Experience Lassen Volcanic National Park!

AT THE EDGE OF LASSEN'S WILDERNESS, the solitude can be so deep that your ears ring with the absence of sound. On mornings after snowfall, the landscape glimmers as if the sky had overturned, spilling the Milky Way across the soaring peaks.

As the sun climbs, things begin to stir in the park. Chick's antecessors call to each other across the red fir forest. The nightly forests of foxes and pine martens are revealed by prints in the snow. By lunch time, giddy children are making their own tracks, sliding down the slopes like otters.

Welcome to Lassen!
As the colorful fall season yields to another snowy winter here at Lassen Volcanic National Park, it is a wonderful time to come, experience, and enjoy the park. Before you journey to Lassen you can take a look through a webcam which shows the spectacular view from the Kohm Yah-mahnee Visitor Center at: http://www.nps.gov/lavo/photosmultimedia/webcams.htm

Sooner or later, children and families will come up to the park to try our snowshoeing on one of the ranger guided programs. Some, it will be the first time. Others will be here to cross-country ski, snowboard, snowshoe or just play in the snow going down the slopes on tubes, discs and sleds. As our cover story mentions, it is important for children of all ages to experience the outdoors. Every season we have parents share their own stories of when they first came to the park as children and have now brought their own. Many of these families are from our own local communities and some travel great distances to see this winter splendor.

In this visitor guide, you will find important details that will make your visit safe and enjoyable. Whether you join a ranger for a guided snowshoe walk or venture out on your own, I have no doubt that the scenic backdrop of snowy mountains and the fun of this winter season will be one of your best memories.
Fall and Winter Activities

Beginner-Intermediate Ski and Snowshoe Routes abound in the Manzanita Lake area (elevation 5,850 feet). The road is regularly plowed from the Manzanita Lake Entrance to the Loomis Ranger Station (one mile). Over 15 miles of cross-country ski trails begin at the Loomis Ranger Station. More experienced skiers can access challenging mountainous terrain from this area. See page 5 for suggested routes.

Intermediate-Advanced Skiers and Snowshoers delight in the steep terrain and sweeping views from the snow-covered Main Park Road (usually accessed from the Southwest Area). See page 4 for touring routes.

Fall Hiking: This is a gorgeous time to visit the park, with fall colors often persisting through early November. Until serious snowfall begins, you can enjoy fabulous hiking throughout the park without the crowds of summer.

Snowplay: The Main Park Road is plowed one mile from the Southwest Entrance to the visitor center. Tobogganing, sledding, and tubing hills are nearby the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center (elevation 6700 feet) and snowboarding is allowed one-fourth mile from the parking area.

Snow Camping: Free permits for wilderness snow camping are available during business hours at the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center information desk, and after hours at the visitor center 24 hour vestibule and the Loomis Ranger Station self-registration station.

Ranger-Led Activities

Snowshoe Walks
Join a park ranger for a one to two mile adventure exploring winter ecology and Lassen's geologic history in the Southwest Area. Wear boots and dress warmly. Participants must be at least eight years old and able to do a moderate physical exercise. Participation is first-come, first-served.

The walks are held Saturdays and Sundays from December 26th through April 3rd. Meet the ranger at 1:30 p.m. outside the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center in the Southwest Area. The walks are 1 1/2 to 2 hours in length. The route and type of walk is determined by snow conditions.

For safety reasons infants and children in carriers/packs are not allowed on snowshoe walks.

For more information please telephone (530) 595-4480, seven days a week, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Snowshoes are provided during the ranger-led walks by the National Park Service. A $1.00 donation is requested for each pair of snowshoes used.

Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center - Open All Winter

Did you know that Lassen Volcanic National Park has a year-round visitor center? Located near the Southwest Entrance, the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center has something for everyone. Come experience our brand new park film in high-definition with digital surround-sound, then take a relaxing tour through our new exhibit hall. Purchase a cup of hot chocolate and watch the snowflakes fall as you enjoy the warmth of our stonework fireplace. Our friendly and knowledgeable park staff are always ready to help you make the most of your visit. The opening hours of the visitor center are 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM daily. We will be closed on Christmas Day (December 25th).

