

# Clear Lake State Park



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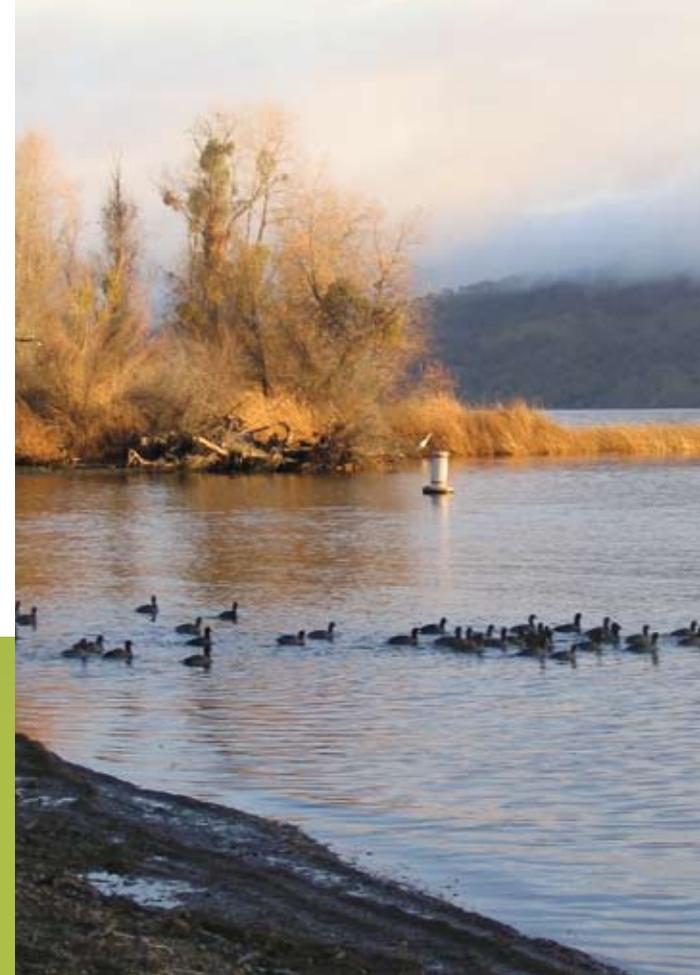
### **Clear Lake State Park**

**5300 Soda Bay Road**

**Kelseyville, CA 95451**

**(707) 279-4293**

*California's largest  
natural lake dates  
back to the early  
Pleistocene era,  
more than 1.5 million  
years ago.*



## Clear Lake State

**Park** is located on the southwestern shore of California's largest natural lake. More than 120,000 visitors each year come to swim, fish, boat, waterski, picnic and camp. The park sits on the edge of Soda Bay, named for a spring of carbonated water that rises from the bottom of the lake and bubbles at the surface.

Summer temperatures often reach over 100 degrees, but most nights cool off comfortably. In winter it may snow in the park. Between October and March, temperatures can dip to 20 degrees, and rain is fairly common.

### PARK HISTORY

#### Native History

Prior to recorded history, the Lile'ek (later called the Xa-Ben-Na-Po Pomo and now known as the Big Valley Pomo) lived below Mt. Konocti on Soda Bay, in the area of today's park.

The Lile'ek built dugout canoes and tule balsa boats to fish for the lake's abundant shapaul and trout. Obsidian (cooled volcanic lava) from Mt. Konocti was readily available for tool-making and barter. Complex Pomo baskets, made from grasses and roots and adorned with feathers, were and still are among the finest baskets made.

Pioneers arrived in 1826 and began to settle in territory inhabited by the natives, often resulting in violence. Tribal leaders



*View of Mt. Konocti from the swim beach*

or not honored. In 1983, 17 California tribes sued for and gained permanent federal recognition. The Big Valley Pomo began buying back their former tribal lands. Today the Big Valley Pomo have a thriving government and are working toward self-sufficiency.

#### The Land Becomes a State Park

After the Pomo land was confiscated by the government, it was granted to Salvador Vallejo, who grazed his livestock in the area. For the next 90 years, successive owners used the land for grazing, dairy farming, hunting and fishing.

In 1947 then-owners Fred and Nellie Dorn sent a letter to Lake County officials "granting the County of Lake 330 acres bordering the shores of Clear Lake and which in turn is to be transferred to the State of California for use as a public park." The county deeded the

eventually signed an 1851 treaty with the U.S. government that gave the natives 72 miles of lakefront land and a promise of peace. However, this and many subsequent government agreements for the Pomo to regain their land were canceled

land to the State in 1948, preserving the property for future generations.

### NATURAL HISTORY

The most prominent of the region's many volcanic cones is 4,200-foot Mount Konocti, just southwest of the park. Konocti is classified as an active volcano, although it has been dormant for thousands of years. The Clear Lake region is geologically active—as seen by the many hot springs in the area. At the turn of the 20th century, hundreds of health-seekers traveled by rail and stage to the local mineral springs resorts, which promised to cure everything from rheumatism to obesity.

