

DRAFT BOATING and WHITE WATER

Disclaimer: THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT ANY RESOURCE OR ACTIVITY I'VE FOUND OR DESCRIBE WILL BE AS 'ACCESSIBLE' AS YOU MIGHT NEED. Or information may be out of date. Use the information at your own risk.

What I like about water recreation in northern California is the endless opportunities to take photographs. Beautiful lakes surrounding by forests, fast running rivers, whitewater water coursing down dramatic canyons, all provide wonderful photo opportunities.

Boating for me is a form of survival in the water. We momentarily owned a boat in 1974 for a couple of months. Boating, for us, is a very quick way to a family argument where everyone loses their sense of humor. That being said, lots of people love boating, waterskiing, sailing, and kayaking, too.

Most of the lakes in northern California allow boating. But, you will need to check and see exactly what kind of watercraft are allowed.

Shasta Lake Unique Adventures:

Shasta Dam Tour: fully accessible and free to boot! The US Bureau of Reclamation has a very nice visitor center, A free video version of the tour is available in their auditorium, along with displays, exhibits explaining the dam's construction, and a gift shop. But you can also tour the actual dam. Did I mention it's free?

<https://www.usbr.gov/mp/ncao/docs/shasta-tour.pdf>

<https://www.usbr.gov/mp/ncao/shasta-dam.html>

Shasta Lake is popular for all forms of boating, including houseboats, ski boats, fishing boats and more. Check the Shasta County list for wheelchair accessible boat ramps.

For those who just want a boating experience without owning one, Shasta Lake offers some unique opportunities. Note that I have done neither of these activities. They are on my 'maybe' list depending upon how 'accessible' they turn out to be.

Shasta Lake Dinner Cruise: <http://lakeshastadinnercruises.com/faq/3927870>

Each dinner cruise lasts around 2 hours and makes its way around the most scenic parts of Shasta Lake. It seems like a very nice way to see a lot of the lake without investing in a boat. Wheelchair accessibility info is posted at the company web site. But do call and ask the company for more specific information for your particular needs if you decide to attempt this activity.

It's mentioned that the dinner boat and restroom have limited wheelchair accessibility. Depending on lake levels the exposed dirt road may have uneven and/or unstable pathways. The company says they will do their best to assist those in need to accessibility to the boat. They offer rides to and from the boat departure location for those who need assistance. But, again, I encourage you to arrange in advance for any special needs you might have to determine if the Dinner Cruise is possible for you.

Now if they just had a gluten-free menu..... oh wait, they do! Just call ahead and discuss your needs!

Shasta Caverns: This is one activity I wish we had done when we moved to this area about 15 years ago when I was more able to walk. The main attraction at the Shasta Caverns is obviously the caverns. But, the caverns themselves are NOT wheelchair accessible or mobility friendly due to an abundance of stairs (600 steps to climb). But there are other features of the caverns experience that might make taking a trip to the caverns a fun family activity even though I won't make the whole trek. It really depends on a person's own particular mobility levels and who else wants to go.

According to various information sites, the whole cavern adventure, including the a 10-minute boat ride across the McCloud arm of the Shasta Lake, a 10-minute bus ride up to the cavern's entrance, and a 45- to 60-minute guided tour in the caverns, usually takes about 2 hours. However, the tour of the caverns is NOT recommended for those with mobility concerns (translation – the caverns are not wheelchair accessible), but they will play a narrated video of the same caverns experience in the video center.

You can choose to just purchase a ticket for the boat ride and visitors center (said to be accessible), and let the rest of your group brave the cavern hike. But, I highly recommend calling management (not emailing as they seem to ignore email) to determine if you can get yourself onto and off of the boat and find out where, exactly, you can use your mobility device. Before buying a ticket, make sure you know just how limited their 'access' actually is.

<http://www.onlyinyourstate.com/northern-california/caverns-norcal/>

Renting houseboats is yet another experience I've not had, and probably won't. My spouse swims like a rock, we both sunburn like crazy, and neither of us like to fish. But many families truly cherish their vacations on the water in a houseboat.

I do not know how complicated planning a houseboat vacation would be for a wheelchair user. But, the lakes where houseboats are rentable, also seem to have wheelchair accessible boat ramps along with Marinas. My unanswered question is if I got in the water to swim around, how would I get back on a houseboat?