Be sure to ask about the sustainable design features that make this a state-of-the-art green building.
You Need To Know

For Your Safety
-Please remember that Lassen Volcanic National Park is a wilderness with natural wonders that are also potentially hazardous.
- The National Park Service cannot guarantee your safety.
- Bring a first aid kit, high energy food, water, and extra clothing.
- Dispose of the untransported equipment, supplies, injury, or illness. Water, and winter storm can turn a day trip into an ending outside.
- An emergency phone is available at the visitor center 24 hour visitable.
- A pay phone is available in the lower plaza at Manzanita Lake.

Roads
-Carry tire chains in your vehicle.
- The Lassen Ranger Station is at 3450' elevation and the Southwest Entrance is at 6740' elevation.
- Be alert for road conditions and driving snow.

Park Road Closures
- Call the visitor center for current road information at (530) 595-4440.
- The Main Road will usually close by mid-November for the season due to snow. Visit the road conditions and spring road opening website at http://www.nps.gov/laveplmy/road/conditions/current_conditions.htm.
- Road usually begins on the Main Road on early April; the road usually opens by mid-June.
- The Butte Lake, Warner Valley and Jasper Lake roads close to vehicle travel for the season due to snow by late October and usually reopen by late June.

Trails
- Call the visitor center for current trail information at (530) 595-4440.
- Be aware that most trails may be covered by snow and that the snow may be dangerously thin and could collapse at any time.
- Do not walk on areas lacking.

Campground
- The Southwest Campground is open for snow camping.
- Fires and firepits are not permitted, self-contained barbecues are allowed on the paved parking lot.
- The cost to use the campground is $14 per night, please register at the entrance station.

Accessible Facilities
- Kohl Yeh-mah-nee Visitor Center: information desk, Exhibit, Restrooms, Water Fountain, Food Service, Theatre.
- Manzanita Lake: Lassen Ranger Station, Restrooms.

Pets
- Pets are permitted within 50 feet from power line, roads or parking areas and must be on a leash and not disturb wildlife.

Snowmobiling
- Snowmobiling is not permitted anywhere within the boundaries of Lassen Volcanic National Park. Please see a ranger about a groomed snowmobile trails outside the park.

For additional park rules and regulations, please inquire at the Kohl Yeh-mah-nee Visitor Center in the Southwest Area.

Into the Wilderness

Create country skiers and snowboarders who venture into Lassen’s backcountry can expect spectacular views and snow quality. Adequate preparation and precautions may ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Call the visitor center Information desk at advance for information on snow, weather, and backcountry conditions.

Day Users
- Always sign in on trail register: stands at the Kohl Yeh-mah-nee Visitor Center and at the trailhead by the Lassen Ranger Station in the Manzanita Lake area.
- Registration helps us track search and rescue runs necessary.

Overnight Users
- A wilderness permit is required. See our area roads for snowboarding.
- Wilderness permits are available at the Kohl Yeh-mah-nee Visitor Center (open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or by calling (530) 595-4440. Permits are available 24 hours a day at the Lassen Ranger Station. Registration is required at the Kohl Yeh-mah-nee Visitor Center 24-hour visitable. A permit for a wilderness permit can be found at http://www.nps.gov/laveplmy/permits.htm.
- Park in designated overnight parking area. OnEXInside vehicles can be damaged by snow removal equipment if parked in other areas.

Pets, Fires, Litter
- Pets are not permitted in the backcountry.
- Open fires and fire pits are not permitted; use campfire only.
- Carry out all litter.
- Dig into buried or room least one foot deep and snow away from trails.
- Carry out all waste paper.

