

The Scenic Route

By McKenzie Kraemer



Unplug.

It's a loaded word. We know we should set the technology down, but unplugging makes us anxious. But disconnecting from technology helps us connect to naturally scenic settings. If you are ready to take your eyes off of the screen and enjoy some face time with nature, we have just the guide to get you off the technology highway and onto the scenic route.

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Photo courtesy John Webster/Webstermediahouse.com





CANOE/SUP

Payette Lake is a scenic show-stopper. This deep alpine lake right in the heart of downtown McCall is perfect for summer boating, sailing, jet skiing, and swimming. When it comes to kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding, however, locals know that Payette Lake plays second fiddle to the North Fork of the Payette River.

This lazy stretch of river, aptly named “The Meanders,” is meant for ambling. Flanked by soaring pine trees and lush wetlands, it is not uncommon to see deer, eagles, fox, or even the occasional moose on the bank. Beneath the surface, schools of fish dart back and forth under your paddles in the crystal clear water.

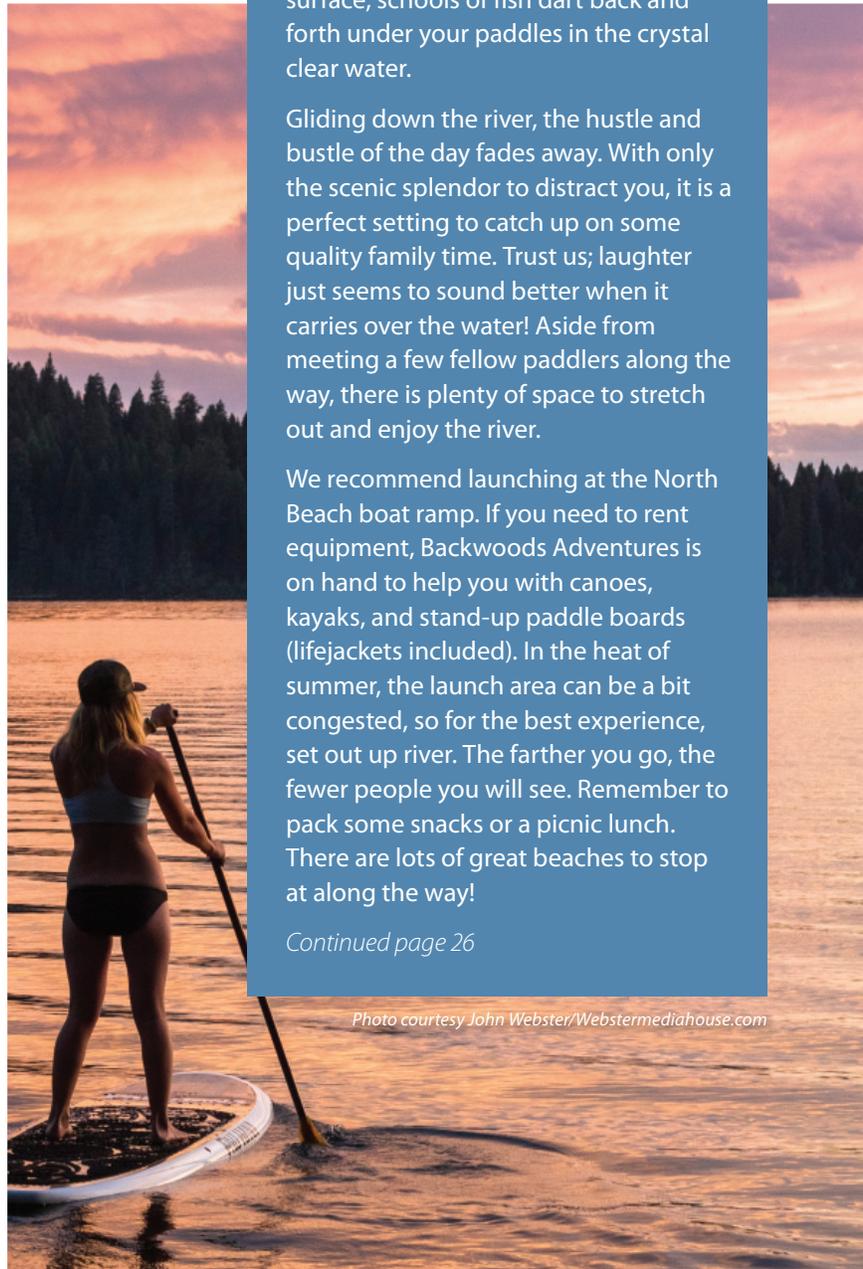
Gliding down the river, the hustle and bustle of the day fades away. With only the scenic splendor to distract you, it is a perfect setting to catch up on some quality family time. Trust us; laughter just seems to sound better when it carries over the water! Aside from meeting a few fellow paddlers along the way, there is plenty of space to stretch out and enjoy the river.

