

CALIFORNIA GIRL SCOUT BACKPACKERS

Graveyard Lakes Basin

Silver Divide Loop – Western Sierra

Itinerary provided by Girl Scouts San Diego

Created: January 2020

Distance: 26 miles

Starting Trailhead: Edison Lake, 3 hours east of Fresno

Finishing Trailhead: Edison Lake, John Muir Trail Ferry Landing

Best Months: July - September

Permit Limit: 12 people

Preview: The Silver Divide is a magnificent backdrop for a High Sierra backpack trip. This loop begins at Edison Lake, the highest in a chain of reservoirs east of Fresno, and takes you over two passes with outstanding views – Goodale Pass (10,960') and Silver Pass (10,900). Follow a portion of the John Muir Trail (JMT) and enjoy beautiful creeks and lakes.

Girl Scout Progression Points: Develop itinerary-building skills for week-long trips. Build skills in bear awareness, moving camp to camp, creek crossings, true wilderness day hikes, and navigation. Cross-country navigation is possible in the Graveyard Lakes basin.

Key Risks:

- Kaiser Pass Road – this one-lane road is slow going. Be safe!
- Black Bear Country
- Altitude & Elevation Gain
- Weather
- Lingering Snow on Passes
- Stream Crossings – N. Fork of Mono Creek can be hazardous in early season

Sample Itinerary (By Day):

1. Drive to Edison Lake. Along the way, stop in Prather to pick up your permit at the Pineridge Ranger Station. The local Vons makes outstanding sandwiches if you want to 'take away' your dinner. Spend the night camping at Vermillion Valley 'Resort' at Edison Lake.
2. 7.8 miles to Graveyard Lakes.

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3. Day hike the Graveyard Lakes Basin. If you have a strong group with good x-country navigating skills, consider hiking up to Silver Fox Pass, the divide between Graveyard Lakes Basin, and Peter Pande Lakes.
4. 2.5 miles to Wilbur May Lake.
5. 4.5 miles to Lake of the Lone Indian – good campsites on west of lake, north at the outlet, and one lovely, above-the-lake-with-amazing-view site on the bluff just west of the lake along the trail.
6. 7.3 miles to top notch Silver Creek campsites above Pocket Meadow. (1 mile north of the creek crossing before the switchbacks that descend to Pocket Creek Crossing.)
7. Day hike to Mott Lake (8 miles round trip).
8. 5 miles to Edison Lake ferry landing. (Taking the morning/afternoon ferry across the lake eliminates another 5 – 6 miles of hiking along the north side of the lake to your car at the trailhead.)

Itinerary Options:

- Take time to day hike through the Graveyard Lakes Basin. (Excellent opportunity to polish your cross-country/use-trail navigation skills.)
- Day hike to Mott Lake (off the JMT) later in the trip is worthwhile.

Permits Needed:

- Wilderness Permit Required
 - High Sierra Ranger District (in Prather): 559-855-5355
 - Permitting Office: 29688 Auberry Rd. Prather, CA 93651
 - Permits can be reserved 1 year in advance:
<http://files.meetup.com/824870/wildernesspermit.pdf>

Resources & Safety Management:

- Vermillion Valley Resort: <http://www.edisonlake.com/> Vermillion Resort is right on Edison Lake and is an outstanding resource for all backpackers including JMT and PCT thru-hikers. In addition to lodging, there's a restaurant, store, showers, and ferry service. Vermillion Valley Resort caters to backpackers, hikers, and anglers, so you can count on their little store to be quite well-supplied and their restaurant packed.
- Ferry Service – Vermillion Valley Resort: The ferry runs twice a day from June to October. It leaves Vermillion Valley Resort landing at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.; it leaves the Mono Creek landing (opposite shore) at 9:45 a.m. and 4:45 p.m.
- Mono Hot Springs <http://www.monohotsprings.com> The hot springs are an excellent resource for lodging or baths/showers after your trip. They are located about ½ an hour from Edison Lake (toward Fresno). There's also a store and restaurant plus all the spa amenities.
- High Sierra Pack Station: <http://www.highsierrapackstations.com> Another option to consider is using a pack station to take your gear into Graveyard Lakes and having your group meet them there.
- Topo Maps: 7.5 minute Graveyard Peak

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Lake of the Lone Indian

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