

Hulsey Lake

Small and exquisitely scenic, Hulsey Lake is an unexpected surprise to those who are on their way up to Escudilla Peak for the first time. To those in the know, it's an out of the way and beautiful little lake to fish. Because of its size, the lake can quickly become crowded on a summer weekend; however, it can be equally peaceful on a weekday.



Location – Hulsey Lake is located at 8,620 feet on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. It is an impoundment of Hulsey Creek, a tributary of Nutrioso Creek. To reach it, drive north from Alpine for 6 miles on U.S. Highway 180/191. At milepost 421, turn east onto Forest Road 56, and drive about 2 miles to the parking area. This road also accesses Terry Flat and the Escudilla Wilderness Area. Follow the dirt trail from the parking area a short distance down to the lake. Due to snow and ice, the lake is usually inaccessible from November to mid-April.

Description – Hulsey Lake is a mere 5 acres in size, with a maximum depth of 12 feet and an average depth of 10 feet. The area around the lake is heavily forested, and the tree line comes down to the shoreline. The Department stocks Hulsey Lake with catchable-sized rainbow trout in the spring and early summer. The lake gets weedy in summer months, and high pH levels prevent stocking as the season progresses. The lake frequently has a winter kill; there is typically no overwinter survival.

Amenities – There is a parking area near the lake, but no boat ramp. There is a barrier-free toilet. The nearest campground is the Alpine Divide Campground, located approximately 4 miles south of the lake, just off the highway. This is a fee-use campground, having 12 sites with restrooms and drinking water. The campground is open May-October, and there is a campground host who sells firewood. The nearby town of Alpine provides everything in the way of gas, lodging, food and tackle.

Fishing Techniques – Fishing with a bobber works well at this lake, making it an ideal spot for kids to fish. Try suspending a night crawler, salmon egg, or Power Bait under the bobber. Power Bait fished off the bottom works well early in the year. Small spinners and flies with a casting bubble also work well soon after trout are stocked. Traditional fly fishing is difficult because of the trees surrounding the lake and also because the lake bottom is soft and drops off abruptly.

Special Notes – Statewide fishing regulations apply and a trout stamp is required. The daily bag limit is six trout; three for unlicensed anglers under the age of 14. Boat motors are restricted to electric only.