We recommend launching at the North Beach boat ramp. If you need to rent equipment, Backwoods Adventures is on hand to help you with canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards (lifejackets included). In the heat of summer, the launch area can be a bit congested, so for the best experience, set out up river. The farther you go, the fewer people you will see. Remember to pack some snacks or a picnic lunch. There are lots of great beaches to stop at along the way!

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Photo courtesy John Webster/Webstermediahouse.com

TIP: Make a reservation for rental equipment in advance. Backwoods Adventures, Gravity Sports, Home Town Sports, and the McCall Sports Exchange all offer summer water rentals.



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BEACH CRUISERS

We are in awe (serious awe) of the epic downhill mountain bikers who tackle the diverse terrain around McCall. For those with the skills, it is definitely worth a try. But let's face it, not all of us have the balance and reflexes to keep from flying over a bike's handlebars in a banked turn on steep singletrack. Knowing the limits of our ability, some of us prefer sticking to easy cruising...beach cruising, that is!

A beach cruiser is the perfect way to navigate McCall in the summer. Jump on a cruiser for a leisurely ride to grab a morning coffee at Mountain Java. Gallery hop through downtown McCall and skip the hassle of parking. Grab a group of friends and hit up a few stops along the McCall Ale Trail. Take the family for an after-dinner treat at Ice Cream Alley. The possibilities are endless.

On a cruiser, getting from point A to point B offers up an opportunity to slow down and take in the scene around you. Because a cruiser typically has a limited number of gears, a slower pace is natural. Ditch the car and opt for the breeze on your face as you bypass summer traffic to strike out to explore the side streets and pathways (you may even encounter some of our famous "town deer").

For an easy, scenic ride, we love combining the Spring Mountain Ranch and downtown McCall paved pathways into a loop. Start at the Payette Lakes Middle School and head north. Follow the path as you pass the McCall Golf Course and Spring Mountain Ranch neighborhood. At Lick Creek Road, turn west toward Ponderosa State Park. From the four-way



Photo courtesy City of McCall

stop at Davis Street, jump on to McCall Avenue toward Mile High Marina then merge onto Mill Road. From here, head into Legacy Park for picture-perfect views of Payette Lake. To connect to the final stretch of pathway, ride along 2nd Street to City Hall. The pathway veers south toward Harshmans Skate Park and connects to Deinhard Lane. From here, choose to go east along Deinhard back to the Middle School, or cross Deinhard and keep going south...the trail ends right near Broken Horn Brewing and, let's face it, you deserve a beer after all that scenic fun!

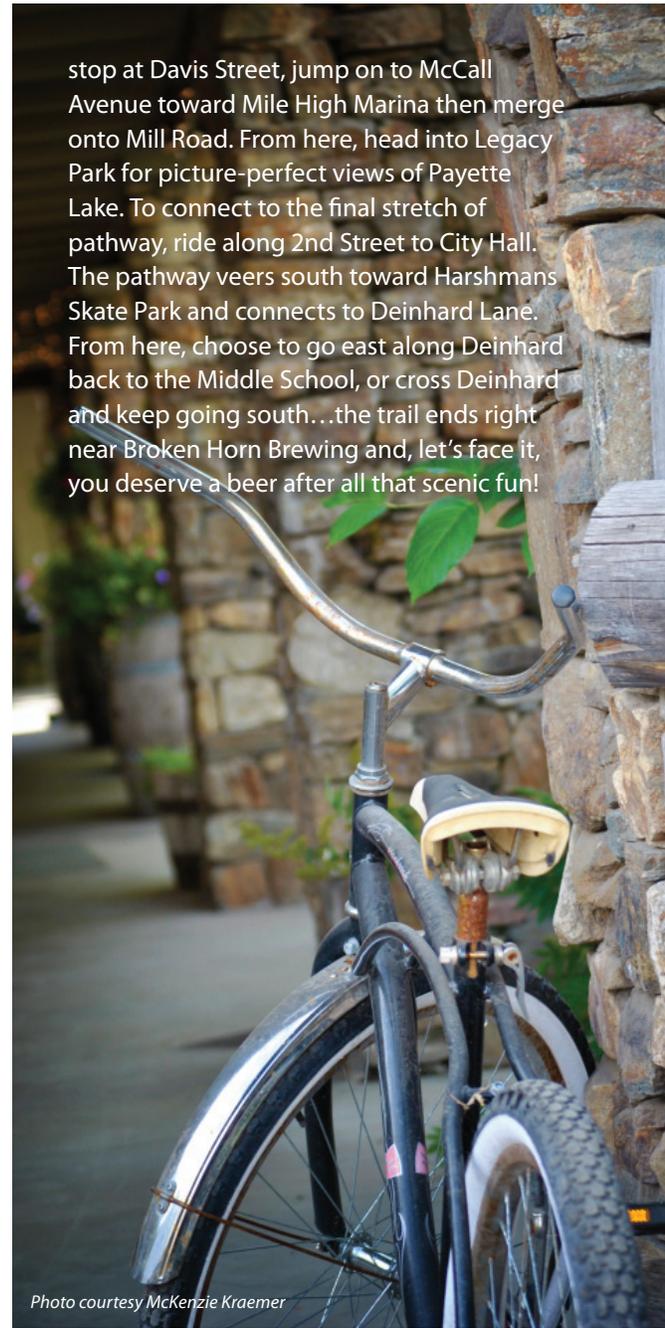


Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer

TIP: Beach cruiser rentals are available at the McCall Sports Exchange (802 N 3rd Street), Gravity Sports (503 Pine Street), Home Town Sports (300 Lenora Street), and Apex Electric Bike Sales and Rentals (616 N 3rd Street).

SCENIC CHAIRLIFT RIDE AT BRUNDAGE

Riding a chairlift in the summer is a unique sensation. There is something about seeing the ground clear of snow that makes the entire experience feel new and fresh. The smell of pine trees fills your nose as you fly up the mountain. And when you get to the summit? It feels like you are standing on top of the world!

On a clear day, Payette Lake, Long Valley, and the Seven Devil's Wilderness can be seen from the top of Brundage Mountain. You can even catch a glimpse of Oregon's Blue Mountains. See the buildings and homes in McCall and New Meadows transformed into tiny dots on the landscape, and boat wakes on Payette Lake scaled down to little stripes of white on a blue canvas. After you have had your fill of sweeping panoramic views, head back down the mountain by riding the chairlift, hiking, or biking.

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TIP: Save some green and pick up a \$3 discount coupon at local retailers and lodging partners in town or save 30% by going online to brundage.com to pre-purchase your tickets.



