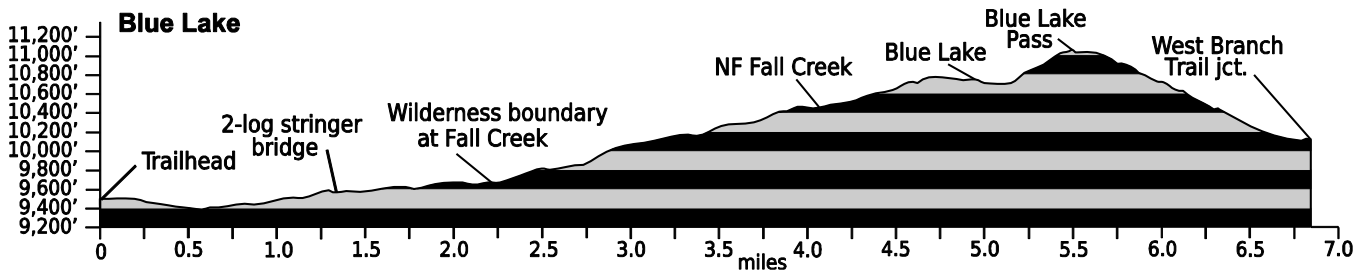


Mar. 5, 2022

Public Trail Information: Blue Lake

Trail(s): Blue Lake #959	
Ratings / restrictions:	Hikers – Moderate Stock – Moderate, but prohibited May 15 thru Sept. 15 Camping prohibited within 1/4 mile of lakes or between lakes, see map See complete regulations below INFORMATION OF INTEREST.
Cautions:	Burn area; Lightning in exposed alpine areas; moose; giardia
Typically accessible:	Year-round; see SEASONAL below
Wilderness:	Rawah
One-Way Length:	5.0 miles to Blue Lake ; 6.9 miles to junction with West Branch Trail
Beginning / Peak Elevation:	9,482 / 11,040
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	1,722 / 1,101 / +621
Map(s) - Trails Illustrated:	#112 Poudre River Cameron Pass; Mountain Jay - Rawah Wilderness
Map(s) - USGS 7-1/2' Quadrangles:	Chambers Lake, Clark Peak, Rawah Lakes



TRAILHEAD LOCATION:

Upper Poudre River Area: Drive 53.7 miles on CO-14 from Ted’s Place to mm 69.5. The Blue Lake parking lot and trailhead will be on your right (west side of the road) just beyond Long Draw Road. There is limited parking for stock trailers in the drive-through parking lot with 2 entrances.

Toilets are at the Long Draw Winter Trailhead, with considerable additional parking (also drive-through with 2 entrances), on the east side of CO-14 before (about 0.25 mi northeast of) the Blue Lake Trailhead.

CAUTIONS: This trail was in the Cameron Peak Fire of 2020, the largest fire in Colorado history, which burned nearly 209,000 acres. This trail was severely burned, much of the trail is black, there is risk of falling trees, and it may be very difficult to follow the trail in some sections.

Cautions in Burn Areas:

- Falling Trees
 - Tree root systems can be burned – compromised or non-existent. Thus, trees in burned areas fall at a high rate for some time after a fire.
 - There may be a large number of trees on the trail.
- Stump Holes -- Tree stumps sometimes burn below ground level and can leave dangerous holes, often filled in loosely by ash or needles.

- Difficult to Follow Trails
 - At times the trail can be difficult or impossible to follow with no vegetation or tread visible.
 - Even in formerly familiar terrain, the landscape can be disorienting.
- Rock Slides are more likely, due to lack of vegetation and root damage.
- Flash Flooding is likely even with small rainstorms and may occur way downstream from rain.

WATER: Abundant - Good water sources are plentiful and well-spaced along this trail: Joe Wright Creek at 0.25 mile; Sawmill Creek at 0.4 mile; a small unnamed creek about 1.3 miles above the trailhead; Fall Creek at 2.2 miles; north branch of Fall Creek at 4.0 miles; the creek draining Hang Lake at 5.0 miles; the inlet of Blue Lake at 5.2 miles; two crossings of an unnamed tributary to the West Branch within 0.5 miles of the trail jct. with the West Branch Trail, and West Branch itself. Only the 1.5 mile stretch of the trail near and beyond Blue Lake Pass is without easy access to water.

CAMPING: One possible camping location is in the area of the crossing of the north branch of Fall Creek at 4.0 miles above the trailhead. Locating your camp here assures that you won’t be competing with others for legal campsites closer to Blue Lake (but still outside the Blue Lake/Hang Lake closure area). Camping is also possible near the west end of the Blue

Lake Trail at approximately GPS N40°38.11' W105°54.93'), a little northeast of where this trail crosses the West Branch of the Laramie River. This location can accommodate several tents. See REGULATIONS below.

