

California State Parks near Folsom Provide Great Family Destinations in Northern California

California State Parks in the Folsom area provide great family destinations in northern California. Whether it's a place for recreation or discovering California's history, state parks have something for everyone:

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area [PLACER, EL DORADO and SACRAMENTO counties; phone (916) 988-0205] is located in the Sierra-Nevada foothills, about 25 miles east of Sacramento. The lake can be reached either Highway 50 or I-80.

This 18,000-acre recreation area offers excellent opportunities for camping, hiking, biking, running, picnicking, horseback riding, water-skiing, and boating. Fishing offers trout, catfish, big and small mouth bass, or perch. A wealth of information may be found at the recently opened American River Water Education Center, located in the Folsom Dam administrative area. State Parks and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation jointly operate the facility. Tours inside of the dam are offered. Interpretive displays in the center convey an appreciation of the American River as it flows from its headwaters in the high Sierra to the Pacific.

The area is also designated as a Watchable Wildlife site.



The park also contains **Lake Natoma**, downstream from Folsom Lake. Lake Natoma is popular for sailing, kayaking, crew races, and other aquatic sports.

For cyclists, there is the **American River Bike Trail** connecting Folsom Lake with many parks in Sacramento County before reaching Old Sacramento, 27 miles downriver.

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area operating hours are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., October 15 through March 31. Summer hours (April 1 – October 14) are from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The **Folsom Powerhouse**, located within the city limits of the historic city of Folsom, produced 11,000 volts of electricity for Sacramento residents (22 miles away) from 1885 to 1952. Vintage generators are still in place at the powerhouse, as is the control switchboard, which is faced with Tennessee marble. Visitors touring the powerhouse can see the massive General Electric transformers, as well as the forebays and canal system that brought water to the building. The site is open Wednesday through Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m. For tour information, visitors should call (916) 985-4843.

The 1893 **Historic Truss Bridge** (restoration is to be completed in March 2000) is found just upriver of Rainbow Bridge and the Folsom Powerhouse. It now serves as a bicyclist-pedestrian bridge linking the existing American River Bike trail to the Folsom Historic District and the powerhouse.

The **Folsom Historic District**, adjacent to the Folsom Powerhouse, offers a pleasant gold rush era town setting for strolling, shopping, dining, lodging, and

even a look at a restored 1850s railroad turntable. An informative local history museum is also found in the district. Joint State Park/City of Folsom connecting pathways and bike lanes lead from the historic district either upriver to the Folsom City Zoo and City Park or downriver for a pleasant walk or ride along the wooded south side of Lake Natoma to the Willow Creek fishing and small watercraft launch area.

For California State Parks camping reservations, the toll-free ReserveAmerica, Inc. camping reservations hotline is (800) 444-PARK (7275) between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Time, seven days a week. Reservations may be charged to VISA or Master Card.

#