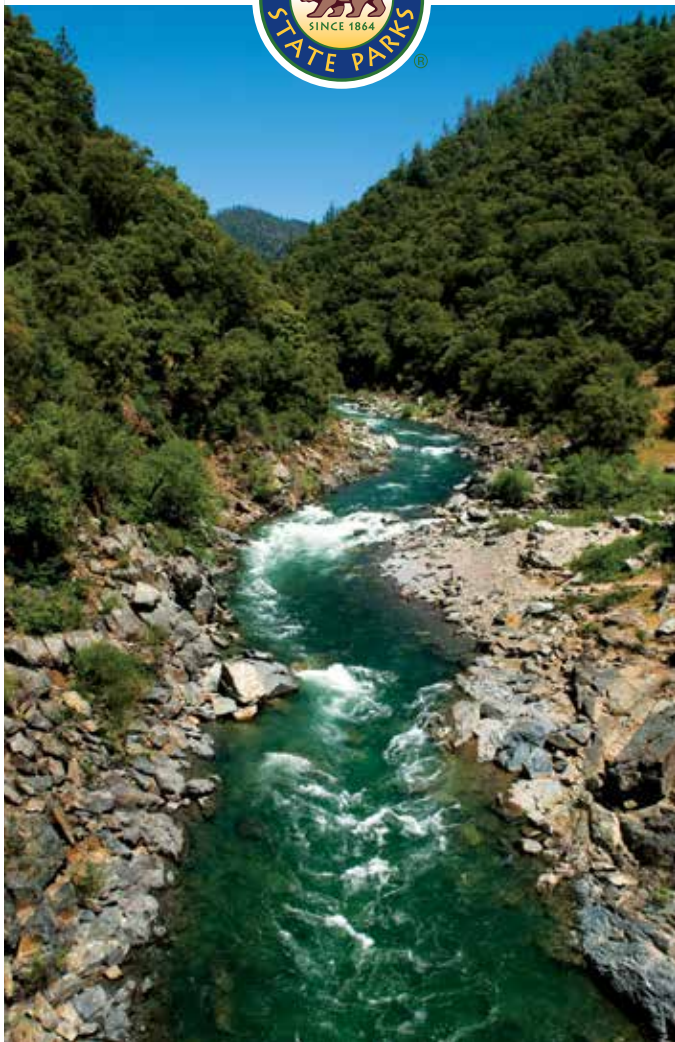


# Auburn

## State Recreation Area



### Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(530) 885-4527**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact [interp@parks.ca.gov](mailto:interp@parks.ca.gov).

#### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

P.O. Box 942896

Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For information call: (800) 777-0369

(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.

711, TTY relay service

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

#### Auburn State Recreation Area

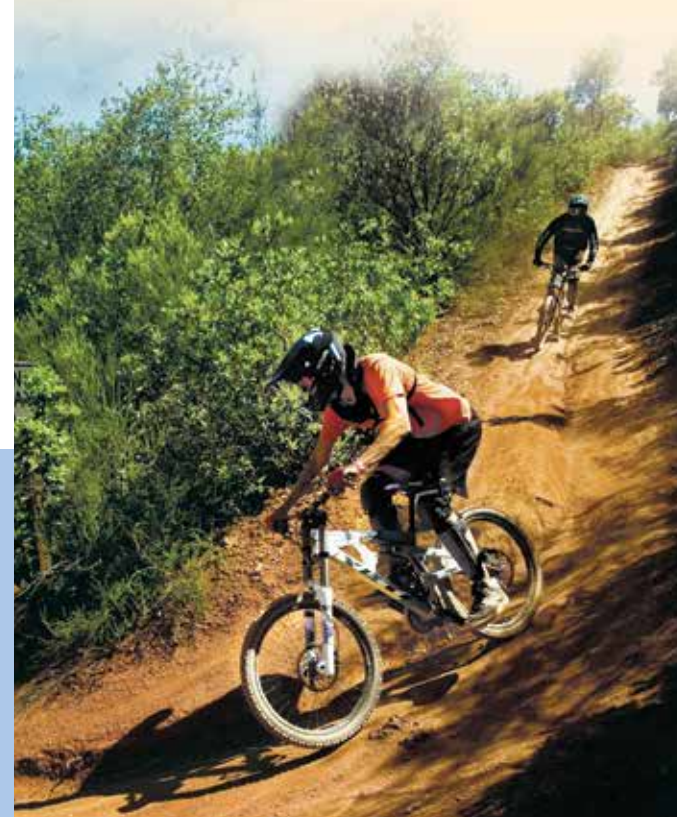
501 El Dorado Street

Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 885-4527



*Deep in California's  
legendary gold country,  
the spectacular canyons  
and clear waters of the  
American River draw hikers,  
equestrians, cyclists, and  
river enthusiasts.*



