

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.



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Discover the many states of California.™

Auburn State Recreation Area

501 El Dorado Street

Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 885-4527



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*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 in 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 low-40s. Dress in layers, and bring rain gear 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. The surviving descendants of area

Nisenan are working toward Federal recognition for their tribe.

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 expanded from the Coloma site on the South Fork to 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.

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 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.



Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge, circa 1930s

THE AUBURN DAM

Flood control and water storage have been important issues since California 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.

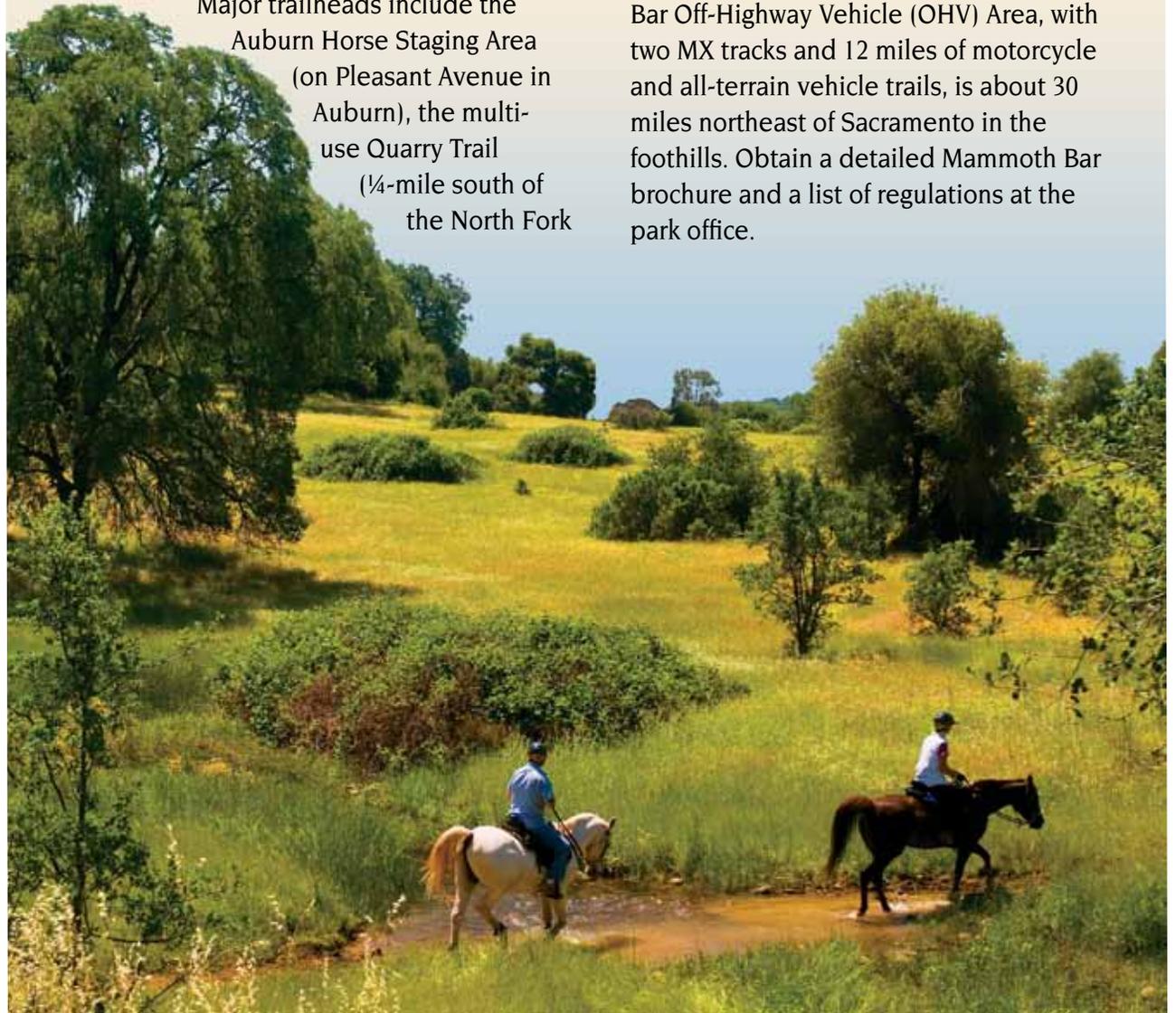
Park Wildlife—Black-tailed deer and rabbits can be seen during the daylight hours, while raccoons, opossums, gray foxes and coyotes rule the night. Black bears, rattlesnakes, mountain lions and bobcats live in the park. The riparian habitat hosts California quail and canyon wrens. Red-tailed hawks and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



RECREATION

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.

Off-Highway Recreation—The Mammoth Bar Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area, with two MX tracks and 12 miles of motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle trails, is about 30 miles northeast of Sacramento in the foothills. Obtain a detailed Mammoth Bar brochure and a list of regulations at the park office.





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 the Iowa Hill Road. Campsites are available first-come, first-served.
- Ruck-a-Chucky Camp-

ground—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.
- 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.

Gold Panning—Recreational gold panning is allowed only in permanent, running streambeds. There are special restrictions on use of metal detectors. Call the park for specific information.

Swimming and Whitewater Activities—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 and canyon scenery are breathtaking, but 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. For a detailed river touring map, contact the Whitewater Recreation Office at (530) 885-4162 or visit <http://american.parks.ca.gov/auburn/whitewater>.

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 boating regulations.

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.



NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, 7806 Folsom-Auburn Road, Folsom (916) 988-0205
- Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, 310 Back Street, Coloma (530) 622-3470
- Empire Mine State Historic Park, 10791 E. Empire Street, Grass Valley (530) 273-8522

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