Photo courtesy Brundage Mountain Resort



Photo courtesy Brundage Mountain Resort

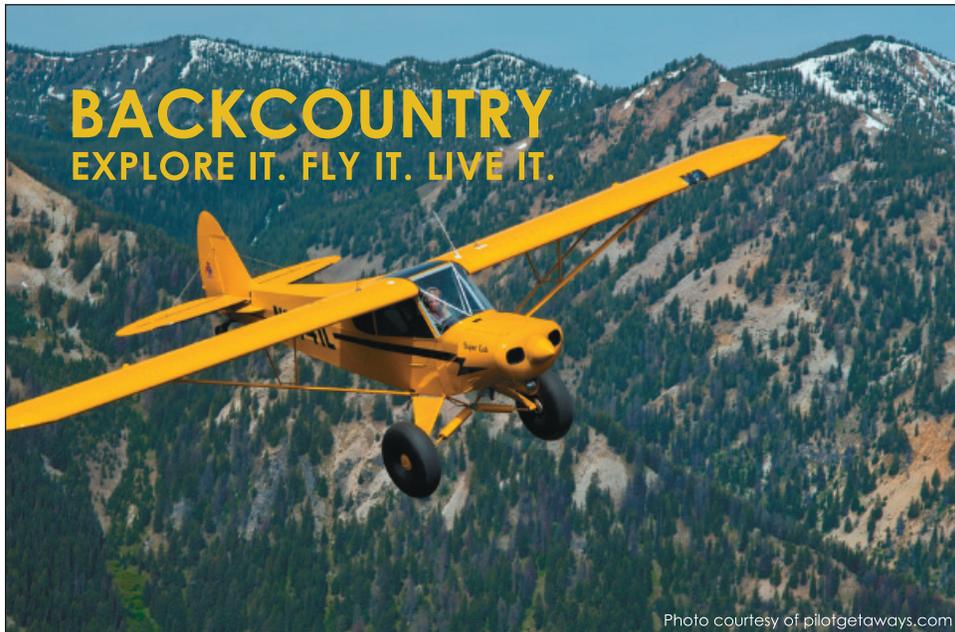


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ZIPLINE TOURS AT TAMARACK

Writer Arthur Plotnik once called the Ponderosa pine “a Clint Eastwood of a tree.” These massive pines are rugged, lean, and hearty, living 500 years or more. Ironically, these resilient trees have a softer side. The bark of a Ponderosa smells like butterscotch (yes, seriously!). It is easy to find Ponderosa pines dotting the landscape around McCall, but Tamarack Resort has a novel way to appreciate these majestic trees...by ziplining into one!

Tamarack’s thrilling, action-packed zipline tour includes eight zip lines and two suspension bridges covering 3,500 feet of stunning mountain terrain. Fly over creeks, canyons, and forest while enjoying stunning views of Lake Cascade and the valley below.

The pièce de résistance of the tour is zipping onto a platform built around a Ponderosa pine. The circular structure soars about 100 feet off of the ground and affords spectacular views along with a big adrenaline rush! Once on the platform, you can feel the movement of the tree. We will admit the sensation is a bit out of this world, but don’t worry, the expert guides make sure you are harnessed securely at all times. After zipping into the tree, a quick walk around the platform and you are all set to zip right back out.

Zipline Tours are available seven days a week during the summer season. The morning tour departs at 9am and 10am and the afternoon tour departs at 1pm and 2pm.

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Photo courtesy Tamarack Resort

TIP: Zipline tours can fill up quickly. Be sure to make your reservations in advance by visiting tamarackidaho.com or calling (208) 325-1030.

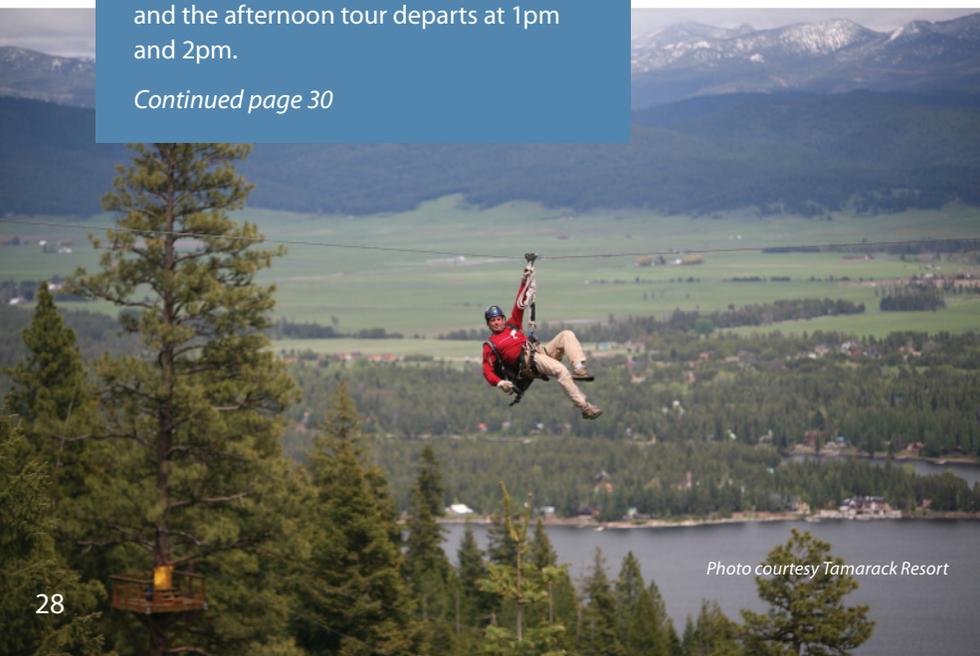


Photo courtesy Tamarack Resort



Photo courtesy Tamarack Resort



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Its always the perfect temperature in McCall, but there is truly something a little extra-special about summer.

Payette Lake comes to life. Restaurant patios open up and recreational activities abound. From water skiing, enjoying the beach, to bike riding, there is something for everyone in McCall. In days gone by Payette Lake provided newcomers in the area food supplies and a means to move goods from one end to the other.

