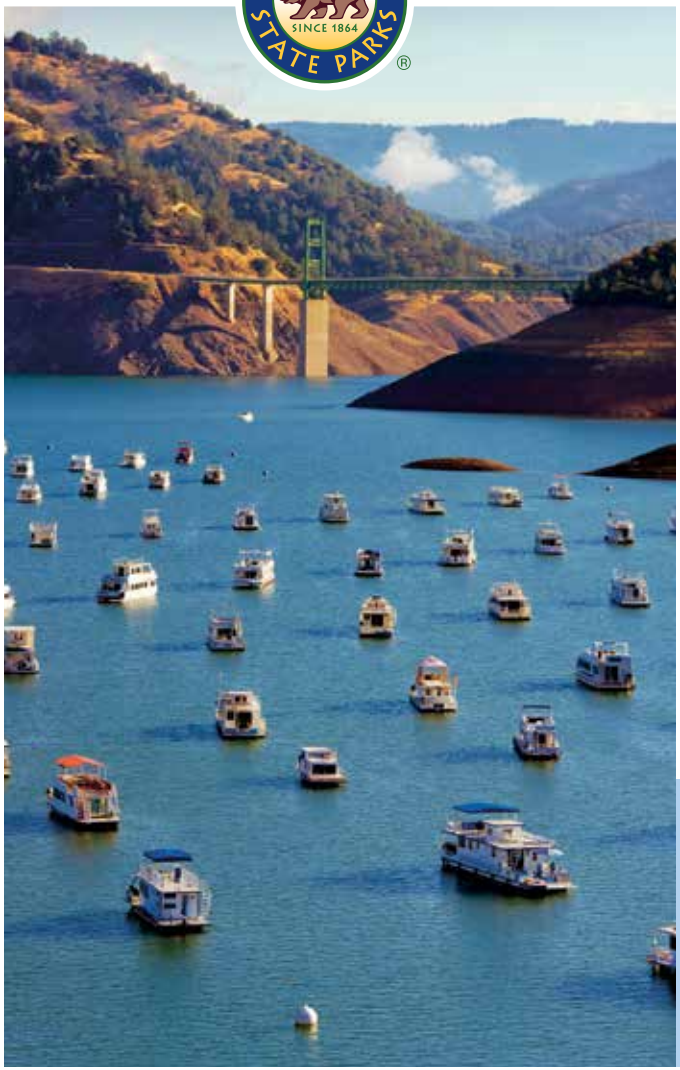
Lake Oroville
State Recreation Area



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) 538-2219**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

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Lake Oroville
State Recreation Area
400 Glen Drive
Oroville, CA 95966
(530) 538-2219

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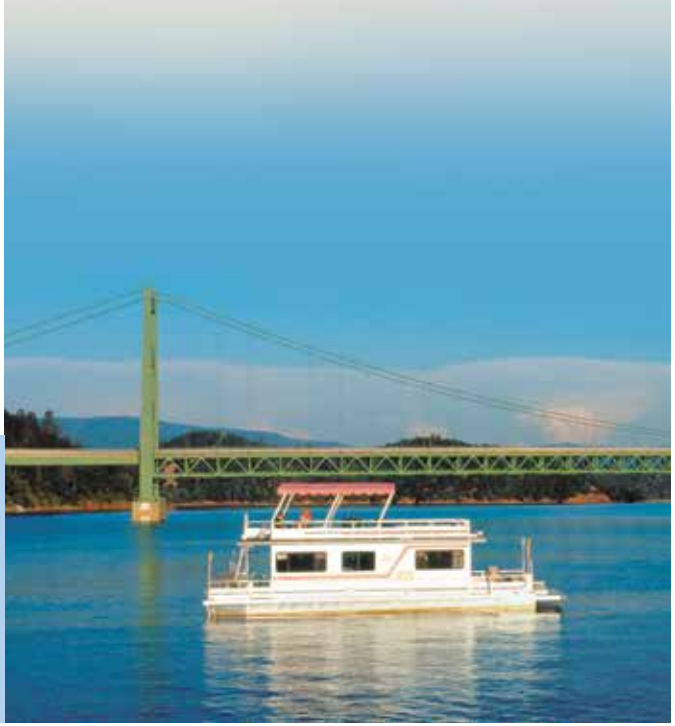
After the springtime snow runoff, take a trip up the middle fork of the Feather River to see the spectacular 640-foot Feather Falls. When the lake is high, you can boat to within a quarter-mile of the falls.



Lake Oroville State Recreation Area is located on the Feather River in the chaparral-oak-pine belt of northern mother-lode country. Lake Oroville, about 75 miles north of Sacramento, is the largest state reservoir in northern California.

The lake's climate varies with the seasons. Summer temperatures at the lower elevations range from 85 to 100 degrees and from 60 to 70 degrees in the evenings. It is cooler year-round at the higher elevations, with winter temperatures ranging from about 30 degrees to the mid-50s. Annual rainfall ranges from about 26 inches near the Thermalito Forebay to about 60 inches at higher elevations. Spring and fall are usually mild, with pleasant days and cooler evenings.

NATIVE PEOPLE

For thousands of years the Northwest Maidu people made this area home. A typical village might consist of a few families, or it might have 500 or more inhabitants. Often there was a "main" village with sweathouses and other common-use ceremonial buildings. The Maidu were hunters and gatherers. Acorns were their main food source, and nutritional variety came from large and small game, nuts, berries, seeds, and fish from what is now the Feather River. In 1820 Captain Luis Arguello was exploring the area and named the river *Río de las Plumas* (River of Feathers) because the sunlight reflecting on its surface resembled floating feathers.

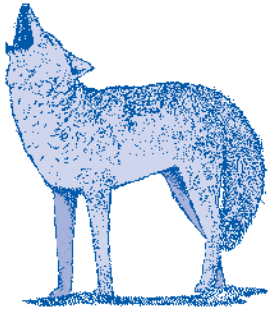
The lives of the Maidu were disrupted after the 1848 gold discovery. When the Feather River was found to be rich in gold, entrepreneurs and gold seekers flooded into the area, taking Maidu land and establishing several small mining towns. Most towns are now under the lake. A tent city named Ophir ("gold" in Hebrew) became the present city of Oroville. The newcomers also brought diseases to which the native people had no resistance, so their numbers dwindled. Today many Maidu people live on local rancherias, including those at Oroville and Chico.

Aerial view of Oroville Dam

THE DAM

In 1967 Lake Oroville was created by Oroville Dam, at 770 feet the nation's tallest earthen dam. The lake conserves water distributed by the State Water Project to homes, farms, and industries in the San Francisco Bay area, the San Joaquin Valley, and Southern California. Oroville's facilities provide flood control, smog-free generation of electric power, and recreation. At its maximum fill level of 900 feet, the lake includes some 15,500 surface acres for recreation; 167 miles of shoreline allow boaters to land and explore the surrounding country.

WILDLIFE



Coyote

An abundant, varied wildlife population inhabits the area of Lake Oroville. The resident species include mountain lions, raccoons, turkeys, opossums, coyotes, tree and ground squirrels, rabbits, deer, skunks, ringtails, bears, and many kinds of native birds.

THE VISITOR CENTER

A visitor center complex atop Kelly Ridge features interpretive displays, an audio-visual room with on-request videos, and a 47-foot viewing tower overlooking the lake and dam. To reach the visitor center, continue up Oroville Dam Boulevard beyond the dam turnoff, or take Kelly Ridge Road off Olive Highway. Restrooms are located in the courtyard.

RECREATION

Lake Oroville offers camping, boat-in camping, floating campsites, horse camping and horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, both sailing and power boating, waterskiing, fishing, picnicking, and swimming.

CAMPING

Please camp only in designated areas. Reservations are recommended from late spring through Labor Day. Reserve all campsites at **www.ReserveCalifornia.com**.

Loafer Creek—137 sites at the Coyote Campground can accommodate tents or trailers up to 31 feet and campers or motorhomes up to 40 feet (no hookups). Drinking water and restrooms, coin-operated showers, laundry tubs, and a launch ramp are nearby. An RV sanitation station is available. Six group sites accommodate up to 25 persons each; limit of eight vehicles per site. Larger groups may reserve more than one site.

One of the lake's floating campsites

Horse camping—**Loafer Creek Horse Camp** has 15 campsites, an accessible restroom with showers, pipe corrals, and horse exercise and washing stations.

Bloomer Horse Camp has three first-come, first-served seasonal campsites, with a vault toilet and no showers or running water. Check in at the Spillway kiosk before the ten-mile ride to camp.

Bidwell Canyon—75 sites with hookups accommodate trailers up to 31 feet and RVs up to 40 feet. Facilities include a lakeside marina with a launch ramp, store, snack bar, fuel dock, boat rental, and a pumping station for boat holding tanks.

Spillway—Shaded picnic sites and overnight camping for self-contained RVs are located at the north end of the dam. Drive across Oroville Dam to reach the facilities, which include a launch ramp and restrooms.

Lime Saddle—Hookup and non-hookup sites accommodate RVs. Features include a five-lane launch ramp, picnic facilities, and restrooms. The nearby marina offers boat docking, fuel, fishing boat rentals, boating supplies, a store, and snack bar.

Floating Campsites

You will need a boat—your own or a rental boat from the marina—to reach the ten 20' x 24' floating sites. Each site sleeps up to 15 people and has a camp table, sink, propane barbecue grill (propane provided), a lockable closet, an accessible restroom, a covered living area, an upper sun deck/sleeping area, and room for tents. Bring your own drinking water.

Boat-in Camps

Boat-in camping is first-come, first-served, and only in designated campsites identified by signs at beach areas around the lake. Ask directions to your camp at the park entrance or launching area. Each camp has six to twenty-six individual campsites; boat camps are located at **Craig Saddle**, **Foreman Point**, **Goat Ranch**, and the **Bloomer Primitive Area** at Bloomer Point—**Bloomer Knoll**, **Bloomer Cove**, and **Bloomer Group Camp**. The group camp accommodates up to 75 people. Sites have tables, stoves, pit toilets, and garbage cans. Bring your own drinking water.

PICNICKING AND BOATING

North Thermalito Forebay is reserved exclusively for sailboats, canoes, and other non-motorized boats. The shaded, grassy day-use areas have barbecue stoves and picnic tables near a 200-yard sandy swimming beach. Four shaded ramadas can be reserved for picnic groups. Piped drinking water and restrooms are nearby.

The Forebay Aquatic Center, at North Thermalito Forebay offers watercraft rentals and classes seasonally.

South Forebay has a paved launch ramp for fishing and power boats, parking, and restrooms, but no drinking water.

Loafer Creek Area has a seasonal swim beach and lawn area with 100 picnic sites.

Overnight boating is permitted, but boats must have self-contained sanitary facilities, and all waste and water outlets on board must be sealed. Use sanitation stations around the lake at the marinas.

Boat mooring is permitted except where posted otherwise; marina berths are leased by prior arrangement. Overnight camping on shore while boating is not permitted, with the exception of the boat-in campsites; however, boaters are welcome to go ashore for day use.

SWIMMING

The Loafer Creek Area and North Forebay near the Aquatic Center are the only designated swimming areas at the lake. **Lifeguard service is seasonal only**; do not allow children to swim unattended.

FISHING

Rainbow and German-brown trout, large- and smallmouth bass, black and spotted bass, and some catfish and salmon are caught here. All anglers over age 16 must carry a California sport fishing license. Shore and boat fishing are permitted in the North and South Forebays, but no motorized boats are allowed in the North. Do not fish or take your boat into the designated swim areas.

THE FEATHER RIVER FISH HATCHERY

The Department of Fish and Wildlife operates a two-part salmon and steelhead hatchery at 5 Table Mountain Blvd., Oroville 95965. Underwater windows in the barrier dam's observation area permit close-up viewing of the fish ladder during spawning.

At the fish hatchery building across the street, artificial spawning takes place in the autumn. To schedule guided group tours, please call (530) 534-2306 or visit **http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/fishing/hatcheries/feather-river**

The fishing is great year-round.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The visitor centers are accessible. The park's campgrounds, restrooms, picnic areas, marinas, and fish-cleaning stations all have accessible features. Some accessible sites with hookups may be reserved at Bidwell Canyon. The 5.5-mile bike trail is barrier-free, and four other trails offer some accessibility.

Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit **http://access.parks.ca.gov**.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Dumping—The dumping of waste or refuse in any of the area's water is prohibited at all times. Please help keep Lake Oroville clean. Sanitation stations and floating restrooms have been placed at strategic locations.

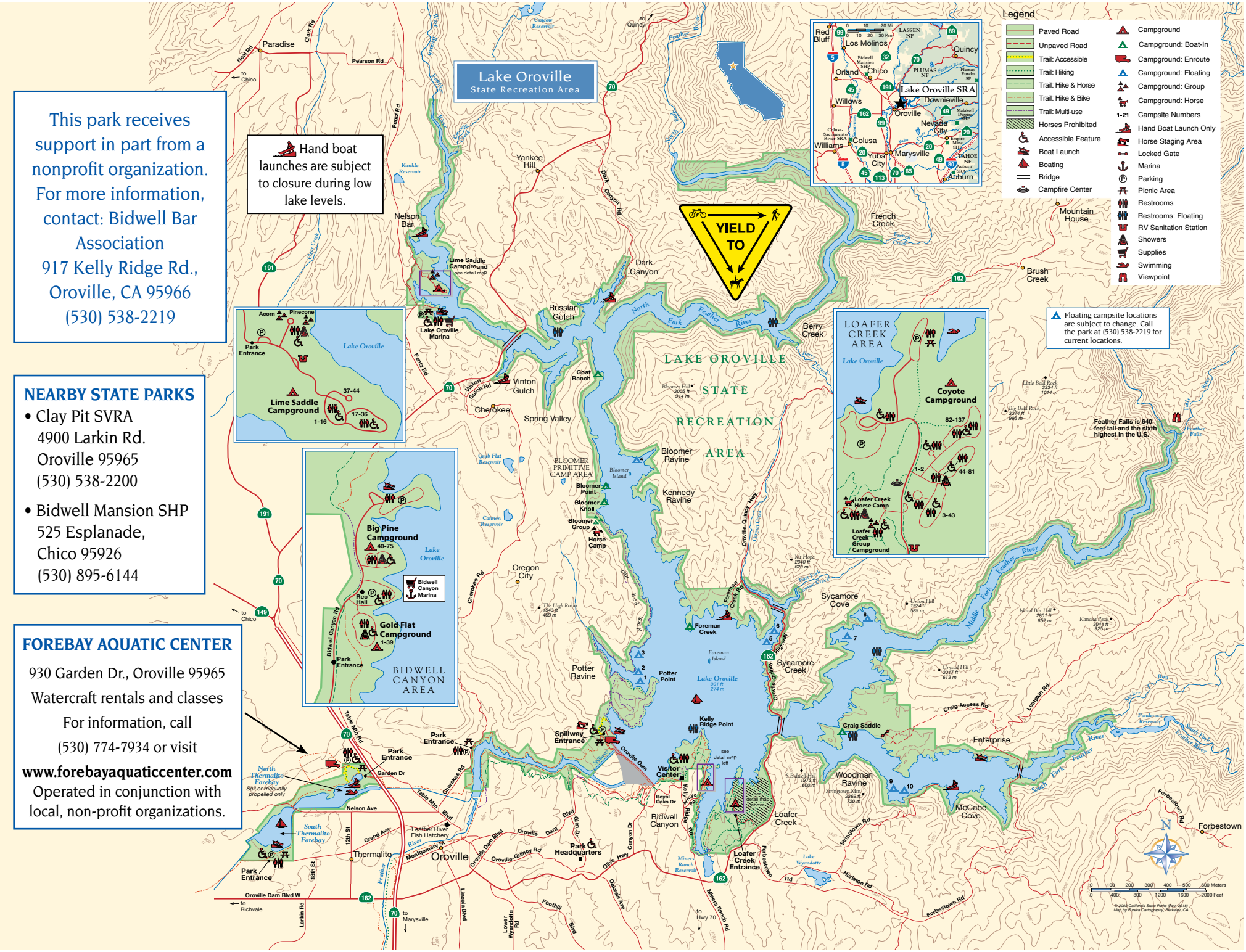
Driftwood—Because it is not part of the area's natural ecosystem, driftwood can be collected and used for fuel. It can be found in the lake and its tributaries or ashore between the actual lake level and the high-water mark.

BOATING

- **Boating rules**—All boaters should be familiar with boating rules and regulations. *The ABCs of California Boating* from the Division of Boating and Waterways may be found at any park entrance or marina or at **www.dbw.parks.ca.gov**.
- **Speed limits**—The speed limit is five miles per hour within 100 feet of a swimmer or 200 feet of any shore, boat-launching facility or designated mooring area. Water skiing is not permitted in the narrow upper reaches of the lake's tributaries.
- **Boating tips**—Floating logs and other driftwood are boating hazards, especially during the winter and spring when heavy rains wash dangerous debris into the lake.
- **Night boating**—Only boats equipped with the proper running lights may use the lake at night. The speed limit is five miles per hour when it is dark.
- **Securing boats**—If you leave your boat to go ashore, be sure to tie it up.
- **Lake level**—Lake level fluctuates daily throughout the year. Summer and fall draw down (lower); winter and spring rise. This change in surface level also changes the location of shoals near shore, so look for varying hazards.

CAMPING

- **Fires and fuel**—In hot weather, extreme fire hazard conditions exist; fires are permitted only in designated fire rings and barbecues within campsites. No ground fires. Call 911 or contact the nearest park employee to report a fire.
- **Firewood**—Dead wood (not driftwood) is a normal part of the park's ecosystem, so its collection and use are prohibited. Firewood can be purchased from camp hosts. Use propane- or gas-fueled camp stoves and charcoal-burning barbecues only within designated camping or day-use areas.


