

Lily Lake

by Dave Cooper



Pleasant skiing on the Lily Lake Trail-small.jpg

A quick check reveals at least eleven Lily Lakes or Lily Pad Lakes in Colorado. This week's destination is to one of these, located near Tennessee Pass, a spot we like for its often bountiful early season snowfall. On a recent visit, we weren't disappointed, being greeted with eight to twelve inches of fresh powder. As we started skiing up the trail the snow ended and the sun emerged, rewarding us with a very nice outing in a beautiful area.

Getting to the Crane Park Trailhead: From the intersection of Highways 91 and 24 at the northern edge of Leadville, drive north on Highway 24 for 7.1 miles to a junction with County Road 19. Turn left on CR19, immediately reaching the Crane Park Trailhead parking area on the left.

GPS coordinates for the trailhead (NAD83): 39°20'50"N, 106°20'00"W, 8,396 feet.

Note that the ski routes in Crane Park have recently changed. Skiers are now requested to park at the trailhead parking area at the junction of County Road 19 and Highway 24, then use the newly created ski trail, designed to keep ski traffic off the road.

Hike Description

From the parking area ski or walk one quarter mile west on County Road 19 to the start of the new ski trail, located on the right hand side of

Statistics: From the Crane Park trailhead Lily Lake the trail gains 550 feet and loses 110 feet (to be re-climbed on the way back) in 2.7 miles one way.

Difficulty: An intermediate level cross-country ski trail on mostly gentle terrain with one or two steeper hills. Also suitable for all levels of snowshoer.

USGS Quad: Leadville North, CO.

the road and well signed to the 10th Mtn. Hut, Lily Lake and Slide Lake. Ski through pine forest and an open area on the gently rising trail, following blue diamonds, until reaching a signed junction with the trail coming from Tennessee Pass at mile 1.2 from the trailhead. Turn left and ski generally southwest until reaching the Wurts Ditch Road at mile 1.4. This intersection of trails is again well signed. Cross the road and climb southwest, following the signs for the Colorado Trail and 10th Mountain Hut (Winter Route). Make sure you follow the blue diamonds in this area. We found several confusing side trails that led in other directions. After a short climb the trail descends gradually into the North Fork of West Tennessee Creek, reaching another road with ski and snowmobile tracks at mile 2.0. A sign at this intersection indicates two ways to get to Lily Lake. This is where we chose to leave the Colorado Trail and Continental Divide Trail, turning right onto the road and following blue and orange diamonds (the orange diamonds marking a snowmobile route).

At mile 2.7 an abundance of orange and blue markers on a tree indicate that the ski and snowmobile trails diverge. The blue diamonds continue into a meadow on the right on the way to the 10th Mountain Hut and Slide Lake, but to reach Lily Lake we continue straight, on the road, reaching a gate in about 100 yards. Lily Lake is immediately to the south of this gate, a wide expanse of snow-covered ice at this time of year. The lake makes a good spot for lunch.

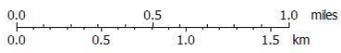
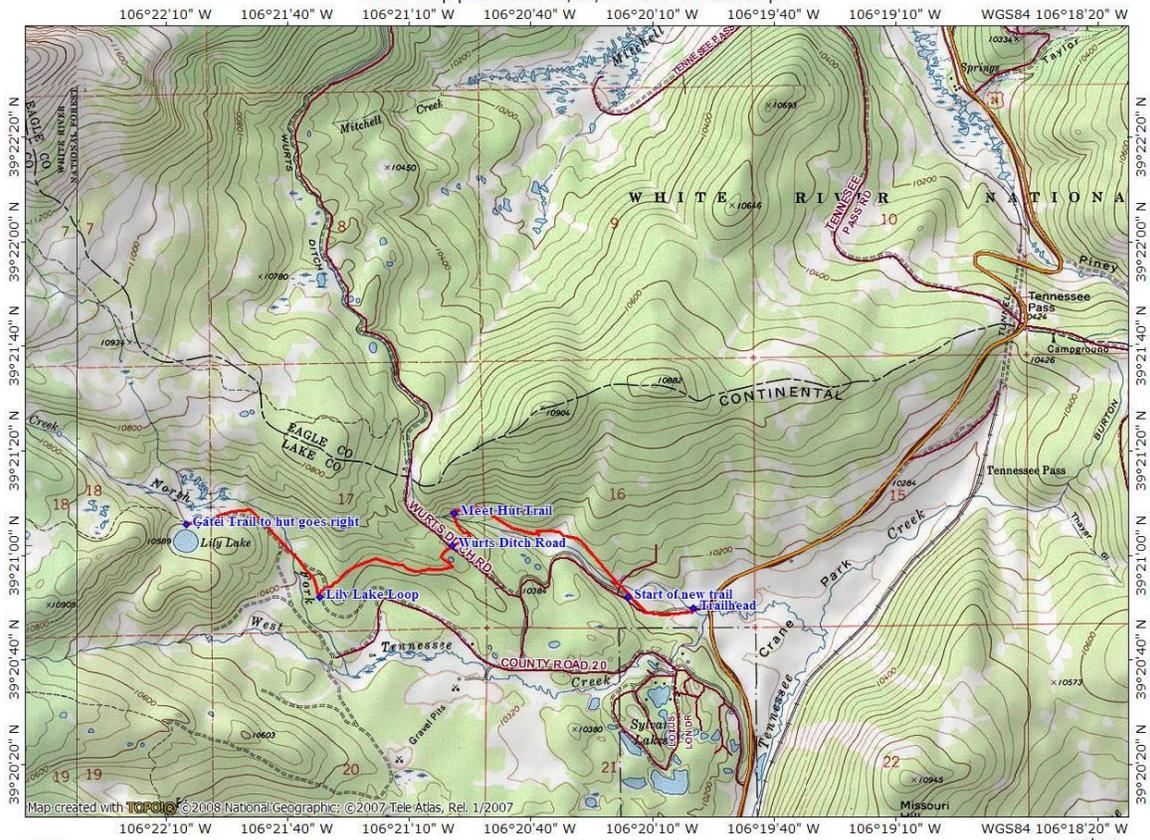
The broad expanse of Lily Lake - small.jpg

To return, retrace your tracks, being careful not to overshoot the turnoff onto the Colorado Trail, 0.7 mile from the lake. An alternate way to go would be to continue around the west and south sides of the lake to complete the Lily Lake Loop, but this section of trail can be tricky to follow if not tracked, so take care if you choose this option. We elected to enjoy a fast run back down, following our tracks.



Enjoying good early-season snow- small.jpg

TOPO! map printed on 12/14/10 from "Untitled2.tpo"



TN MN
9 1/2°
12/14/10

GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 Trailhead, 39,20,50, -106,20,0, 10268 feet
 Start of new trail, 39,20,52, -106,20,16, 10219 feet
 Meet Hut Trail, 39,21,8, -106,20,59, 10416 feet
 Wurts Ditch Road, 39,21,2, -106,20,59, 10493 feet
 Lily Lake Loop, 39,20,52, -106,21,32, 10483 feet
 Ski Trail to hut goes right, 39,21,6, -106,22,2, 10610 feet
 Gate, 39,21,6, -106,22,5, 10619 feet

