

Big Shallow Lake



The trail to Shallow Lake or Big Shallow Pond is a flat and well-worn 2.5-mile trail hike, just outside of Raquette Lake's hamlet. The trail is part of the Pigeon Lake Wilderness area. The lake is known for its shallow, sandy lake bottom. The trail leads through beautiful mature forests but passes through around big wetlands and can be a wet trail at times.

The trailhead for Shallow Lake and West Mountain is a couple miles down the Uncas Road, a dirt road that runs between the communities of Raquette Lake and Inlet. The trailhead is on the north side of the road between Upper Pond and Lower Pond.

The trail begins along the Upper Pond shoreline, offering water access at several points, including a small sandy beach. The trail is flat and surrounded by tall larch and white pines. There is a bridge over the flood-prone wetland that joins the two ponds and a taste of mixed hardwood forest before the trail wraps around the larger Lower Pond. The trail continues along the shore of the pond until the junction with the Shallow Lake trail. There is minimal elevation change during the first leg of the hike.

At the trail junction, follow the Shallow Lake trail to the left. To the right, the trail continues towards West Mountain. This section of trail is less worn than the first leg due to West Mountain's popularity,

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but it is still easy to follow and adequately marked. The forest is at this point primarily conifers but mixed with hardwoods and is quite beautiful. Before long, this trail arrives at a wetland, that can be challenging to cross during periods of high water. Immediately after the wetland on the lefthand side of the trail is a patch of mossy evergreen forest sustained by the area's high water table. You will likely encounter chattering red squirrels.

After another mile or so, the trail arrives at a small, grassy, beach-like area on the south shoreline of Shallow Lake. This provides easy canoe launching or simply a nice spot to eat lunch. The lake is heavily bordered by high cedars, larch and white pines, with a long point visible across from the end of the trail.

The hike out is the same as the hike in.

Help Protect the Forest Preserve and Be Prepared When You Hike: Please follow “**carry in, carry out**” rules for all trash and follow other **Leave No Trace** principles when hiking in the public Forest Preserve and other wild areas. The seven Leave No Trace principles are: 1) Plan ahead and prepare; 2) Stay on hiking trails and camp at designated areas; 3) Dispose of human waste and trash properly; 4) Leave what you find; 5) Minimize campfires; 6) Respect wildlife; 7) Respect other hikers. **Educated and prepared hikers do not damage the environment or need search and rescue unless injured.**