

# California State Parks in the Shasta-Cascade Region Offer Natural Beauty and History

Visitors to California State Parks in the Shasta-Cascade region discover natural beauty - and California history - including a Chinese temple, a mansion, and a Gold Rush town.

"Many of these parks are easily accessed from major highways," said Lori Martin, State Park Ranger at McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park. "So, whether you have thirty minutes or a week's vacation to spend, the parks in this region of California have something to offer everyone."

**Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park**, located 3.5 miles north of McArthur, is reachable only by boat. This beautiful, isolated park is a wilderness area with two-thirds of the park covered in rugged lava rock (including black basalt.) The area is surrounded by a network of rivers and lakes featuring excellent trout and bass fishing. Boaters, canoeists and hikers can explore the park's 6,000 acres of lava flows, waterways, and pools, or just enjoy watching the park's wildlife. (The park is a Watchable Wildlife site.)



Boats are launched from the Rat Farm Landing, located three miles north of McArthur on a dirt road from the end of Main Street. The park has environmental camping. For more information, call (530) 335-2777 or (530) 225-2065.

**McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park**, located northeast of Redding, six miles north of Highway 299 on Highway 89 near Burney; features 910 acres of forest and five miles of streamside and lake shoreline, including a portion of Lake Britton. The park's namesake is 129-foot Burney Falls, one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the state. One hundred million gallons of water flow over the falls every day. Additional water comes from springs, joining to create a mist-filled basin. Ranger Lori Martin notes, "Many visitors stop at McArthur-

Burney Falls as they pass through the area not knowing what to expect. It's fun and interesting to see their reaction when we point out the falls located a few hundred feet from the entrance. Then I tell them about the bald eagles, the pioneers cemetery, the boat rentals, hiking trails and interpretive activities for all age groups. Their next question is how to make camping reservation."

The park has six miles of hiking trails through an evergreen forest and Lake Britton offers water sport activities. Black swifts nest in the cliff behind the falls and rare nests of bald eagles can be seen along the shoreline of Lake Britton. (The park is a Watchable Wildlife site.)



The park has developed campsites. For reservations call 800-444-PARK (7275) or go online to: <http://www.reserveamerica.com>. For more information about the park, call (530) 335-2777 or (530) 225-2065.

**Castle Crags State Park**, located six miles south of Dunsmuir on I-5, is named for the surrounding 6,000-foot tall glacier-polished crags. The park offers a view of Mount Shasta, swimming and fishing in the Sacramento River, and 28 miles of hiking trails in the back country, including a 2.7 mile access trail to Castle Crags Wilderness, part of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Pacific Crest Trail also passes through the park. Other natural features of the park include a bubbling mineral spring, wild orchids, and, in the spring, an array of wildflowers. The park has both developed campsites and environmental campsites. (One of the campgrounds is situated along the river.) For reservations call 800-444-PARK (7275) or go online to: <http://www.reserveamerica.com>. For more information about the park, call (530) 235-2684.

**Weaverville Joss House State Historic Park**, also known as The Temple of the Forest Beneath the Clouds, is the oldest continuously used Chinese temple in California. Located in the town of Weaverville, 50 miles west of Redding on Highway 299, this Taoist temple is still a place of worship. During China's Cultural Revolution, many of the old rural-style temples were dismantled

or destroyed. The Weaverville Joss House is an intact and complete temple, which no longer exists in many parts of China.

On display are religious artifacts, art objects, pictures, and mining tools brought to the area by Chinese immigrants during California's Gold Rush. The Temple is the site of the Lion Dance, held in January or February of each year to celebrate the arrival of the Chinese New Year. A lion dance is also held on the Fourth of July Weekend. Tours of the Joss House are conducted on the hour from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., Wednesdays through Sundays, during the tourist season. There is a fee. Visits to the Joss House Visitor Center are free. For more information, call (530) 623-5282 or (530) 225-2065.

**Shasta State Historic Park**, located six miles west of Redding on Highway 299, was the center of 1850s gold mining in California. In 1849, Shasta, the "Queen City" of the northern mines in the Klamath Range, served as the main shipping point for supplies and money between the mines and San Francisco. Today, a row of old, ruined brick buildings is what's left of the "Queen City" of the Gold Rush.

The County Courthouse is restored to its 1861 appearance, the year when it was converted from commercial uses to become the Shasta County Courthouse. The courthouse has been converted into a museum that contains exhibits about Native Americans (including Pit River Indian basketry), pioneer life, frontier justice (with a courtroom, jail and gallows) - and a fine art collection. The Boggs Collection contains over 100 years of California art.

Across the street from the courthouse, the Litsch Store Museum gives visitors a look at an old-fashioned general store. Operated from the 1850s to 1960, the Litsch Store features wooden barrels that stored everything from pickles to whiskey and shelves packed with canned goods, yardage and derbies.

Also featured in the park is a restored barn and stagecoach. For more information, call (530) 243-8194.

**William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park**, located two miles northeast of Red Bluff on Adobe Road, is named after the first and only president of the short-lived California Bear Republic - which lasted for 22 days. The park features the old 1846 adobe home, carriage shed, blacksmith shop and a visitor center. Historical photographs and Native American artifacts are on display at the Kelly-Griggs House Museum, a restored Victorian mansion in the park.

The adobe memorial to Ide is located in a picnic area overlooking the Sacramento River. Park volunteers and staff present living history programs throughout the year. For more information, call (530) 529-8599.

**Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area**, located six miles east of Corning and I-5 on South Avenue, sits along the Sacramento River. Mount Shasta, Mount Lassen, and the Trinity Alps can be seen in the distance.

The park is a popular fishing spot for king salmon, steelhead, striped bass, and bluegill.

A boat launch ramp located across the road in the county park provides easy access to the river for water sports. There is also a broad sand and gravel beach along the Sacramento River.

Another special park feature is the 328-acre preserve, winter home to the bald eagle and a summer nest site for the yellow billed cuckoo. Birdwatchers can also see geese, ducks, herons, jays, quail, owls, hawks, falcons, and pheasants. The grove displays some of the last remaining riparian habitat to be found in California.

Over a hundred plant species have been identified throughout the park. The most prominent is the large valley oak. The California black walnut, Oregon ash, black cottonwood, sycamore, and willow are also in the park. Beneath the oaks and cottonwoods along the river is elderberry, wild grape, and wildflowers in season.

The west bank has a boat-in campsite and the east shore has a 41-site campground.

The site is wheelchair accessible. For reservations call 800-444-PARK (7275) or go online to: <http://www.reserveamerica.com>. For more information about the park, call (530) 839-2112.

**Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park**, located five miles west of Chico on River Road, has 180 acres, including four miles of riverfront. The park serves as an access point for river rafters, canoeists, and kayakers. Park visitors can also enjoy fishing (for salmon, steelhead and shad), boating, and picnicking.

The park preserves a disappearing natural resource - the riverine habitat. Massive oaks and cottonwoods give dense shade needed for survival of cool-water creatures. Thickets of elderberry, wild grape, blackberry, wild rose and perennials provide shelter to a diversified wildlife population. The park offers a great setting for observing and learning about the riparian community.

For more information, call (530) 342-5185.

**Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park**, located adjacent to Chico State University in downtown Chico, preserves a beautiful, three-story, 26-room Italiante House Museum that stands as a memorial to General John and Annie Bidwell, Chico's founders. John Bidwell was a pioneer, farmer, soldier, statesman, politician and philanthropist. Annie Ellicott Kennedy Bidwell was the daughter of a socially prominent, high ranking Washington official. She was committed to a number of moral and social causes, including suffrage and the prohibition movements.

The Bidwells used the Mansion extensively for entertaining friends. Some of their guests included President Rutherford B. Hayes, General William T. Sherman, Susan B. Anthony, Governor Stanford, and John Muir.

The style of the mansion is that of an Italian villa. The building's exterior is finished with a pink-tinted plaster. Inside, the most modern gas lighting, plumbing and water systems were installed. The rooms include a spacious entry hall, formal parlor, dining room, library, the General's office, and a ballroom. The

rooms were filled with furniture of the Victorian era with tables topped with marble, white lace curtains, and wall-to-wall carpeting.

Tours are available. For more information, call (530) 895-6144.

**Plumas-Eureka State Park**, located four miles west of Graeagle, is at the foot of Eureka Park (also called Gold Mountain), which produced \$25 million in gold from hard-rock mining during the late 1880s. Plumas-Eureka State Park features hiking trails that lead to four lakes and a first-come, first-served campground under pine trees along Jamison Creek.

The park has a museum (once a miner's bunkhouse) that features early gold mining equipment and relics. Outside are a blacksmith shop, stamp mill, stable, mine office and a restored miner's home. During the summer, docents and park staff conduct tours of the buildings and provide blacksmithing demonstrations.

A variety of plant and animal life are abundant in the park. Birdwatchers can observe the pileated woodpecker (largest North American woodpecker) and the calliope hummingbird (smallest North American hummingbird). [The best period for birding is April through May.] Some of the animals rarely seen at the park include bobcats, snowshoe hares, porcupines, long-tailed weasels and mountain lions. Squirrels, black bears and coyotes are more frequently noticed.

Madora and Eureka Lakes, as well as Jamison Creek, which flows through the park, provide fishing opportunities. Late spring and early summer are considered the best times to fish. Madora Lake fishing includes rainbow and brown trout, while Eureka Lake contains only brook trout. Jamison Creek has mostly rainbow trout, with a few brown trout.

Most of the park's visitation takes place during the summer. However, an increasing number of people enjoy the park's winter recreational activities, such as cross-country skiing.

For more information, call (530) 836-2380.

**Lake Oroville State Recreation Area**, located seven miles east of Oroville via Highway 162, is a beautiful, tranquil lake especially popular for water-skiing and bass fishing.

The lake was created by Oroville Dam (the tallest earth-filled dam - 770 feet above the stream bed of the Feather River - in the country) in 1967. At its maximum level, the lake provides 167 miles of shoreline and 15,500 surface acres for recreation. Activities in the area include fishing, swimming, water-skiing, sailing, powerboating, picnicking, camping, hiking, horseback riding, houseboating, boat-in camping, floating campsites, and horse camping.

Some campsites may be reserved (including boat-in group camps) by phoning (800) 444-PARK (7275). Sites not reserved and boat-in family camps are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Lake Oroville Visitor Center features a museum with exhibits and videos as well as a store. The view from the 47-foot tower there, with two high-powered telescopes, offers a spectacular panorama of the lake as well as the Sierra Nevada and Sutter Buttes mountain ranges.

For more information, call (530) 538-2219 or (530) 538-2200.

**Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area**, 2.5 miles from Oroville, provides good beginner terrain for off-road enthusiasts. The clay used to build Lake Oroville was taken from the Feather River Valley, three miles west of Oroville. The result, a large shallow pit ringed with low hills, is the site of this 220-acre recreation area. Recreationists in the park ride motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and dune buggies. The park also has a rifle range. Visitors are advised to call in advance to determine riding conditions.

To reach the park from Highway 70, go west on Oroville Dam Boulevard (Highway 162), then two miles south on Larkin Road, to entrance.

The park is open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset. For more information, call (530) 538-2200.

This past year, more than 85.2 million visitors generated approximately \$2.6 billion in direct visitor spending in communities surrounding California State Parks throughout the state. When these dollars reverberate and are respent in these communities, the total economic impact is an estimated \$6.65 billion - enough to support more than 100,000 jobs throughout local communities statewide.

For camping reservations, call 1-800-444-PARK (7275) or go on line to <http://www.reserveamerica.com>

Visit California State Parks on line at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

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