lake, i.e. when one first reaches the actual lake going this direction:



This is Grassy Creek. We hiked this trail before the trail crews had time to put another section of bridge in across the first part of this creek:



One can cross further up-stream on this rock-and-log crossing other hikers probably put together:



The other fork of the creek can be crossed on one of these fallen logs:



There were some marshy areas on this side of the lake which we had to cross, and they were a welcome change from the volcanic gravel which we had encountered on the western side of the lake:



This is the junction with the trail to Cameron Meadow and Juniper Lake; the 4.7 miles to Cinder Cone is accurate if one is going to the base of the southeastern side of the Cinder Cone, and the 4.3 miles to the southernmost tip of Butte Lake is also fairly accurate:



There were a few of these tall blue flowers along the sides of the trail:



We passed through numerous nice meadows on this side of Snag Lake:



This part of the trail reminded me of the Deer Lakes trail near Escalante:



The trail around the eastern shore of Snag Lake crosses a few streams, as seen on the TOPO map on the second page of this report:



Panorama of Snag Lake:



The trail on the western side of the lake seems to have better panorama photo opportunities than the trail on the eastern side:



There were a few places where the route became marshy and the trail was somewhat difficult to find sometimes:



Snag Lake has a large cove on its eastern side, with a fairly big island in the center:



Looking out of the trees and across the cove at this island:



We spotted this small caterpillar on one of the blue-flowered plants:



One last panorama of this cove, with the island left of center in the photo, before the trail leaves Snag Lake and starts to gain elevation. I think Crater Butte is the prominent peak in the background:



We only spotted this red flower on this part of the trail:



Another very nice meadow we hiked through:



As we got further from the lake, the terrain became less grass and more dirt:



These yellow-flowered plants were everywhere during this part of the hike:



Panorama showing how much the ground through here was covered by these interesting plants:



Closer photo of one of these yellow-flowered plants:





This is the third type of purple flower which we spotted on this hike:



The trail finally began to descend the other side of the ridge we had crossed:



It was starting to get late in the day, and we still had over 2.5 miles back to the parking area:



This is the junction with the Widow Lake trail; the sign here and the park map agree on the distance of 2.4 miles back to the Butte Lake rangers station:



Looking across the southernmost tip of Butte Lake at where the Fantastic Lava Beds form the lakeshore:



Panorama of the southern part of Butte Lake, with Prospect Peak to the right and the Cinder Cone barely visible in the center:



Luckily the trail was still compacted dirt and not volcanic gravel through here, as otherwise the hike back would have taken us much longer:



Looking across the lake at Prospect Peak again; notice the lava islands in the center of the photo. To the right of the lake is the junction with the Bathtub Lake trail, and in the center (below Prospect Peak) is approximately where the parking area is located:



Another look at the northeastern part of Butte Lake, with one of the lava islands to the left in this photo:



From here we were able to glimpse Mount Lassen, seen between the Cinder Cone (left) and Prospect Peak (right):



This small island looked like it had been used as a campsite previously; the water is deeper here than it looks and I would guess that care must be used when crossing the logs to the island so as to not fall into Butte Lake:



A closer look at the bump which must be crossed to return to the parking area:



Looking back along the eastern shore of Butte Lake:



The park map indicates that one can cross Butte Creek here; however, it did not appear safe at this time to cross this logjam (I'm not sure if there is any sort of seasonal bridge that is sometimes located near here, but I doubt it):



This is the trail towards the Bathtub Lakes; we were able to cross the creek further down on a large fallen log:



Looking back at Butte Lake and the logjam:



This is the log we used to cross the creek:



From here, we ascended the bump seen in the previous photos; here is the outlet of Butte Lake as seen from partway up:



Looking across the northern end of Butte Lake towards Sunrise Peak:



Panorama of Butte Lake, with Sunrise Peak to the left, Ash Butte in the center, Mount Hoffman right of center, and the Cinder Cone behind the trees and to the right in this photo:



As we descended the other side, we again encountered the volcanic gravel:



The trail follows the northern shore of Butte Lake for a short distance:



This is the trail sign at the parking lot for the trails heading in this direction from Butte Lake:

