

Plumas-Eureka State Park



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation 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) 836-2380. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

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Plumas-Eureka State Park
310 Johnsville Road
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(530) 836-2380

*This unique park offers
a look at the ecological
wonders of the high
Sierra and a glimpse of
the cultural history of the
California Gold Rush.*



*A*t Plumas-Eureka

State Park, 7,447-foot Eureka Peak juts above the wooded timberline. High on the glacier-scored peaks of the Sierra Nevada, the rugged park sits at the foot of the granite formation once called “Gold Mountain.”

Winter temperatures range from 20 to 40 degrees. Springtime is usually wet. Summer temperatures range from 75 degrees to the low 40s. Weather changes quickly; dress in layers.

PARK HISTORY

Native People

For thousands of years, the Northern Maidu inhabited the Feather River region's forested ridges, high lakes and green valleys. They settled along the edges of valleys and migrated into the mountains to hunt or gather roots and seeds during the warm seasons. Talented craftspeople, they wove coiled and twined baskets to store dried meat, seeds and ground acorns necessary for winter survival. Maidu women created exquisite beadwork, highly sought-after for trade and adornment.

The Maidu remained relatively isolated until 1851, when miners discovered gold on an exposed quartz ledge high on the slopes of Eureka Peak. Diseases, destruction of native food and plant resources and



Eureka Lake

violence at the hands of European settlers rapidly reduced the native population. Many Maidu were eventually employed as laborers by white ranchers or miners. Today, Maidu descendants still follow the language, religious customs, basketry techniques and other practices of their ancestors.

Gold Mining

The 1848 gold discovery at John Sutter's sawmill in Coloma brought scores of thousands of would-be prospectors to California. Gold fever came to Plumas when several miners

struck gold on Eureka Peak. Thirty-six miners joined together to form the Eureka Company; other small mining companies quickly formed to work the area's rich veins.

Several area townsites formed to accommodate the miners. Jamison City began as a tent city in 1853, and the more refined Johnsville was founded in 1876.

Eureka Mills sprang up on Eureka Peak around the same time.

As surface gold deposits diminished, smaller mining companies closed for lack of capital. In 1872 a British company

purchased the Plumas Eureka mines, consolidating and further developing mining operations. A new stamp mill replaced two older mills, tunnels were enlarged, and new machinery purchased. The Plumas Eureka mines operated profitably until the 1890s, and in 1904 the British company sold them. Operations slowly tapered off, and during World War II, the U.S. government passed the War Production Board Limitation Order, effectively ending all mining operations. By then, the Mohawk Stamp Mill had processed more than \$8 million in gold from the mine's 65 miles of tunnels.

A NEW WINTER SPORT

In the winter, heavy snows inspired miners to organize snowshoe races. The first race took place in Plumas County in 1861—the first recorded ski competition in the western hemisphere. Snowshoes, or “longboards,” were 12-foot Norwegian-style skis that weighed as much as 20 pounds. Skiers had one long, large ski pole carried between the legs as a brake. On the straight courses, racers reached speeds of more than 80 mph.

Skiing became a way of life for sport and travel. Some historians think the tramways for the Plumas Eureka Mine may have been the world's first ski lifts.



Longboard racers



Historic area

PLUMAS-EUREKA TODAY

The park's historic structures testify to the area's colorful history and the epic search for gold. The mineshafts and tunnels are sealed off. Ruins of the tramway are still visible on the hillside. The Mohawk Mill has been partially restored, and the former miners' bunkhouse now houses the park museum and offices.

NATURAL HISTORY

The park's dense forest is composed of white fir, Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, Jeffrey pine, lodgepole pine and incense cedar. Red fir, mountain hemlock and western white pine grow at higher elevations. Stands of willow, alder and black cottonwood grow along Jamison Creek, Madora and Eureka Lakes, and other wet areas. Dry, rocky regions are covered with manzanita, chinquapin and ceanothus. Spring and summer wildflowers, including leopard lilies and columbines, provide splashes of color.

Visitors might spot a golden eagle perched in a tree on Eureka Peak. Black bears, foxes,

mountain lions, porcupines, deer and bobcats live in more remote areas. Nuthatches, mountain chickadees, western tanagers and other Sierra birds fill the air with their songs.

RECREATION

Museum—The museum in the historic miners' bunkhouse has natural history exhibits, archaeological finds, mining artifacts, a working scale model of the stamp mill, and hands-on exhibits for children. It also houses the camp store and park headquarters. The museum and camp store are open from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, with limited hours year-round.

Tours/Events—During living history days, costumed docents demonstrate life in a historic mining town. In the summer, tour the Moriarity House and learn how a miner's family lived more than 100 years ago. Tours accommodate eight persons at a time—sign up at the museum. Docents and staff conduct summertime blacksmithing demonstrations and tours of the mine

buildings. Ask about guided hikes, nature walks, and other activities.

Fishing—Jamison Creek, which flows through the park, occasionally yields trout. Other lakes and streams in the area offer rewarding angling.

Camping—Jamison Creek has 67 campsites with picnic tables, fire rings and bear-proof food lockers. Piped drinking water, restrooms, and hot showers are nearby. Sites accommodate trailers up to 24 feet and motor homes up to 28 feet. Reservations are recommended from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Call 800-444-7275 or make reservations online at www.parks.ca.gov. The campground closes from October through late spring.

Winter Recreation

Enjoy the solitude of several cross-country ski or snowshoe loops. The annual Longboard Revival Race series takes place at the historic Plumas-Eureka Ski Bowl. At this event, hosted by the nonprofit Plumas Ski Club, contestants wearing 1860s attire race downhill on 9- to 16-foot wooden skis.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Accessible camping and picnicking are available. The visitor center/office structure is historic but generally accessible, with a restroom that is usable.

Accessibility is constantly improving. For current accessibility details, call the park at (530) 836-2380 or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Dogs must be under control and on a leash no longer than 6 feet at all times. They may not be left unattended, and must be in a tent or vehicle at night.
- Dogs are not permitted on most trails within the park.
- Do not feed the wildlife in the park; secure all foodstuffs and toiletries in the food locker provided in your campsite.

This park receives support from
 Plumas-Eureka State Park Association
 P.O. Box 1148,
 Graeagle, CA 96103
www.plumas-eureka.org



Bear cubs

