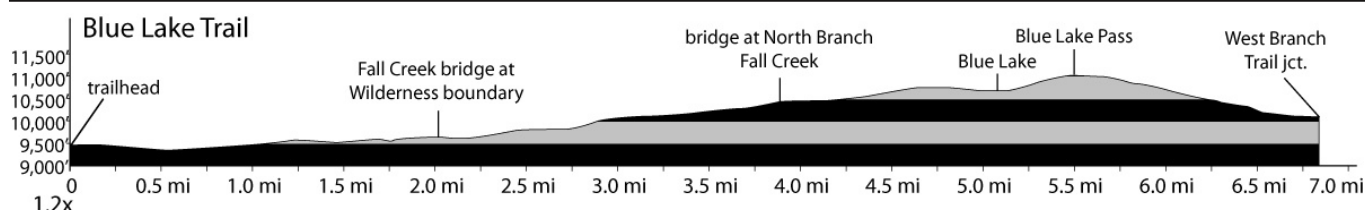


Priority:	HIGH (patrol methods: day hike; backpack)
Ratings:	Hikers – Moderate to Strenuous; Stock–Prohibited May 15 thru Sept. 15
Open for summer patrol:	June 29 th
SPOT/USFS Radio:	REQUIRED (Radio: 02 > 01; Priority 1, Good reception)
Wilderness:	Rawah
One-Way Length:	6.9 miles (trailhead to West Branch Trail) – 5.0 miles to Blue Lake
Beginning Elevation:	9,482
Peak Elevation:	11,040 at Blue Lake Pass
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	1,722 / 1,101 / +621
USFS Regulations:	National Forest > Wilderness > Closure Area > Wilderness
Trails Illustrated:	#112 Poudre River, Cameron Pass
USGS 7-1/2' Quadrangles:	Chambers Lake, Clark Peak, Rawah Lakes



Trailhead Location: Poudre Canyon; drive 53.7 miles 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) opposite the Long Draw Road. Facilities are at Long Draw Winter Trailhead and parking area on the east side of CO-14 just before reaching the Blue Lake trailhead.

GPS Coordinates:

trailhead: N40°34.798' W105°51.336'
 Wilderness boundary: N40°36.04' W105°52.14'
 Blue Lake: N40°37.080' W105°54.358'
 jct. West Branch Trail: N40°38.155' W105°55.058'

Trail Description: This is one of the most heavily used trails in the Rawah Wilderness, because of its proximity to a paved road and the 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. The 1/4-mile Blue Lake Closure Area surrounds the lakes. Camping and wood fires are prohibited within this closure area. Saddle, pack, or draft animals of any type are prohibited on the entire trail from May 15 through September 15. Stock are

allowed on the trail from September 16 through May 14, but they may not be corralled, tethered, hobbled, or picketed overnight within the Blue Lake Closure Area.

The first 2 miles of the trail follows an old logging road and is in multi-use National Forest. Within the first 0.25 mile you will cross over Joe Wright Creek. About 1.5 miles from the trailhead there is a small rise to the east with a nice overlook that offers glimpses of Chambers Lake. You will enter the Rawah Wilderness shortly after crossing a footbridge over Fall Creek. After another 2 miles, you reach a meadow and a log bridge crossing the north branch of Fall Creek. If you are backpacking, look for a campsite here to avoid the heavy camping just outside the closure area. Much of your time should be spent patrolling around Blue Lake and Hang Lake, explaining the 1/4-mile closure area to visitors. Hang Lake is located on a shelf 440 feet above and to the southwest of Blue Lake. You should also patrol up to Blue Lake Pass and down to the junction with the West Branch Trail to check out this stretch of trail. [The 2-log stringer bridge across the West Branch of the Laramie River at the end of this trail is washed out so, even if you are prepared to wade the stream, a through hike to the West Branch Trail may not be possible/safe during high stream flow conditions.]

If you hike off-trail to the west-northwest of the

Note the 1/4 mile Closure Area around Blue Lake and Hang Lake – No camping allowed. No stock allowed on this trail from May 15 through September 15.

Trail: Blue Lake 959

pass, through some krummholz stands and boulder fields, you can get a breathtaking view of the 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 are rewarded with an outstanding vista of the Rawahs.

Check for illegal camping in the drainage area just below Blue Lake. It's a popular camping area. Follow the stream down for 0.75 mile and you will intersect the Blue Lake Trail at the meadow. The map below shows some details of your patrol. It is not meant for navigation.

