

31. SPOONER LAKE

History – Spooner Lake is a small impoundment constructed in 1927 to store irrigation water. The Nevada Department of Fish and Game developed a trout fishery in 1973 and regulations changed from general to zero-harvest in 1982, then changed again in 2006 to a 5 fish limit. Spooner Lake is located in Douglas County and situated within Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park at an elevation of 6,980 feet.

Pertinent Information – The reservoir, at maximum legal capacity, covers about 78 surface acres and has a depth of nearly 20 feet. It was drained in 1996-97 to repair the outlet valve and in 1999 again attained the maximum water level. Lahontan cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, bowcut trout (rainbow X cutthroat), brook trout and tiger trout (brown X brook hybrid) have been stocked in the past five years. Lahontan tui chub, a native fish in the minnow family, however, dominates the lake. Angler questionnaire data in 2007 showed that 294 anglers fished 1,203 days to catch an average of 5.21 trout per angler day. Trout generally average between 8 and 14-inches in length with an occasional 15 to 19-inch trout being caught. Anglers use lures or hand-made flies and wade the shoreline or fish from float-tubes.

Nevada Division of State Parks charges a small fee to enter Lake Tahoe State Park at Spooner Lake. Picnic tables, barbecue pits, restrooms, water, and a phone are available. Vehicle parking is within a couple hundred yards of the lake and there is a groomed trail with a moderately sloping hill leading down to the shoreline.

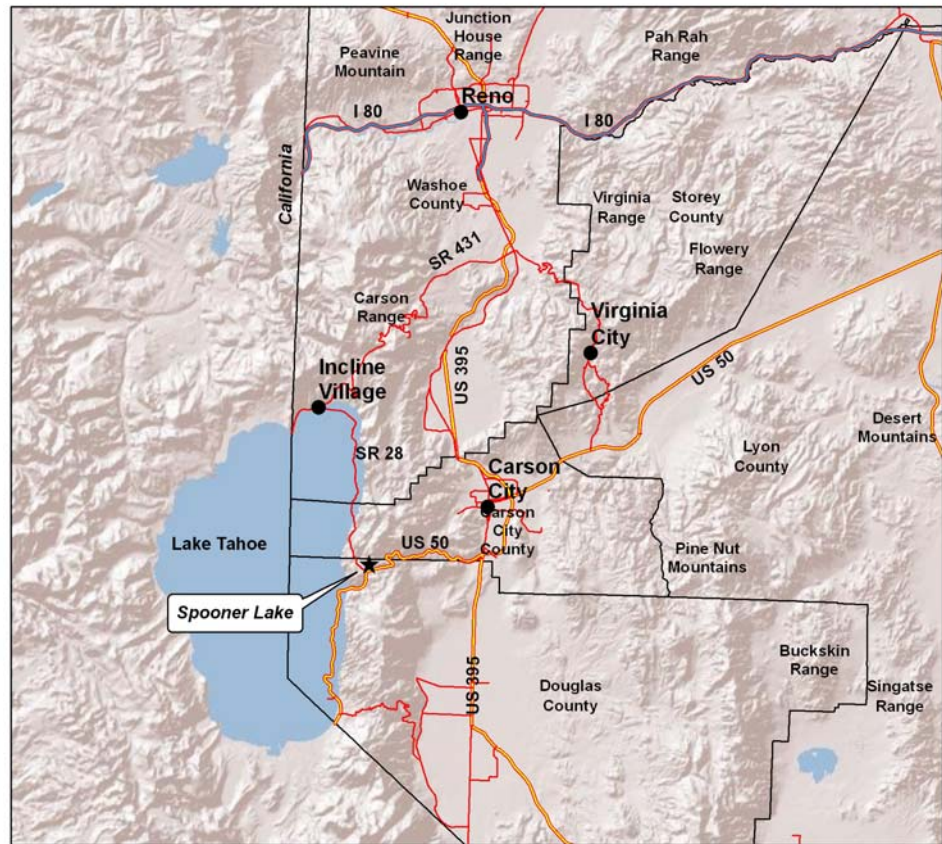
Most angling occurs during the ice-free period generally from May through October. Other activities include mountain biking and hiking the many backcountry trails that begin at Spooner Lake. In winter, cross-country skiing and similar outdoor activities are popular.

Stocking – A total of 3,000 rainbow trout, 4,000 bowcutt trout, and 1,000 tiger trout are scheduled for stocking into the lake this spring and fall.

Regulations – In 2006, the angling regulations were changed from catch and release fishing only to a general 5 fish limit utilizing any legal method (bait included). The season is open to fishing year around, 1 hour before sunrise to 2 hours after sunset.

Biologist Forecast for 2009 – Spooner management has always been challenging due to an extensive tui chub population, which compete with trout for food and space. Nevertheless, the lake does provide some great fishing for smaller sized trout if anglers use a float tube or small boat to get out away from the thick shoreline weed beds. In 2006, the lake management changed to a put-and-take fishery where any legal method can be used to capture 5 trout.

Boating Regulations –A new regulation allowing electric motors is now permitted. Float-tube fishing and use of canoes are popular in Spooner Lake.



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Access – Access to Spooner Lake is excellent for all types of vehicles. Restrictions, however, may occur during winter from heavy snowfall. From Carson City, travel 3 miles south on Highway 395 to Highway 50. Head west on Highway 50 approximately 10 miles to Spooner Summit, along the eastern edge of the Sierras. Turn north on Highway 28 for ½ mile to the Spooner Lake Park entrance.