## *A*uburn State Recreation Area is a jewel of a park within the heart of the gold country.

Once crowded with hard-living gold miners, Auburn SRA now offers something for everyone. Whether you prefer a strenuous workout on 100 miles of trails, the thrill of finding “yellow” in your gold pan, or relaxing in one of Northern California’s most beautiful landscapes, you will enjoy the wild beauty of this special place.

Summer temperatures here average from high 80s to mid-90s, and winters are wet, with highs in the mid-50s and lows in the 30s and 40s. Expect rain between October and April.

Auburn SRA is made up of federal project lands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, set aside for the building of the Auburn Dam.

### **PARK HISTORY**

#### **Native People**

The Southern Maidu or “Nisenan” were the area’s predominant native group for thousands of years.

The Nisenan hunted and gathered from their established villages. Their winter homes were covered in earth for insulation and dug partially underground —two to three feet deep. Summer shelters consisted of branches laid over a framework of saplings and covered with brush.

The Nisenan wove baskets for trapping fish and for carrying, winnowing, and storing food. Many Nisenan baskets grace museum collections all over the world. Today’s descendants honor their ancient traditions.

#### **Gold is Found**

In January of 1848, gold was discovered at nearby Coloma on traditional Nisenan lands. Within a few months, the foothill and mountain homelands of the native people were overrun by would-be millionaires. Europeans, Americans, and even local residents dug, panned, deluged with high-pressure hoses, dredged, and pounded the gold out of any place it might be found.

Within months, mining activity on the South Fork of the American River in Coloma expanded to include the Middle and North Forks, now a part of Auburn SRA. Although early mining created extensive environmental damage, the damage has since been diminished by natural processes.



*Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge, circa 1930s*

A rich array of historic and cultural features can be seen at the park. The Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge, an early concrete arched bridge, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Several historic bridges are still being used in remote areas. California’s highest bridge, the 730-foot Foresthill Bridge, lies within the park.

The hard rock tunnels on the Middle Fork of the American River were the earliest tunnels of this type constructed in California. Whitewater rafting through one of these tunnels at Tunnel Chute provides an unparalleled experience.

### **THE AUBURN DAM**

Flood control and water storage have been important issues since California’s statehood. When the Folsom Dam was built in the mid-1950s, a “companion” dam was planned for the ravines and gorges of the American River Canyon that comprise today’s Auburn SRA. In 1966 Congress authorized a dam at Auburn; construction was begun by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1967.

In the 1970s, concerns emerged about environmental, engineering, and earthquake risks, with rising costs associated with Auburn Dam. As a result, construction was halted in the early 1980s. Although no active construction work is taking place, the Auburn Dam remains a Congressionally authorized project. As an authorized project, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has funded California State Parks’ operation of Auburn SRA.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Auburn State Recreation Area has richly varied natural habitats.

**Riparian habitat**—White alders, willows, Fremont cottonwoods, and creek dogwoods line the rivers and streambanks.

**Chaparral and foothill woodland**—South-facing upper canyon walls support chaparral—small, drought-resistant trees and shrubs. Poison oak grows in the foothill woodlands community, as well as buckeyes, interior live oaks, blue oaks, manzanita, deer brush, and toyon.

**Mixed conifer**—Ponderosa pines, Douglas-fir, California black oaks, and madrone cover the north-facing upper canyon walls.

All habitats bloom in spring with acres of wildflowers such as monkey flowers, fiddleneck, Indian paintbrush, larkspur, lupine, and brodiaea.

**Park wildlife**—Black-tailed deer and rabbits can be seen during the daylight hours, while raccoons, opossums, gray foxes, and coyotes rule the night. Black bears, rattlesnakes, mountain lions, and bobcats live in the park. The riparian habitat hosts California quail and canyon wrens. Red-tailed hawks and bald eagles soar overhead, seeking their next meal.



## RECREATION

**Swimming and river touring**—River flows and levels are swift and unpredictable, so please use common sense and proper safety equipment. A wide variety of non-motorized boating opportunities can be found on the North and Middle Forks. The river's swift currents are not for beginners. The North Fork and Middle Fork range from a Class II float to a much more dangerous Class VI portage.