Jim Warren discovered gold in the 1860's in what would eventually become known as Warren, Idaho. During the gold boom Warren was one of the largest settlements in the Idaho Territory at the time. In those days a wagon trail and pack string trail headed north along the west side of Payette Lake moving supplies to the gold mines and outlying areas. That trail became what we now know today as Warren Wagon Road.

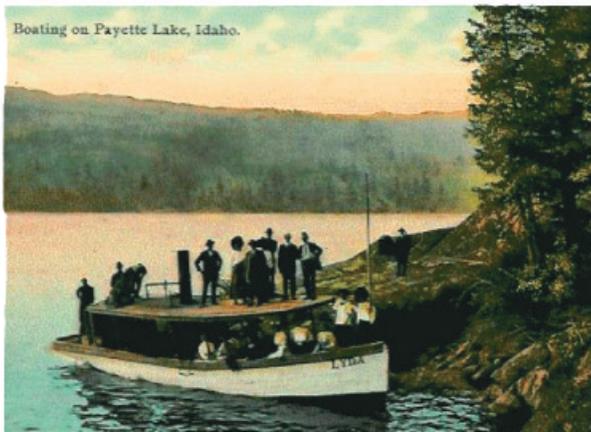
With ever increasing demands for lumber and mining supplies in the back country the lake route offered larger weight haul and shorter haul time. THE LYDA was one of the early work boats powered by steam transporting from what was known as Lake Port, now McCall, to the north end of Payette Lake, reloading here on wagons and pack strings to head for the gold bearing mines farther north.

THE LYDA would haul passengers along the route for site seeing to help cover the cost of operations. Life was thriving in the area. THE LYDA could be seen hauling passengers and towing a "dancing barge" for local events. After THE LYDA retired a new vessel, the 60' Winston was built to replace her. The Winston took over the haul route until the demand of freight hauling shifted to more economical motorized means.

In 2012 **THE IDAHO** started cruising on beautiful Payette Lake offering luxury cruising with a heated lower cabin, restrooms and a full beverage and snack bar on board. To reduce fossil fuel consumption solar panels have been installed on **THE IDAHO** for enviro-friendly cruising. **THE IDAHO** is the perfect venue for private events and public cruising on Payette Lake.

Payette Lake has a long history of work boats gracing its shores. **THE IDAHO** is looking forward to seeing you on the lake this summer to continue this long tradition and share more bits of history.

Afternoon, evening, sunset and private event cruises.



MLC1.054 Sylvan Beach camp c. 1912. McCall. ID postcard

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While visiting McCall and the local area, check for lodging, dining and other activities with the Southwest Idaho Travel Association @ VisitSouthwestIdaho.org





Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer

GOLF

You don't have to be an avid golfer to appreciate the natural splendor of our five area courses. Teeing off over a green meadow with a snowcapped mountain at your back may not automatically improve your handicap, but it will improve your mood! Fairways flanked by towering pines, perfectly manicured greens overlooking the crystal-clear water, and tee boxes that offer dramatic views of the mountains beyond are just a few of the striking scenes that await.

Each golf course has its own appeal, but we rounded up some of our favorite holes that showcase both dramatic scenery and challenging play.

