

INDEPENDENCE LAKES

Date	Mid September	Time	afternoon
Location	Independence Lakes – Burley, ID	Weather	Clear
Fish Species	Grayling, Cutthroat, Rainbow	Size Range	Mostly 10-12". One at 15"
Fish Caught	Many		
Flies Used	Elk Hair Caddis		
Techniques	Dry fly		
Comments	One of the two alpine lake areas in Southern Idaho. Take a cool side trip to City of Rocks National Reserve		

I decided to leave a day early before meeting my brother to do a fishing trip on Boulder Mountain in southern Utah. Independence Lakes was on the way and I decided to also take a hike in the City of Rocks National Reserve and do a little birding before meeting him in the afternoon.

Independence Lakes are just over 9,000 feet and one of only two alpine lake areas in southern Idaho; the other lake being Bloomington Lake near Paris, ID. From the bench above the lakes you can see the row of all four lakes.



The three highest Independence Lakes

It was a three mile hike to the lowest lake and four miles to the highest. There was also a good chunk of elevation gain but I didn't keep track. I didn't see fish in the two top lakes but there were plenty of fish in the two lower lakes.



The highest lake

I found the best action in the lowest lake for Cutthroat, Rainbow and also a few Grayling to my surprise. The second lake was slower fishing but there were still several takers.



Grayling

As I was standing on a rock at the second lake scanning for fish I noticed movement out of the corner of my eye. I looked down and a large Cutthroat came out from under the rock I was standing on to get a bite of something before returning to its lair. I quickly dangled an Elk Hair Caddis a foot or so away from the edge of the rock. It didn't take long before I was looking down the throat of the Cutthroat as he came up to take the fly. As he closed his mouth and turned his head I raised the pole only to see my fly escape into the air. I tried this technique a couple more times before I was finally able to get a hook into him. The fish took a couple of runs before I was able to land it. It was a nice 15" Cutthroat and much larger than anything else I saw.

After a little bit of fishing I climbed to the top of the mountain to get some views looking toward the south at Castle Rocks and City of Rocks. I also wanted to get a picture of the lakes from above. The views were worth the climb. This is a nice area to get in and out of in a day or it would make an easy overnigher.

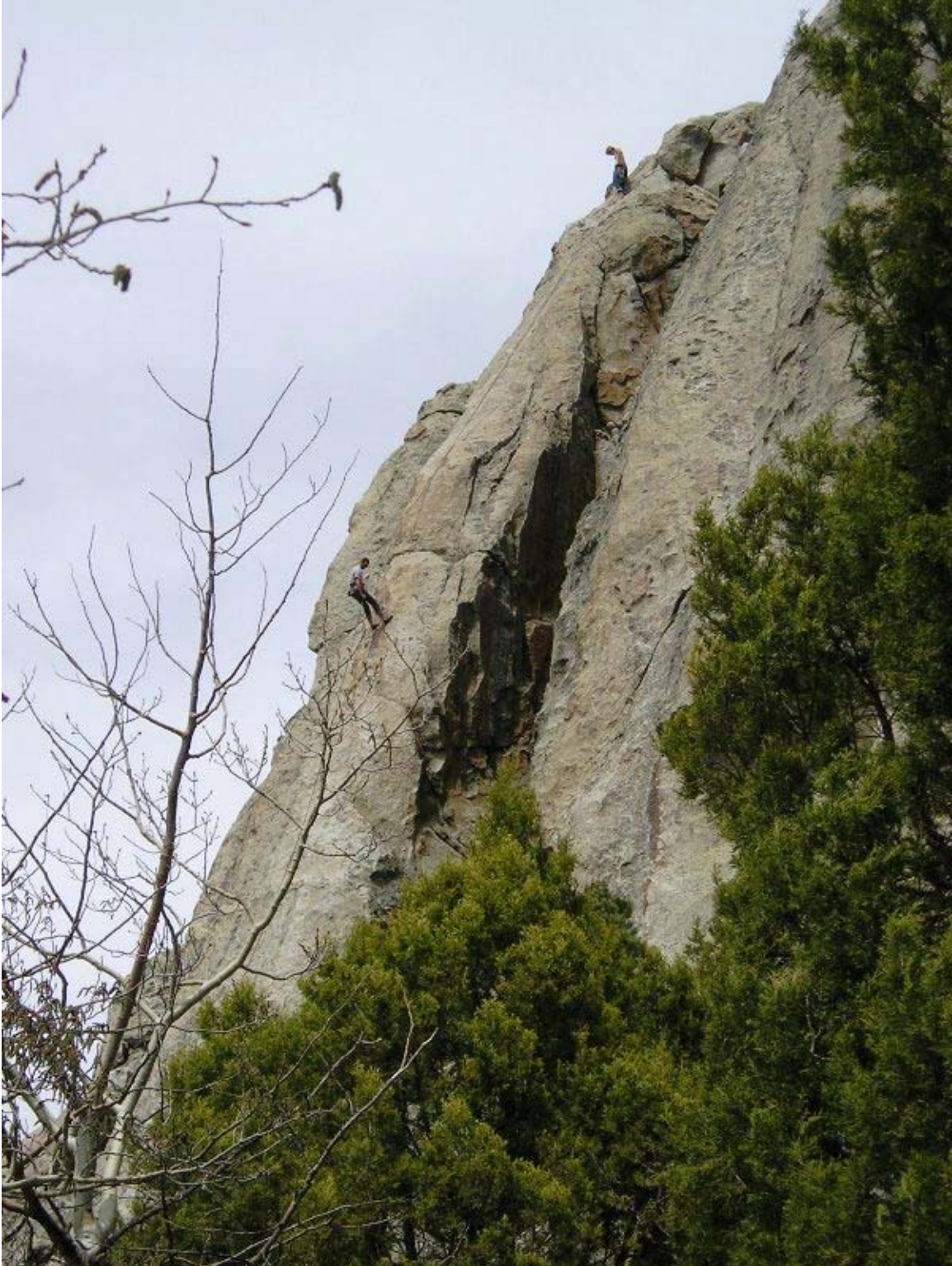


The second lake

Looking south at Castle Rocks State Park



The next day I hiked a 12 mile loop around the city of rocks. This is a popular area for rock climbers. I hiked this area in the spring as well. That is when all of these pictures were taken. I love walking through the white Granite spires.



Mountain climbers at City of Rocks National Preserve

I have a good friend that got me into birding this last winter. It is a fun hobby that compliments my passion for the outdoors. I've seen 180 bird species this year on my outdoor adventures and added four new species on this trip. I saw a Red Crossbill, White Breasted Nuthatch, Gray Flycatcher and a Green Tailed Towhee. I saw lots of Raptors and I was hoping to see a Pinyon Jay or Scrub Jay but no luck. I've learned a ton this year about birds and it has made my outdoor adventures that much more meaningful.



