

Nature's bouquet at Lake Winnemucca



Purple is the dominant color on the way to Round Top.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

A kaleidoscope of colors dances across the landscape in the gentle breeze.

The record-setting snowfall from winter 2016-17 is still being felt – or at last seen. The flowers are late, but they were worth waiting for. If you think you've seen vibrant, healthy lupine, you haven't seen anything until you go to Winnemucca Lake.



Flowers of all colors are spread across the trail.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

An explosion of wildflowers is erupting in the High Sierra – about one month later than normal. And they appear to be at their peak.

The splash of deep purple, mixed with the lavender of the wild iris, interspersed with the vibrant red Indian paintbrush, the dainty yellow daisy-like flowers, and the white Queen Anne's lace are like a bouquet ready to be picked. Instead, the hikers are capturing memories with photographs.

Some are close to the ground; others a few feet high. Some are in isolated patches; others appear to be a field of flowers.



Wild iris

While locals know better than to do this hike on a weekend day, there appeared to be more Tahoe-ites on the trail Aug. 6 than out-of-towners. Yes, it was a bit of a freeway, but the joy this wondrous outing brought all of us made it more of a celebration of sorts. We were all happy to be sharing in the party Mother Nature was throwing.



Reflections of Round Top at Winnemucca Lake. Photo/Kathryn Reed

At about 5 miles round trip, this is a relatively easy hike. The only thing that might set someone back is that it starts at 8,500 feet. Elevation gain is about 500 feet.

A couple patches of snow still cross the trail. The only remarkable thing about it is how late in the season this is. Water on the trail is not an issue.



Beauty is everywhere on this
hike out of Carson Pass.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Sitting at Winnemucca Lake looking up at Round Top (10,381 feet) plenty of snow dots the rocky landscape.

Thundering water can be heard rushing on the far side of the lake. Waterfalls not normally seen this time of year are tumbling down the rock into the lake. Some appear to be roaring beneath the snow.



Wildflowers are at their peak.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

An ice shelf looks like something out of a winter landscape that doesn't belong in the Carson Pass – especially in August.

This raw, ruggedness is a reminder of the many personalities of Ma Nature. This flashback to winter makes me wonder if the next one is closer than I want to admit.



Lupine with Caples Lake in the distance. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west. Just past the bug station in Meyers, go left onto Highway 89. At the T-intersection, go right onto Highway 88. At the top of Carson Pass is parking to the left. Cost is \$5.