Water, Food, Clothing, Supplies
- Carry water, especially in dry conditions. Water is an important solvent for dehydration.
- Purchase water on the routes just before the Lassen Ranger Station and near the Lassen Ranger Station (only small consumers will fit the water).
- Store food and trash in a carryout or hang up on food.
- Carry waterproof cold weather gear, even on sunny days.

Layers clothing to maintain an even temperature; excess perspiration can lead to hypothermia.
- Carry a topographic map and compass and know how to use them.
- Pack an emergency kit, complete extra binding, and repair materials.

For Your Safety
- Always travel with a partner or a group.
- Select a travel route familiar at least one member of your group and enjoy your experience.
- Be prepared for adverse weather extremes (cold winds, rain, snow, lightning) which can kill unprepared travelers.
- Prepare and terminate your trip if a storm is forecasted or appears to be building. Weather can be unpredictable and fast-changing.
- If caught in a storm, wait out in a sheltered, avalanche-safe area until conditions improve.
- A few minutes of exposure to snow conditions.
- Be aware that hypothermia may be caused by snow and that the snow may be dangerously thin and could collapse at anytime.
- Use caution when crossing the snow and avoid areas near avalanche paths.
- Leave your snowshoes off when crossing power lines and avoid doing so at all times.
- Snowshoeing is not permitted anywhere within the boundaries of Lassen Volcanic National Park. Please see a ranger about a groomed snowmobile trails outside the park.

Climate Statistics

Lassen Volcanic National Park Peak Experiences
Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoe Routes

Virtually the entire park is open to the skier or snowshoer. Most routes described below are accessible with snowshoes or skis with climbing skins. Summit conditions on the various peaks may require skinning or crampons. These routes provide a variety of terrain and scenery. Snowstorm or avalanche conditions may be encountered. The same winter travel rules will still apply at any sign of inclement weather.

Visitors exploring Lassen's backcountry in the winter should take special precautions. Heavy snowfall and rough terrain create serious avalanche conditions throughout the park. In addition, the weather is often severe and snowstorms can be sudden and severe. Visitors are strongly advised to carry avalanche gear. This includes basic knowledge of route finding and snow science, a probe pole, avalanche beacon, and a lightweight snow shovel.

No backcountry camping is allowed within one-half mile of the Growler areas. All skiers and snowshoers are to sign in/out for day and overnight trips. Registrations are located near the trailhead Brach at the Lassen Ranger Station and at the visitor center 24-hour vestibule. Common courtesy alerts that skiers and snowshoers stay out of cross-country ski tracks.

Main Park Road from Southwest Area

Classification: Beginner to Advanced
Distance: Southwest Builders Access to Lake Helen 6.2 mi, to road summit at base of Lassen Peak 7 mi, to Kings Creek Meadows 11.5 mi, to Summit Lake 1.65 mi, to Hat Lake 19 mi, to Mountaineer Lake 30 mi.
Elevation: Start (Southwest Builders Access) 7600', high point 8900', Mountaineer Lake 9300'
Average Skiing Time: one way: Lake Helen 3 hrs., Kings Creek 5 hrs., Summit Lake 8 hrs., Mountaineer Lake 2 days.

The route starts at the Southwest Builders Access and follows the unpaved Main Park Road through the park to Mountaineer Lake. Hazardous sidehill, steep, and slippery conditions with icy conditions may be encountered. The Diamond Peak area has a history of avalanches. This area should be avoided by using the marked "Ranger Canoe" trail just north of Lake Helen (see map below). By mid-altitude in the high, open country in the headwaters of the Hot Springs Valley and Ranger Peak, it is advisable to find any use of the road. High winds and whiteout conditions are common in this area during winter storms. The road crosses several avalanche paths. Terrain off the road is generally steep, south of Kings Creek and gentle northeasterly. Good coverage snow camping areas with wilderness permits can be found a short distance from the road north of Diamond Peak, near Mineral Lake and Lake Helen, Kings Creek Meadow, Summit Lake and Hat Lake. This route offers good access into the heart of Lassen's backcountry.