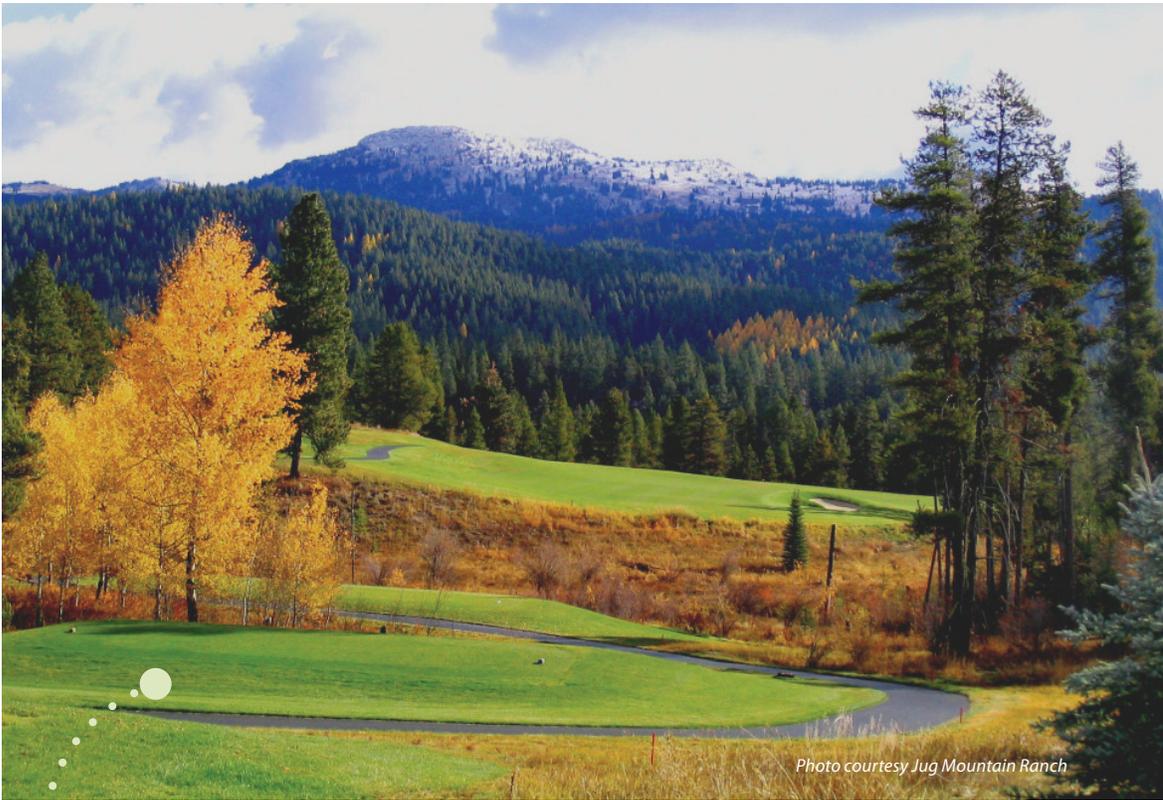


Photo courtesy Jug Mountain Ranch

Jug Mountain Ranch: Set at the base of Jughandle Mountain, the 16th hole at Jug Mountain Ranch is a long par 5, dogleg right. The tee shot is played uphill and over natural wetlands with a perfect view of Jughandle Mountain. Once on the fairway, thick groves of trees line each side of the hole, while Boulder Creek crosses the narrowing fairway near the green.



Photo courtesy Cascade Golf Course

Cascade Golf Course: Tucked next to Lake Cascade, this 9-hole course may just be the most scenic in the area. Each hole offers beautiful views of the lake, but we love #6 for its exciting tee shot over the water. Starting on a bluff above this par 4, a solid drive is required to carry the water. Women can play the forward tee, but we recommend taking a shot at playing from the tips on this hole!



Photo courtesy McCall Golf Club, credit Gary Ertter

McCall Golf Club: With 27 holes to choose from, finding a favorite at McCall Golf Club is a tough choice, but Aspen #1 is a beauty. The 370 yard par 4 has a tree-lined fairway with a stunning view of Brundage Mountain and water features to the left of the fairway and green, which was rebuilt in 2016. If you are lucky, you may also see some of the resident deer wander through your tee shot adding both challenge and aesthetic appeal to Aspen #1.

MeadowCreek Golf Resort: Located at the 45th parallel in New Meadows, this 6,696 yard course offers a thrilling round of golf. With par 4s and 5s dominating this course, we love hole 13 for its short and sweet challenge. Precision is the name of the game with a tee shot over natural wetlands. Your reward? Expansive views of the golf course and mountains beyond. You may even catch a glimpse of Brundage Mountain in the distance.