SEASONAL: Accessible in winter. The parking area is usually accessible, but be prepared for high elevation winter driving conditions. Snowshoes or skis are needed. Because of avalanche danger near Blue and Hang Lakes, the winter trail diverges from the summer trail at its junction with the creek draining Blue Lake (North Fork Fall Creek), about 4.0 miles from the trailhead. Follow the creek to Blue Lake. The first 2.25 miles to the Wilderness boundary is well marked with blue diamonds; after that the trail is not marked. Note: The unbridged crossing of N Fall Creek (at 4.0 miles above the trailhead), may be challenging during high stream flows, even if you are prepared to wade. The 2-log stringer bridge across the West Branch of the Laramie River at the end of Blue Lake Trail is washed out, so even if you are prepared to wade the river, a through hike to the West Branch Trail may not be possible or safe during high stream flow conditions.

DESCRIPTION: This is one of the most heavily used trails in the Rawah Wilderness, probably because of its proximity to a paved road and the relatively short distance required to reach a subalpine lake. Because of this heavy use and extensive resource damage around Blue and Hang Lakes, special regulations have been implemented in the 1/4-mile Blue Lake Closure Area that surrounds the two lakes, prohibiting fires and overnight camping and prohibiting stock from overnight stays.

REGULATIONS:

- Camping and Fires - Prohibited within 200 feet of trailhead and parking area. Outside the Wilderness boundary, recommend at least 100 feet from water and trail. In the Wilderness, prohibited within 200 feet of water or trail. Prohibited within 1/4 mile of Blue Lake and Hang Lake and in between the lakes (Blue Lake Closure Area; see map). Wood fires prohibited above 10,800 feet elevation (Rawah Alpine Closure Area).
- Dogs - Must be on hand-held leash with hikers, voice control with stock.
- Stock - Prohibited May 15 through September 15. Prohibited overnight in the Blue Lake Closure Area. To avoid spreading noxious weeds, recommend beginning 72 hours prior to the ride stock feed should only be pellets or certified weed free hay. Required: throughout the trip, any feed *must* be pellets or certified weed-free hay.
- Bicycles and Other Wheeled Conveyances - Prohibited.
- Motorized Transport - Prohibited.
- Motorized Equipment - Prohibited in Wilderness.
- Group Size - Outside the Wilderness boundary, more than 74 people in a single group must have a USFS permit. In the Wilderness, maximum 12 people and stock, combined.

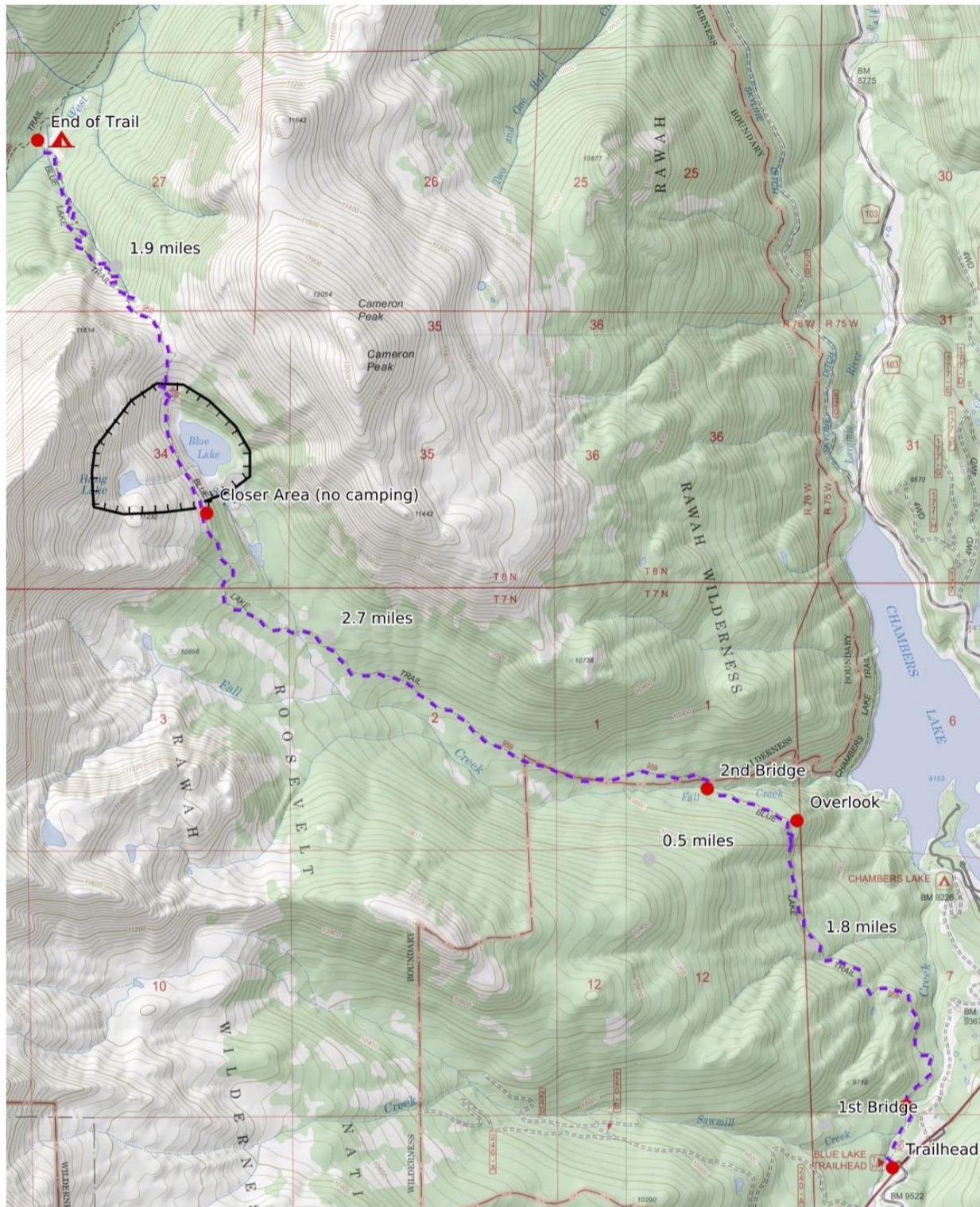
For the first 2 miles, the trail follows an old logging road in multi-use National Forest and slopes gently upward through a spruce/fir forest. At about 0.3 mile from the trailhead, the trail crosses over rushing Joe Wright Creek. About 1.8 miles from the trailhead there is a small rise to the east with a nice overlook that offers glimpses of Chambers Lake. The trail enters the Rawah Wilderness at about 2.2 miles, shortly after crossing a footbridge over Fall Creek, and the slope increases. At about 4.0 miles, the trail reaches a small meadow and a log bridge crossing the north branch of Fall Creek. Look for lovely wildflowers here, especially early to mid summer. The stunning gem of Blue Lake is reached at about 5 miles, where there are many alpine flowers blooming in season. Note that there is no established trail to Hang Lake (which is located on a shelf 440 feet above and to the southwest of Blue Lake).

