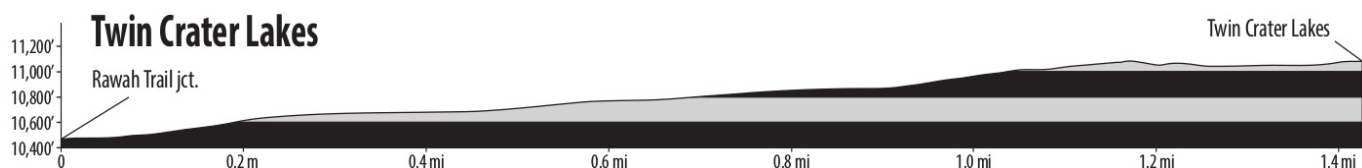


Priority:	<b>HIGH</b> (patrol methods: backpack; ride stock; day hike)
Ratings:	Hikers – Moderate; Stock riders – Challenging
Open for summer patrol:	June 29 <sup>th</sup>
SPOT/USFS Radio:	<b>REQUIRED</b> (Radio: 02 > 01; Priority 2, Moderate reception)
Wilderness:	Rawah
One-Way Length:	1.4 miles (from the Rawah Trail to Twin Crater Lakes)
Beginning Elevation:	10,472
Peak Elevation:	11,087
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	615/14/+601
USFS Regulations:	Wilderness
Trails Illustrated:	#112 Poudre River, Cameron Pass
USGS 7-1/2' Quadrangles:	Rawah Lakes



**Trailhead Location:** This trail is accessed via the Rawah (South) and West Branch trails. Drive up the Poudre Canyon for 51.6 miles from Ted's Place, turn right on the Laramie River Road (CR-103) at mm 71.5, and proceed 7.1 miles to the West Branch parking area, a short distance north of the Tunnel Campground. The West Branch Trail begins about 50 feet south of the parking area and heads west along a ditch road. Facilities, water and stock trailer parking are available at the trailhead.

**GPS Coordinates:**

*jct. Rawah Trail:* N40°39.599' W105°55.604'  
*Twin Crater Lakes:* N40°38.830' W105°56.465'

**Trail Description:** This patrol is best accomplished as an overnight trip, doing the Twin Crater Lakes Trail patrol in conjunction with the Rawah Trail (South) patrol. You can find legal campsites 0.2 mile past the Twin Crater Lakes Trail junction on the north side of the Rawah Trail. If you plan to patrol both of these trails, remember to schedule and report them separately.

Hike up the West Branch Trail, passing the junction with the Camp Lake Trail after about 2.7 miles. After another 0.8 mile you will come to the North Fork of the Laramie River. Note that the 2-log stringer bridge across this stream is washed out so, even if you are prepared to wade the stream, patrolling beyond this point may not be possible/safe during high stream flow conditions. Shortly after crossing this stream you will encounter a junction with the southern end of the

Rawah Trail. Proceed up the Rawah Trail. About 0.9 mile up this trail, the 2-log stringer bridge across the stream coming out of Twin Crater Lakes is badly damaged and may be unusable. Even if you are prepared to wade the stream, patrolling beyond this point may not be possible/safe during high stream flow conditions. Continue up the Rawah Trail (S) through a series of steep switchbacks to the Twin Crater Lakes trailhead (about 1.6 miles above the West Branch Trail).

If you are patrolling both trails, continue on up the Rawah Trail to just beyond the second crossing of the North Fork (unbridged), where the trail begins its steep ascent to Grassy Pass, checking for illegal campsites along the stream. While in this area, you can make a steep side trip to Bench Lake (about 0.25 mile to the southwest). However, don't include observations, contacts, or trail maintenance from this side trip to Bench Lake in your official patrol report (except possibly in *COMMENTS*).

From Bench Lake you can proceed either of two ways. You can backtrack down to the Rawah Trail and then down to the Twin Crater Lakes trailhead. Go up the Twin Crater Lakes Trail, checking for campsites in the groves to the left just after crossing the stream. Continue past an un-bridged stream crossing on up to Twin Crater Lakes, where few legal camping sites exist but camping is often quite heavy. The final climb to

## Trail: Twin Crater Lakes 962

the lakes is quite steep. This ends your official patrol of this trail. However, if you're feeling ambitious, you can climb the ridge to the north of lower Twin Crater Lake and check out Rockhole Lake before returning to Twin Crater Lakes and then hiking back to the Rawah Trail and then the West Branch Trail.

Alternately, from Bench Lake you can continue cross-country to the south-southwest to Rockhole Lake and then drop down to the south-southeast to Twin Crater Lakes. From here you would patrol down the Twin Crater Lakes Trail to the Rawah Trail and then out via the West Branch Trail. Because neither Bench Lake nor Rockhole Lake is part of any official patrol, do not include observations, contacts, or trail maintenance from these side trips in your official

patrol report (except possibly in the *COMMENTS* section).

Although this trail is labeled "North Fork Trail" on the Trails Illustrated map #112, its official name is "Twin Crater Lakes Trail" (as indicated on the Rawah Wilderness map by Mountain Jay). Do not confuse this trail with the "North Fork Trail #929" that PWV patrols in the Big Thompson drainage.

