

Park It

I love this time of year when there are so many opportunities to explore the parks that surround us. People are planning their vacations, for destinations near and far to get away from the hum drum of day-to-day work. With the cost of gasoline at \$4 a gallon (and rising), a local choice to me seems to be the best choice for getting away.

I, for one, am a park connoisseur. I can't get enough of visiting and enjoying the numerous parks that are so close to us, be it Bidwell Park, One-Mile, Five Mile or upper park, or beautiful Wildwood Park in Chico. Why not get away from it all in Paradise, with a visit to Bille Park (located at 501 Bille Road), or take the trail down to the canyon? Then there's Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area situated along the Sacramento River. The park is on South Avenue just three miles west of Highway 99 at Vina, or six miles east of I-5 at Corning. Or maybe take the short drive to Merlo Park in Stirling City, where you can enjoy the pristine quiet of its three ponds and the picnic areas. The park is located at 22 Retson Road, about ¼ mile off the Skyway. And then there's the ranch-style Durham Community Park (1847 Durham-Dayton Highway) which offers plenty of room to have a barbecue with your family and friends. Travel south to Gridley to enjoy Manuel Vierra Park, with its beautiful oak trees and fun play equipment for kids. The park is located between the far south ends of Haskell and Washington Streets in Gridley. And how many of you know that Biggs has a skate park? It's located at 9th Street and C Street. And, of course, there is Riverbend Park, situated along the scenic Feather River, where Montgomery Street meets Highway 70.

This time of year as things heat up sometimes the most important thing is water. There's Loafer Creek by Lake Oroville, and the Forebay with its shady trees and aquatic center where you can sail and even take a kayak to view the beaver dam. One of the most impressive aquatic centers I've seen in some time is Gauche Aquatic Park in Yuba City. This \$6 million water park is located at 421 C Street, adjacent to the Sutter County Fairgrounds, and features a 25-foot state-of-the-art water slide. Yuba City has done a great job in creating a venue that rivals Redding's aquatic center, which is also quite impressive. Speaking of Redding, why not take a day trip to visit one of the most incredible bridges in our country, the Sundial Bridge. The Bridge provides pedestrian access to the north and south areas of the Turtle Bay Exploration Park, a complex containing environmental, art and history museums and the McConnell Arboretum and Gardens, and to the Sacramento River Trail. I go to Turtle Bay to enjoy the educational experience as well as the opportunity to walk across the Sacramento River and enjoy the flow of the water beneath me.

I could go on about the parks in our area. There are many that I haven't even mentioned. I will leave it up to you to explore the area's untapped park resources. That is your quest this summer, to enjoy what surrounds you in a very close distance to your home. It's fun – it's like a geo cache experience. A friend of mine has mentioned to me

that they go to Strawberry Valley to enjoy their summer vacation. It's so close but so far from all the usual activities in their life. With the economy and the price of gas being so high there are many who struggle to make ends meet. The mission of Feather River Recreation and Park District and other local park agencies is to provide safe and enjoyable opportunities to just get away. Stay close to your home base this year, have fun locally, and *park it!*

Quote

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time." John Lubbock

"What do I want to take home from my summer vacation? Time. The wonderful luxury of being at rest. The days when you shut down the mental machinery that keeps life on track and let life simply wander. The days when you stop planning, analyzing, thinking and just are. Summer is my period of grace." Ellen Goodman

Fun Facts

Bidwell Park was established July 20, 1905 through the donation by Annie Bidwell of approximately 2,500 acres of land to the City of Chico. Since that time, the City has purchased additional land and today the total Park size is 3,670 acres (nearly 11 miles in length), making it one of the largest municipal parks in the United States.

Merlo Park was dedicated in August 1987 by Harry A. Merlo in memory of his mother. Harry was born in Stirling City and was the founding president of the Louisiana-Pacific Corporation.

Upcoming Events

FRRPD Concerts in the Park continue this Thurs., June 5 with Audiotherapy. Next Thurs., June 12 – 3 Fingers Whiskey. Concerts are held at Riverbend Park from 6:30 to 8 p.m. and are free to the public!

Don't miss opening day of the Forbestown Museum Sat., June 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Enjoy an opening ceremony, chili cook off and even gunfights provided by Gunfighters, Incorporated. As always, admission to the Museum and Old Town are free.

Join us for the *Welcome to Summer* pool party at Nelson Pool on Sat., June 7 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Call 533-2011 for more information.

Sign up now for Pilates Class, which begins June 9. Call 533-2011 for more information.

FRRPD's "Fun in the Sun" Summer Day Camp begins Mon., June 9. Call 533-2011 for more information.

See you in the parks!