Ridge Lakes

Classification: Advanced, Intermediate
Distance: 2.5 mi round trip
Elevation: Start (Southwest Builders Access) 7600', high point 8900'
Average Skiing Time: one way: 1 hr
To reach the trailhead, follow the unpaved Main Park Road from the Southwest Builders Access (1.4 mi), cross the bridge just before reaching Sulphur Works, then turn left (northeast) away from the road and follow the drainage just west of the Sulphur Works thermal basin. The trail climbs rapidly to the Ridge Lakes basin. Several good camping spots (with Wilderness permit) can be found on the north shore of Ridge Lakes. If weather is severe, more protected camping can be found about 0.3 mi. below Ridge Lakes along the outlet creek. Avoid the area just south of Ridge Lakes during periods of avalanche danger. The trail loop north from Ridge Lakes to rejoins itself about 0.6 mi. below the basin.

Brokeoff Mountain

Classification: Advanced
Distance: 4 mi round trip
Elevation: Start 4659', summit 9510'
Average Skiing Time: one way: 4 hrs.
Most skiers access the summit via the southwest ridge. Nevertheless, getting onto this ridge can be difficult as the various routes inevitably take a skier through hazardous areas. Traditional routes often use the Forest Lake trail or the forested section which begins near the park entrance. Numerous avalanche paths exist on all aspects of the mountain. There are several sections of extremely dangerous terrain. Be sure to use extreme caution. Skiers reserved travel on Brokeoff Mountain until spring when snow conditions traditionally stabilize.

Summit conditions during inclement weather often include high winds with little or no visibility. Large, overhanging snow cornices at the summit make any approach to the edge extremely dangerous.

Forest Lake

Classification: Intermediate
Distance: 1 mi
Elevation: Start 7000', high point 7500'
Average Skiing Time: 2 hrs.
Description: The trail begins at the Southwest Builders Access and follows the unpaved Park Road 1000 yd. Then turns (south) and follows a shallow bowl several hundred feet until another narrow bowl is reached. At this point the trail turns right (west) and passes through the bowl to a flat area. Look for a ridge on the right (north). Follow the crest of the ridge toward the west until a small lake to the left (south) up a steep face. Continue to the southwest, staying close to some large open areas to the north. On reaching the next ridge, turn (west) and follow the ridge to the open bowl area beyond Brokeoff Mountain. Do not travel into the bowl-turn left (south) and follow the moraine to Forest Lake.

South/southwest winds or snow is prevalent throughout the Sulphur Works Area. These heated gases melt snow cover which may be unrecognizable due to new snow covering the openings. Facilities have occurred from visitors breaking through snow and falling into these heated cavities. Multiple vents can occur in terrain that appears to be stable.

Know where the vents are and keep away from hydrothermal areas.
Manzanita Lake Area Winter Recreation Map

Manzanita Lake Snowshoe Loop
Classification: Beginner
The trail is recommended for foot traffic only, not skiing.
Distance: 1.6 mi; Round trip: 3.2 mi
Elevation: Start 5800'; high point: 6350'
Average Time (one trip): 1.5 hr.
The route starts near the Loemi Ranger Station and circles the lake.

Nobles Emigrant Trail
Classification: Intermediate to advanced
Distance: 3 mi
Elevation: Start 5800'; high point: 6350'
Average Time (round trip): 3-4 hrs.
The trail starts at the Main Park Road across from the Loemi Ranger Station. The route follows the historic Nobles Emigrant Trail at the base of Lake Mountain. The trail then climbs a portion of the south face of Lake Mountain and continues up through snow to be further at a gradual descent, then rejoins the Main Park Road at Sunset View. Turn right (north) to follow the Main Park Road back to make a loop.