With a little research, a family member with mobility or other disability issues may be able to have a unique watercraft experience. But, you will have to check directly with the various rental companies to find something that may suit your personal mobility issues and answer your specific questions. I firmly recommend having someone scout out the situation in person before committing to a costly rental that might just be a flop.

More than just houseboats may be rented. All sorts of watercraft seem to be available: canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, and more. Here's a list of some contacts, none of which I have actually used.

Shasta Lake <http://activenorcal.net/outdoors/your-vacation-on-water-%E2%80%93-the-10-things-you%E2%80%99ll-need-for-the-p/>

Whiskeytown Lake: <http://www.whiskeytownmarinas.com/oak-bottom-marina>

Sailing at Whiskeytown Lake: There is at least one sailing group in the northstate that has experience with the disabled. The Redding Yacht Club, [<http://reddingyachtclub.org/>] [see their facebook page, too] which plans events on Whiskeytown Lake, can accommodate the disabled. They have sailboats with

adaptive equipment installed and host events for disabled veterans. Their web site seems perpetually out of date, so I'd use the phone to get more information from them about coming events.

Photo Note: There are several great photo locations driving around Whiskeytown Lake. I recommend having a long lens or a good zoom if you want pictures of boating from afar. Do some pre-scouting to find your favorite spot, then arrive EARLY to park and set up. I suggest bringing your own chair, a big hat or shade umbrella, water and snacks. Be prepared for some breeze, too.

Trinity Lake: <http://www.trinitylakeresort.com/>

Lake Britton: <http://www.burney-falls.com/marina-boat-rentals/>

I like to photograph Lake Britton from the MacArthur Burney Falls State Park. This is a fee area, but the Park has lots of wheelchair accessible amenities like trails, picnic areas, Burney Falls, and Lake Britton which as a very nice wheelchair accessible fishing platform and an accessible boat dock.

I've gotten some really nice photos of Lake Britton right from the shoreline. The whole Park has wonderful photo opportunities.

Kayaking and Rafting:

I'm not sure I'm brave enough to try river rafting, or kayaking either. But both activities are great fun to photograph, particularly if you have a long zoom lens on your camera. For me, the challenge is finding a location on dry land where I can get some great shots of those kayakers and rafters hitting the white water stretches.

Spring is the big season for whitewater enthusiasts and if you want to get good photos, then you'll need to plan ahead. Want to know where the white water folks will be? Check out American Whitewater <https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/search/state/rgLP/level/run/atleast/1/atmost/V%2B/sr/1/>

Once you've picked your river, then get some maps and do your homework. You may have to do some scouting to find good locations to set up for photography. Some downloadable maps show where the rapids are located and then you can determine roads that get near, and find overlooks, or bridges, or pull-off areas where you can get clear views of the river and rapids.

I tend to prefer taking single frame shots with my particular camera as it's burst mode (where it snaps several frames in succession then stores them) isn't that fast. Getting just the right dramatic shot is often a matter of luck, but if you hit the river on a day when a lot of kayakers are making their runs, you'll come home happy.

Trinity, Upper Sacramento, Salmon, Klamath, Pit Rivers are all great possibilities for getting photographs or taking video. <http://activenorcal.net/outdoors/wet-behind-the-ears-can-be-a-good-thing/>

The Pit River provides some spectacular places to get photos of kayakers and rafters. The Pit Falls area is not what I would call 'accessible' but if you have a long zoom lens, you can actually get some great shots from 299E from a pullout that overlooks the Falls.

<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/6799>

In Big Bend, kayakers come through the Pit River white water and under the bridge. Great photo possibilities abound with a little patience but you need a long zoom to see the whitewater action.

Keep in mind that on most river in northern California there are hydro power dams and that means water releases from time to time. Water releases will be occurring in August and September on the Pit 5. <https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/265/> Water releases in summer do attract both rafters and kayakers who often make multiple runs over the course of a day. The ware releases are often well known in advance so you can put them on your photo calendar.

If you want to try getting wet (and you haven't got a raft, kayak or any experience), Shasta Disabled Sports out of Mount Shasta, apparently hosts summer programs that include several activities from May through October including whitewater rafting, camping, fishing, boating, and rock climbing. Event locations vary but include beautiful locations such as Siskiyou Lake, Kangaroo Lake, Klamath River, and the Upper Sacramento River. (and they have winter programs, too). Their web site seems out of date, but they should have the contacts for rafters and kayakers. Call them if you are interested in any of their programs.

