

Remote reservoir provides plenty of paddling fun

By Kathryn Reed

POLLOCK PINES – Advantages to leaving the basin with a canoe include avoiding a wicked downpour and knowing you have something to float in if it's really bad when you get back. Luckily the canoe could stay on the truck as we returned to South Tahoe on this particular Sunday.

As clouds formed in the distance on what I call the backside of Desolation Wilderness, we paddled in full sunshine.



Sue Wood's
maiden voyage
at Union
Valley
Reservoir.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

It was the first time either Sue or I had had been to Union Valley Reservoir. Tucked into the Crystal Basin Recreation Area of the Eldorado National Forest, it is much larger than I anticipated. My arms aren't strong enough to paddle the perimeter. Perhaps a multi-day camping trip is needed to experience the whole reservoir as well as the surrounding bodies of water.

Around different bends are what seem to be private beaches – but they aren't. It's just that these people got there first.

It looks like the high water mark is about 6 feet from the vast shoreline. The reservoir belongs to Sacramento Municipal Utility District, even though an El Dorado County sheriff's boat is patrolling the lake in this area owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

Even though motorboats are allowed, the chaos of Lake Tahoe wasn't evident – even on a Sunday in August.

Campers dot the shoreline, with some sites visible from the water. People are swimming, splashing and floating.

A few kayakers are out.

The water is cool, but welcoming.

To get there: Go west on Highway 50, turn right on Ice House Road, go 16 miles and you'll see signs for the reservoir. Also in this area are Loon Lake and Ice House Reservoir. From Tahoe it's the long way to Wrights Lake. The \$7 day use fee is good at other bodies of water in the area on the same day. For more information, call (530) 647.5415.

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