

*The natural, cultural  
and recreational  
diversity of Lake Tahoe  
rests on a fragile balance.*



## Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

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Governor

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**Sugar Pine Point State Park**  
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# Sugar Pine Point State Park



**L**ake Tahoe, at 6,229 feet above sea level, is known for its great depth and clear, exquisitely blue waters. The natural, cultural and recreational diversity of Lake Tahoe rests on a fragile balance, and its ecosystem is aggressively protected by a number of agencies, conservation organizations, legislators and concerned citizens.

The largest of the state parks at Lake Tahoe, Sugar Pine Point is 2,000 acres of dense sugar pine, fir, aspen and juniper forests set behind nearly two miles of lake frontage. This is the only Tahoe-area park where camping in the snow is part of the lake's winter experience. Located ten miles south of Tahoe City on the west side of Lake Tahoe, the park's acreage extends three-and-a-half miles into the U.S. Forest Service's Desolation Wilderness Area.



*Sugar Pine Point has nearly two miles of lake frontage*

The park's showpiece is the elegant but rustic 11,000 square foot Pine Lodge—also called the Ehrman Mansion. It is a fine example of the grand turn-of-the-century

summer homes of the well-to-do who flocked to Lake Tahoe in the early 1900s to escape their bustling city lives. Here, they could reconnect, if only temporarily, to the serenity and recreation of the outdoors.



*Sugar Pine*

### PLANT COMMUNITIES

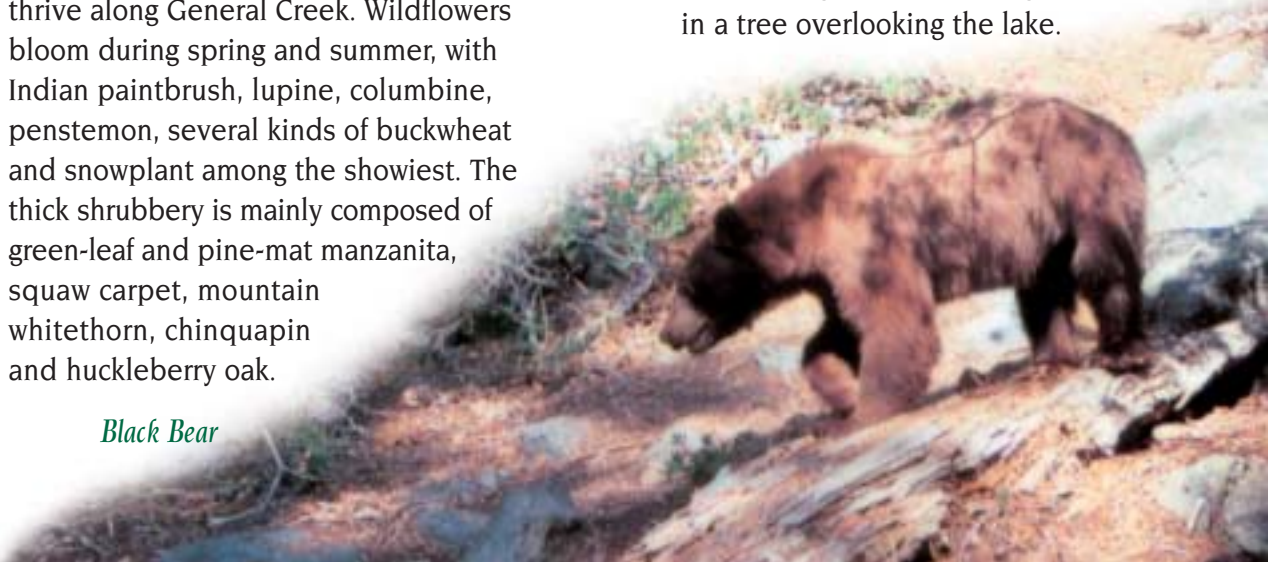
The canyon floor's rocky debris was deposited approximately 10,000 years ago by glacier melt. The dense forests consist of white and red firs, incense cedars, jeffrey pines and the park's namesake, the sugar pine. Lodgepole pines, quaking aspens, black cottonwood and mountain alders thrive along General Creek. Wildflowers bloom during spring and summer, with Indian paintbrush, lupine, columbine, penstemon, several kinds of buckwheat and snowplant among the showiest. The thick shrubbery is mainly composed of green-leaf and pine-mat manzanita, squaw carpet, mountain whitethorn, chinquapin and huckleberry oak.

*Black Bear*

### WILDLIFE

The Tahoe area is home to many large and small animals. Chickarees, chipmunks, Beechey and golden-mantled ground squirrels, raccoons and coyotes are frequently seen in the campgrounds and other developed areas. Black bears, porcupines, pine martens, beavers, bobcats and deer are occasionally spotted in more remote areas of the park.

