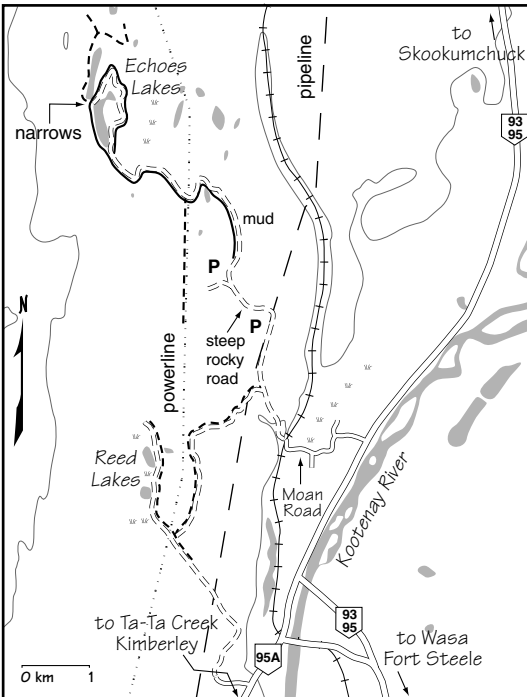


53 ECHOES LAKES

The clear, deep and spring-fed Echoes Lakes stretches out for 2 km in the Rocky Mountain Trench, near the rural community of Ta-Ta Creek. A shallow creek joins the navy blue waters of these two narrow lakes. Forests of western larch, aspen, Douglas fir and pine surround the low-elevation lakes. Rocky bluffs, grassy meadows and the marshy shallows, lined with bullrushes and lily pads, all add interest to the serene setting by Echoes Lakes. East of the lakes rise the rugged snow-covered Rocky Mountains, which we can see occasionally through the trees.

The lakeside ecology is a prime habitat for many species of water birds, fish and turtles. Watch the primitive turtles swimming in the clear water or basking in the sun on logs. Enjoy the frolics of ducks, loons and shore birds, and watch fish jump above the still water. The trail/route along the western side of both the lakes is a delightful spring or fall hike.



Rating easy

Time short day hike or mountain bike ride

Distance 4 km to south Echoes Lakes
5.5 km north end of both lakes

Elevation gain 85 m (280 ft.), plus small hills up and down
Echoes Lakes 835 m (2740 ft.)

Trail old roads through forest to two low-elevation lakes

Maps 82G/13 Skookumchuck
82G.081 in the 1:20,000 series
82G.082 in the 1:20,000 series

Drive

Road any vehicle, final 1 km moderate clearance

Road map page 180

The dirt road to Echoes Lakes is narrow, flat and sandy. In wet weather the road may be too soft for low-clearance vehicles.

From the Highway junction 95A and 93/95 at the Kootenay River bridge near Wasa, drive northeast on Highway 93/95 for 2.2 km to Moan Road.

- 0 km Turn left (north) on to Moan Road from Highway 93/95. Moan Road turns left then right past rural acreages. The road appears to end, but when you get close to its apparent ending, it continues to the right, through a narrow gap between a fence and dirt bank.
- 1.2 km Turn right sharply at the narrow gap. Cross railway tracks. The narrow road winds around many curves.
- 2.6 km Turn right
- 3 km Continue straight at the intersection with an underground gas pipeline. Follow along the pipeline road for 200 m.



Besides the pleasant hike by Echoes Lakes, many easy to moderate mountain-bike explorations follow old roadways and trails that braid through the Ta-Ta Creek area. Most of the biking access is open from May until November. Use the 1:20,000 map series, black and white topographic maps, which include most of the roads in the area. Some pastures may be on private property or in Crown Range. Close the gates and respect domestic cattle. Obey the few no trespassing signs and stay to the roadways.

To reach Echoes Lakes, follow the fairly level and sandy roadways as far as you want to drive. Hike or bike from the parking spot, at 750 m (2460 ft.), heading north along the flat road. In less than 1 km from the vehicle, a huge mud-hole spreads across the path.

From the muddy section, climb uphill on the road. At 1.4 km reach the overview of the first small pond, 800 m (2640 ft.). Continue to head approximately northwest. After hiking 2 km, the road goes under a powerline, continue straight. Then at 2.3 km of hiking, take the right fork (north).

The second marshy lake is alongside the roadway about 3 km. Stay on the main road and at 4 km arrive at the south shore of the first oval-shaped Echoes Lake, in about a 1-1/2 hour hike.

Rocky Mountains stand in the background view from Echoes Lakes. Western larch trees blaze bright yellow as they change colour in autumn.

- 3.2 km Turn left. The road climbs steeply up a rocky narrow slope. (Low-clearance vehicles should not attempt to drive much beyond the pipeline, instead hike or bike it.)
- 4 km Turn right
- 4.2 to 5 km Park anywhere beside the road on the grass. (Hike or drive across a cattleguard. Less than 1 km from the cattleguard, the road narrows into a tight forest and heads into a huge mud-hole. Park in the meadow before reaching the forest and the mud.)

From the wide, grassy and damp beach at the south shore, follow the roadway around to the left (west), to an open (and usually dry) grassy area. Hike the winding forested trail for 1 km along the western lakeshore. This trail leads to the scenic “narrows” between the two lakes. Usually we construct a makeshift log bridge to span the 2 m-wide and shallow creek across the narrows gap. A sunny meadow just north of the narrows is a fine place for a lunch break.

You can also explore the narrows between the two lakes on a mountain bike. About 200 m before reaching the south shore of the first Echoes Lake, a tiny dirt road branches off to the right (north). Follow this small road around the dark forest and after several kilometres it makes its way

to the narrows. Routefinding on the roads is not difficult.

To continue hiking along the lakesides, cross back over your makeshift bridge. The trail bends west, around the marshy section. Then follow an indistinct trail along the western edge of the second (north) lake. For views of the Rockies, keep hiking north, past the lakes and into the open Douglas fir forest. Climb up any of the short rocky bluffs.

Return to the vehicles the way you came in, or explore the many other roadways in the area. The Echoes Lakes area is a scenic, calm and enjoyable place to explore in spring, summer and autumn.

Cattail reeds in sunshine at Echoes Lakes, while adjacent mountains are still under raging storms.