Near the Park:
McGowan Lake & Nanny Creek
Classification: Beginner to intermediate
Distance: 5 mi in Nanny Creek
Elevation: Start (Highway 89) 6000', and (Highway 36) 5115'
Average Time (one trip): 2 hrs.
The trail leaves Highway 89 on the unpaved McGowan Lake Road (5.5 mi south of the Shastina Entrance Station). The route is marked with blue and yellow side markers and proceeds across a hill and through a large meadow. The trail thenloop along the north side of Nanny Creek. The trail does not go to McGowan Lake which is on private property. This trail makes for a good cross-country ski vehicles are available for rent.

Please stay offtake ice.
Lakes ice is dangerous and unstable. Shows may be difficult to recognize due to snow.

Backcountry Ski Patrol
The Lassen Volcanic National Backcountry Ski Patrol is on patrol! Patrollers are volunteers who can be identified by their snowsuits or snowshoes with universal first aid gear and were trained in avalanche safety. They are on patrol from November 1 to April 30.

Be “Avalanche Aware”
Always obtain weather and avalanche information before entering the backcountry (see Color Avalanche Danger Description on back page). At times, backcountry travel may be advised due to high or extreme avalanche conditions.

STORMS
- 96% of all avalanches occur during or soon after a storm.
- When new snow falls on top of an old snow, the avalanche danger increases.

SNOWFALL
- Snowfall at a rate of 1" or more per hour increases avalanche danger rapidly.
- With heavy winds, newer snow can become rapidly buried with snowsentrated into a few inches of snowfall.

WEATHER CONDITIONS
- Rapidly changing weather conditions (wind, temperature, precipitation) can cause unstable snow.

SOUND
- Unusual snow can settle beneath a ski's weight with a "thump."

RECENT AND PRIOR AVALANCHE ACTIVITY
- If you see a new avalanche, suspect dangerous conditions.
- Avoid old slide paths, steep open gullies, and areas with small trees that had been swept away by avalanche.

ROUTE SELECTION
- If you must cross a dangerous slope, stay high and near the top. Avoid avalanche fracture lines.
- If you must climb or descend a dangerous slope, go straight up or down; do not weave back and forth.
- Areas of dendritic trees, ridges, or rocky outcrops can be unstable along the climb.
- Only one person should cross a dangerous slope at a time.
- Snow will be hard and loose as the day grows warmer; this can make a return trip more difficult.
- Each person should carry a shovel.
- Carry and be trained to use an avalanche beacon.

Avalanche identifier
- Keep at least 500 feet away from the avalanche's runout.
- If you are caught in an avalanche, use a shovel and beetown equipment.
- Make swimming motions and try to stay on top, working your way to the avalanche's runout.
- If you are pulled beneath the surface, keep your mouth closed.
- As you begin to move, make a path in front of your face with your hands; keep your arms close to your body.

If you are a survivor:
- Make the place where you last saw the person buried and search directly downstream.
- Probe the snow in an even line across the snowfield using ski poles, shovels, or trees.
- If you can, send someone for help.
- If you are alone, do not abandon your search and go for help unless it is a matter of life or death.

Photos by L. Martin

Lassen Volcanic National Park
Peak Experiences 5
NEARBY BUSINESSES

Lassen Volcanic National Park does not endorse the organizations and enterprises listed below, but we wish to thank them for their generous support in producing this publication as a visitor service.

South of Park, Highway 36:
Mineral and Mill Creek

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Mineral and Mill Creek

Southeast of Park, Highway 36:
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Chester/Lake Almanor Business Directory

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Migrate, Hibernate, or Tolerate?

Wild animals have three main methods to deal with winter:
1. They can leave by migrating, if they can avoid it by hibernating or
2. or they can live with it by tolerating and adjusting to its severe conditions.

Many animals migrate. More than 83 species of birds nest in the park. Most of these birds leave northeastern California before winter sets in and return in spring. Western tanagers fly as far south as Costa Rica. Many songbirds, from swallows to warblers, fly to western Mexico for the winter. How many people do you know who head south to places like Florida when winter weather arrives?