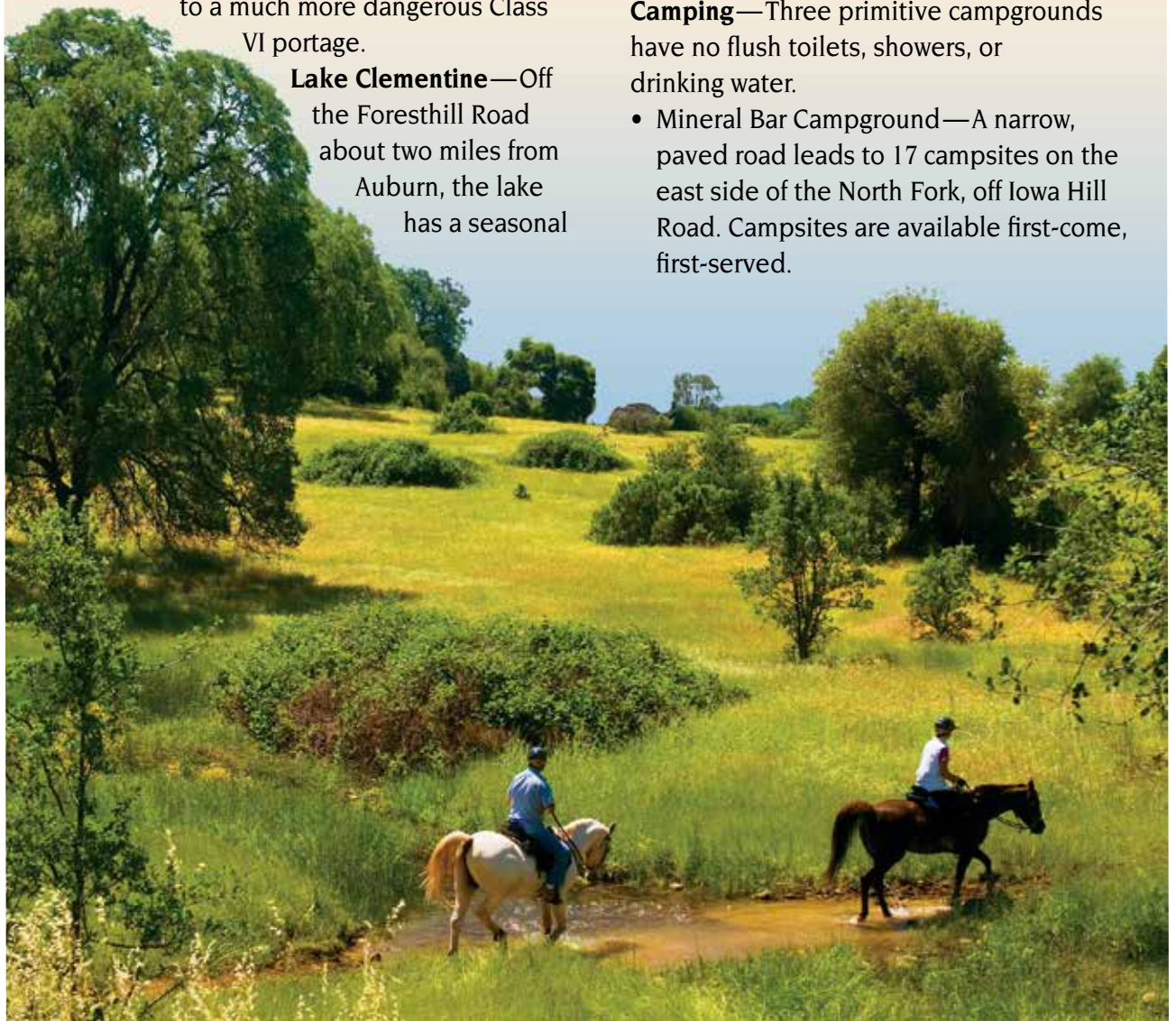
**Lake Clementine**—Off the Foresthill Road about two miles from Auburn, the lake has a seasonal

boat launch ramp, a marina, boat-in campsites, and a day-use swimming area at the upper end of the lake. Call (530) 885-4527 for current boating regulations.

**Fishing**—The Middle Fork is a good place to catch trout and bass. Fishing on the North Fork is only fair due to low flows during warm summers.

