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Take a Hike: Lake Lillian

What: A moderate hike into the Alpine Lakes region near Snoqualmie Pass. Views of Mount Rainier and other Alpine Lakes are the reward for this easily accessible day hike.

Where: From Everett take I-5 south to I-405, then I-90 east to Exit 54 (Hyak/Gold Creek). Drive under the freeway and right on the frontage road signed Gold Creek. At 4 miles, turn left onto Forest Service Road 4934 (Lake Lillian). The trailhead is on your left at an elevation of 3,600 feet at 4.2 miles.

Length: 8.6 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Beginning elevation: 3,600 feet

Highest elevation: 5,350 feet

Maps: Green Trails, Snoqualmie Pass 207 USGS Quad, Chikamin Peak

Notes: Follow the road 100 yards up. On the left hand side you will see a sign for the Lake Lillian trail (No. 1332). The first half-mile is an old logging road. Take a left turn up steep switchbacks through a clear-cut bearing an abundance of colorful spring flowers. On a clear day you are rewarded with views of Mount Rainier growing bigger as you gain elevation. After a mile, enter the woods and head up switchbacks that continue for another 0.6 mile to the Lake Margaret junction on the right. From here the trail runs along the ridge another mile below Mount Margaret, gradually descending to Twin Lakes. The lakes are quite small and only a few feet deep, but do make a nice setting for photo opportunities. Beyond Twin Lakes the next mile winds up and down through open rocky slopes alternating with forest. The last 0.3 mile becomes steep switchbacks leading to Lake Lillian. The last little bit does offer some challenges on steeper sections, but the reward at the top is Lake Lillian and its steep rocky shore, offering a nice place to snack before your return trip.

Other Opportunities: Lake Laura is 200 vertical feet below Lake Lillian, so if you're not feeling like you can make it, that's a nice spot to call the highpoint for the day. If you are looking for a little more distance, follow the goat path around the northeast side of the lake and up Rampart Ridge.

Permits: Northwest Pass required at the trailhead.

Overnight camping: Backcountry campsites are located at Twin Lakes and the North and South shores of Lake Lillian.

More information: Contact the Cle Elum Ranger District at 509-852-1100 or consult the "Fresh Reports" section on the Washington Trails Association Web site at www.wta.org. Also refer to "100 Hikes in Washington's Alpine Lakes" by Ira Spring, Vicky Spring and Harvey Manning.

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