Photo courtesy MeadowCreek Golf Resort

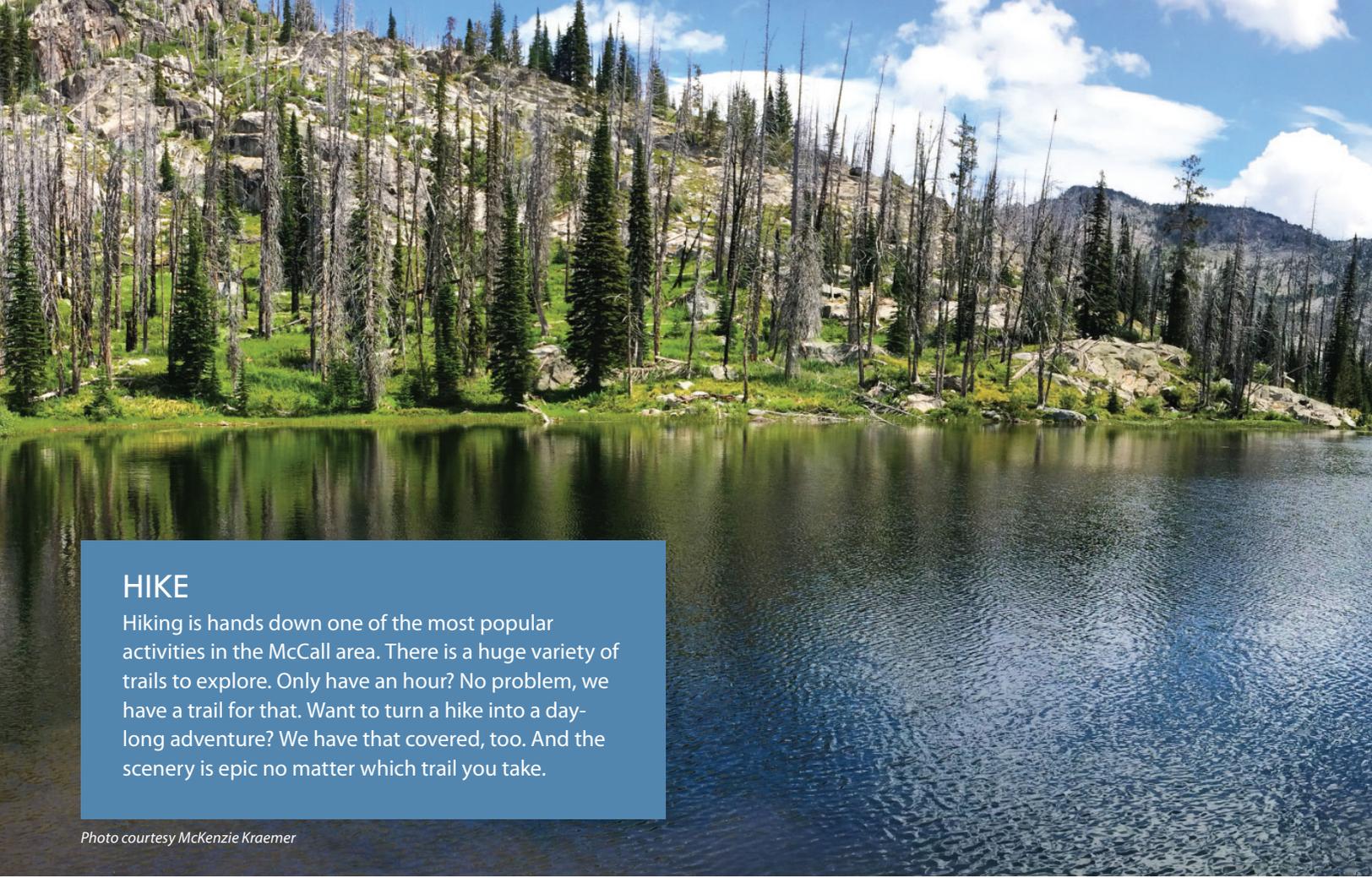


Photo courtesy Whitetail Club

Whitetail Club: This private course has a dual personality. Half of the holes wind through mature pines while the other half take advantage of wide open views. Hole 16 is the latter. This par 3 offers plenty of challenge with a tee shot over the water paired with the scenic beauty of a stream that crosses the hole and flows smoothly into a large pond. Don't be fooled by the serene setting. While the water features add ambiance, they can be hazards to your score.

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TIP: If you are looking for a serious golf getaway in the McCall area, visit mccallchamber.org to find our "Hit the Links Itinerary." We show you how to fit a round of golf at all five courses into one vacation!



HIKE

Hiking is hands down one of the most popular activities in the McCall area. There is a huge variety of trails to explore. Only have an hour? No problem, we have a trail for that. Want to turn a hike into a day-long adventure? We have that covered, too. And the scenery is epic no matter which trail you take.

Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer



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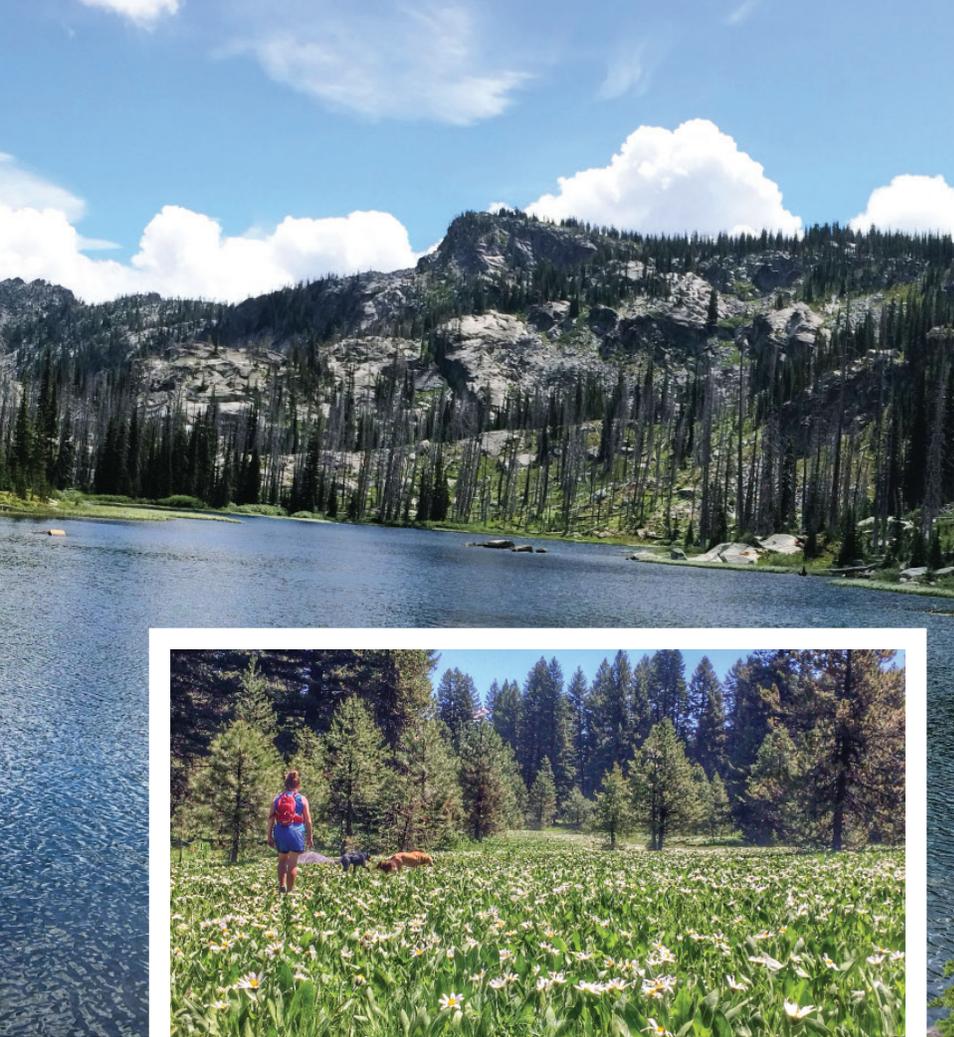


Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer



If you make only one purchase during your trip to McCall, we recommend it be "The Hiker's Guide to McCall and Cascade." This book is fabulous. Author Scott Marchant provides a wealth of information on 55 hikes in the area that covers everything from the kid-friendly 1.8 mile Meadow Marsh Loop in Ponderosa State Park to the strenuous 11.6 mile Twentymile Lakes route.

Using this book as a guide, there are a number of hikes to discover that may otherwise be overlooked. One of our favorites is Hard Creek Lake. This hike is an easy 3.2 miles, accessed from the Hard Creek Campground about 19 miles past Brundage Mountain Resort. What makes this a favorite? First, the trail takes you through a range of beautiful landscapes including wildflower-filled meadows, a boulder field, and high mountain forests. The stunning alpine lake flanked by steep granite walls at the end also earns this hike major kudos. Not to mention, you will likely have the place all to yourself! A scenic route at its finest.

Looking for more hikes? Try the Boulder/Louie Lake route. You can hike to either lake independently or make it a loop. Goose Creek Falls is another popular hike and can be accessed from either the Last Chance Campground or the trailhead at the Gordon Titus Parking Lot along Goose Lake/Brundage Road. Pearl Lake is a great family hike if you are headed up Warren Wagon Road, while Snowslide Lake and Duck Lake are great options off of Lick Creek Road.

TIP: Find "The Hiker's Guide to McCall and Cascade" at the McCall Chamber of Commerce office (605 N 3rd Street).

Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer