

Lake Davis Recreation Area

Plumas National Forest

Beckwourth Ranger District



A Great Place to Visit

From winter ice fishing to relaxing summer angling, Lake Davis is well known to fishermen as the place to go. In addition, camping, hiking, nature viewing, grand vistas, wildflowers and much more await visitors.

Some camping families have been coming to Lake Davis campgrounds regularly for 30 or more years. Many of these campers first came with parents or grandparents and now they're having just as much fun with their children or grandkids. It's a family place. This season many will be returning after varying lengths of absence. And, we are always welcoming first time visitors.

Boating

Boating is regulated by California Dept. of Water Resources and patrolled by Plumas County.

The most popular boating activity on Lake Davis is fishing. Skiing and jet skiing are not allowed. The lake is at 5,886 feet elevation. On warm summer days sail boats, fishing boats, pleasure watercraft, canoes, kayaks, windsurfers and fishing floats dot the water.

High winds sometimes produce unsafe conditions, especially for small craft. During cold conditions, wind can also push floating ice from one side of the lake to the other and has resulted in boaters being trapped by ice.

Boat Launching

All boat launch facilities are fee areas. Camp Five, Honker Cove, Lightning Tree and Mallard Cove Launching Facilities have loading docks, paved ramps, parking and restrooms. Loading docks get pulled out of the water due to ice. When docks get pulled out in the winter, ramps remain open and fees are not collected.

Skiing and jet skiing are not allowed.



Lake Davis and Spring wildflowers

Area History

Native American tribes visited this area over 10,000 years ago. Northeastern Maidu have been in the area for thousands of years. Historically, Maidu are a hunting-fishing-gathering people. They continue to have great respect for nature. This northeastern group did not travel or migrate far and so, rarely associated with other divisions of the tribe.

In the early 1800's the area was infrequently visited by trappers and traders. In 1820 members of a Spanish expedition named the river 'Rio de las Plumas' or Feather River due to the many feathers found along its banks.

In 1849 and again in 1851, thousands flocked to this area after the discovery of gold. The winter of 1852 to 1853 was so bad most miners left the area. Many returning miners brought their families via the Beckwourth Trail (see pg3) from Oroville. Farming and ranching communities that supported area mining efforts sprang up around Sierra Valley.

Late in the 19th century, railroads were developed in the area. By the start of the 20th century, Plumas County had become an important mining, lumbering and agricultural area. Today the pioneer railroads have disappeared. The Western Pacific railroad corridor, Highway 70 and Highway 89 have replaced the old rail and road systems for getting goods to market, residents to neighboring cities and others to come as visitors.



Fishing

One of the main purposes in building the Grizzly Creek Dam and forming Lake Davis was to improve fishing in the area. The most common gamefish are Trout - Rainbow, Brown and Brook; Largemouth Bass; Brown Bullhead; and Pumpkinseed. Ice fishing is popular when conditions permit.

Fishing is regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Regulations booklets and licenses are available at;

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/>

They are also available at several local businesses where tackle and bait are sold. The closest tackle store is the Grizzly Store just south of the dam on County Road 126.

Camp Five, a fee area has a 100 foot accessible fishing levee that can be used by wheelchair. There are also nine no fee fishing access points scattered around the lake. These include: Bluff Cove (No amenities), Coot Bay (toilet), Cow Creek (vault toilet), Eagle Point (no amenities), Fairview Point (toilet), Freeman Creek (no amenities), Jenkins Point (toilet), Long Point (no amenities), and Mosquito Cove (no amenities).

Mountain Biking

The Lake Davis Trail is the only developed trail in this area. Riders can also ride on the roads. Busier roads will include traffic and dusty conditions. Less busy roads are usually a better option. The Smith Peak Road is a good uphill workout. Moderate effort roads include the 2 mile 24N06 road from Grizzly Road south of Lake Davis to the Beckwourth Genesee Road. Roads in the flat areas surrounding the lake take less effort to ride.

Lake Davis is home to the Lost and Found Gravel Grinder Bike Ride where one can race or just ride one of the routes. For more information search for the ride on the web.

Lake Davis Trail

Lake Davis Trail is a 7 mile path that skirts the south and east sides of Lake Davis. It meanders through the mixed conifer forest and over meadows with wonderful views of the lake with high sierra peaks in the background. Meadow areas have elevated walkways to protect these fragile ecosystems. The trail is open to foot, bicycle and equestrian traffic. In the winter the ungroomed trail is open to cross country ski and snowshoe use.

Several sections of the trail overlap with the historical Feather River Lumber Company rail road grade.

This trail was completed thanks to the efforts of a variety of community groups and especially the Portola Rotary Club.

The trailhead is located on County Road 126 just east of the County Road 126/Forest Road 24N10 intersection. Drive north from Portola on West Street. This is County Road 126. Proceed about seven miles to the intersection. Continue on CR126 100 feet, to the trailhead on the left.

The trail continues to the dam. After crossing the dam the trail continues and skirts Grizzly Campground. From here the trail crosses County Road 112 (Grizzly Road). Again the trail crosses County Road 112 just before the Lightning Tree Campground and continues to its end at the Lightning Tree Boat Ramp.

Catfish Cove Trail

Catfish Cove Trail is an accessible trail with its trailhead on County Road 126 about 1 mile east of the Lake Davis Trail trailhead. After Catfish Cove Trail crosses Lake Davis Trail it then heads toward the lake. On a small knoll and at a picnic table, the trail provides an excellent view of Lake Davis and a small wooded island (if the lake is full).

Smith Peak Fire Lookout

Smith Peak is on the west side of Lake Davis. Atop the peak is the Smith Peak Lookout. This is an operational lookout that is staffed during fire season. Visitors are welcome at the lookout. Generally when there are no active fire operations, staff are available to speak with visitors and allow access to the lookout. This may not be the case during lightning events. Smith Peak Lookout commands a fantastic view of Lake Davis, Grizzly Creek, Sierra Valley and surrounding ridges peaks and valleys. On clear days Mt. Lassen is visible.

Camping

Lake Davis Recreation Area has four campgrounds. All are vendor operated with hosts available during peak season. Campsite amenities include fire rings with grills and picnic tables. Campgrounds have first come and reservation campsites that are available on-line at www.recreation.gov or by calling 877-444-6777.

Grizzly Campground has 55 campsites. 16 are open for reservation. The campground has water, paved roads, trash collection, coin operated showers and flush toilets.

Grasshopper Flat Campground has 71 campsites. 14 family campsites are open for reservation. There is one group site that has space for 25 campers. The group site is available by reservation only and Senior and Access 'America the Beautiful' Passes may not be used. The campground has flush toilets, showers, paved roads, trash collection and water.

Grasshopper Flat Overflow Campground is open only when all campsites in the area are filled. Reservation sites are not available. Campground amenities include a vault toilet, dirt road, no water and no trash collection. Water and coin operated showers are available at Grizzly and Grasshopper Flat Campgrounds.

Lightning Tree Campground is open year around. It has 40 campsites. 11 are open for reservation. Several sites are double sites. Senior and Access 'America the Beautiful' Passes may not be used for double sites. The campground has seasonal water, and trash collection. When water and trash service is not available camping is free.

Dispersed Camping is not allowed in Lake Davis Recreation Area. It is allowed outside the recreation area on Forest Service managed land.

Campground	# of sites	Toilet type	Showers	Group sites
Grizzly	55	Flush	Yes	No
Grasshopper Flat	71	Flush	Yes	1
Lightning Tree	40	Vault	No	No
Overflow		Vault	No	No



Photo by Fredrick Howe

Wildlife

Young black bears are most likely to climb a tree when they sense danger. This cub's mother was at the bottom of this tree looking very stern. It's very important to not feed wildlife. By not feeding, you are protecting yourself, other people and the wildlife. A bear that becomes acclimated to people and expects food, becomes a nuisance, then becomes more bold and finally becomes a potential danger. This cub won't always be so cute. Imagine it in three years as an adult waiting at the bottom of the tree, looking stern and expecting to get a handout from you.

Help keep wildlife wild.

Jim Beckwourth and His Trail

James Pearson Beckwourth was a mountain man, fur trader and explorer. Born a slave in 1798 Virginia. Freed by his father and master, Beckwourth was a trained blacksmith. He narrated his life story to Thomas Bonner in 1856 which resulted in the book, "The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth". A war chief of the Crow Nation, a U.S. Army war veteran, a Rocky Mountains fur trader and a shop keeper in California, Beckwourth is best known for opening the lowest trail over the Sierra Nevada in 1851.

Mostly an old Indian trail, his trail from Pyramid Lake, Nevada to Oroville, California was used by thousands of immigrants. Its use declined in 1855. Today it is a National Historic Trail.

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In case of Emergency

Fire / Medical / Emergency

Call 911

