



READ & HIKE
IDAHO

LAKE CREEK TRAIL

A Read & Hike Idaho Trail Guide

▮ NORTH OF KETCHUM, IDAHO

TRAIL SNAPSHOT

LOCATION:

North of Ketchum, Idaho

DISTANCE:

Choose your own distance

DIFFICULTY:

Easy to moderate

BEST SEASON:

Spring to fall

BEST FOR:

Families, classrooms, birding

Lake Creek Trail is a peaceful, family-friendly trail area north of Ketchum. Families can choose a short walk or a longer outing while noticing flowing water, tall pines, grasses, birds, and open valley views. It is a good fit for young hikers, classrooms, and families who want a gentle outdoor literacy connection.

Detailed Trail Guide

Lake Creek Trail invites families to slow down and notice the small details of a creek-side landscape. Because the trailhead connects with several miles of non-motorized trails, families can choose a short sensory walk or a longer outing. The creek, grasses, pines, bird sounds, and open views create natural opportunities for field notes, sketching, and shared reading pauses. This trail works especially well for beginning hikers, mixed-age groups, or family caregivers focused on observation and family conversation.

Quick Trail Facts

LOCATION	North of Ketchum, Idaho
DISTANCE	Choose your own distance; trailhead accesses several miles of non-motorized trails
DIFFICULTY	Easy to moderate
ESTIMATED TIME	30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on turnaround point
BEST SEASON	Spring to fall
RESTROOMS / PARKING	Parking is available at the Lake Creek Trailhead; check seasonal amenities before visiting.
FAMILY-FRIENDLY NOTES	Flexible for short walks, mixed-age groups, birding, and nature journaling.
SAFETY REMINDERS	Watch for bikes and other trail users. Stay close to children near moving water. Bring layers, water, and sun protection.

Family Hiking Reminder

Use this guide flexibly. Pick a safe turnaround point, pack water and layers, and check current trail or weather conditions before visiting.

Read Before & After

Books that connect to this trail

Use these books before the hike to build curiosity and after the hike to extend family conversation. Choose one short read-aloud, one longer title, or a mix for different ages.

READ BEFORE YOU GO • The Hike by Alison Farrell • Creekfinding by Jacqueline Briggs Martin • A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel • The Busy Tree by Jennifer Ward • Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner	READ AFTER YOU HIKE • The Wild Robot by Peter Brown • My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George • A Wolf Called Wander by Rosanne Parry • Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv • The Nature Fix by Florence Williams
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Family Conversation Prompts • What sound did you notice first? • What part of the book reminded you of the creek? • How did this landscape make you feel? • What changed when we slowed down? • What can we do to care for trails near water?
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Trail Activities

Observe, search, sketch, and wonder

Observation Prompt

Pause by the creek. What do you see, hear, feel, and wonder? Follow where the sound of the water changes as you move.

Scavenger Hunt

☐ Moving water	☐ Something shaped like a circle
☐ A bird sound	☐ A place where shade changes the temperature
☐ A pine tree	☐ A trail sign or marker
☐ A plant with tiny leaves	☐ A safe animal sign
☐ A rock with more than one color	☐ A quiet place to read

Drawing or Journaling

Draw the creek as a moving line across your page. Add plants, rocks, trees, and sound words around it.

Simple Nature Activity

Water words: brainstorm words that describe the creek, such as rushing, trickling, cold, clear, bubbly, fast, quiet, or sparkling.

Age-Level Variations

Ways to use this trail with every age

Ages 0-3	Listen to creek sounds and practice simple nature words like water, tree, rock, bird, and sky.
Ages 4-7	Complete a five-senses check-in with drawing instead of writing.
Ages 8-12	Write detailed field notes about water, plants, and wildlife signs.
Teens	Photograph or sketch how water shapes the trail environment.
Adults / Family Read-Aloud	Read beside the creek and discuss how sound changes the mood of a story.

Downloadable Printables

- Trail guide PDF
- Creek-side senses walk
- Scavenger hunt
- Field notes page
- Drawing journal page

Before You Go

Trail distances, access, amenities, and seasonal conditions can change. Families should check the managing agency, recent trail reports, weather, road conditions, and posted trailhead signs before visiting.

Source Notes

- BLM Lake Creek Trailhead notes describe the trailhead as a popular access point north of Ketchum with several miles of non-motorized trails.
- Visit Sun Valley trail information places the Lake Creek Trailhead about four miles north of Ketchum on Highway 75.

Library Program Idea

Host a Walk, Wonder, Read event with a short read-aloud at the trailhead, a 15-20 minute sensory walk, a creek-side listening pause, and a closing circle where each family shares one detail they noticed.

