

Folsom Lake

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 (916) 988-0205. This publication can be made available in alternate formats. Contact interp@parks.ca.gov or call (916) 654-2249.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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Discover the many states of California.™

**Folsom Lake
State Recreation Area
7755 Folsom-Auburn Road
Folsom, CA 95630
(916) 988-0205**

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*Folsom Lake's
miles of shoreline and
waterside trails attract
millions of boaters,
equestrians, cyclists and
hikers each year.*



Folsom Lake State Recreation Area offers

scenic panoramas of open grasslands, rolling hills, the Sierra Nevada, Sacramento Valley and the Bay Area's Mount Diablo.

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area

covers 19,500 acres. Its two reservoirs, Folsom and Natoma, attract about two million visitors annually.

The climate dictates dressing in layers. For hot summers, dress lightly, wear a hat, and use sun block. In winter, fog brings a chill. Spring and fall offer warm days with cooler evenings and nights.

PARK HISTORY

Native People

For thousands of years, the land near Folsom Lake belonged to the Southern Maidu or Nisenan ("from among us"). The Nisenan lived in temporary summer shelters made from peeled tree bark. In winter they dwelled in permanent villages on the American River. These villages had community buildings, including a *kum* ceremonial and guest structure.

The Nisenan traded with other native groups, exchanging local acorns for black oak acorns, manzanita berries and sugar pine nuts. Coastal people traded with the Nisenan for oyster shells, shell beads and basket materials. The Nisenan are still known worldwide for their woven baskets made from



Scenic views

willow, redbud, tule, milkweed, sedge grass and native grapevines.

After the 1848 gold discovery, most of the Nisenan lands were given away as part of a land grant. The native people were overwhelmed by the loss of their food sources and by diseases like smallpox. The Nisenan people were nearly decimated, but today their descendants live in nearby communities or on reservations.

FOLSOM DAM

Folsom Lake was created in 1955 by the construction of Folsom Dam, a concrete dam flanked by earth wing dams and dikes, with a total length of about nine miles. The shoreline extends about 15 miles up the forks of the American River. Lake level normally varies from 460 feet in early spring to less than 400 feet by summer. Downstream, behind Nimbus Dam, smaller Lake Natoma has about 500 surface acres of water. Built by the Bureau of Reclamation as part of California's Central Valley Project, Nimbus and Folsom Dams control the waters of the American River and provide flood protection, household water supply, power and irrigation.

THE FOLSOM POWERHOUSE

Nearby Folsom Powerhouse was built to harness the water power of the American River at the original Folsom Dam, completed by Folsom Prison laborers in 1893. The Powerhouse landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a state historic park.

PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

Blue oaks, interior live oaks, foothill pines and annual grasses dot the open woodlands. In the spring, blooming wildflowers include Indian paintbrush, larkspur, lupine, brodiaea, fiddleneck, dutchman's pipe and monkey flower.

Black-tailed deer, raccoons, skunks, opossums, gray foxes and coyotes are often seen in the park. Mountain lions and bobcats may occasionally be seen. Beavers and river otters live in the Mormon Island Wetlands, a perfect area for bird watching.

Nesting egrets, herons and cormorants may be observed from the Willow Creek access. Year-round residents include Canada geese, blackbirds, scrub jays, quail, wrens, bushtits and towhees. Wrentits and California thrashers sing in the chamise-chaparral. Look for kingfishers and grebes near the water. Red-tailed hawks, kestrels, ospreys and eagles might be seen soaring over the lake.



Folsom Lake and Dam

RECREATION

Fishing—Folsom Lake waters hold trout, catfish, largemouth and smallmouth bass, perch and kokanee salmon. A valid California fishing license is required. Lake Natoma's accessible pier and fishing platform is at Nimbus Flat.

Boating—Launching facilities are located at several places around the lake (see map for details). The marina at Brown's Ravine also features boat slips, a towing service, a gas dock and snack bar.

CAUTION: Boaters should be alert or floating debris. Watch carefully for underwater hazards, especially when the lake level lowers in summer.

Camping

Peninsula Campground—A hundred family campsites—some accessible—accommodate trailers up to 18 feet and motor homes up to 24 feet. A sanitation station is provided. No site hookups are available. Accessible flush toilets, hot showers and piped drinking water are available. Two launch ramps and a day-use area are near this secluded campground at the end of the Peninsula between the north and south forks of the American River. Reach the area by boat or drive ten miles

Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Aquatic Center



Windsurfing on Folsom Lake

south from the town of Pilot Hill on Highway 49.

Beals Point Campground—Just north of Folsom Dam, 49 family campsites accommodate trailers and motor homes up to 31 feet. Hookup sites and a sanitation station are available. Piped drinking water and wheelchair-accessible restrooms with hot showers are available.



Horseback riding trails at Folsom Lake

Negro Bar Group Campsites—On the north shore of Lake Natoma, three group campsites are available. Two can accommodate up to 50 people each and one can accommodate up to 25 people.

Reservations—Reserve campsites at all campgrounds by calling (800) 444-7275 or visiting www.parks.ca.gov.

Boat Camping—You may camp overnight aboard your self-contained sailboat or powerboat only in designated mooring areas.

Obtain a map of the mooring areas when registering for boat camping at the Granite Bay entrance station or the marina at Brown's Ravine. If no one is available when you arrive, contact park headquarters. Your boat must have self-contained sanitary and gray-water systems with sleeping accommodations for all aboard. You may camp ashore at the Peninsula Campground only in a designated campsite. Beach the bow of your boat and anchor off the stern. A secure tie-up is essential, as the wind may rise during the night. Boat camping is limited to two consecutive nights.

Picnicking—Family picnic sites are located at Nimbus Flat and Negro Bar on Lake Natoma, and at Beals Point, Granite Bay, the Peninsula area, and Folsom Point on Folsom Lake. Beals Point, Nimbus Flat and Peninsula have accessible picnic tables, restrooms and parking. All sites have barbecues; bring your own charcoal.

The group picnic area at Granite Bay holds up to 200 people. Reserve by calling (916) 988-0205.

Horseback Riding—Horse trailers can unload and park



Lake Natoma accessible picnic area



Nimbus Dam

at several equestrian staging areas. Granite Bay has hitching rails, a water trough, and chemical toilets.

Other staging areas are located at Negro Bar, Rattlesnake Bar, Brown's Ravine, Old Salmon Falls, Falcon Crest and Sterling Pointe.

Trails—The park has 95 miles of trails for hikers, bicyclists, runners and horseback riders. The trail system includes a portion of the Western States/ Pioneer Express Trail between Sacramento and Carson City, Nevada. Oaks Nature Trail is designated as accessible.

A paved, mostly accessible bicycle trail loops around Lake Natoma, linking to Beals Point and the American River Bike Trail.

Darrington Trail is a popular mountain bike trail on the south fork of Folsom Lake, near Salmon Falls.

Beach/Shore Access—Call to reserve a beach wheelchair for two hours at the Beals Point or Granite Bay day-use areas.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Accessibility in California State Parks is continually improving. For specific details, visit www.access.parks.ca.gov.

EXHIBITS/PROGRAMS

The American River Water Education Center interprets water conservation and the American River Watershed. For information call (916) 989-7100 and tours call (916) 989-7132 or see www.usbr.gov/mp/arwec.

AQUATIC CENTER

The Sacramento State Aquatic Center offers boat rentals and boating safety classes. The facility is cooperatively operated by California State Parks, Associated Students of California State University

Sacramento, and the Department of Boating and Waterways. Call (916) 278-2842 or visit www.sacstateaquaticcenter.com for schedules.



Canoeing at Lake Natoma

Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Aquatic Center

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Folsom Powerhouse SHP
9980 Greenback Lane
Folsom 95630
(916) 985-4843
- Auburn SRA
501 El Dorado St. Auburn 95602
(530) 885-4527

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Grass, brush and trees become tinder-dry. Wildfires are a serious threat. Fires are allowed only in the camp stoves or fire rings provided.
- Poison oak is present throughout the park. Even when dormant, poison oak can cause a serious rash.
- Rattlesnakes, mountain lions or bobcats may be present in the park. Do not walk alone in isolated areas. Report sightings to park staff.
- Floating debris, an uneven lake bottom, and rock outcroppings are hazards for boaters and swimmers. Swim only in designated areas. No diving is permitted.
- All cultural and natural features are protected by law and may not be disturbed or removed.



Poison Oak

This park receives support in part from a nonprofit organization.

For more information, contact
Friends of Lake Folsom and Natoma
PO Box 257, Orangevale, CA 95662
www.folfan.org

