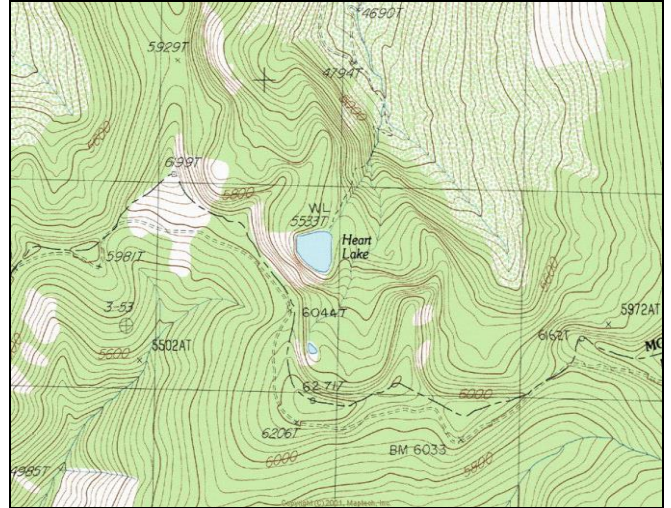


Heart Lake (Big Creek)



Description: Heart Lake is a small (7.1 acres), remote glacial cirque lake located in the Big Creek drainage (St. Regis) at 5,533 ft elevation. This lake lies on the Lolo National Forest (Superior Ranger District).

Location: T18N, R30W, Section 32; Latitude N47.2840°, Longitude W115.4550°; Nearest Town: St. Regis, MT.

Access: Access to Heart Lake can most easily be obtained by taking the Haugan exit from Interstate Highway 90, west of St. Regis. Take USFS Road #386 southwest about 2 miles, then bear left onto USFS Road #3820 along the East Fork of Big Creek. Take this road ~ 6 miles to USFS Road #1159. Less than 0.25 mile up this road is the trailhead to Heart Lake. From here, it is a short (< 1 mile), steep hike to the lake. Another option may be to hike off-trail down to the lake from USFS Road #391, which runs approximately along the Idaho/Montana border.

Campsites and Use: Heart Lake lies in a remote setting that receives moderate use. There is at least one a well-established campsite and a partial trail around the lake.

Angling Opportunity: Heart Lake supports both westslope cutthroat trout and rainbow trout populations, which likely have hybridized. Shoreline topography and access lends well to shoreline angling around >60% of the lake perimeter.

Stocking History: Stocking records indicate that Heart Lake has been stocked twice. It was stocked with westslope cutthroat trout in 2000 and with rainbow trout in 1977. Stocking with westslope cutthroat trout every 7-10 years will likely continue in the future.

Angling Pressure: Estimated angling pressure from Montana state-wide mail surveys in 1995-2005 was low and averaged 69 angler-days per year.

Other Nearby Lakes: Heart Lake lies near several other lakes, though they will be difficult to access if approaching Heart Lake from the north. If Heart Lake is accessed from USFS Road #391, Crystal Lake and Rudie Lake can both be reached from USFS Trail #269, which runs north from USFS Road #391 just 2.3 miles (road distance) east of Heart Lake. Another 1.1 miles (road distance) east, there is a short, steep trail down to Clear Lake. Two more road miles east is Trail #250, which intersects Trail #280 and provides access to Hub Lake and Hazel Lake.



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Max. depth = 60 feet