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FOURTH OF JULY LAKE TRAIL

A Read & Hike Idaho Trail Guide

▣ SAWTOOTH NRA, IDAHO

TRAIL SNAPSHOT

LOCATION:

White Cloud Mountains / Sawtooth National Recreation Area

DISTANCE:

About 3 miles round trip

DIFFICULTY:

Moderate

BEST SEASON:

Summer to early fall

BEST FOR:

Older kids, lake views, wildflowers

Fourth of July Lake Trail is a rewarding alpine lake hike with forested sections, mountain views, wildflowers, and a beautiful lake destination. It is a strong fit for families who want an adventure that still makes space for reading, resting, and noticing.

Detailed Trail Guide

Fourth of July Lake Trail gives families a classic alpine destination: a mountain lake, forest sections, open views, and seasonal wildflowers. The route is short enough for many families with older children but still feels like an adventure. The lake makes a wonderful place to pause for a snack, read a short book or chapter, and reflect before heading back.

Quick Trail Facts

LOCATION	White Cloud Mountains / Sawtooth National Recreation Area
DISTANCE	Approximately 3 miles round trip to Fourth of July Lake
DIFFICULTY	Moderate
ESTIMATED TIME	1.5 to 2.5 hours for many families, depending on pace and stops
BEST SEASON	Summer to early fall
RESTROOMS / PARKING	Trailhead access may involve a dirt road. Check road and trail conditions before visiting.
FAMILY-FRIENDLY NOTES	Best for families with older children or younger children who are already used to hiking.
SAFETY REMINDERS	Bring layers, water, snacks, and sun protection. Watch for changing mountain weather and uneven trail surfaces.

Family Hiking Reminder

Use this guide flexibly. Pick a safe turnaround point, pack water and layers, and check current trail or weather conditions before visiting.

Read Before & After

Books that connect to this trail

Use these books before the hike to build curiosity and after the hike to extend family conversation. Choose one short read-aloud, one longer title, or a mix for different ages.

READ BEFORE YOU GO • The Hike by Alison Farrell • A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel • The Camping Trip by Jennifer K. Mann • The Busy Tree by Jennifer Ward • Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn by Kenard Pak	READ AFTER YOU HIKE • My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George • The Wild Robot by Peter Brown • Hatchet by Gary Paulsen • A Wolf Called Wander by Rosanne Parry • The Nature Fix by Florence Williams
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Family Conversation Prompts

- What did you notice that we might have missed if we hurried?
- What part of the book reminded you of the lake or mountains?
- How did the landscape make you feel?
- What was the most peaceful part of the hike?
- What can we do to care for alpine lake areas?

Trail Activities

Observe, search, sketch, and wonder

Observation Prompt

Look at the lake and mountains together. What shapes, colors, and reflections do you notice? What changes when the wind moves across the water?

Scavenger Hunt

☐ A mountain reflection	☐ A bird or bird sound
☐ A wildflower	☐ A trail marker
☐ A tall pine	☐ A place to rest
☐ A cloud shape	☐ A sign of changing weather
☐ A rock texture	☐ Something that makes you ask a question

Drawing or Journaling

Create a view-finder drawing. Draw the lake as if you are looking through a window and add three details around the edges.

Simple Nature Activity

Mountain weather watch: pause at the beginning, middle, and end of the hike. Notice how the sky, wind, temperature, or clouds change.

Age-Level Variations

Ways to use this trail with every age

Ages 0-3	Name simple trail features: water, tree, rock, flower, and sky.
Ages 4-7	Draw one thing from the trail and tell a story about it.
Ages 8-12	Write three field notes: one about plants, one about water, and one about mountains.
Teens	Create a photo or sketch series showing before, during, and after the hike.
Adults / Family Read-Aloud	Read a short passage at the lake and discuss how the setting changes the reading experience.

Downloadable Printables

- Trail guide PDF
- Wildflower and view finder scavenger hunt
- Field notes page
- Drawing journal page

Before You Go

Trail distances, access, amenities, and seasonal conditions can change. Families should check the managing agency, recent trail reports, weather, road conditions, and posted trailhead signs before visiting.

Source Notes

- Sawtooth National Forest information lists Fourth of July Creek Trailhead as a recreation access point in the Sawtooth area.
- Sawtooth National Forest visitor guide information describes Fourth of July/Washington Lake as a popular White Cloud Mountains hike with lake and peak views.