<http://www.shastadsusa.org/summer-recreation>

Logistics for river running on your own may be daunting. What goes into the river also has to come out at some point. Getting in may be a lot easier than getting out considering the scarcity of accessible river points.

<http://www.californiawhitewater.com/rivers/lower-klamath/logistics/>

Private rafting companies can apparently provide river trips for those with disabilities:

<https://whitewatertours.com/main-trinity-river/>

<http://www.trinityriveradventureinn.com/kayaking>

There's more information about Trinity River rafting at the USFS:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm9_008083.pdf

I strongly recommend contacting the appropriate NF or Ranger District for current information about conditions/accessibility for any specific locations you plan on visiting/using before making the trip, whether it's a campground, river access point, or accessible restroom. Conditions change annually, and what may have been accessible in years ago on their published (but not updated) list might not be accessible by a person using a wheelchair now.

And remember, on rivers you need to plan for put-in and take-out locations which may NOT be the same due to river conditions.

I have looked at the online information and where mentioned, cross referenced information with Recreation.gov or other sites. Finding a symbol legend for recreation.gov is difficult, but it appears that the wheelchair symbol for access will turn up under the 'Site' tab. Also, if you use the search box at any National Forest web site, don't be surprised if you get umpteen returns of exactly the same page.

Anyway, here's what I've gleaned from the various web sites. I have not personally physically checked any of this information on national forest accessible recreation on the ground. If you go to a location in a national forest and there is nothing wheelchair accessible there, IT'S NOT MY FAULT! I suggest using the information in order to ask specific questions at either a Ranger District or a National Forest office about accessibility for your purposes. (At least I've saved you about 200 hours of more of research time.)

Shasta Trinity National Forest: Wheelchair Accessible Boat Ramps

Shasta Lake: If you have your own watercraft, the USFS has identified these as wheelchair accessible boat ramps. 5 are described as accessible with a sixth possibly accessible. Some boat ramps are stated to have wheelchair accessible fishing platforms and/or wheelchair accessible loading platforms. Restrooms may or may not be wheelchair accessible as it's hard to tell from the descriptions provided by USFS.

- **Antlers Boat Ramp**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recarea/?recid=6421>
- **Bowerman Public Boat Ramp (unconfirmed)**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recarea/?recid=6476>
- **Centimudi Public Boat Ramp**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recarea/?recid=6457>
- **Clark Springs Public Boat Ramp**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recarea/?recid=6481>
- **Packers Bay Public Boat Ramp**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recarea/?recid=6460>
- **Pine Cove Public Boat Ramp**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/stnf/recreation>

Trinity Lake

Trinity River

Whiskeytown Lake

McCloud River (rafting, kayaking):

<http://www.onlyinyourstate.com/northern-california/the-hidden-castle-norcal/>

Klamath National Forest:

Goosenest RD: **Jaunita Lake:** Juanita Lake offers a unique combination of recreation opportunities. The campground has 23 campsites and one 50 person group camp. The 55 acre lake is regularly stocked with trout and has a bass and catfish population. There is a 1.5 mile paved, barrier free trail that circles the lake with 2 fishing jetties for easy access to the lake.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13165&actid=29>

Scotts River RD: **Gottville River Access:** The Gottville River Access has a sandy road and a concrete ADA accessible side walk to the water's edge. There is a ADA accessible restroom, parking area and dispersed camping area. [Klamath River]

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13070&actid=34>

Scotts River RD: **Kangaroo Lake Campground:** Kangaroo Lake campground has 18 sites, 13 of which are drive-in and 5 are walk-in. The campground also provides accessible facilities, **including a 1/4 mile paved trail right down to the lake.** The lake itself covers 25 acres, and is 110 feet deep. There is no boat ramp but motorless boats are permitted. Restrooms are accessible for wheelchairs. Two fully accessible

campsites. From Callahan, take the Callahan-Gazelle Rd for approx. 10 miles to the Rail Creek Rd. There is a sign for Kangaroo Lake, and this road will take you the 8 miles to the campground. [recommendation from Great Shasta Rail Trail group]

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13114&actid=29>

Happy Camp/Oak Knoll RD: **Tree of Heaven:** Some campsites are accessible to wheelchairs with assistance. There is a concrete ramp to the river. Some tables and restrooms will accommodate wheelchairs with assistance. [Klamath River]

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13064&actid=29>