Your Guide to Marin County’s Public Lands

Best Winter Activities

See salmon in West Marin Migration. Migration. Migration. That is what coho salmon and steelhead trout do in the streams throughout West Marin after winter storms. Check out Olema Creek (Point Reyes National Seashore), Lagunitas Creek (Samuel P. Taylor State Park), and Redwood Creek (Marin Woods National Monument), for the best vantage points.

View birds at Rush Creek Enjoy the birds that visit Rush Creek Preserve. Take a walk on the Pinheiro Fire Road to see an amazing variety of shorebirds and waterfowl that spend the winter here.

Winter hike in Muir Woods National Monument Go on a ranger-led hike through the primitive forest at Muir Woods in search of banana slugs, mushroom gardens, coho salmon, winter wildflowers and ghost trees.

Mountain bike ride up historic Eldridge Grade to the top of Mt. Tamalpais Eldridge Grade opened in 1884 as a horse carriage road up the north side of Mt. Tamalpais. Its rocky condition creates a perfect midwinter ride to the top of Tam. The East Peak Lookout at 2,571 feet in elevation is Marin’s highest point.

Check out the surf at Rodeo Beach Rodeo Beach is only a stone’s throw from San Francisco and is a great spot for checking out the waves where the surf picks up in the winter.

Fish at Bon Tempe with the family Bon Tempe Reservoir is stocked with catchable rainbow trout from October to May. A great opportunity for families to get out of the house, have some fun and enjoy the scenery.

Witness migrating whales and lazy elephant seabirds from Chimney Rock From December through April, California gray whales migrate from Alaska to Baja then return to Alaska, while the northern elephant seal comes ashore to birth pups and rest.

Camp in the quiet on Angel Island Winter is a great time for locals to get a weekend campsite. Weather is often pleasant, just keep an eye on the forecast and check the ferry times. Reservations can be made with as little as two days’ notice.

Hike to Hidden Lake on Mount Burdell Preserve Hidden Lake is the most significant upland vernal pool in Marin County. During the late winter and early spring Hidden Lake serves as the breeding site for millions of newts and tree frogs. The pool sustains several listed rare plants.

Best Summer Activities

Celebrate the summer solstice at Muir Beach Go beachcombing and then enjoy the longest day of the year around a campfire at the continent’s edge.

Visit the West Point Inn on Mount Tamalpais The inn was once a stopover for passengers who rode the “Crooked Railroad in the World” up from Mill Valley to the top of the mountain. The sweeping view from the inn includes much of the East Bay, San Francisco, Marin Headlands, Golden Gate Bridge, and the Pacific Ocean. Take a Sunday morning “Pancake Hike” and top off the view with a little maple syrup.

Find shade in the redwood grove at Indian Tree Preserve Nestled up top of the Indian Tree Preserve is a dense redwood grove, catching fog and creating a cool oasis above the parched Novato landscape.

Take an evening Walk on Ring Mountain Make the most of the long summer evenings. Look for the Tiburon Mariposa Lily, a flower that occurs nowhere else on earth, while you enjoy one of the most spectacular views of the bay area.

Circumambulate Mt. Tamalpais Rejoin the steps of the Best poets Gary Snyder, Ailen Ginsburg, and Phillip Whalen in their reverential hike around the entire mountain – a hiking challenge, a personal inspiration, and a spiritual test in one day.

Celebrate China Camp’s heritage Every August, China Camp celebrates with an Annual Heritage Day at the restored, nineteenth century Chinese fishing village. Chinese music, acrobatics, folk dancing, village tours, demonstrations, and other entertainment for all ages continue throughout the day.

Best Fall Activities

Horseback ride at Point Reyes National Seashore The Seashore offers numerous trails for horseback riders.

Keep the trails and yourself in shape - Mt. Tam Trail Crew Join our skilled volunteers and staff as we maintain and repair our trail system, build bridges, install fencing and erosion control structures, cut back brush, and repair stairs. Trail events are generally held on the first Saturday of every month and are suitable for ages 13 and up.

View the raptor migration Visit Hawk Hill in the Marin Headlands to watch the annual migration of raptors.

Relax on Tomales Bay Fall at Heartes Desire Beach means less fog, more sun, and warmer water. Bring a towel and your family and spend the day. Take a meander on the half-mile Indian Nature Trail.

Best Spring Activities

Walk through wildflowers at Point Reyes National Seashore Spectacular displays of brilliantly colored wildflowers await curious eyes from February through April along coastal spots such as Chimney Rock, Abbotts Lagoon, and Limantour Beach.

Become a “Frog Docent” and help protect frogs at Carson Falls The foothill yellow-legged frog is declining throughout its range. These once-common amphibians can still be seen at Little Carson Falls between March and June. Volunteer docents are present on weekends, ready to share beautiful and fascinating tidbits about kidgopoles and other residents of the falls. Docent trainings are held each February.

First weekend visit to Marin Headlands Stay in the Marin Headlands hostel, ride the MUNI 76 bus to keep it car-free! If you do this on the first weekend of the month you can visit the NIKE site on Saturday and then hike up to Battery Townsley on Sunday!

Listen to the roar of Cascade Falls in Cascade Canyon The creeks run through this preserve are among the most pristine in the county. Early spring is a great time to visit, when wildflowers abound and Cascade Falls runs full.

Fly fishing at Lake Lagunitas Enjoy a unique catch and release fishing experience at Lake Lagunitas. The lake is stocked with catchable rainbow trout between October and May. Special regulations require that fish over 14” be released. Barbless hooks and artificial lures are required. This is a popular spot for fly fishing in a serene setting.

Visit secret Marin cemeteries Take a trip to visit spooky cemeteries on public lands. These spots include the pioneer cemetery in the Rush Creek Open Space Preserve where Carl Rush and His wife are buried and the historic Lucas Valley cemetery (across from the Marin County Parks field office).

Hike the Tomales Point Trail Hike the four mile Tomales Point Trail to view the native tule elk and witness a panorama of Tomales Bay, Bodega Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The trail is flat with some hills.

With a common mission of land stewardship, several agencies work to preserve Marin County’s 143,000 acres of public lands; the National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin Municipal Water District, Marin County Parks. These agencies offer a wide range of facilities, lands and activities. Use this guide to learn more about the many opportunities offered on the public lands of Marin County.

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Map: © 2009 1:100,000 Marin County, CA 3.75" x 3.75" Map and Data Projects, Michael Howley, Grant County, OR

Working Together for the Future of Marin County

Looking north from the south tower of the Golden Gate Bridge towards the Marin Headlands

© Carl Rush and his wife are buried and the

Cascade Falls runs full.

Revisit ancient Ohlone subsistence methods at China Camp. Today, China Camp State Park is a State Park and Heritage Site.

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Requests for accommodations may be made by calling (415) 473-4381 (Voice) 473-3232 (TDD/TTY) or by e-mail at disabilityaccess@marincounty.org. Copies of documents are available in alternative formats, upon request.

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