Library Program Idea

Invite families to bring a book to read at the lake. Begin with a trailhead safety circle, hike slowly, pause for a view-finder sketch, and close with a shared question: What did this place help us notice?



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TITUS LAKE TRAIL

A Read & Hike Idaho Trail Guide

📍 NEAR GALENA PASS, IDAHO

TRAIL SNAPSHOT

LOCATION:

Near Galena Pass, Idaho

DISTANCE:

About 3.5 to 5 miles round trip

DIFFICULTY:

Easy to moderate

BEST SEASON:

Summer to fall

BEST FOR:

Families, lake views, shorter hikes

Titus Lake Trail offers a beautiful mountain lake experience with open views, forest edges, wildflowers, and calm water. The peaceful destination works well for observation, sketching, quiet reading, and family reflection.

Detailed Trail Guide

Titus Lake Trail is a manageable alpine lake hike near Galena Pass. Families can use the trail to practice slow hiking: stopping often, looking closely, and noticing small details. The lake setting invites reflection and makes a natural place for reading together, sketching water and mountains, or comparing near and far observations.

Quick Trail Facts

LOCATION	Near Galena Pass, Idaho
DISTANCE	Approximately 3.5 to 5 miles round trip, depending on starting point
DIFFICULTY	Easy to moderate
ESTIMATED TIME	1.5 to 3 hours for families
BEST SEASON	Summer to fall
RESTROOMS / PARKING	Parking and trailhead conditions may vary by access point. Check current conditions before visiting.
FAMILY-FRIENDLY NOTES	A good choice for families looking for an alpine lake experience with a manageable distance.
SAFETY REMINDERS	Bring water, layers, sturdy shoes, and sun protection. Stay on the trail and protect fragile plants near the lake.

Family Hiking Reminder

Use this guide flexibly. Pick a safe turnaround point, pack water and layers, and check current trail or weather conditions before visiting.

Read Before & After

Books that connect to this trail

Use these books before the hike to build curiosity and after the hike to extend family conversation. Choose one short read-aloud, one longer title, or a mix for different ages.

READ BEFORE YOU GO • The Hike by Alison Farrell • Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner • A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel • The Camping Trip by Jennifer K. Mann • Hike by Pete Oswald	READ AFTER YOU HIKE • The Wild Robot by Peter Brown • My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George • A Wolf Called Wander by Rosanne Parry • Hatchet by Gary Paulsen • Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv
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Family Conversation Prompts • What did you notice when we stopped talking? • What part of the book felt connected to this place? • How did the lake change as we looked at it longer? • What was your favorite small detail? • How can we protect quiet places like this?
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Trail Activities

Observe, search, sketch, and wonder

Observation Prompt

Sit near the lake and notice what is still, what is moving, and what changes when the wind blows.

Scavenger Hunt

☐ Calm water	☐ A wildflower
☐ A lake reflection	☐ A mountain ridge
☐ A bird sound	☐ A shady resting place
☐ A small insect	☐ A rock pattern
☐ Pine needles	☐ A quiet moment

Drawing or Journaling Make a mountain reflection journal. Draw the lake on one half of the page and the reflected landscape on the other half.	Simple Nature Activity Sound map: sit quietly for one minute. Draw yourself in the center of the page and mark where each sound comes from.
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Age-Level Variations

Ways to use this trail with every age

Ages 0-3	Listen for sounds. Point toward water, wind, birds, and footsteps.
Ages 4-7	Draw the lake and add three things around it.
Ages 8-12	Compare what you see close up with what you see far away.
Teens	Write a short reflection about solitude, quiet, or mountain landscapes.
Adults / Family Read-Aloud	Choose a quiet place and read a poem, picture book, or short chapter near the lake.

Downloadable Printables

- Trail guide PDF
- Mountain reflection journal
- Field notes page
- Scavenger hunt

Before You Go

Trail distances, access, amenities, and seasonal conditions can change. Families should check the managing agency, recent trail reports, weather, road conditions, and posted trailhead signs before visiting.

Source Notes

- Sawtooth National Recreation Area trail information lists Titus Lake Trail as an easy hike/bike trail with routes from Forest Road 188 or Galena Pass.
- Sawtooth National Forest visitor information describes Titus Lake as a short alpine lake hike near Galena Summit.

Library Program Idea

Create a Mountain Reflection Journal program: families hike to a resting spot, sketch the lake or a nearby view, read a short nature book, and share one quiet detail they discovered.

