

BOZEMAN PASSAGE

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BOZEMAN!



Storm Lake Camp

By: Christopher J Thompson

Chris slowly crawled through Anaconda, Montana heading to Storm Lake Road ten minutes west of here. Turning left, Chris found quaint farmhouses along well-maintained roads, suddenly it took a thankful turn for the worst. Thankful in that a treacherous road would prevent crowds from reaching the 8,200-foot elevation where Storm Lake is found.

After setting up camp, Chris and his group separated to get in the last hour of fishing before sunset. However, as the sun set, Chris walked back to camp, head down, disappointed, fishless. They were snagging insects from the air all over the lake, just not hopping for anything Chris provided.

Once back to camp Chris relaxed with the rest of the crew eating, drinking and, as the night progressed, a thorough examination of the Milky Way and constellations illuminating the Big Sky. Then a confused bird began his call hours before the sun planned its ascent, signaling Chris to retire as he had become accustomed to the long days and short nights that were the norm with this crowd.

The sun had not yet risen when Chris sprang forward in his "transient tent", a bag and pad in the back of his truck with a tarp over the bed. He looked left to see a doe and her young spotted fawn having breakfast a few feet away. She looked up startled and then



returned to her meal after seeing that Chris was not a threat in his current state. After ten minutes they moved on and Chris arose to start a fire and get the sweet, sweet bean juice rolling in the percolator.

Over breakfast and coffee, the group spoke of their plans for the day. Some planned to fish, some to swim and Chris planned a minor exploration of the 158,000 acres of the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. The group cleaned up and went their separate ways, Chris began his trek around Storm Lake to climb the summit of Rainbow Mountain, or Mount Tiny, or both if time allowed.

Chris returned from his three-hour ascent of Rainbow Mountain with an insatiable hunger. Fortunately it was after noon and grub was awaiting him back at camp. Devouring the much needed nourishment, Chris excitedly recounted the grueling hike and stunning sights. Two members immediately decided to see for themselves and hit the trail. Exhausted, Chris opted for a short nap before showing another member of the group 'the best fishing hole on the lake'.

As the two sat on the milky white cliffs, rigging their lines, they watched as a blast of wind made its way across the lake, raising white caps on the water and knocking the hats off the men. Fighting the wind for a short time, the two eventually returned to camp. When the hiking group made its way back, the group relaxed for dinner, recalled their days and eventually withdrew to bed. Chris stayed up to burn the remaining wood and, in doing so, was visited by the overconfident doe he had met this morning. Chris made a quick movement to startle her, nothing. Chris flailed his arms, stepping at her like a madman, nothing. Within five feet from her, Chris recalled a scene from *Animals Gone Wild* and imagined her attacking him. Smirking, he continued toward the beast, making cattle herding calls and was eventually successful. Chris put out the fire and retired to bed.

The next morning all arose and scurried about to consume the coffee needed to decamp. Loading the food and equipment, the group loaded in their vehicles and descended the pothole filled, rugged dirt road. This remote, barely accessible base site is a perfect base camp to plan a full week or more of backpacking, fishing and animal watching. If you can break away from the monotonies of life, plan a trip to the overlooked Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness for a true Montana Adventure.