Lake Oroville
State Recreation Area
Legend
Paved Road
Unpaved Road
Trail: Accessible
Trail: Hiking
Trail: Hike & Horse
Trail: Hike & Bike
Trail: Multi-use
Horses Prohibited
Accessible Feature
Boat Launch
Boating
Bridge
Campfire Center
Campground
Campground: Boat-In
Campground: Enroute
Campground: Floating
Campground: Group
Campground: Horse
Campsite Numbers
Hand Boat Launch Only
Horse Staging Area
Locked Gate
Marina
Parking
Picnic Area
Restrooms
Restrooms: Floating
RV Sanitation Station
Showers
Supplies
Swimming
Viewpoint
YIELD TO
LAKE OROVILLE STATE RECREATION AREA
LOAFER CREEK AREA
BIDWELL CANYON AREA
BLOOMER PRIMITIVE CAMP AREA
Lime Saddle Campground
Coyote Campground
Big Pine Campground
Gold Flat Campground
Feather Falls is 640 feet tall and the sixth highest in the U.S.
Floating campsite locations are subject to change. Call the park at (530) 538-2219 for current locations.
Hand boat launches are subject to closure during low lake levels.
Paradise
Oroville
Thermalito
Forbestown
Mountain House
Brush Creek
French Creek
Berry Creek
Dark Canyon
Russian Gulch
Yankee Hill
Nelson Bar
Vinton Gulch
Cherokee
Spring Valley
Oregon City
Bloomer Ravine
Kennedy Ravine
Potter Ravine
Potter Point
Foreman Creek
Sycamore Cove
Sycamore Creek
Craig Saddle
Enterprise
Woodman Ravine
McCabe Cove
Loafer Creek
Bidwell Canyon
Kelly Ridge Point
Visitor Center
Spillway Entrance
Park Headquarters
Loafer Creek Entrance
Park Entrance
Lake Oroville Marina
Bidwell Canyon Marina
Rec Hall
Feather River Fish Hatchery
North Thermalito Forebay
South Thermalito Forebay
Sail or manually propelled only
Oroville Dam
Oroville Dam Blvd W
Table Mtn Blvd
Garden Dr
Nelson Ave
Grand Ave
Montgomery
Oroville-Quincy Rd
Olive Hwy
Foothill Blvd
Lincoln Blvd
Larkin Rd
Pentz Rd
Clark Rd
Neal Rd
Pearson Rd
Dark Canyon Rd
Cherokee Rd
Bidwell Canyon Rd
Lumpkin Rd
Craig Access Rd
Skyline Drive
Forbestown Rd
Hurleton Rd
Miners Ranch Rd
Lake Wyandotte
Lower Wyandotte Rd
Lake Wyandotte
Feather River
North Fork Feather River
Middle Fork Feather River
South Fork Feather River
Lake Oroville
to Chico
to Richvale
to Marysville
to Hwy 70
to Quincy
Red Bluff
Los Molinos
Orland
Chico
Willows
Colusa
Williams
Yuba City
Marysville
Oroville
Nevada City
Downieville
Quincy
Auburn
Lake Oroville SRA
LASSEN NF
PLUMAS NF
TAHOE NF
Bidwell Mansion SHP
Colusa-Sacramento River SRA
Plumas-Eureka SP
Malakoff Diggins SHP
Empire Mine SHP
Auburn SRA
Acorn
Pinecone
Park Entrance
37-44
17-36
1-16
1-2
44-81
3-43
82-137
40-75
1-39
Loafer Creek Horse Camp
Loafer Creek Group Campground
Bloomer Point
Bloomer Knoll
Bloomer Group
Horse Camp
Bloomer Island
Foreman Island
Lake Oroville 901 ft 274 m
Royal Oaks Dr
Miners Ranch Reservoir
Kunkle Reservoir
Concow Reservoir
Cresta Reservoir
Pentz Reservoir
Forbestown Reservoir
Grab Flat Reservoir
Carmen Reservoir
Little Bald Rock 3334 ft 1014 m
Big Bald Rock 3274 ft 998 m
Mt Hope 2040 ft 622 m
Union Hill 1924 ft 585 m
Island Bar Hill 2801 ft 852 m
Kanaka Peak 3044 ft 928 m
Crystal Hill 2017 ft 613 m
S. Bald Hill 1973 ft 600 m
Springtown Mtn 2369 ft 720 m
The High Rocks 1543 ft 469 m
Bloomer Hill 3000 ft 914 m
Lime Saddle Campground (see detail map)
Lake Oroville Marina (see detail map)
Bidwell Canyon Marina (see detail map)
Loafer Creek Entrance (see detail map)
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