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## NORTHERN REACH

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Cover: Singer's Bay on the Upper Columbia  
*Wayne Gorst Photo*

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# Lost Lake Trail

## An Accidental Hike

by Nancy Owens Barnes

We find ourselves at Lost Lake Trail on a whim when, in early June, snow still blanketed the West Cabinets trail we originally intended to hike that day. So retreating and agreeing to save that trek for another day, my husband Tom and I head for lower terrain, Lost Lake Trail, a short hike that should fit snugly into what remains of the day.


Not far from the western shore of the Pend Oreille River, Lost Lake Trail lies between Garfield Bay and Camp Bay on the Bottle Bay Peninsula. The trail loops 2.3 miles through the woods from the trailhead to the southeast edge of Lost Lake and back. Even though the trail map we carry with us shows the trail looping around the lake, it does not. According to the Sandpoint Ranger District, the drawing is in error. The Ranger District has, however, linked the Lost Lake Trail with the Mineral Point Trail, adding another 2.5 miles for a longer hike, if one prefers.

The lushness of the woods surprises me as we leave the trailhead on a path lined with tall evergreens such as pine and spruce, along with a variety of deciduous trees. Quiet permeates our surroundings except for a few birds chirping high above us and occasional squirrel chatter. The well-worn path cuts through thick woods, allowing little light to seep through in places. Lined with sporadic patches of wildflowers—Indian paintbrush, lupine, barberry and others—the trail angles and curves toward the lake with minimal elevation gain, making the trail an excellent walk for families with children.

As we approach the lake, a number of turtles—red-eared sliders—abandon their lounge in the sun and slip quietly off logs that have tumbled into the water over the years. Then, when we reach the lake and relax on a wooden, lakeside bench, we begin to see that many turtles inhabit the lake. Some appear as simply dark spots just beneath the water's surface or resting against grasses along the shore, becoming a "Where's Waldo" game as we squint and attempt to identify them around the lake. Others inch close to a mass of reeds or a rock, where they raise their shoehorn-shaped heads to watch us watching them.

Along the far shore, pairs of Mallards cruise smoothly and silently. A shallow lake, occasional huddles of lily pads float on the water around its edge where dragon flies, large and small, flit and shift from one to the next. The smallest dragon flies glow with iridescent blue when they hover in the sunlight.

After sitting, then exploring the lake edge for a couple of hours, we continue our hike, looping back toward the trailhead, passing masses of ferns and old tree trunks and logs, some covered with moss and lichen. On the path I find a hefty black beetle crossing the trail. I stop and touch its back. It's shell is hard. The beetle pays me no mind and continues forward.

By mid-afternoon we return to the trailhead. Even though we had taken a last-minute detour from our original plans, an easy hike looping through the woods along Lost Lake Trail finished off a fine day in the outdoors of North Idaho. 

*"In all things of nature is something of the marvelous."*

Aristotle

### Getting There

From Highway 95, 5.5 miles south of Sandpoint, turn east onto Sagle Road. Follow Sagle Road 7 miles to Garfield Bay Road (fork to right). Follow Garfield Bay Road 1.5 miles to Garfield Bay Cut-Off Road. Turn left and go .4 miles to Green Bay Road. Turn right onto Green Bay Road and go 4.5 miles to the end of the road, the trailhead for Lost Lake Trail 81.

For Additional Information Contact:

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*Photos courtesy of the author*