



Eldorado National Forest



Desolation Wilderness. Photo by Jon Erickson.

Visitor Guide

Discover Your Forest

Welcome

Thousands of visitors are drawn each year to the Eldorado National Forest's rivers, lakes, and streams alive with fish; mountains and meadows for alpine and nordic skiing; campsites and picnic areas in alpine backcountry and dense forests. Four hundred miles of hiking trails pass through all kinds of terrain, from gentle oak foothills on the west to the 10,000-foot crest of the Sierra Nevada. Two major highways - Highway 50 and Highway 88 - run through the Forest, making it an easy drive from Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The miners who came to California in the gold rush of 1849 called the land "el dorado" for the fabled Spanish "land of gold." We hope that after you have enjoyed Eldorado National Forest's natural riches you will think the name is even more appropriate today!

The Forest Service is committed to nurturing and managing the National Forests in order to ensure the health of the land. As we respectfully use and play in these precious public lands, we are taking part in a shared vision for the future.

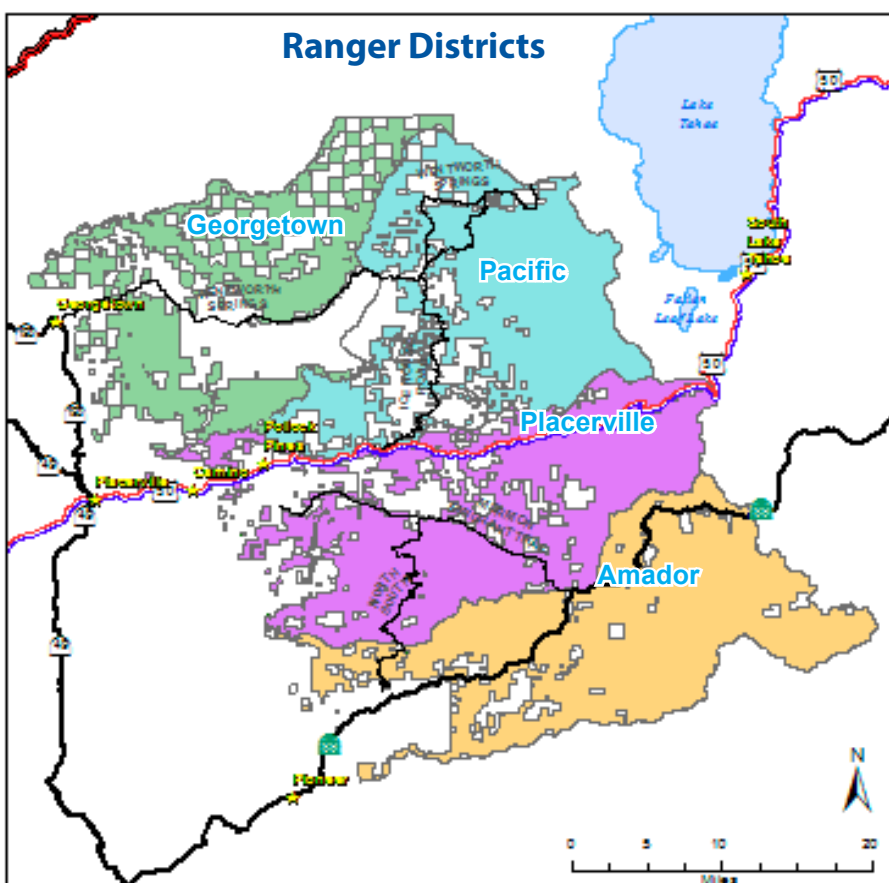
Located in the Central Sierra Nevada region, the Eldorado National Forest is considered an urban forest. It is located one hour from the metropolitan area of Sacramento which has a population of over one million people, and three hours from the San Francisco Bay area, with a population of over six million. The Forest plays a vital role in the environment, health and well being of over seven million people.

This forest is an ideal place for people seeking to escape from busy urban lifestyles. Its climate and topography offer a wide range of recreational opportunities, including hiking, fishing, boating, camping and cross-country and downhill skiing.

Quick Facts

- ◆ **Acreage** = 605,252
- ◆ **Elevation** = ranges from 1,000 to 10,000 feet
- ◆ **Climate** = Warm, dry summers and cold wet winters.
- ◆ **Lakes, Reservoirs, and Ponds** = 888 including 11 large reservoirs
- ◆ **Major River Canyons** = Mokelumne, Cosumnes, American, and Rubicon.
- ◆ **Streams and Rivers** (year-round) = 2,853 miles
- ◆ **Fishable Streams and Rivers** = 611 miles
- ◆ **Animal Species** = 340
- ◆ **Plant Species** = 1,136
- ◆ **Vegetation Types** = Chaparral, oak woodland, mixed-conifer, fir, and sub-alpine trees.
- ◆ **Campgrounds** = 57
- ◆ **National Historic Trails** = Carson Emigrant Trail, Pony Express Trail, and Pacific Crest Trail

Because this guide covers the entire Eldorado National Forest, information contained within is a general overview of this large area. For detailed recreation information on trails, campgrounds, roads, current conditions and closures, or management information, always seek out the local forest offices or go to www.fs.usda.gov/eldorado.



What Is Inside?

What To Do?	2
Where To Go?	3
Traveling	6
Know Before You Go	7
Map	8

Something For Everyone

The Eldorado National Forest divides its 605,252 acres into four areas called ranger districts: Amador, Georgetown, Pacific and Placerville. The districts manage the land for watershed, range and forest health, wildlife habitat, heritage resources, and multiple recreation opportunities.

Consequently, you are sharing the land with ranchers, contractors, and people enjoying hiking, motorcycling, camping, and much more. These lands are a shared resource that belong to everyone.



What To Do

Fishing

The rivers, creeks, and lakes in the Eldorado National Forest abound with rainbow, brown, and brook trout, offering fishing enthusiasts a first-rate rod-and-reel experience. The fishing season in rivers begins in late April and runs through mid-November; a license is required. Lakes are open to fishing year-round. Check out the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website at www.wildlife.ca.gov for license and planting information.

Horse Riding & Camping

See the Sierra the way the settlers saw it, by horseback. Enjoy the quiet and solitude for a half-hour or a week-long packing trip. Popular horse camping areas are Dru Barner, Tells Creek, Wrights Lake, and Loon Lake equestrian campgrounds.

