

Trail Information

This self-guided tour is a two-mile round trip that takes approximately an hour. We ask that you respect the natural and cultural resources by leaving them undisturbed. The historical significance of this area is priceless. The entire northern trail is an 11-mile round trip hike. (Biking and other recreation activities will be evaluated during the development of a comprehensive, long-term management plan.) Visitors must bring plenty of water and wear good hiking boots. The first three miles of the trail are relatively level and of moderate difficulty, while the last 2½ miles are arduous, with steep grades exceeding 20 percent. Plants are characteristic of riparian habitat – willows, maple, alder, ferns and nettle. Access by guided hikes to the southern part of the Reserve is available May 15 through November 15, with wet weather restrictions. Call the Arcata Field Office for reservations.



Bureau of Land Management
Arcata Field Office
1695 Heindon Road
Arcata California 95521-4573
(707) 825-2300
<http://www.ca.blm.gov/arcata>

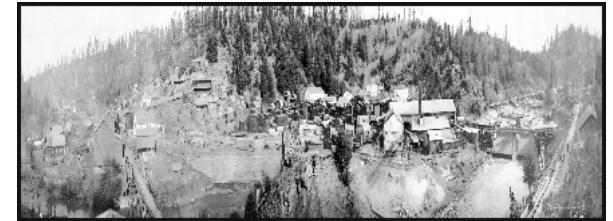
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History of Falk

Just a mile from this parking area, the town of Falk thrived for 50 years. The town was founded by Noah Falk, one of the thousands who emigrated to California from the eastern United States, seeking a quick fortune in the gold fields. Falk left Ohio and arrived in San Francisco in 1854, but unlike the gold miners, he was lured to the “redwood gold” of the North Coast, where he worked 30 years in the lumber mills. In 1884 he built his own lumber mill – the Falk mill – and an entire town to support its workers in this isolated site. The town soon grew to 400 inhabitants. Life in Falk was hard. The men toiled 12 hours a day, six days a week turning out milled lumber. It was shipped on the Bucksport and Elk River Railroad to the town of Bucksport, located where the Bayshore Mall is today. The women often tended large gardens and livestock. The townsfolk took a break from their labor on Saturday nights, when an orchestra from Eureka often entertained at the Falk dance hall. The town thrived until 1937, when the mill was shut down due to the Great Depression. From the 1940s to the 1970s, Falk was a ghost town. Bottle hunters sifting through the town’s remains and people living in the abandoned buildings became a liability concern for the Elk River Lumber Company, which owned the townsite. To resolve the problem, the company razed the buildings in 1979.



Falk Historic Logging Town



Self-Guided Tour



Please Return to Brochure Box



1 You are now standing in front of an historic orchard. The trees are predominantly cherry and plum. When the mill shut down each winter, Falk residents had to be self sufficient. They planted orchards and gardens, and preserved their harvests to sustain them through the winter. The land along the trail had been cleared and used for agricultural purposes, so many of the original tree re-sprouts you now see are less than 20 years old.

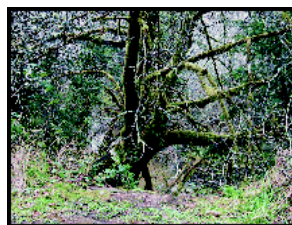


2 The column-shaped trees are English yew. These trees were planted in front of residences for decorative purposes. Until the 1970's, Loleta and Charlie Webb were the official caretakers of Falk.

Behind you stood a barn and a small pasture where Loleta kept her cows. Behind the yew trees, on top of the stump, are the remnants of their water tank. Charlie was reputed to chase off trespassers with a rock salt-loaded shotgun.



3 Remnants of giant redwoods are found along the trail. They were logged as early as 150 years ago. Notice the large notch at the top of the stump. Sawyers used giant 2-person handsaws to cut the trees, as they had no chain saws in those days. The notches held spring boards for the sawyers to stand on while cutting. The loggers worked all day to cut one tree down. They earned about \$3 a day. The younger trees forming the circular pattern around the large stump are actually sprouts originating from the stump.



4 Behind the alder grove is a large log pole on which is nailed a piece of wood. This is the remnant of a trestle. Trestles were used as bridges to cross the rivers or maintain level grades for the railroad. Leaning up against the hillside is an intact portion of this trestle. As you continue down the trail to the mill site, notice domestic plants such as ivy, roses and holly that once grew around houses concentrated on the hillside in the immediate area.



5 This is the site of the Falk mill. Houses and the cookhouse stretched along the hillside. This area held the town's concentrated population of 400 people. When the site was abandoned it became a virtual ghost town. Some of the timber used to build the mill was salvaged.

The train was used not only to haul lumber for the mill, but it was the primary means of transportation for families to take shopping excursions, to send children to school, and for the residents to go into town to socialize. The tracks were removed in the 1950's.



6 Old-timers say this was once home to a Falk employee. The "door" was enlarged...notice the axe marks. A bed and table were said to grace this home. The employee most likely stayed here in the summer months during the working season. A Sitka spruce tree now grows through the stump.