Mileages from the trailhead shown in the table below are approximate. The map below shows some details of the trail. It is not meant for navigation.

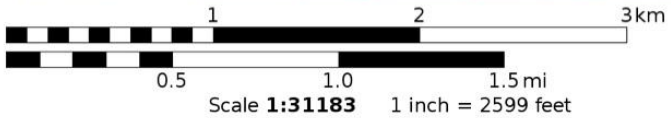
INFORMATION OF INTEREST: If you hike off-trail to the west-northwest of the pass, through some krummholz stands and boulder fields, you can get a breathtaking view of the upper West Branch Basin and its beautiful lakes. Also, if you hike off-trail to the east from the pass to the top of Cameron Peak, which towers above Blue Lake (check your map for its location), you will be rewarded with an outstanding vista of the Rawah.

Mileage	GPS Coordinates: datum = WGS84	Lat/Long	UTM	
0	Blue Lake Trailhead (on CO-14)	N40°34.79' W105°51.34'	427581m	4492468m
0.3	timber bridge over Joe Wright Creek	N40°34.96' W105°51.31'	427627m	4492782m
1.3	2-log stringer bridge across a small, unnamed stream	N40°35.45' W105°51.65'	427156m	4493693m
1.9	overlook of Chambers Lake	N40°35.91' W105°51.79'	426967m	4494546m
2.2	junction of Blue Lake Trail with old logging road	N40°36.00' W105°52.09'	426545m	4494716m
2.2	timber bridge across Fall Creek	N40°36.02' W105°52.16'	426447m	4494754m
2.3	Wilderness boundary	N40°36.04' W105°52.14'	426476m	4494791m
4.1	lower crossing of North Fork of Fall Creek	N40°36.52' W105°53.93'	423960m	4495705m
5.0	Blue Lake	N40°37.08' W105°54.36'	423365m	4496747m
5.0	crossing of outlet stream from Hang Lake	N40°37.06' W105°54.41'	423294m	4496711m
5.2	SE shoreline of Hang Lake	N40°37.00' W105°54.60'	423025m	4496602m
5.5	large rock cairn at the top of Blue Lake Pass	N40°37.44' W105°54.48'	423203m	4497415m
5.8	western Blue Lake/Hang Lake Closure Area boundary	N40°37.61' W105°54.66'	422952m	4497732m
6.9	end of patrol at junction with West Branch Trail	N40°38.16' W105°55.06'	422399m	4498755m

(See next page for map of trail.)



Mercator Projection
 WGS84
 USNG Zone 13TDE

Blue Lake: 4