Boating

Alpine lakes fed by melting winter snows are paradise for water sports enthusiasts. Whether you prefer a kayak, sail or ski boat, you will find plenty of pristine, high mountain lakes for your enjoyment. Silver Lake and Union Valley Reservoir are great for boating, skiing, sailing, kayaking, and canoeing. For a non-motorized paddle Woods Lake and Wrights Lake are great places to go.

Bicycling

There are excellent mountain biking opportunities on trails and roads within the Forest that will lead you on an adventure. The Union Valley Bike Trail is a paved 6 mile long trail along the east side of the reservoir which is a great family or beginner trail. The more experienced rider will enjoy the Fleming Meadow Trail system that allows you to control the length and difficulty of your ride. The Rock Creek Recreational Trail System is a great lower elevation trail system that is at least partly accessible in the winter. Riders are welcome on most National Forest roads as well as trails outside of designated wilderness areas and the Pacific Crest Trail.

Skiing, Snowshoeing, and Snowmobiling

The Eldorado National Forest provides easy access to plenty of terrain perfect for winter recreation. Whether you prefer back-country skiing, snowshoeing, downhill skiing, snowmobiling, or just playing in the snow you can find a place on the forest to enjoy yourself. You can go snowshoeing and cross-country skiing at the Loon Lake Winter Recreation area, Strawberry Canyon Nordic trails, Echo Summit trails, Anderson Ridge trails, Meiss Meadow trails, and Kirkwood Cross-country Resort. The Silver Bear Trail system offers excellent groomed snowmobile trails. Snowmobiles are not allowed in the wilderness. Sierra Mountain Resort and Kirkwood Mountain Resort offer premier downhill skiing and snowboarding opportunities.



Wildlife viewing is a unique and special opportunity in a national forest. Just remember that this is their home and keep your distance. Keep a clean camp and don't feed the wildlife. FS Photo.



Tubing behind a boat on Union Valley Reservoir. Photo by Kristi Schroeder.

Staying Overnight?

Looking for a campground?

Are you driving a motor home? Pulling a trailer? Pitching a tent? One of our more than 50 campgrounds has a spot for you! Most are open Memorial Day through Labor Day or longer. Many accept reservations through Recreation.gov; others are first-come, first-served. Fees vary. Don't hesitate - in July and August, many campgrounds fill fast.

Prefer to "Get Away From It All"?

Try camping in an undeveloped area with no facilities and no fees. The advantages to this type of camping include solitude, quiet, and adventure.

Where allowed, just pull off the road and park in a way that does not obstruct traffic or damage resources; never drive in fragile wetlands or meadows. Remember all motorized vehicles must be no further than one vehicle length off a designated route.

Please practice Leave No Trace principles. Camp at least 100 feet from water sources. Come prepared to provide everything you need, including drinking water and waste disposal. With no toilet facilities, bury human waste in a six-inch hole well away from trails, water, and other campers. Pack out used toilet paper with your garbage. Please leave the area in as good (or better) condition than you found it. Often, locations destroyed by thoughtless campers must be closed to restore the area's natural health. Help ensure your favorite area remains open. A campfire permit is required.

Prefer to sleep indoors?

Harvey West Cabin, Sly Park Guard Station, Robbs Hut, Van Vleck Bunkhouse, and Loon Lake Chalets are available for rental through Recreation.gov.

Campfires

Campfire permits are required for all wood, charcoal, and gas fires. The permit is free.

- ◆ There should be a 5 foot clearance around the fire. Build campfires away from low-hanging branches and in an area clear of vegetation.
- ◆ Never leave your fire unattended even for a few hours. Be sure your fire is completely extinguished and out cold before leaving using the Drown/Stir/Feel method.
- ◆ Check with your local ranger district office for current conditions and restrictions.
- ◆ Permits can be obtained online at www.preventwildfireca.org or from any national forest, CalFire, or BLM office.
- ◆ Firewood: Gather or cut only dead wood lying on the ground for your campfire. You can use a chainsaw if the saw has a spark arrestor. You will need a woodcutting permit to take firewood home.
- ◆ Fireworks are not allowed in a national forest.

ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES.



Fire Restrictions

Wood and charcoal fire may not be allowed during the hot, dry season. Consider using a gas stove or bbq as an alternative to campfires.

Where To Go - Campgrounds & Picnic Areas



AREA	NAME	# SITES	PICNIC SITES	GROUP SITES	FEE	RESERVATIONS	WATER	HIKING	FISHING	BIKING	SWIMMING	BOATING	ADA ACCESS	NOTES
GEORGETOWN	Dru Barner Park	48			Y		Y		Y	Y				Equestrian campground
STUMPY MEADOWS RESERVOIR	Ponderosa Cove Group			1	Y		Y		Y		Y			75 people
	Stumpy Meadows	40			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Boatramp, 5 mph limit
	Black Oak Group			4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		25/50/75 people
HELL HOLE RESERVOIR	Middle Meadows Group			2	Y	Y	Y		Y					
	Big Meadows	53			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Boatramp within 1 mile
	Hell Hole	10			Y		Y		Y			Y		Boatramp nearby
CRYSTAL BASIN ICE HOUSE ROAD	Silver Creek Group			1	Y	Y			Y					40 people, no trailers
	Robbs Hut			1	Y	Y		Y		Y				6 people, year-round
	Van Vleck Bunkhouse			1	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y				6 people, year-round
	South Fork Group			1	Y	Y			Y					125 people
	Wrights Lake	67	10		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	No motor boats, 15 equestrian sites
ICE HOUSE RESERVOIR	Ice House	83	10		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Boatramp, dump station
	Northwind	9			Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	Strawberry Point	10			Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
UNION VALLEY RESERVOIR	Jones Fork	10			Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Lone Rock	5						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Boat or trail access only
	Sunset	131			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Boatramp
	Fashoda Tent	30	5		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Tents only, walk-in sites
	Big Silver Group			1	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y			Y	50 people
	Azalea Cove	10						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Boat or trail access only
	Wench Creek	100		2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		50 person group site
	Yellowjacket	40			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Boatramp
	Wolf Creek	42		3	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Dump station, 25/50 people
	Camino Cove	32								Y	Y	Y		
Westpoint	8							Y	Y	Y			Boatramp	
GERLE CREEK RESERVOIR	Angel Creek Picnic		4					Y	Y		Y			No motor boats
	Gerle Creek	50	4		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	No motor boats
	Airport Flat	16						Y	Y				Y	
LOON LAKE	Loon Lake	53	5	3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Boatramp, dump station, 9 equestrian sites
	Loon Chalet			1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				20 people, year-round
	Northshore	15			Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
	Red Fir Group			1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
	Wentworth Springs	8						Y	Y	Y				4wd access, no trailers
HIGHWAY 50 CORRIDOR	Bridal Veil Picnic		30	1	Y	Y			Y		Y			American River, 50 people
	Sand Flat	29			Y		Y		Y		Y			American River
	Lovers Leap	21			Y		Y	Y	Y					Rock climbing
SILVER FORK ROAD	China Flat	18	5		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			American river
	Harvey West Cabin			1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			20 people
	Silver Fork	35			Y		Y	Y	Y		Y			American River
SLY PARK ROAD	Sly Guard Station			1	Y	Y	Y	Y					12 people. Sly Park Reservoir nearby	
NORTH SOUTH	Pipi	51	5		Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	
	Capps Crossing Group			1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			40 people
HIGHWAY 88 CORRIDOR	Middle Fork Cosumnes	11			Y				Y		Y			Cosumnes River
	Silver Lake East	62			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Boatramp nearby
	Silver Lake West - EID	35			Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Operated by EID
	Sandy Cove Picnic - EID		5		Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Operated by EID
	Kirkwood Lake	12			Y		Y	Y	Y		Y			No motor boats
	Caples Lake	34			Y			Y	Y		Y	Y		Boatramp, 5 mph limit
	Woods Lake	25	8		Y		Y	Y	Y		Y			No motor boats or trailers
BEAR RIVER RESERVOIR	Sugar Pine Point	8			Y		Y		Y		Y	Y		
	South Shore	22			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		
	Pardoes Point	10	5		Y		Y		Y		Y	Y		
	Bear River Group			4	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y		Boatramp, 25/50 people
SALT SPRINGS	Mokelumne	13							Y		Y			Mokelumne River, yr-rd
	Moore Creek	8							Y		Y			Mokelumne River, yr-rd
	White Azalea	6							Y		Y			Mokelumne River, yr-rd

Reservations

Toll-Free: 877-444-6777
TDD: 877-833-6777
INTL: 518-885-3639
Internet: www.Recreation.gov

General Information

Current information available at www.fs.usda.gov/eldorado.

Fees: Campground fees are subject to change. At some campgrounds there is an extra charge for each additional vehicle and/or pets.

Limits: Single-family campsites accommodate 6 persons and 2 vehicles. Double sites handle 12 persons and 4 vehicles.

First Night: Site must be occupied the first night. Equipment cannot be left unattended for more than 24 hours.

Stay Limit: Each stay is limited to 14 days per district.

Check-out time is 1:00 p.m. Check-in time is 2:00 pm.

Pets are permitted and must be kept on a 6-foot leash at all times.



Interagency Passes

Senior Passes are a life time pass available for a one-time \$10.00 fee to persons 62 years of age or older.

Access Passes are a life time pass free to qualifying persons who are blind or permanently disabled.

These cards entitle the holder to a 50% discount at federal recreation areas. They do not apply to group sites, cabin rentals, parking, or wilderness permits.

Annual Passes can be purchased by any individual for \$80. It is honored by sites that charge entrance and standard amenity fees and receive no other discounts. One year.

- ◆ **Entrance Fee:** A fee charged to access lands managed by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- ◆ **Standard Amenity Fee:** Fees for use of sites that have a combination of basic amenities – picnic tables, trash receptacles, toilets, developed parking, interpretive signing, and security.

To obtain a pass, please contact your nearest Forest Service, National Park, or Bureau of Land Management office.

Where To Go - Trails



Difficulty: E = Easy M = Moderate S = Strenuous

Use Type: H = Hiking E = Equestrian/Horse Riding B = Biking

AREA	NAME	MILES 1 WAY	DIFFICULTY	USE TYPE	MAJOR ACCESS ROAD	INFORMATION Visitors will need a forest map for navigation. See map options in "Know Before You Go".
GEORGETOWN HIGHWAY 193	11E12 One Eye Creek	1.5	S	HE	Traverse Creek	Trail drops into Rock Creek drainage with a view of Castle Rocks.
	10E04 Mar Det	4.8	M	HE	Meadowbrook	Trail goes through low elevation mixed conifer forest ending on Darling Ridge road.
WENTWORTH SPRINGS ROAD	11E08 Kelliher	2	S	H	Bottle Hill	Old miner's trail to Volcanoville which goes down to Otter Creek.
	11E06 Otter Creek	1.4	S	HE	Bottle Hill	Trail descends to Otter Creek, crosses, and climbs up to Paymaster Mine road to Volcanoville.
	11E14 Bald Mtn. Canyon	1.6	S	H	12N89	Steep trail down to Rock Creek, crosses creek and continues to Sugarloaf Mountain.
	11E15 Sugarloaf	0.8	S	H	Mace Mill	Goes into Rock Creek drainage to Sugarloaf Mountain.
	11E13 Martin	1.6	M	HEB	12N31	Moderately steep trail down to Rock Creek and up other side. Motorcycles allowed.
	12E07 Nevada Point	1.2	S	HEB	Rubicon rd spur	Trail winds down to Pilot Creek then to Rubicon River where bridge is washed out. Rest of trail is not accessible.
GEORGETOWN UPPER COUNTRY	13E16 Lawyer	1.3	S	H	Eleven Pines	Trail drops into Rubicon River drainage ending in a gorge with a large fishing, swimming hole.
	14E09 Hunter	10	M	HB	Eleven Pines	Trail parallels Rubicon River with many fishing and swimming holes. Motorcycles allowed.
	14E02 Hell Hole	4.3	M	H	Hell Hole Dam	Scenic and rocky walk along reservoir ending at Upper Hell Hole campground.
CRYSTAL BASIN ICE HOUSE ROAD	14E01 Ice House Bike Trail	3.1	M	HB	Wright Lake Tie	Trail goes through Strawberry, Northwind, and Ice House campgrounds and winds along ridge tops with views of Crystal Range and Ice House Reservoir. West end connects to Big Hill road system.
	14E12 Union Valley Bike Tr.	4.8	E	HB	Union Valley CGs	Paved trail through campgrounds with beautiful views of Union Valley. Interpretive signs along trail. 2 segments.
	15E10 Bassi Falls	2	M	HEB	12N32	Winds through forest by Big Silver Creek on the way to Bassi Falls. Limited Parking.
	14E14 South Fork	3.1	S	HE	13N84	Scenic views of South Fork Rubicon Canyon and Crystal Range. Goes to confluence of Rubicon Rivers.
	14E21 Gerle	1	E	HB	Ice House	Trail parallels Gerle Creek between Angel Creek picnic area and Gerle Creek campground.
	14E23 Summer Harvest	1	E	HB	Gerle Cr. Picnic	Interpretive trail from picnic area along west shore of Gerle Reservoir.
	16E30 Loon Lk South Shore	6.2	M	HEB	Loon Lake CG	Trail parallels the lake shore then climbs over saddle into Desolation Wilderness. Wilderness permit required.
VAN VLECK AREA 13N22	15E21 Highland	3.2	S	HE	Cheese Camp	Trail follows road to weather station then goes toward Tells Peak ending at Forni Lake. Wilderness permit req.
	15E08 Red Peak	10.4	S	HE	Highland Trail	Trail splits to right at 0.4 mile and goes to Lake No. 3, Lake No. 5, and Barrett Lake. Wilderness permit required.
	15E23 Loon Lake	4.5	M	HEB	Highland Trail	Trail splits to left at 0.5 mile and goes along the north fence of Van Vleck meadow, north to Loon Lake.
	15E22 Shadow Lake	2	M	HB	Highland Trail	Trail splits off 0.8 mile at first main drainage and continues northeast to Shadow Lake.
	15E19 Bassi Loop	4.6	M	HE	Van Vleck TH	Trail heads south to Bassi Fork, curves northeast until connects with Red Peak trail, then left to Highland Trail.
	15E20 Sun Rock	2	E	HEB	Bassi Loop	Trail splits off 0.7 mile and head west to base of Sun Rock.
	16E11 Two Peaks	5.6	M	HE	Bassi Loop	Trail splits to right near Bassi Fork follows north edge of meadow then climbs past northeast side of Two Peaks.
WRIGHTS LAKE AREA	16E13 Lyons	5.6	EM	HE	Wrights Lake Rd	Follow road east paralleling Lyons Creek through forest to Lyons and Sylvia Lakes. Wilderness permit required.
	16E14 Bloodsucker	2.3	EM	HEB	Equestrian CG	South along trail and road climbing until it intersects with the Lyons Trail about 1.5 mi from Lyons Trailhead.
	15E12 Windmill	3	M	HEB	Parking Area	Across from overflow parking area the trail heads west on ridge top then to Jones Fork drainage. Scenic views.
	16E12 Twin Lakes	3.4	M	HE	Twin Lakes TH	Follow signs around southeast side of lake heading east to Twin Lakes. Wilderness permit required.
	16E18 Meadow Loop	1	E	HEB	Twin Lakes TH	Follow Twin Lakes trail to Twin Tie junction, cross bridge to left onto Meadow trail. Follow trail back to trailhead.
	16E08 Rockbound	7.8	M	HE	Rockbound TH	Trail is a main corridor east into Desolation Wilderness. Wilderness permit required.
	16E15 Beauty Lake	0.5	E	HEB	Rockbound Trail	Trail splits off 0.5 mi. and goes to Beauty Lake. Return can make a loop following trail to Wrights lake.
	16E17 Twin Lakes Tie	0.8	E	HEB	Rockbound Trail	Trail splits right at 0.25 mi. east of Beauty Lake heading back toward Wrights lake, Old Corral Loop, Meadow Trail.
HIGHWAY 50 CORRIDOR	13E19 Pony Express Trail	38	E	HEB	Highway 50	Several access points for this Historic Trail. See article under Where to Go.
	17E75 Cody Lake	0.5	E	HEB	Packsaddle Pass	A fairly east hike to this glacier formed lake.
	17E12 Lovers Leap	2.5	M	HEB	Strawberry Cyn.	Trail leads to the top of Lovers Leap for a great view of the South Fork American River canyon. Allows motorcycle.
	17E25 Pyramid Creek Loop	1.7	M	H	Highway 50	Loop trail before wilderness boundary offers views of the American River canyon, Lovers Leap, waterfalls, and it is a Special Geologic Interest Area. Wilderness permit required if crossing boundary.
	17E14 Sayles Canyon	4.5	M	HEB	17E13	Trail is a moderate climb back and forth across Sayles Creek leading up through Round Meadows to the PCT.
	17E13 Bryan Meadows	3	M	HEB	Sayles Cyn Trail	Trail splits off, continues east passing through beautiful stands of lodgepole pine and mountain hemlock to PCT.
	Pacific Crest Trail	20	S	HE	Highway 50/88	National Trail. Can access Eldorado NF segments at Carson Pass, Meiss, Echo Summit, and Barker Pass trailheads.
SILVER FORK ROAD	17E51 Caples Creek	4	M	HEB	Caples TH	Follows along north side of Caples Creek through virgin forest and meadows. Motorcycles allowed.
	17E52 Government Mdws	0.5	EM	HEB	Caples Trail	Short trail leads around several lush meadows and ends at Caples Creek. Motorcycles allowed.
	17E71 Old Silver Lake	1.5	M	HEB	Caples Trail	Trail goes through mixed stands of virgin pine and fir to the ridge top to meet the Silver Fork trail.
	17E20 Silver Fork	3	M	HEB	Caples Trail	Trail follows Silver Creek down to quiet pools and then climbs to meet Old Silver trail. Motorcycles allowed.
	17E17 Buck Pasture	3	M	HEB	Cody Meadows	Trail leads down into Buck Pasture and along the north ridge of scenic Caples Creek drainage. Allows motorcycles
SLY PARK ROAD	13E04 Cedar Park Trail	1.2	E	H	Sly Park	Paved trail available year round. Great for individuals with disabilities. Pets must be leashed.
	13E08 Fleming Meadow Tr	8.8	M	HEB	MET	Mixture of roads and trails great for early spring and fall use as at 3,800 feet in elevation. Pets must be leashed.
	14E15 Trestle Trail	1.2	E	HEB	Capps Crossing	From 9N36 this trail follows a railroad grade to Steely Creek passing three collapsed trestles or railroad bridges.
HIGHWAY 88 CORRIDOR	17E57 Shealor Lake	1.5	MS	HE	Shealor TH	Climbs through open granite and timber to ridge before dropping down to lake. Great views of Silver Lake.
	17E21 Horse Canyon	8.6	S	HEB	Horse Cyn TH	Trail travels through forest with unique volcanic rock outcroppings. Views of Thimble Peak, Silver Lake, and mid-summer wildflowers are gorgeous. Last 3 miles in Mokelumne Wilderness. Caution: motorcycles allowed on first part of trail, for experienced riders only.
	17E22 Thunder Mtn. Loop	10.3	MS	HEB	Thunder Mtn TH Horse Cyn TH	3.3 miles of trail is north of Highway 88 includes dramatic view from Castle Point. Southern portion includes 2.3 miles of Horse Canyon trail before connecting off to Thunder Mountain Trail.
	17E46 Lake Margaret	2.5	M	HEB	Lk. Margaret TH	The mid-summer wildflowers and the changing color of the aspens in the fall are worth the trip.
	17E16 Little Round Top	2.5	M	HEB	Schneider Camp	The trail leads around Little Round Top through stands of lodgepole and whitebark pine to junction with PCT.
	PCT - Showers Lake	4	M	HE	Schneider Camp	Trail climbs to ridge over Meiss Lake basin and provides excellent views of Lake Tahoe in the distance.
	PCT - Meiss Lake	4	M	HE	Meiss TH	Follow PCT trail to the ridge and then the lake to experience spectacular views and wildflower displays.
SILVER LAKE	17E19 Allen Camp	2	S	HEB	Plasse's Resort	Trail climbs through forested and rocky slopes until it joins with the Mud Lake road Near Allen Camp.
	17E23 Granite Lk/Hidden Lk	1-5	MS	HEB	Granite TH	Take road by Kit Carson Resort to trailhead. Trail ascends and crosses Squaw Creek to Granite Lake then another 3 miles to Hidden lake. Trail forks to Plasse's Resort for a great 5.3 mi. loop. From Hidden Lake can also take a trail to connect with Allen Camp trail and return down to Plasses for another loop.

Where To Go - Highlights



Campers in Dru Barner. FS Photo.

Dru Barner Park

At 3,000 feet in elevation, Dru Barner is unique on this forest as it offers year-round camping and equestrian use. Trails feed right out of the campground into the surrounding forest. This facility is seven miles east of Georgetown. Turn left on Bottlehill Bypass Road and go 1.5 miles on the paved road to the park.

Union Valley Bike Trail and Boat-In Campgrounds

The longer section (5.8 miles) runs between Jones Fork campground and Wench Creek campground, while the shorter segment (0.8 miles) connects Yellowjacket and Wolf Creek campgrounds. Access to Lone Rock and Azalea Cove campgrounds is by foot, bike or boat. As you travel the paved trail you will find beautiful views of Union Valley Reservoir and the surrounding forest. Interpretive signs along the trail tell the story of the use and development of water resources in Union Valley.

Wilderness Areas

Desolation Wilderness and Mokelumne Wilderness are two of the many beautiful areas of public land which are designated by Congress to be as free as possible from the impact of human use. Much of the pleasures of venturing into wilderness come from the lack of "civilized intrusions"- no generators, motors, televisions, or buildings mar the solitude. No motorized vehicles or mechanical equipment are allowed in any wilderness. You may travel by foot or horseback, and use packstock. Trails are kept to a minimum.

Overnight permits are required in both Wilderness areas. A quota system is in effect beginning on Memorial Weekend through September for Desolation. A fee is required in Desolation for an overnight permit; day use permits are free. Day use permits are not required in the Mokelumne Wilderness. Campfires are not allowed in Desolation Wilderness and areas of the Mokelumne Wilderness. Campstoves are permitted. Group size is limited to 12 people for Desolation and 8 people overnight for Mokelumne Wilderness.

Sno-Park Permit

Sno-Parks are snow-cleared parking lots, with sanitation facilities, that provide direct access to popular cross country ski trails, snowmobile routes, and snow play areas. This is a California Department of Parks and Recreation program. \$5.00 day, November 1 to May 30.

Shot Rock Vista / Silver Lake Overlook / Carson Emigrant Trail

Intending to return to the Mormon settlements in the Great Salt Lake Valley after the war with Mexico, forty-five men and a woman set out in 1848 with wagons, mules, and horses, working their way up the ridge between the American and Mokelumne rivers. From the Placerville/Pleasant Valley area their course charted east to Sly Park reservoir, along Mormon Emigrant Trail, crossing what is now Highway 88 and onto the ridges south and east of Silver Lake, over West Pass, through the valley where Caples Lake now lies, and on over Carson Pass. From there they swung northeast, joining the already established California Trail leading over Donner Summit. Thus, the Mormon company forged 170 miles of new trail that would become the most popular emigrant route into California and is now part of the California National Historic Trail. Today you will find a commemorative marker at the Silver Lake Overlook and a view of the valley at Shot Rock Vista.

Caples Creek Non-Motorized Trail System

The Caples Creek Trailhead is located on Silverfork Road and provides access to approximately 10 miles of equestrian and hiking trails on the Placerville Ranger District. Facilities at the trailhead include 1 vault toilet and parking spaces large enough for horse trailers. An equestrian camp is located approximately ¼ mile south of the trailhead along Silverfork road and provides additional parking for larger vehicles.



Highway 88 in the fall. FS Photo.

Carson Pass National Scenic Byway

Stretching from the Sacramento Valley in California to the Carson Valley in Nevada, this 58-mile byway of Highway 88 winds its way through the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, reaches the summit at Carson Pass, and ends up on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada. One of the most visually dramatic of the trans-Sierra highways in California, you will witness views of ragged volcanic skylines, cool green meadows, mountain lakes framed by timber-covered slopes, adventure-filled rock valleys, and distant mountain peaks. Outdoor lovers can go camping, boating, or fishing at one of the many lakes and recreation areas along this route. Winter recreation is just as fantastic: try snowmobiling, sledding, cross-country or downhill skiing.



Pony Express Trail

Prior to 1851, mail from the United States was delivered to Gold Rush communities by clipper ship, or by steamship through Panama, then by mule across the isthmus, and by steamer to San Francisco, a delivery lasting as much as 30 to 90 days. In 1851, mail began to be delivered on an improved monthly basis from Salt Lake City. The desire for even faster mail delivery led to the establishment of the Pony Express, which brought mail to California in a mere 10 days by individual riders on horseback. Each rider covered between 30 and 100 miles or more, changing mounts at least three times before turning the mail over to the next rider in the relay.

Mail service by the Pony Express began in April of 1860 and terminated in October of 1861 when the Union Telegraph line was completed. 80 riders, including 14-year-old William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, who made the record single run of 322 miles, were employed to race between the 190 stations in all kinds of weather, across 120° F deserts and snow covered Sierra passes.



On the Eldorado National Forest...

The Pony Express National Historic Trail was established in 1992 to preserve the trail and commemorate those who rode it. The portion of the Pony Express Trail that runs through the Eldorado National Forest is approximately 19 miles long and parallels Highway 50 through the South Fork of the American River watershed. The trail is open to equestrians, bicyclists and hikers. Motorized use is not allowed.

Access Points: Echo Summit, Wrights Lake Road, Webber Mill Rd., Peavine Ridge Road and at the end of Bryan Meadow Road (11N09A) near the entrance to Sierra At Tahoe Ski Area.

Pacific Crest Trail

The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail extends 2,650 miles from Canada to Mexico, passing through 23 National Forests and seven National Parks. The trail enters the Eldorado National Forest in the Desolation Wilderness and winds its way to the forest's southeastern tip, where it meets the Stanislaus and Toiyabe National Forests.

Traveling

Traveling In The Forest

In 2008, roads and trails on the Eldorado were designated for wheeled motor vehicle travel. Vehicle travel off these designated roads and trails (cross-country travel) is prohibited.

Motor Vehicle Use Map

The Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) is a free map available at any of the Eldorado National Forest offices and on our forest website. This map shows the roads and trails in the Eldorado National Forest that are designated for motor vehicle use, the type of vehicle that can be operated on the routes, and identifies which routes are restricted during the seasonal closure.

Travel Safety

Driving on mountain roads requires extra caution. Some dirt roads may narrow to one lane. There may be blind corners so travel slowly and be prepared to stop in half the sight distance.

- ◆ Be sure to study a map before heading out. Call ahead for current local weather, road, and trail conditions (see back page for phone numbers).
- ◆ Plan for longer travel times. Steep and winding roads can only be traveled safely at low speeds. Use lower gears on steep roads.
- ◆ When two vehicles meet on a steep road where neither can pass, the vehicle facing downhill must yield the right-of-way by backing up until the vehicle going uphill can pass. The vehicle facing downhill has the best control of the vehicle when backing up.
- ◆ Always stay in your lane and watch for falling debris, other vehicles, and animals on the road.
- ◆ When sightseeing, use roadside pullout areas to allow others to pass.
- ◆ Gas stations and other services may not be available in remote areas. Come prepared with a full gas tank and extra food, water, clothing, tire chains, and any medications you may be using.

Off-Highway Vehicles

Many excellent off-road opportunities exist on National Forest lands for the OHV enthusiast. For our hard-core 4WDers the world reknown Rubicon Trail will test your skills. Free user guidelines and route maps are available at all Ranger Stations as well as online: www.fs.usda.gov/eldorado.

Featured Trail Systems

Elkins Flat and Gold Note Motorized Trail Systems

Both trail systems are popular OHV recreation destinations located along the "North South road" (Forest Service road 10N83 or Primary Route 6)" which is accessed off of Mormon Emigrant Trail (MET). Elevation ranges from 4,000 to 6,000 feet so the trails may be under snow for part of the winter.

The main staging area for the Elkins Trail System provides access to approximately 48 miles of motorcycle and ATV trails. Just south of Elkins is the Gold Note Trail System offering 30 miles of trails and roads which interconnect with the Elkins system.

Access

- ◆ **Via Highway 50 from Placerville** - travel east 13.0 miles, turn right on Sly Park road and travel 5.0 miles, turn left on Mormon Emigrant Trail (just past Jenkinson Lake) and travel 10 miles, turn right on the North South road and travel 15 miles to reach Elkins Flat and the staging area.
- ◆ **Via Highway 88 from Jackson** - travel east 27 miles, turn left onto Omo Ranch road, then 0.7 miles to the intersection with North-South road. There are several trailheads as you travel north along this road for access to different trails.



(Top) Forest Highway sign for paved roads. (Bottom left and right) Forest system road marker. Look for the symbols that indicate the vehicle types that area allowed on the trail. FS Photos.

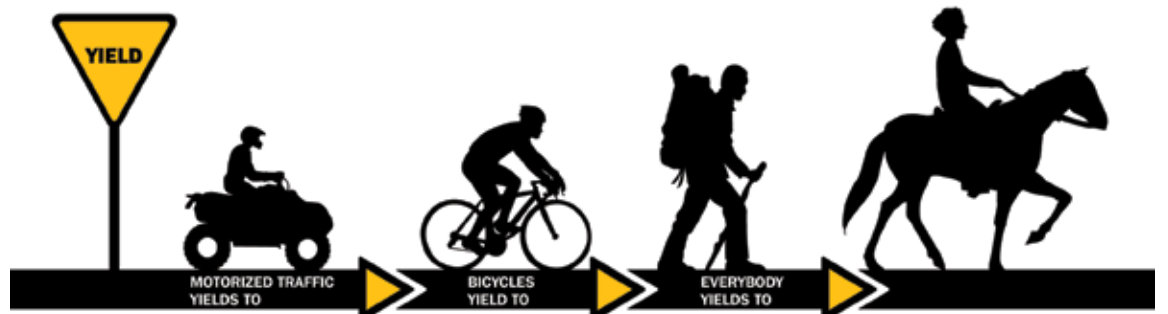
Route Markers

Road or trail markers at the beginning of routes will help you to locate yourself on the map and to determine if motor vehicle use is allowed on that route. Paved roads are legal to drive on as long as the vehicle is licensed to operate on a highway. (See photos).

Seasonal Closure

All dirt roads and trails are closed to motor vehicle use between January 1 and March 31 except the Rock Creek area near Georgetown which has its own seasonal closure policy and procedures. The Seasonal Closure may be extended if roads or trails are wet and susceptible to damage. This closure is intended to protect water quality and prevent rutting and damage to these roads and trails. Approximately 600 miles of paved and gravel roads are not affected by the closure.

SHARE THE ROADS & TRAILS, AND BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS



Rock Creek Recreational Trail System

Rock Creek includes 110 miles of trails of all difficulty levels open from spring through fall. During winter, selected trails may be open depending on weather. At 3,000 feet in elevation a portion of this trail system remains accessible in the winter. This system mixes motorcycles, equestrian, and biking use types so use caution.

Access

- ◆ **Mace Mill Staging Area** - From Georgetown drive 6 miles east on Wentworth Springs road. Turn right at the east entrance of the Balderston road (which makes a loop onto the Wentworth Spring road). Drive south for approximately one mile and turn left onto the Mace Mill road. Proceed approximately one and a half miles to the Mace Mill Staging Area.
- ◆ **Bald Mountain Staging Area** - From Georgetown drive 10.5 miles east on Wentworth Springs road. Turn right onto the Rock Creek North road (12N72 road). Drive south for approximately one half mile and turn right onto the Bald Mountain Lookout road (12N71). The road leading to the Bald Mountain Staging Area will be on the right almost immediately after.

Know Before You Go

Outdoor Safety . . . It's Everyone's Responsibility

Whether touring in the backcountry or along the road, travel poses certain risks. You are responsible for educating yourself. In an emergency contact the local sheriff's department by dialing 911.

- ◆ **Have A Plan:** Obtain a Map and do your research ahead of time.
- ◆ **Reporting Party:** Tell someone where you are going, when you expect to return, and what to do if you don't. Cell phones rarely work well in the mountains; don't rely on them.
- ◆ **Groups:** It is a good idea to travel in groups of four so if someone is injured, one person can stay with the injured person, and the other two can travel for help.
- ◆ **Hiking:** Be sure to pick a trail that matches your experience and ability. Have the proper clothing; changes in the weather can happen rapidly. Wear good hiking boots, and break them in before your hike! Please remember to pack out what you pack in.
- ◆ **Drowning Hazards:** Be extra careful along rivers and streams; falling in is dangerous. Rocks are smooth and slippery. Swift and/or cold water rapidly sap your strength. Hidden rocks and debris can trap feet and arms.
- ◆ **Children:** Monitor your children at all times. They move quick.
- ◆ **TEN Essentials:** Always carry plenty of water, food, map and compass, extra clothing, first aid kit, flashlight, whistle, fire starter, knife/tool, sunglasses, and sunscreen.



Altitude

The major cause of altitude sickness is going too high, too fast. At higher elevations, the air becomes "thinner," which means you get less oxygen to breathe. Altitude sickness symptoms may include shortness of breath, nausea, heart palpitations, extreme thirst, weakness, headaches, and "tunnel vision." If you experience any of these symptoms, slow down and drink water. If symptoms persist, proceed to a lower elevation, and seek medical attention.

Storms

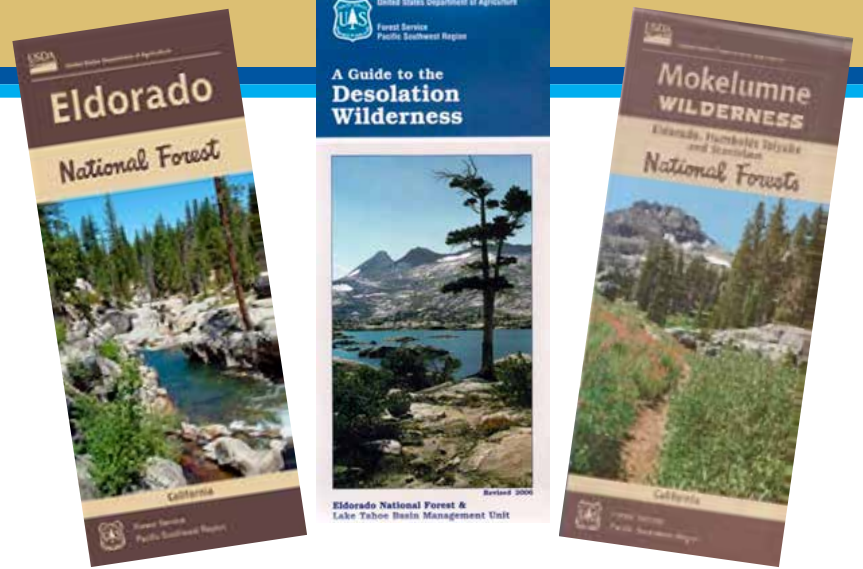
Storms form quickly in the mountains. Bring clothing for all weather conditions: raincoats, jackets, fleece, or wool. Remember to pack cold-weather survival gear in case you become stranded. Snow can occur year-round at higher elevations.

- ◆ Avoid afternoon summer storms by heading out early and getting off mountain peaks and high points before storms arrive.
- ◆ If you see dark clouds, lightning, or hear thunder, get inside a building or a vehicle. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid standing on ridge tops, rocks, in the water, or in open meadows. If you are caught in a lightning storm, remove your pack and crouch with your hands on your knees until the worst has passed.
- ◆ Use caution crossing dry streambeds and low areas; sudden storms may cause flash floods.
- ◆ Check the weather before heading out at www.weather.gov.



Hypothermia

Becoming too cold can lead to this life threatening condition at any time of year, especially if you fall into cold water. Hypothermia is possible even in midsummer and is caused when the body's core temperature is lowered by cold and wind. It can happen even at temperatures of 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms range from feeling extremely cold to sluggish behavior, slurred speech, or unconcern for the cold. If anyone in your group begins to show symptoms, act immediately to re-warm them. Get out of the wind and rain, remove wet clothing, build a fire, and give hot liquids only if they are conscious. Stay warm, dry, and well nourished; wool and some synthetic clothing help you stay warm even when wet. No cotton. It stays wet and will keep you cold.



Maps

- ◆ **Pick-Up** in person at Forest Offices.
- ◆ **Online Purchase:** www.nationalforestmapstore.com
- ◆ **Avenza:** <http://www.avenza.com>. Download PDF maps to your smartphone.
- ◆ **Forest Service Interactive Travel Online Map:** <http://apps.fs.fed.us/TravelAccess>.
- ◆ **Interactive Visitor Online Map:** <http://www.fs.fed.us/ivm>

Wildlife

Please help keep wildlife "wild" by not approaching or feeding them.

- ◆ **Keep Your Distance** - Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and telephoto lenses to minimize stress to animals and provide a safe viewing distance for you. If an animal approaches you, move away and maintain a safe distance.
- ◆ **Bears** - Always secure your food, and keep a clean camp.
- ◆ **Insects** - Use insect repellent during mosquito season. Check for wood ticks in the spring and early summer. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry Hantavirus.
- ◆ **Pets** - Leashing your pet protects the health and safety of your pet, visitors and wildlife. Leashes protect dogs from becoming lost and from hazards such as mountain lions.

If You Are Lost

If you get lost or become disoriented, stay calm and stay put! Stop and pay close attention to your surroundings and landmarks; relate this to your location on a map.

- ◆ Trust your map and compass, and do not walk aimlessly. If you are on a trail, don't leave it.
- ◆ Stay put if it is nightfall, if you are injured, or if you are near exhaustion.
- ◆ Keeping warm is more important than finding food and water.

Dehydration / Drinking Water

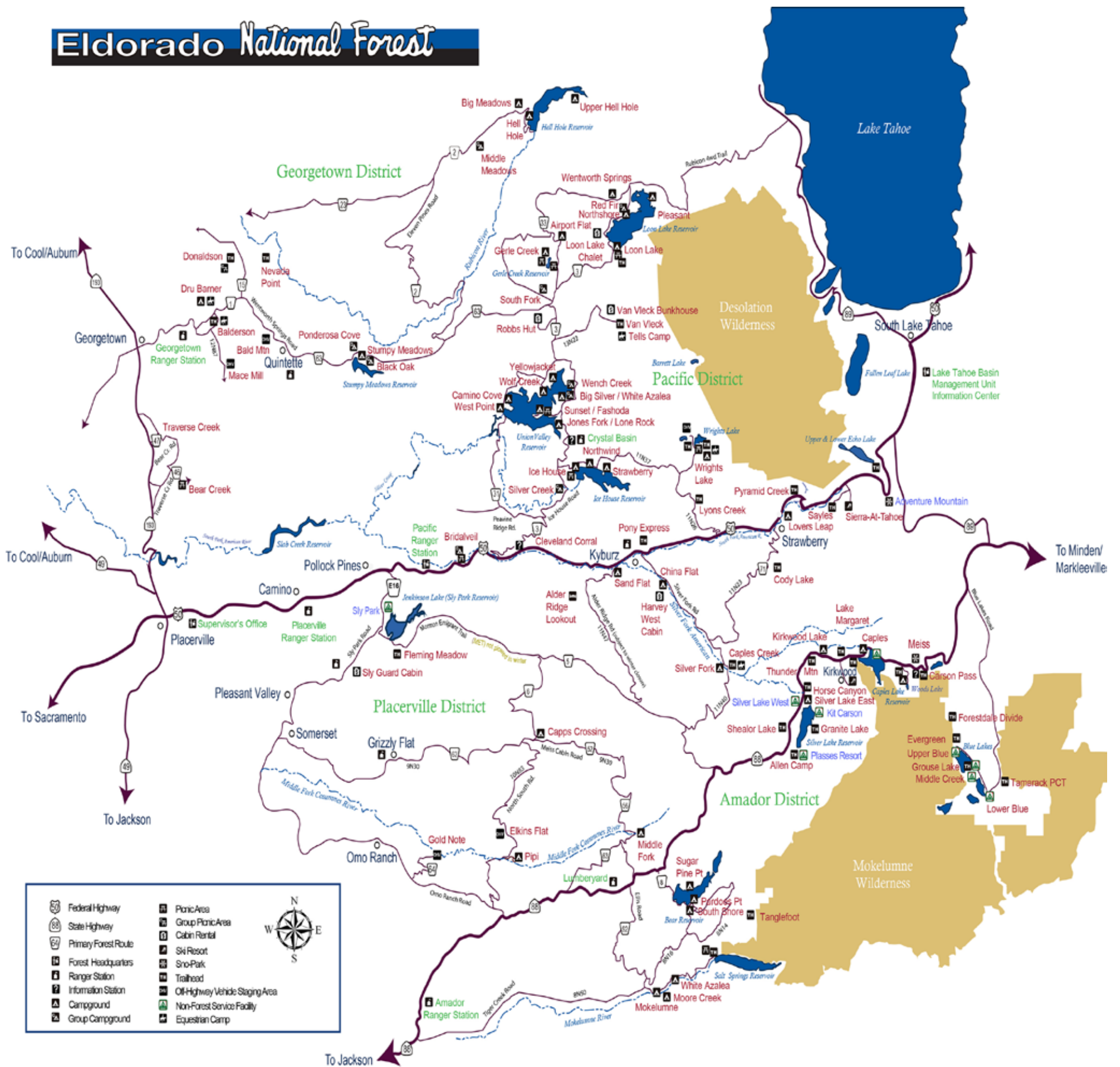
The dry California air draws moisture out of the body in all temperatures. While traveling, you may be miles away from a clean water source. Water in streams and lakes may not be suitable for drinking even if it looks and tastes pure. Treated drinking water is available at many developed recreation areas. If you must drink water from a stream, boil or properly filter all free-flowing drinking water to kill Giardia and other parasites.

Poison Oak

Poison oak can be encountered up to 4,000 feet in elevation. Look for shiny green leaves in groups of three in spring and summer, red leaves with whitish berries in fall, and bare plants in winter. If you touch any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes right away.

Where To Go

Eldorado National Forest



Become A Forest Volunteer

What better way to help the land you love than to get personally involved? The Forest Service has a volunteer program that can put your skills and interests to work. Contact your nearest Forest Service office for more information.



Eldorado National Forest Interpretive Association

ENFIA offers information, maps, books and other items about the Forest at the Forest Service offices and ENFIA visitor stations. Proceeds from sales support visitor programs on the Eldorado National Forest. For more information on ENFIA, including volunteer opportunities, and to purchase materials online visit www.enfia.org.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Contact Information

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Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 622-5061

AMADOR RANGER DISTRICT

26820 Silver Drive
Pioneer, CA 95666
(209) 295-4251

GEORGETOWN RANGER DISTRICT

7600 Wentworth Springs Rd
Georgetown, CA 95634
(530) 333-4312

PACIFIC RANGER DISTRICT

7887 Highway 50
Pollock Pines, CA 95726
(530) 644-2349

PLACERVILLE RANGER DISTRICT

4260 Eight Mile Road
Camino, CA 95709
(530) 644-2324



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