

THE FOUR HIKEATEERS

By Fauzia Simjee McClure



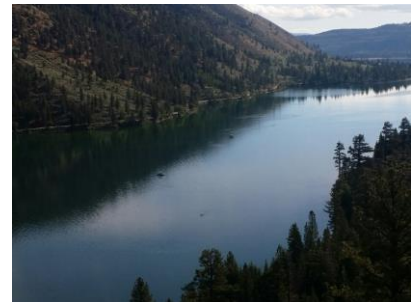
Chris, Ramona, Karen and I got together at 8 am on Wed, July 8th for a hike up Horse Creek Trail. Ramona drove us to Mono Village where our hike was to begin. While driving on the dirt road, she maneuvered through several large ponds which had developed from the recent rains. The drive was rather challenging as the ponds were consumed with drenched wood chips. The van rocked back and forth as we made our way through Lakeshore Drive, reminding me of one of the rides at the county fair.

We arrived at Mono Village by 8:15 am and stopped at the weather report. We learned from Bob that rain was agreed this would give us plenty of time to hike up Horse were excited to get on with our much anticipated hike. The didn't discourage us, not in the least bit! The morning was we could see the sun playing peek-a-boo. There were big, clouds resembling cotton candy, high above us along with blue skies. It was cool, crisp and refreshing and I was glad to have my fleece pullover to keep me warm. The temperature and current conditions seemed just perfect for our day hike.



bait shop to check the expected by 11 am. We Creek Trail and back. We thought of a little rain somewhat overcast and oval-shaped, puffy white hints of indigo and baby

We walked through the campground, crossing the old, wo od suspension bridge above the creek. Today, we couldn't spot any trout in the creek. After walking through the grassy meadow, we reached the start of the trail. It began as a gradual incline up the mountain. followed our fearless leader, Chris, as she effortlessly made her way through winding path leading us to higher elevation. We seized the opportunity to several viewing breaks. We could look at both upper and lower Twin from



We the take

could upper algae



hoof caught growing

intermittent vista points and also see right through the lake and noticed the vast beds growing beneath. The colors of the waters were breathtaking—turquoise, light green, and shades of jade. We didn't see any bear, mountain lion or coyote scat on the trail, but, did notice some deer prints embedded within the slightly damp dirt. The smell of sage our attention. With the recent rains, it was especially fragrant. Also along the edge of the trail were mountain fuchsia, lupine, mountain

mint, and even wild onion. Karen was brave and tasted the wild onion. You could certainly note its' smell, not quite as pungent as the market bought onions. Instead, it was surprisingly sweet. So, none of us ran away from Karen.

We heard the songs of several varieties of birds as we arrived to the meadows at still chirping through. jumped



the an sides.

higher elevation. There were and even a hummingbird On a hot day, I would have into the pond! The water welcoming, but, was bone-touch. We saw a plant asparagus; it was narrow and tall with some orange spikes all along its None of us had ever seen anything like this remarkably beautiful species.



and ponds wrens dashing readily appeared chilling to resembling

Chris took some photos so she could research and find out just what it was. We were curious about this specimen, and Chris, being the awesome teacher she is, was enthusiastic to take up the task.

We found a perfect place to rest on top of a long, dead pine tree lying in the green meadow. We sat along its' smooth surface and ate our snacks. Between us, we shared carrot and celery sticks, string cheese, granola bars, and bananas. We were relishing our snacks. The hike up certainly stimulated our appetites. Karen was perfectly fine just nibbling on some celery (maybe she filled up on the wild onion). Don't let her small size fool you; she's got more charge in her than Southern California Edison and 100 hummingbirds, combined! We sat amidst the heavenly views, admiring every detail and felt at ease. I had never seen Twin Lakes and all its' surroundings so green in July.

The
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with
all



clouds appeared a little darker as we reached the end of the trail. point, the terrain was covered with gigantic rocks. We could see both peaks with their glory. It felt as if we were on another planet, so beautiful, so vast, so surreal...that's what's amazing at 10,000 feet! We decided to turn back as the trail from here on was all



darker as
At this
covered
both
peaks with
were on

rocks, at least for the next while. We could feel the slightest rain drops descending upon us. We were hoping the drops would be far and few between. Our pace increased as even more rain drops covered us. As we descended down the mountain, we heard the roar of thunder and saw the lightning bolt. Then, REALLY BIG rain drops! Next, came hail, the size of pearls and we could feel the force right through our hats. Our pace became quite fast at this point..."double time, ladies," said Chris.

We were more than half way down the sound of thunder. I was so startled, I safest place during a lightning storm is on whose I ead I had been following, a nd down like a sack of potatoes with my arms feet again almost instantly. On the other for the life of me stand up without help.



mountain when we heard an extremely loud almost tripped. All I kept thinking was "the the ground." Instinctually, I grabbed Chris, brought her to the ground with me. She went wrapped around her. But, she was up on her hand, I was in such a laughing fit that I couldn't

By the time we returned to the drenched from head to toe with Sierra rain. Our clothes and shoes felt heavy. As crazy as it may seem, we absolutely loved it! Ramona ask ed another hiker we had run into to take a photo of us. Our smile was as wide as could be. Though we would have loved to have lunch at the Mono Village Café, we were much hungrier for a hot shower, jammies, and piping hot cider.

Our hike this day was an experience that will stay in our memory banks forever. Hurray! We did it ladies, in spite of the rain, hail, thunder, and lightning. What an adventure up the Horse Creek Trail!