

Silver Lake provides ample fun for boaters of all kinds

By Kathryn Reed

PIONEER – It was hard to know where to look while paddling along Silver Lake. The natural scenery was as captivating as the people on their water toys.

At 7,200 feet, this lake in the Eldorado National Forest sits below Carson Peak. Scattered about are smooth granite “beaches” filled with sunbathers. Pockets of sand are interspersed with the rocks.

A few submerged rock islands make it appear as though people and their dogs are walking on water.



Sue Wood glides along Silver Lake. Photos/Kathryn Reed

At times the lake is so smooth, the glassy water looks like one could walk across it. And in some ways one could say the water skiers were doing just that.

A sport I had not witnessed before was a “surfer” being pulled by a ski boat. Sometimes the person held a rope like a skier would, and other times let go to balance like a surfer and ride the wake. The person is just feet from the stern.

Encouragement from observers in the boat had the surfer trying

to do a 360 like a wakeboarder would do.

Sitting idle, a couple fishermen had hauled in some trout. Rainbow, browns and Mackinaw call Silver Lake home.

Kayakers dot the water.

Even though motorboats are allowed on this small lake near the Carson Spur, they don't dominate this body of water. This means being a canoeist or kayaker is a safe endeavor.

Inlets provide pockets of smooth water to explore. Get out early to stake out a spot on shore in one of these sheltered areas.

The only problem was the looming dark clouds moving in from the south. A slight breeze picked up and the water was no longer tranquil. Even Rusty, who was on his first canoe adventure, could tell the ride was becoming a bit more than an E-ticket experience. It was easier to lie down than for him to balance on four legs.

Instead of staying close to shore, as we customarily do, we decided to go across the lake to be close to the ramp before the thunder started booming on this first Saturday of August.

We had the canoe on top of the truck as the rain started to come down and the lightning filled the sky.

This body of water has had plenty of controversy surrounding it. In 2010, the U.S. Forest Service and Eldorado Irrigation District settled on agreements involving land swaps and water rights affecting the campgrounds and lake. Silver Lake was created from flows of the Silver Fork American River.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west. Turn left on Highway 89. Go over Luther Pass. At the T intersection (Pickett's Junction), go right on Highway 88. You will pass

Caples Lake, Kirkwood and the popular Carson Pass hiking-parking area. Turn left on Kays Road to reach the boat launch.

Other things:

- Boat launch is \$10.
- Hiking trails skirt the lake.
- Camping is walking distance from the lake.
- Kit Carson Lodge offers real beds.

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