Spending winters in the tropics conjures up images of sun bathing on a balmy beach. For birds, however, winter is no vacation. Birds of all sizes fuel their long distance flights by burning fat, so they must store body fat prior to migration and eat enough to replenish this fat as it is burned. Travel to and from nesting areas is full of perils, including storms, predators, obstacles such as radio towers, and the search for food in unfamiliar landscapes.

Many flying animals choose not to migrate during Lassen’s harsh winters. Some insects, such as Lassen’s California tortoise shell butterflies, survive the winter by producing glycerol, a form of sugar that resists freezing. On cold nights, birds such as the Mountain Chickadee enter a controlled hibernation, lowering their body temperatures allows them to save fat that would have been burned to maintain their normal high body temperature.

Hibernation is a strategy used by animals including bears, bats, golden-mantled ground squirrels, and chipmunks. In the fall, bears put on fat by foraging on berries and pine nuts. While bears are denning, their temperatures can drop 15°F and their bodies slow down to reduce energy consumption. Even so, bears will burn 15 to 40 percent of their body fat over the winter, requiring a bear to consume 20,000 calories a day or more in preparation for winter hibernation. Bears may wake up, but do not have to eat, urinate, or defecate. Female bears can give birth during hibernation.

Animals that confront winter have a wide variety of adaptations for survival. Adding fat and gaining weight for hibernation are adaptations. Storing food is a common behavioral adaptation. Beavers stash twigs underwater where they will be available all winter. Pikas, the “haymows of the mountains,” dry grasses they collect in summer for consumption under winter’s blanket of snow.

Many small animals take advantage of the insulating value of the snow. Once the snow cover is about eight inches deep, the temperature at ground level becomes almost constant regardless of how cold it gets above. Voles remain active all winter by living under the snow where their food is still available and they can build warm nests of grass. Unfortunately for voles, weasels will successfully hunt them in their own tunnels, even using the nests as sleeping quarters, and lining the nest with the fur of the previous occupants.

Surviving the winter season can be challenging for not only Lassen’s wildlife, but for park visitors as well. Visitors must also be prepared to deal with rigors of winter. The basic survival strategy is the same; stay warm, have plenty of food and water, and recognize your limits in mountain weather conditions.

Gear Up For Safe Driving In Snow Country!

Please remember that high-elevation roads are often icy or snow-covered during the fall and winter and can be very hazardous, especially when temperatures drop during the evening and early morning hours.

The main park road that connects with Highway 89 is closed throughout most of the winter. The road is plowed to the Kolan Yah-mak-tsee Visitor Center from the Southwest Entrance and to the Lassen Ranger Station from the Manzanita Lake Entrance Station. Visit the website for road status at http://www.nps.gov/lavo/planyourvisit/current_conditions.htm for up-to-date information. The 17 Road (31N17 from Mineral to Viola), other U.S. Forest Service, and some county roads closed for the winter.

Carry tire chains in your vehicle from October through May. Chain requirements can be instituted at any time, even four-wheel drive vehicles with snow tires can be required to chain up. Watch for highway advisories posted in Red Bluff and Redding. Caltrans will post chain requirements on Highways 36 and 44.

To check for chain requirements, road closures, or other highway advisories before your trip, call the Caltrans Highway Information Network at 1-800-427-7623 or go to the Caltrans website at www.dot.ca.gov/bq/rosenfo.

Caltrans also offers important tips for winter driving in snow country at: www.dot.ca.gov/bq/rosenfo/wintdrf.htm.

Park Passes

7-day - $10
Valid from date of purchase.

Annual - $25
Valid for one year from month of purchase. Also honored at Whitecastle National Recreation Area.

Other passes accepted at Lassen Volcanic:

Access Pass - Free, lifetime pass for U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are permanently disabled

America the Beautiful - $80
Covers all National Park units and other federal recreation areas with entrance fees. Valid for one year from month of purchase.

Senior Pass - $10; Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are 62 years or older.

8 Lassen Volcanic National Park Peak Experiences