**Camping**—Three primitive campgrounds have no flush toilets, showers, or drinking water.

- Mineral Bar Campground—A narrow, paved road leads to 17 campsites on the east side of the North Fork, off Iowa Hill Road. Campsites are available first-come, first-served.





trails, is about 30 miles northeast of Sacramento in the foothills. Obtain a detailed Mammoth Bar brochure and a list of regulations on the park website, [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov), or at the park office, 501 El Dorado Street in Auburn. **Trails**—More than 100 miles of mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian trails cross the steep canyons and both forks of the American River. About 20 miles of the Western States Trail pass through the park; this trail

hosts the world renowned Tevis Cup 100-mile Endurance Horse Ride and the annual Western States 100 Endurance Run.

Major trailheads include the Auburn Horse Staging Area (on Pleasant Avenue in Auburn), the multi-use Quarry Trail (¼-mile south of the North Fork at Highway 49), the multi-use Olmstead Loop and connector at Cool (behind the fire station), and the multi-use Foresthill Divide Loop Trail.

For your safety, check trail usage signs at each trailhead or fork, and obey all trail regulations. A detailed trail map is available at the park office.

**Gold Panning**—Recreational gold panning is allowed only in permanent, running streambeds. All use of metal detectors is prohibited. Call (530) 885-4527 for specific information.

- **Ruck-A-Chucky Campground**—A 2.5-mile gravel/dirt road takes you to five primitive first-come, first-served sites on the Placer County side of the Middle Fork (Driver's Flat Road).
- **Lake Clementine Boat-in Campground**—Twenty primitive sites, reachable only by boat, have no vehicle access. Make reservations at (800) 444-7275 or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).
- **River Permit Camping**—Some areas outside of designated campgrounds are available for camping by special permit. Get information and permits at the Auburn SRA office. River camping permits are not available between July 1 and October 15.

**Off-highway recreation**—The Mammoth Bar Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area, with two MX tracks and 12 miles of motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Some accessible features (e.g., parking areas, restrooms, routes of travel) may meet current accessibility guidelines. Visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov> for updates.

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- Carry a trail map, and be aware of the park's steep canyons and extreme heat during the summer.
- All natural and cultural features of the park are protected by law and must not be removed or disturbed.
- Do not hike alone. Wear long pants and be alert for ticks.
- Watch out for mountain lions, rattlesnakes, and black bears.
- Poison oak grows throughout the park.
- Fires may be built only in fire rings provided and must be attended at all times.
- Pets must be under control and on a leash no longer than six feet. They must be enclosed in a tent or vehicle at night.

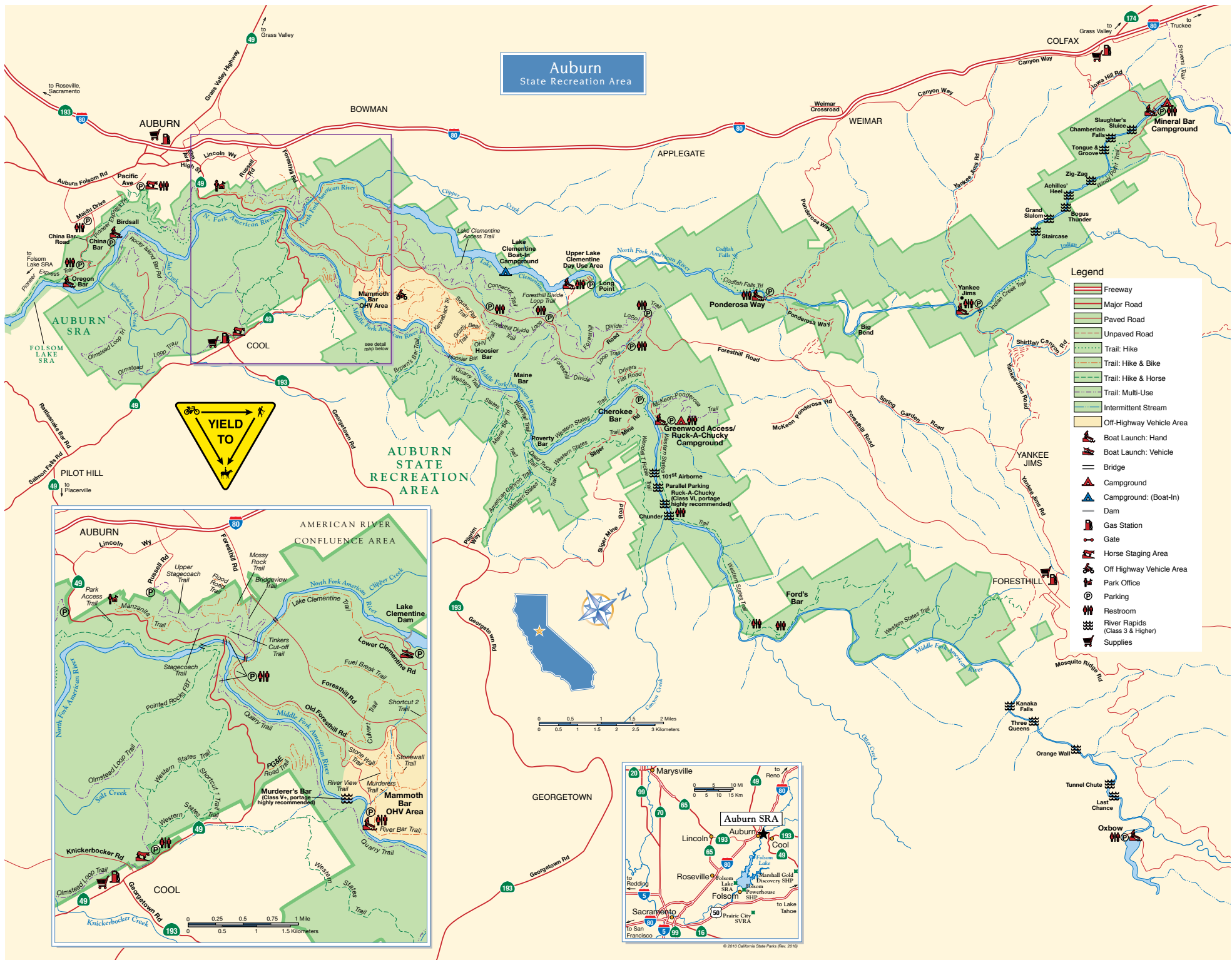


Poison oak

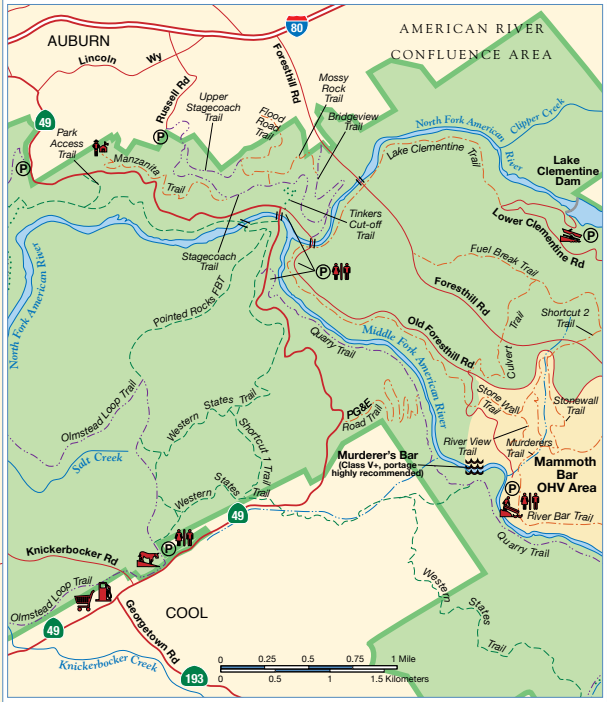
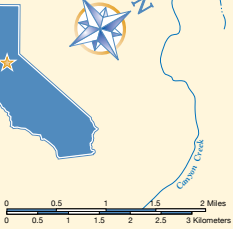
## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Folsom Lake State Recreation Area  
7806 Folsom-Auburn Road, Folsom 95630  
(916) 988-0205
- Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, 310 Back Street, Coloma 95613  
(530) 622-3470
- Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park  
9980 Greenback Lane  
Folsom 95630 (916) 988-0205

# Auburn State Recreation Area



- ### Legend
- Freeway
  - Major Road
  - Paved Road
  - Unpaved Road
  - Trail: Hike
  - Trail: Hike & Bike
  - Trail: Hike & Horse
  - Trail: Multi-Use
  - Intermittent Stream
  - Off-Highway Vehicle Area
  - Boat Launch: Hand
  - Boat Launch: Vehicle
  - Bridge
  - Campground
  - Campground: (Boat-In)
  - Gas Station
  - Gate
  - Horse Staging Area
  - Off Highway Vehicle Area
  - Park Office
  - Parking
  - Restroom
  - River Rapids (Class 3 & Higher)
  - Supplies



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