

Where to try your luck gold panning in Northern California

All areas mentioned have rules so call ahead and find out before you go. Some of the rules are no power equipment, hands and pans only, dates open and areas off limits. No artifact recovery or searching so forth so be sure to make sure what you are doing is allowed. They all require you to fill in your holes. Fine can get awful hefty for those that do not follow the rules.

Nobody likes a claim jumper, so watch for posted claims and pan only at sites and parks where the public is welcome. It's always a good idea to call ahead, visit Web sites and stop at the ranger station to make sure you know the rules.

These areas and parks allow public access for gold panning.

Auburn State Recreation Area: Includes 40 miles of the north and middle forks of the American River. From Auburn, reach the area from Highway 49 or Auburn-Foresthill Road. (530) 885-4527, www.parks.ca.gov.

South Yuba River State Park: Includes a 20-mile stretch of the Yuba River's south fork. Off Highway 49, north of Nevada City. Nearest town is Bridgeport. (530) 432-2546, www.parks.ca.gov.

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park: Gold panning in Humbug Creek, behind buildings in North Bloomfield. Malakoff Diggins is 26 miles from Nevada City. (530) 265-2740, www.parks.ca.gov.

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park: South fork of the American River at Coloma, where gold was discovered in 1848. Panning lessons daily, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Cost \$7. For large group reservations: (530) 295-1850. For more park information: (530) 622-3470, www.parks.ca.gov.

Look for Matelot Gulch Mining Co. inside the park for panning lessons. Cost is \$8; (209) 532-9693, (209) 533-3105. Park is three miles north of Sonora off Highway 49. For more park information: (209) 588-9128, www.parks.ca.gov.

Hangtown's Gold Bug Park & Mine: A 61.5-acre park in Placerville, 2635 Goldbug Lane. Gold panning in the troughs. Pan rental is \$2 an hour. Check in at Hattie's Gift Shop if you want to pan. (530) 642-5207, www.goldbugpark.org.

Tahoe National Forest: A few areas have been designated for public gold panning in the Tahoe National Forest:

- Two square miles along the South Yuba River near the town of Washington have been set aside for gold panning. (530) 265-4531.

BEAR RIVER CAMPGROUND IS OPEN MARCH THROUGH OCTOBER ... Auburn 95603; **Bear River Park** address: 2500 **Campground** Road, **Colfax (530) 886-4901**

Union Flat Campground The Forest Service also has a gold panning parcel at the on the North Yuba River. (530) 288-3231.

Eldorado National Forest: Gold panning is allowed, and the Eldorado National Forest Web site recommends two areas – PiPi Campground and the Cache Rock area. It also provides some good advice: "... it is your responsibility to determine whether you are on private land or a mining claim." Maps are available at ranger offices in Pioneer, Georgetown, Pollock Pines and Camino. www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado.

Mariposa County gold panning - Central California near Yoesemite

Briceburg recreation area approx 12 miles east of Mariposa on Hwy 140 you can sluice and pan for gold. Also at the day use Bagby rec. area between Mariposa and the samll town of Coulterville on hwy 49. . The GPAA also maintains a couple of members only claims in this area. Check out the local small towns around the area like Hornitos and Aqua Fria, these are less travelled but have abundant gold in the creeks and rivers.

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