



CALIFORNIA GIRL SCOUT BACKPACKERS

Dinkey Lakes

Cliff Lake Trailhead to Island Lake

Itinerary provided by Girl Scouts San Diego

Created: January 2024

Distance: 15.2 miles plus 5.8 mile day hike

Elevation Gain: Approximately 1,500'

Starting Trailhead: Cliff Lake Trailhead (near Courtright Reservoir)

Finishing Trailhead: Cliff Lake Trailhead

Best Months: June and July

Permit Limit: 12

Preview: Dinkey Lakes is an ideal beginning to moderate, multi-day Sierra trip. The lake basin offers a flexible itinerary, with many day hike options and reasonable elevation gains. The lakes are beautiful with several campsites. The Cliff Lake Trailhead is much less crowded than the other Dinkey Lakes trailhead out of Shaver Lake. Bonus: it's surprisingly easy to get permit.

Girl Scout Progression Points: Stream crossing, navigation, altitude (9,000 – 10,000'), good for beginners.

Key Risks:

- Water availability and heat in late summer
- Mosquitos in early summer
- River crossing
- Hiking through a recent burn area (as of the creation of this itinerary)

Sample Itinerary (By Day):

1. 5.3 miles Cliff Lake Trailhead to Cliff Lake
2. 2.6 miles to Island Lake
3. 5.8 miles to day hike Dinkey Lakes Loop (5.8 miles); return to camp at Island Lake.
4. 6.5 miles to Nelson Creek/north shore of Courtright Reservoir. A few 100 feet from the intersection of Cliff Lake Trail and Helms Meadow Trail, turn left onto the Helms Meadow trail. There is a very nice forest worker campsite with lots of room. This will allow a quick hike out the last day, good for the long drive home.

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5. 1.5 miles to Cliff Lake.

Itinerary Options:

- Hike out to Cliff Lake trailhead on day 4.
- Car camp the night before your trip at Dinkey Creek Campground, one hour from the trailhead. There are also primitive, walk-in campgrounds closer to the trailhead. Check with the Prather Forest Service Office before your trip to see if they're open.

Permits Needed:

- Wilderness Permit Required: Sierra National Forest, Cliff Lake Trailhead, www.recreation.gov
 - Pick permit up in Prather Forest Service Office, 29688 Auberry Rd. Prather, CA 93651

Resources & Safety Management:

- Prather Forest Service Office: (559) 855-5355
- Map: USGS 7.5 Minute Dogtooth Peak
- Guidebook: Sierra South by Kathy Morey



Dinkey Lakes Basin

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