

Blue Dot Trail (Cirque of Tarns)

Location: Caligata Lake Provincial Park, British Columbia

Drive Time from Spahats Creek Resort: Approximately 30-45 minutes (12 km / 7.5 miles)

Walking Distance from Spahats Creek Resort: Not recommended due to the distance and rough terrain.

Difficulty: Difficult

Distance of Hike: Approximately 7 km (4.3 miles) round trip

Elevation Change: Significant (steep ascents)

Estimated Hike Time: 4 to 4.5 hours round trip

Overview: The Blue Dot Trail, also known as the Cirque of Tarns, is a challenging and rewarding alpine hike in Caligata Lake Provincial Park. This remote trail leads hikers through diverse terrain, including wet meadows, dense forests, and steep alpine slopes, culminating in a tranquil cirque adorned with multiple tarns. It is an excellent choice for seasoned hikers seeking solitude and breathtaking scenery.

Drive Description: From Spahats Creek Resort, drive back to the main entrance and turn right onto Spahats Creek FSR. Continue for 4 km (2.5 miles) to a Y junction and go right. Proceed for an additional 9.4 km (5.9 miles) to the 13 km marker. Park on the side of the road at the trailhead for the Cirque of Tarns Trail. The parking area is limited and not suitable for larger RVs.

Hike Description:

1. **Trailhead to Caligata Lake (0.5 km / 0.3 miles):**
 - Begin at the trailhead, entering a wet meadow. Waterproof footwear is recommended as this section can be damp.
2. **Caligata Lake to Boulder Field (0.9 km / 0.6 miles):**
 - Continue through the meadow, bearing left toward Caligata Lake. This section of the trail may be overgrown and include some deadfall.
3. **Boulder Field to Alpine Pass (1.4 km / 0.9 miles):**

- Emerge from the forest at a large boulder field. Ascend the steep headwall, using a zigzag path on the left to reach the pass between Spahats Hill and Raft Mountain.
- 4. **Alpine Pass to Cirque of Tarns (1.2 km / 0.75 miles):**
 - From the pass, turn left and climb a steep talus slope southward. Follow the stream to its source, leading to the first tarn. Navigate around the left side of the tarn and ascend the ridge to reach the high cirque containing multiple tarns.
- 5. **Return Journey:**
 - Descend via the same route, taking caution on steep and rocky sections, for a total round-trip distance of approximately 7 km (4.3 miles).

Tips:

- **Preparation:** This hike requires navigation skills. Carry a map, compass, or GPS, and ensure someone is informed of your plans.
- **Gear:** Wear good boots for the trail, as the new boardwalks installed in 2023 make waterproof footwear unnecessary. Sturdy footwear is still essential for the rocky ascents. Trekking poles are highly recommended.
- **Seasonal Considerations:** Fall is an ideal time to undertake this hike, as meadows are drier and mosquito activity is reduced.
- **Safety:** The trail is remote and less frequented; ensure you are adequately prepared for emergencies.

Summary: The Blue Dot Trail to the Cirque of Tarns offers a demanding yet fulfilling journey through diverse terrains, culminating in a tranquil alpine cirque. This hike provides a true high-alpine adventure for experienced hikers seeking solitude and stunning natural beauty in Caligata Lake Provincial Park.