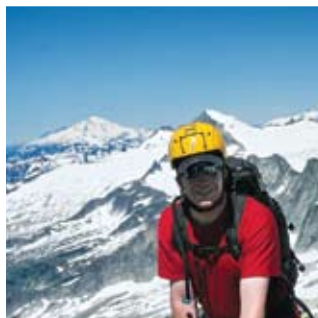


A Blue Water Gem

PHOTOS AND STORY BY SCOTT HARDER



Scott Harder is an avid hiker, rock climber, mountaineer and backcountry skier from Mill Creek. He has owned and operated Cascade Guiding Services and worked in the outdoor industry for more than six years. Currently, he's in the process of launching a new online outdoor gear business. E-mail him at scott@climbwashington.com.

Take a Hike to Lake Lillian

Lake Lillian Trail is also known as the “Mount Margaret Trail,” because many who travel it are actually destined for the summit of Mount Margaret. There are also several other trails you’ll see along the way that access Margaret Lake, Twin Lakes and a few other less-popular destinations.

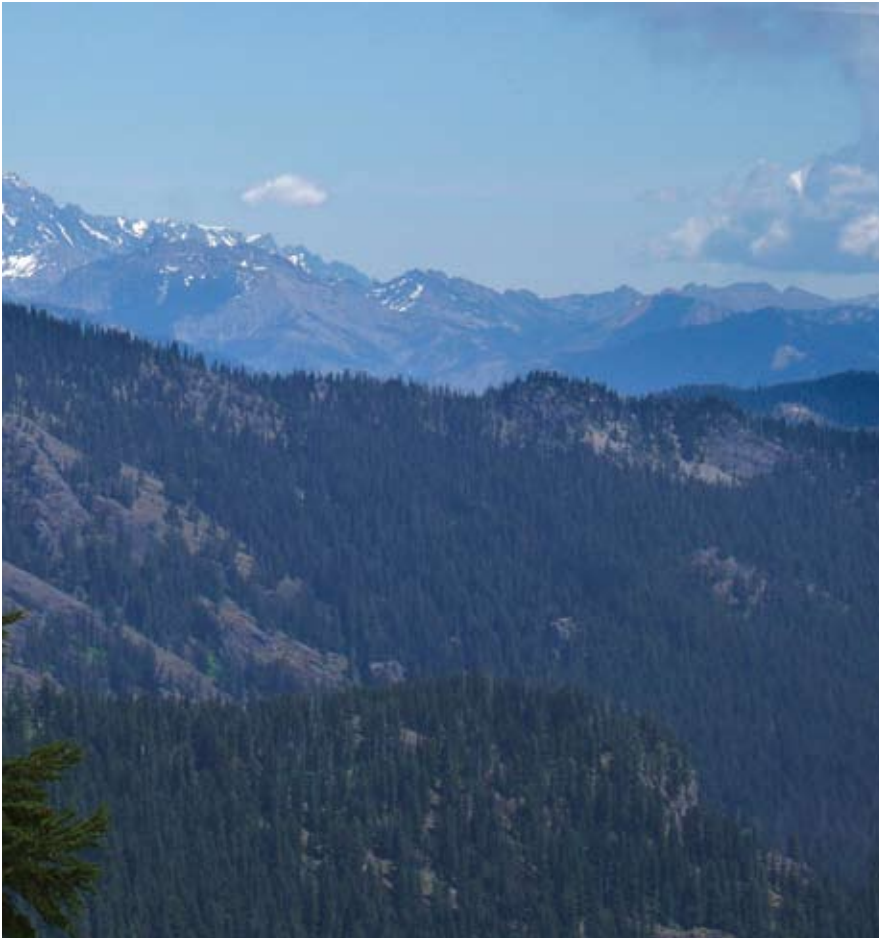
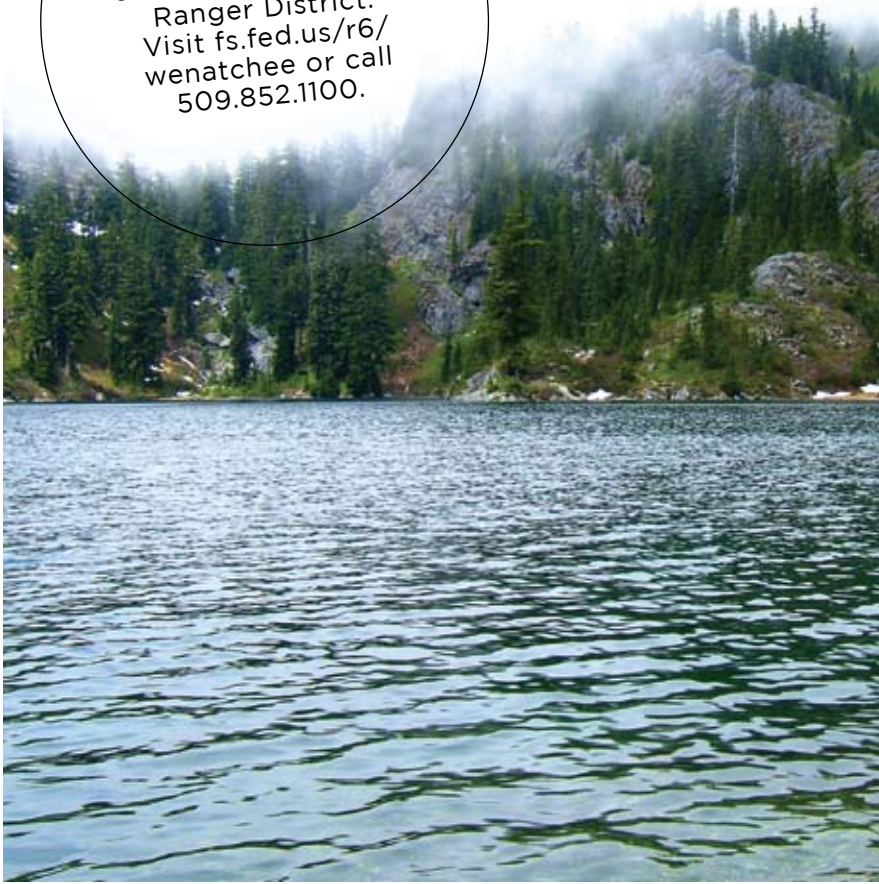
Follow the gravel road up for 100 yards; on the left-hand side you’ll see a sign for the Lake Lillian Trail. The first half-mile is a pedestrian-worn old logging road. Take a left and turn up steep switchbacks through clear-cut, bearing an abundance of colorful spring flowers. On a clear day, you may be rewarded with views of Silver Peak and Mount Rainier, which seem to grow larger the higher you go.

