

Welcome to the Sacramento River Rail Trail

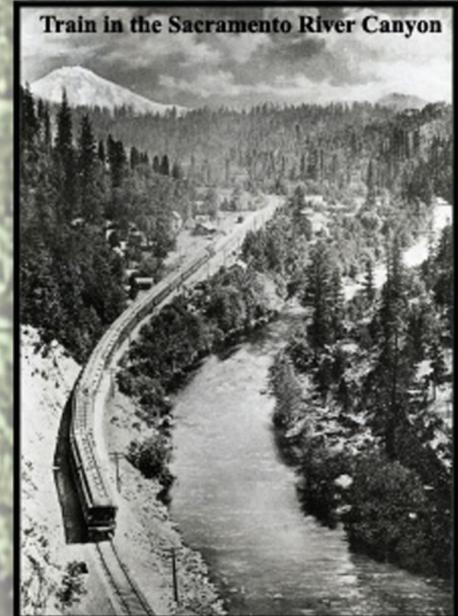


Welcome to the Sacramento River Rail Trail. Take a leisurely stroll down the wide and level trail or paddle your canoe across the glassy surface of the Keswick Reservoir as you enjoy the views of Shasta Dam and Mount Shasta.

Whether you walk, pedal, or paddle, watch carefully for osprey and otters fishing for a snack in the reservoir. If you step quietly you may be lucky enough to see a jackrabbit or gray fox dart across the trail.

If it's fishing your heart desires, look no further than Keswick Reservoir, which is home to wild trout, including German browns and rainbows. Anglers can access the reservoir via boat at the Keswick boat launch off of Iron Mountain Road. Opportunities abound for bank fishing all along the reservoir.

This guide is provided to assist in planning your trip to this beautiful area. Join us in exploring, enjoying and protecting the public lands around the Sacramento River Rail Trail.



Train in the Sacramento River Canyon

Historic Photo provided by Shasta Historic Society

Rails to Trails

In 1949, the railroad was purchased by the Bureau of Reclamation. The rail line was officially abandoned in 1980. Rails, ties, signals, telegraph wires and poles were removed for salvage.

By then, many community members had a vision of a recreational link between Redding and Shasta Dam. The vision came to reality with a partnership between the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Forest Service, California Department of Forestry, Shasta County, City of Redding, and the McConnell Foundation. On June 1, 2002, the Sacramento River Rail Trail and the Sacramento River Trail were designated as National Recreation Trails in the National Trail System.



Rail Tunnel

One-half mile north of Motion Creek sits a prominent, 500-foot-long railroad tunnel. It was excavated during the construction of the railroad in the 1800s, and reinforced with concrete in 1923. The tunnel curves slightly, such that one end cannot be seen from the other, but there is sufficient daylight to illuminate the entire passage for crossing. A tunnel bypass trail is also available on the east side of the tunnel.

Road of a Thousand Wonders

Years before the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, engineers from the Central Pacific Railroad surveyed a route to unite the California and Oregon Pacific rail lines. They discovered that the Sacramento River had carved a relatively gentle route to its headwaters, where many mountain ranges converge.

In 1872, the Pacific Railroad reached the level land before entering the Sacramento River Canyon and construction stalled due to financial troubles. Nevertheless, it did not prevent the founding of a town site which was named Redding, after the railroad's land agent, B.B. Redding. The Central Pacific Railroad, builder of the western portion of the transcontinental railroad, resumed work northward from Redding in 1883. An estimated two thousand workers, all but about 200 of whom were Chinese, began carving the railroad out of the canyon walls with picks and shovels. Grading and construction of masonry culverts preceded the track laying. Skilled masons were brought from Europe to build the stone culverts and walls visible along the trail. Chinese workers graded the road beds, drilled and blasted rock, laid ballast, ties and rails.

A reorganization of the railroad in 1885 transferred the operation of this route to Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1887 the rails built north from California and south from Oregon were united with a ceremonial last spike in Ashland, Oregon. By 1888, express trains ran between Portland and Oakland in 38 hours.

The course through the Sacramento River Canyon became known as the Shasta Route and was touted in railroad literature as the "Road of a Thousand Wonders." The Shasta Route was the scenic highlight of the 1,300-mile journey between Los Angeles and Portland.

Trail Use

Following the course of Keswick Reservoir and the old rail line, the Sacramento River Rail Trail will soon connect Redding to Shasta Dam. The nine-mile trail is open year-round to horseback riders, hikers, joggers, and bicyclists. The trail has a nearly flat gravel and dirt surface.



Sacramento River Rail Trail at Keswick Boat Ramp

Trailheads are located at Iron Mountain Road (Rock Creek Road junction), Keswick Boat Ramp, Matheson and near the Chappie-Shasta OHV Staging Area west of Shasta Dam. Free parking is available at all trailheads.

Off-highway vehicles share the trail between the gates at Matheson. Please take special precautions when traveling through this area. Motorized vehicles are prohibited beyond this section.

Firearms and fireworks are prohibited on the trail and developed sites. For information on hunting opportunities near this area, please contact the BLM Redding Field Office.

Dogs are welcome, but please keep dogs on leash at developed sites such as parking lots and boat ramps. They may be off-leash in open space and on trails, provided that they are under control at all times. Please dispose of your dog's waste in a garbage can.

Plants and Wildlife

Move quietly along the trail and you may see otters and turtles basking in the sun at the edges of the reservoir, or a gray fox, coyote, or bobcat sneaking across the trail in search of a meal. If you are near the reservoir, see if you can find otter tracks like the ones seen above. Look to the sky for osprey scanning the reservoir for fish. Wildlife viewing opportunities are around every corner. Remember that even seemingly harmless animals can be dangerous if they feel threatened; please enjoy wildlife without touching, feeding, or moving too close.



River Otter

The bushes in this area - with red, smooth bark and stiff, leathery evergreen leaves - are called manzanita. Manzanita blooms in late spring, with clusters of tiny pale pink flowers. Virtually all of the vegetation in this area was destroyed by smelters (for melting mining ore) during the mining booms at the turn of the 19th century; manzanita was the first plant to return. As the area continues to recover over time, more vegetation will grow, including pine, fir and oak trees.

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is a national program that strives to educate visitors about their recreational impacts and techniques to prevent and minimize such impacts on America's public lands. For more information, go to www.LNT.org or call (800) 332-4100.

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impact
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate to other visitors



Keswick Reservoir

Warning! Mine Pollution

The Spring Creek Reservoir, west of the Keswick Boat Ramp, is closed to the public due to mining runoff waste. Please stay clear of this area for your personal health and safety.

Impact of Shasta Dam

The Sacramento River Canyon remained the main line of the Southern Pacific Shasta Route until the building of Shasta Dam. Construction of the dam began in 1938, and a new mainline was built to the east of the canyon route. On May 23, 1942, the last train traveled through this part of the Sacramento River Canyon. The track between Redding and Shasta Dam was retained as a branch line while the rest of the old mainline was inundated by Shasta Lake.

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) offers tours of Shasta Dam; call the Bureau of Reclamation for tour availability.

Shasta Dam Access

Access across Shasta Dam is regulated due to Homeland Security measures, but an annual permit may be obtained. For more information, contact the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) seven business days in advance at (530) 275-4253. To download a permit application from the web, visit the BOR website at www.usbr.gov/mp/ncao.

Camping & Campfires

Camping is available at the Shasta Campground, located at the west side of Shasta Dam, next to the Chappie-Shasta OHV Staging Area. For more information, please contact the Shasta-Trinity National Forest at (530) 275-1589.

Campfires are allowed at the Shasta Campground with a California Campfire Permit. Campfires are prohibited on the trail and the surrounding areas. Obtain a free, yearly campfire permit at any BLM, Forest Service, or CDF office.

BLM/CA/GI-2006-003 + 8350
www.ca.blm.gov/redding
 (530) 224-2100
 Redding, CA 96002
 355 Hemsted Drive
 Redding Field Office
 Bureau of Land Management



www.usbr.gov/dataweb/dams/ca10186.htm
 (530) 275-1554
 Shasta Lake, CA 96019
 16349 Shasta Dam Blvd.
 Bureau of Reclamation - Shasta Dam

www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrimty
 (530) 226-2500
 3644 Avtech Parkway, Redding, CA 96002
 Shasta Trinity National Forest

www.visitredding.org
 (530) 225-4100 / (800) 874-7562
 777 Auditorium Drive, Redding, CA 96001
 Redding Convention and Visitor Bureau

www.ci.redding.ca.us
 (530) 225-4002 Phone
 777 Cypress Ave., Redding, CA 96001
 City of Redding

www.turtlebay.org
 (800) TURTLEBAY or (530) 243-8850
 P.O. Box 992360, Redding, CA 96099
 Turtle Bay

www.shastascadecade.org
 (530) 365-1180 / (800) 4-SHASTA
 1699 Highway 273, Anderson, CA 96007
 California Welcome Center

Other Local Resources

Bureau of Land Management
Sacramento River Rail Trail





BLM

California • Redding Field Office