Clear Lake State Park is a refuge and nesting place for many varieties of waterfowl. Wood ducks nest in the trees, and mallards find homes in the grass and tules. Birds you may see include grebes, herons, egrets, white pelicans, great horned owls, bushtits, northern flickers, red-shouldered hawks and osprey.

Trail users may spot wildlife such as Beechey ground squirrels, minks, muskrats, western pond turtles and, rarely,

a bobcat or mountain lion.

In March, the bright magenta flowers of western redbud stand out in the landscape. California buckeyes leaf out and prepare to bloom.



*Edward Curtis's "The Hunter on Lake Pomo" Photographed at Clear Lake, 1931*

mountain mahogany and basket bush shrubs are common, and the toyon, with red winter berries, flourishes. Foothill pines, blue oaks and California bay laurel are prominent in woodlands, while black cottonwood, California black

walnut and willows are found near streams.

## RECREATION

**Visitor Center**—Located west of the boat launch parking lot, the visitor center features interpretive displays that focus on the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the lake. The center has a large aquarium displaying some of the lake's fish species.

**Activities**—Morning nature walks, evening campfire programs and Junior Ranger programs are scheduled throughout the summer. A Heron Festival and Wildflower Brunch take place each spring. Visit <http://clearlakestatepark.org> for details.

Special programs are available for groups. Call to make arrangements at least two weeks before your visit.

**Camping**—The park has four developed campgrounds with a total of 147 sites, plus two hike/bike sites. Each site has a table with a food locker and fire ring. The group camp accommodates 50 people.



*Campsite with lake view*

campsites have RV hookups.

Reserve all campsites, especially for summer, by calling (800) 444-7275 or visiting [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

**Cabins**—For information on lakeside cabin rentals, call the park at (707) 279-4293.

**Fishing and Picnicking**—You can fish for crappie, catfish or largemouth bass while enjoying your picnic lunch under the oaks and cottonwoods. Picnic sites have tables, barbecues and water faucets. Restrooms and parking areas with room for buses are nearby.

Groups of up to 200 persons can reserve a large picnic facility by contacting the park at (707) 279-4293. The group site includes two

Amenities include picnic tables, barbecue stoves and campfire rings. All campgrounds except Lower Bayview have restrooms with hot showers. An RV sanitation station is near the boat launch area, but no

large barbecues, water, electricity and night lighting on request.

**Boat Launch**—The boat launch and marina are located on the west bank of Cole Creek. The launch ramp is paved, lighted and usable year round. Boat mooring slips are also available. Paved parking adjoins the marina, with a shower and electrical pedestals for charging boat batteries.

**Swimming**—Clear Lake State Park has a swimming beach just below the Lower Bayview Campground. Use caution, as no lifeguards are on duty.

**Hiking**—Many miles of hiking trails and fire roads wind through the park. Most of the terrain is hilly, with elevations of 1,320 to 1,600 feet. Carry drinking water, sunscreen and a hat.

Dorn Nature Trail winds through oak woodland and chaparral. The vegetation includes oaks, manzanita and many native wildflowers. You can start the trail at several points (see map).

The two-mile trail is moderately strenuous.

Indian Nature Trail is a self-guided trail that shows how local Pomo used native plants and other resources. The trail is a moderate half-mile walk.



*The park provides mooring and launching space.*

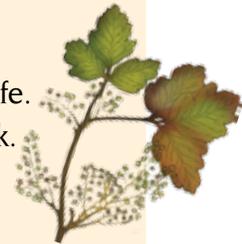
# Clear Lake State Park

## Legend

- Major Road
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Trail
- Paved/Accessible Trail
- Accessible Feature
- Boat Launch
- Boating
- Cabin
- Campfire Center
- Campground
- Fishing
- Footbridge
- Group Campground
- Hike/Bike Campground
- Locked Gate
- Park Office
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- RV Sanitation Station
- Showers
- Supplies
- Swimming
- Viewpoint
- WiFi

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- Fires are permitted only in the stoves or fireplaces provided. Ground fires are not allowed. Bring your own fuel or buy it at the entrance station.
- Loaded firearms and fireworks are not allowed in the park.
- Speed limit on park roads is 15 mph.
- Bicyclists should be careful as the roads are narrow.
- Mosquito repellent is advised.
- Do not feed skunks or other wildlife.
- Diving is not permitted in the park.
- Poison oak is found throughout the park. Stay on trails and designated areas.



Poison Oak

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Several campsites, restrooms, showers and the swim beach are all accessible, as is the Kelsey Creek Trail and portions of the Dorn Nature Trail.

Access is continually improving. For updates, see <http://access.parks.ca.gov> or call the park at (707) 279-4293.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, Anderson Ranch Parkway off Highway 53, Lower Lake (707) 994-0688
- Robert Louis Stevenson State Park, Hwy. 29, eight miles south of Middletown (707) 942-4575

This park receives support in part from a nonprofit organization. For more information, contact: Clear Lake State Park Interpretive Association, 5300 Soda Bay Road, Kelseyville, CA 95451