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FALL CREEK TRAIL

A Read & Hike Idaho Trail Guide

▣ WILDHORSE CANYON, IDAHO

TRAIL SNAPSHOT

LOCATION:

Wildhorse Canyon area, Idaho

DISTANCE:

About 0.69 miles one way

DIFFICULTY:

Easy

BEST SEASON:

Spring to fall

BEST FOR:

Young children, classrooms, waterfalls

Fall Creek Waterfall Trail is a short, scenic trail with flowing water, rocky canyon textures, shaded forest sections, and a rewarding waterfall-focused experience. It is especially useful for families with young children or groups who want a simple outing with strong sensory connections.

Detailed Trail Guide

Fall Creek Waterfall Trail is a short, family-friendly outing in the Wildhorse Canyon area. The trail offers flowing water, rocky canyon textures, shaded forest sections, and a peaceful place to slow down and explore. The sound of water, cool shade, and rock formations make it a natural place for observation prompts and wonder questions.

Quick Trail Facts

LOCATION	Wildhorse Canyon area, Idaho
DISTANCE	Approximately 0.69 miles one way; about 1.4 miles round trip
DIFFICULTY	Easy
ESTIMATED TIME	30 to 60 minutes
BEST SEASON	Spring to fall
RESTROOMS / PARKING	The Fall Creek Trailhead includes an accessible toilet according to Forest Service trailhead information.
FAMILY-FRIENDLY NOTES	A good choice for young children, short outings, classrooms, and families wanting a quick nature experience.
SAFETY REMINDERS	Watch for wet or slippery surfaces. Supervise children near water and rocks. Stay on marked routes.

Family Hiking Reminder

Use this guide flexibly. Pick a safe turnaround point, pack water and layers, and check current trail or weather conditions before visiting.

Read Before & After

Books that connect to this trail

Use these books before the hike to build curiosity and after the hike to extend family conversation. Choose one short read-aloud, one longer title, or a mix for different ages.

READ BEFORE YOU GO • The Hike by Alison Farrell • A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel • Water Is Water by Miranda Paul • Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner • The Busy Tree by Jennifer Ward	READ AFTER YOU HIKE • Creekfinding by Jacqueline Briggs Martin • The Wild Robot by Peter Brown • A Wolf Called Wander by Rosanne Parry • Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv • The Nature Fix by Florence Williams
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Family Conversation Prompts • What did the water sound like? • What part of the book reminded you of this trail? • How did the shaded canyon feel different from open areas? • What was one small detail you noticed? • What can we do to protect creek and waterfall areas?

Trail Activities

Observe, search, sketch, and wonder

Observation Prompt
Listen to the water. How does the sound change as you move closer or farther away?

Scavenger Hunt

☐ Flowing water	☐ A smooth rock
☐ Wet rock	☐ A rough rock
☐ A shady spot	☐ A water sound
☐ A plant growing near water	☐ A safe place to pause
☐ A bird or insect	☐ Something that makes you wonder

Drawing or Journaling Draw the waterfall or creek using lines that show movement. Add words around the drawing to describe the sound.	Simple Nature Activity Rock texture study: without taking rocks home, gently touch or observe nearby rocks. Compare smooth, rough, dry, wet, light, and dark surfaces.
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Age-Level Variations

Ways to use this trail with every age

Ages 0-3	Listen for water and practice movement words like splash, drip, rush, and flow.
Ages 4-7	Draw the waterfall and choose three sound words to describe it.
Ages 8-12	Write a short field note about how water changes rocks, plants, or soil.
Teens	Create a short photo or sketch study of texture: water, rock, bark, moss, or shadow.
Adults / Family Read-Aloud	Read a water-themed picture book or poem and talk about how the trail sounds match the words.

Downloadable Printables

- Trail guide PDF
- Waterfall wonder notes
- Field notes page
- Drawing journal page

Before You Go

Trail distances, access, amenities, and seasonal conditions can change. Families should check the managing agency, recent trail reports, weather, road conditions, and posted trailhead signs before visiting.

Source Notes

- Forest Service information lists Fall Creek Trailhead as access to Waterfall Trail #4344, Fall Creek Trail, and Moose Lake Trail.
- Forest Service Waterfall Trail #4344 information describes the trail as a 0.69-mile accessible trail in the Wildhorse Canyon area.

Library Program Idea

Lead a Waterfall Wonder Notes activity. Begin with a read-aloud about water, walk slowly, pause for a listening minute, sketch movement lines for the creek, and end by sharing one sound word.

