



## LOUIE LAKE – MCCALL, ID

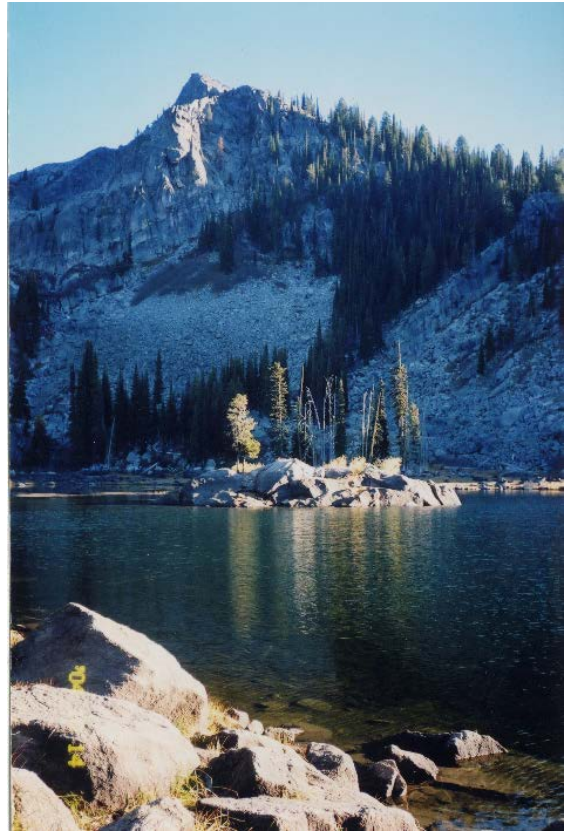
I awoke early on Thursday, Oct. 14 and left the cabin to make it to the trailhead well before the sun would make its presence known. I started up the trail with my backpack and just enough light to see the trail since this was my first time to Louie Lake. Louie Lake is located up a little canyon at about 7000' elevation just east of McCall. The trailhead begins at Boulder Meadows Reservoir and is a steady uphill climb for approximately two miles. I had heard both good and bad reports about the fishing so I wasn't sure what to expect. I knew that it was a popular fishing destination and therefore assumed that it received its share of pressure.

I reached the lake after a little less than an hour and noticed a sign that mentioned this was a trophy lake and that everything less than 20" had to be released. This got me very excited knowing that there were fish that large but I was still unsure of the kind of trout that I was going to catch! The lake was serene. You could see the silhouette of the big granite peak in the water that dominated the background. It was a crisp morning with calm, clear skies with lots of fish rising.



I could not tell what the fish were feeding on unless it was the very, very small bugs that I could see, but didn't know what they were. It seemed to me that it wouldn't be worth the fish's effort to eat something so small. I floated out near the granite island and threw a hopper out to the first rise in my vicinity. It was a matter of seconds before a fish was peeling my line. It gave me a great aerial demonstration before it tuckered out and rested in my net. It was a fat 13" Rainbow with a beautiful color of vibrant red around the gills. Oh wait! Look at the red slashes under the gills. A Cutbow! The trout was a hybrid mixture of a Rainbow and Cutthroat trout. I caught four more fish in the first hour before the sun's rays hit the water. They were all Cutbows, the largest being 17".

The fishing really slowed down for most of the afternoon. I tried several different dry flies, nymphs and streamers over the next several hours catching only a few fish. It was slow but I caught just enough to keep it interesting. The fish started hitting the surface off and on later in the afternoon as they had done earlier in the morning. I was still having limited success until I finally found a fly that seemed to work. Mind you, I was having a heck of a time trying to figure out what they were eating. Many fish were jumping all the way out of the water so I knew I could have success if I could find the right fly or something similar. I finally stuck on a Blue Dun and that seemed to be the ticket. I landed several throughout the late afternoon and by evening the whole lake was hopping. I was catching fish every few cast as I fished the perimeter of the lake and watched for rings created by the rising fish.



It was amazing the size of fish I was catching in very shallow water. The thing that was the most amazing to me is that these fish were all in the 13" to 17" range with the exception of a few. I saw smaller fish but I was catching the larger fish. I can't explain that one. They were all healthy Cutbows that gave a great fight. It was a very fun day on the water and well worth the hike. I had the lake to myself and saw only a couple of hikers the entire day. I think I need to go back and try catching a 20" plus fish. It was a very great way to spend a beautiful October day.