After the first mile, you’ll enter the old growth hemlock forest and head up switchbacks that continue toward the ridge’s crest, where it levels out into a large open area. This marks the location of the Lake Margaret junction. From here, follow the trail to the left as it runs along the west side of Mount Margaret, crossing heather meadows and rocky slopes. The trail then abruptly descends to Twin Lakes (elev. 4700 feet), right near the Alpine Lakes Wilderness boundary.

The lakes are quite small, only a few feet deep, with shallow and sandy bottoms. Twin Lakes offers a nice setting for photo opportunities with its abundance of birds. From Twin Lakes, the trail drops and loses almost 150 feet in altitude, then climbs again for 250 feet to reach the shores of Lake Lillian.

The trail’s last half mile is made up of switchbacks leading to Lake Lillian. Although this last part does offer some challenges, requiring focus during the steeper sections, Lake Lillian and its steep, rocky shore sits at the top and offers a nice place to snack before your return trip. >>

For more information,
contact the Cle Elum
Ranger District.
Visit [fs.fed.us/r6/
wenatchee](https://fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee) or call
509.852.1100.



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Where is it?

Region: Wenatchee National Forest
Location: Cle Elum Ranger District
Trail number: Lake Lillian Trail #1332
Length: 8.6 miles roundtrip
Difficulty: Vigorous, yet energizing
Beginning elevation: 3,600 feet
Highest elevation: 5,350 feet
Elevation gain (total): 1,750 feet in/650 out

Map it

Green Trails: Snoqualmie Pass #207
USGS Quad: Chikamin Peak
Trailhead is located at Lat: N 47.21.851, Long: W 121 21.490

Other Opportunities

Lake Laura is located 200 vertical feet below Lake Lillian, so if you're not feeling like you can make it, that's a nice spot to call the highpoint for the day. If you are looking for a little more distance, follow the goat path around the northeast side of the lake and up Rampart Ridge.

Mount Margaret is a short and very steep hike. Follow the trail from the junction (# 1332 A) on the Lake Lillian Trail and follow a rough trail that steeply ascends through the trees. Follow this trail to the ridge's crest, then through the flowery meadows to gain the summit at 5,339 feet. You'll be treated to many views; Rampart Ridge, Mount Rainier, Stuart and Chimney Rock are among a few to be mentioned.

Getting There

From Seattle, drive east on I-90 to exit 54 (Hyak/Gold Creek). Drive under the freeway and right on the frontage road signed Gold Creek. At four miles, turn left onto Forest Service Road 4934 (Lake Lillian). The trailhead is located on your left-hand side at an elevation of 3,600 feet at 4.2 miles.

Good to Know

- A Northwest Forest Pass is required for parking at the trailhead.
- Backcountry campsites are located at Twin Lakes and the north and south shores of Lake Lillian for overnight camping.
- Dogs are allowed.

Book References

- "100 Hikes in Washington's Alpine Lakes" by Ira Spring and Harvey Manning.
- "Day Hiking: Snoqualmie Region" by Dan Nelson.
- "Hiking Washington's Alpine Lakes Wilderness" by Jeff Smoot.
- "Best Hikes with Dogs: Western Washington" by Dan A. Nelson. 