YELLOW BELLY & MCDONALD LAKES TRAIL

A Read & Hike Idaho Trail Guide

▣ SAWTOOTH AREA, IDAHO

TRAIL SNAPSHOT

LOCATION:

Sawtooth area near Pettit Lake, Idaho

DISTANCE:

About 3.6 to 5.1 miles

DIFFICULTY:

Moderate

BEST SEASON:

Summer to early fall

BEST FOR:

Lake exploration, active families

Yellow Belly & McDonald Lakes Trail offers a peaceful family adventure in Idaho's mountain landscape. This trail invites hikers to explore alpine lake scenery, forest edges, open views, and quiet places to pause, read, and reflect beside the water.

Detailed Trail Guide

Yellow Belly & McDonald Lakes Trail invites families into a Sawtooth landscape of lake water, mountain views, forest edges, and quiet shoreline spaces. This trail is especially good for families who want to connect reading with noticing: reflections on the water, animal signs near the shore, changing light, and the feeling of moving from one lake space to another. It can be used as a longer family hike or adapted by choosing a shorter stopping point.

Quick Trail Facts

LOCATION	Sawtooth area near Pettit Lake, Idaho
DISTANCE	Approximately 3.6 to 5.1 miles, depending on route and turnaround point
DIFFICULTY	Moderate
ESTIMATED TIME	2 to 3 hours for many family groups
BEST SEASON	Summer to early fall
RESTROOMS / PARKING	Parking and access may vary depending on route and trailhead. Check road and trail conditions before visiting.
FAMILY-FRIENDLY NOTES	Best for families comfortable with a longer hike, uneven trail, and lake-area exploration.
SAFETY REMINDERS	Bring water, sun protection, layers, snacks, and a map or downloaded trail information. Watch children near water.

Family Hiking Reminder

Use this guide flexibly. Pick a safe turnaround point, pack water and layers, and check current trail or weather conditions before visiting.

Read Before & After

Books that connect to this trail

Use these books before the hike to build curiosity and after the hike to extend family conversation. Choose one short read-aloud, one longer title, or a mix for different ages.

READ BEFORE YOU GO • The Camping Trip by Jennifer K. Mann • Because of an Acorn by Lola M. Schaefer • The Hike by Alison Farrell • Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner • A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel	READ AFTER YOU HIKE • My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George • The Wild Robot by Peter Brown • A Wolf Called Wander by Rosanne Parry • Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults adapted by Monique Gray Smith • Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv
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Family Conversation Prompts • What did you notice first when you saw the lake? • What part of the book reminded you of this hike? • How did the landscape make you feel? • What changed as we moved along the trail? • What can we do to care for this place?

Trail Activities

Observe, search, sketch, and wonder

Observation Prompt

Look closely at the lake edge. What do you notice where water, plants, rocks, and trees meet?

Scavenger Hunt

☐ Lake reflection	☐ A quiet place to sit
☐ A shoreline plant	☐ A sign of wildlife
☐ A bird sound	☐ A mountain shape
☐ A rock with more than one color	☐ Something growing near water
☐ A place where wind changes the water	☐ Something that shows the season

Drawing or Journaling

Draw the lake in three layers: foreground, water, and mountains. Add labels for the details you noticed.

Simple Nature Activity

Compare two lake views. What is the same? What is different? What changes when you move just a little farther down the trail?

Age-Level Variations

Ways to use this trail with every age

Ages 0-3	Point to water, trees, rocks, and sky. Practice simple words like blue, cold, tree, bird, and big.
Ages 4-7	Do a color hunt. Find three shades of green, two shades of blue, and one surprising color.
Ages 8-12	Write field notes comparing the lake, forest, and mountain areas.
Teens	Photograph or sketch patterns: ripples, tree lines, shadows, and rock textures.
Adults / Family Read-Aloud	Read a short passage beside the lake and talk about how water changes the feeling of a place.

Downloadable Printables

- Trail guide PDF
- Lake-to-lake scavenger hunt
- Field notes page
- Drawing journal page

Before You Go

Trail distances, access, amenities, and seasonal conditions can change. Families should check the managing agency, recent trail reports, weather, road conditions, and posted trailhead signs before visiting.

Source Notes

- Sawtooth National Recreation Area trail updates note that Mays Creek Trail connects to the Yellowbelly Trail near McDonald Lake.
- Sawtooth National Forest recreation information notes that Yellow Belly Lake is north of Pettit Lake and does not allow motorized watercraft.
- Sawtooth Wilderness information notes special campfire restrictions in some drainages, including Yellow Belly Lake Creek; check current rules before visiting.

Library Program Idea

Use this as a Lake-to-Lake Nature Hunt. Families compare shoreline plants, water movement, and soundscapes, then finish with a read-aloud and a reflection about how each lake space felt different.