

Sher's Trail Reviews - Bear Creek Lake Park, Lakewood

This is a nice warm up trail, something to "tune up" horse and rider after a long winter break. Has creek crossings, easy to moderate slops, riding amongst the trees as well as open land. And within a few minutes of Denver.

--- Review by Sher Olson of "Rocky Mountain Trails"

TRAIL - Bear Creek Lake Park

AREA - west Lakewood, CO.

MILEAGE - 9 miles, loops.

DIFFICULTY - Easy

TRAIL PHOTOS can be seen at: RockyMountainTrails.net/TrailBearCreekLakePark

MANAGEMENT - Lakewood Parks & Recreation, Bear Creek Lake Park (303) 697-6159

(<http://www.LakeWood.org>)

TRAIL LOCATION - From Denver, take Hwy 285 (W.Hampden Ave) and go west. At C-470, go north/right for 1 1/4 mile. Exit Hwy 8 (Morrison Rd) and go east/right for approx. 1/4 mile to the park entrance (sign) on the south/right side. Turn right into the park. Will see a ranger's booth on the left, pay entry fee here. After the booth, the road splits - stay on the left. The third parking lot on the south/right side is "White Tail" - this is the largest and ranger preferred lot for horse trailers. Although there are many other parking lots - Cottontail, Muskrat Meadows, White Tail are the three that allow horse trailer parking. White Tail has room for 10-15 trailers. Trail head to the south of all three parking lots.

AMENITIES - White Tail lot has a rest room (port'olet), one covered picnic table with grill, water spigot, hitching post. Many spots to water horses in the creeks. People may swim only at the swim beach at Big Soda Lake. Horses are not allowed in the lakes. There is a horse rental stable, by reservation (303) 697-9666

TERRAIN - Dirt path, mostly flat with some mild slopes. Bare hoofed ok. Most trails on the north side of the lake & creek are tree covered (shade) while the south ridge top path is open.

CAMPING - None for equestrians.

REGULATIONS - Open year round. Park Pass \$4.00 daily per vehicle. Park hours - May to first week of Sept. is 6:00am to 10:00pm - then Nov. to Mar. is 8:00am to 6:00pm. Remember to clean up horse droppings in the parking lot! Stay on marked trails - no riding on the dam - no horses in the fitness trails (is posted "no horses", easy to spot.)

SHARED TRAIL USERS - Hikers, bikers, fishermen, boaters. Leash law here, but not unusual to see loose dogs. Wind surfers at Soda Lakes.

COMMENTS - Several spots along Bear and Turkey Creek offer excellent practice for water crossing. This trail connects to the Bear Creek Greenbelt, to the east. Also connects to the Kipling Equestrian Trail, to the east. Bear Creek Lake is a good place to train a pack horse or to pony.