The bird population includes steller jays, juncos, mountain chickadees, flycatchers, woodpeckers and western tanagers. Canada geese, mergansers, mallards and kingfishers can usually be spotted near streams and the lake. A fortunate winter visitor might be rewarded with the sight of a bald eagle perched in a tree overlooking the lake.



## PRESERVATION

As the beauty and grandeur of Lake Tahoe came to the world's attention, so too did the fragility of its ecosystem. Scientists are continually learning about the lake's uniqueness and sensitivity.

In the face of decades of development, the Lake Tahoe history being written at the outset of the 21st century is one of protection and, in some cases, restoration. Sugar Pine Point State Park plays a part in recording this important aspect of human history as well. One example is the creation of the Edwin L. Z'Berg Natural Preserve, a project dedicated to the late Assembly member who sponsored key legislation on parklands and resource conservation.

During your visit you may also see evidence of various ongoing natural resource management programs. Erosion control, thinning of overcrowded forests, removal of dead trees in high-use areas, prescribed burning, and habitat improvement are a few of the many projects being undertaken to maintain, restore and preserve natural conditions within the park.



*Aerial view of Sugar Pine Point State Park*

## HUMAN HISTORY

For thousands of years, Lake Tahoe was brimming with fish, its forests rich with game and edible plants. Drawn to this bounty, the Washoe people relocated to the lake each spring from throughout their tribal boundaries to spend their summers hunting, fishing, feasting, trading, socializing and preparing food for the coming winter. Bedrock mortars and other evidence of the Washoe presence can be found near the lake.

The discovery of gold in Placerville and silver in Virginia City in 1848 brought a boom in development and a demand for lumber. However, logging in the Tahoe basin removed most of the original old growth forests, leaving barren hillsides. The mining boom gave way to a number of elegant hotels and family-style resorts around the lake, including the short-lived Bellevue Hotel at Sugar Pine Point.

Sugar Pine Point's first permanent non-native resident was a Kentucky frontiersman named "General" William Phipps. The General staked out a homestead claim on Sugar Pine Point in the spring of 1860. The first cabin he built was lost to fire, but his second cabin may be seen near the South Boathouse.

Transformation of the Tahoe region continued through the first half of the 20th century, with blasting of the solid granite mountains during road construction. The roads made Lake Tahoe even more accessible to tourists until World War II,



*Phipps Cabin*

when a lull fell over the Tahoe Basin. One account estimates the population of the Tahoe area fell to a mere 200 people. However, that serenity was broken by 1960, when Lake Tahoe entered the world stage as the backdrop for the 1960 Winter Olympic Games at Squaw Valley. Sugar Pine Point State Park shares a piece of this history, too, as part of the Nordic trail used during the games passed behind Pine Lodge, just inside the park boundary.

## PINE LODGE (THE EHRMAN MANSION)

In the late 1800s, internationally known west-coast banker Isaias Hellman visited the area on a business trip. The forested mountains reminded him of his native Bavaria, so Hellman purchased property on the promontory known as Sugar Pine Point. Walter Danforth Bliss, a well-known architect of the time, was hired to design a three-story summer home for Hellman. Completed in 1903, Pine Lodge—built largely of native materials—seems to grow out of the landscape itself. It is a Shingle

Style California Craftsman home, which refers to the design of enclosed porches and organic expression, with overlapping wood shingles that wrap delicately around the curves and corners of the home's exterior. Pine Lodge is one of the finer expressions of this uniquely American style of architecture.

Hellman's youngest daughter Florence managed the home for her father and inherited it after his death. When Florence married Sidney Ehrman, an attorney and sports enthusiast, the next several generations of Ehrmans kept up the summer traditions of Pine Lodge. In 1965 Pine Lodge and its estate were sold to the State of California to become Sugar Pine Point State Park.

*Nature Center and Gift Shop (Tank House)*



*Pine Lodge (The Ehrman Mansion)*

You may enjoy many of the same leisure activities as the Pine Lodge guests of yesterday. While seated on the mansion's massive front porch overlooking the jewel-blue lake, imagine yourself a pampered guest of the Ehrman family. Tours of the home are offered daily from early July through the Labor Day holiday. You will be guided through the eight bedrooms on the second



floor, past servants' quarters, down the back staircase, and through what was once a modern and very busy kitchen.

### **DISCOVER THE PARK**

#### **Nature Center and Gift shop**

The Nature Center and Gift Shop are

located in the Tank House. Interpretive displays, hands-on exhibits and a theater help to explain the region's geology and natural history. The Nature Center's highlight is a floor-to-ceiling diorama of native wildlife. Natural and cultural history publications, recreational guides and books are for sale. The Center and Gift Shop are open daily from June through August and on weekends in September.

### **Edwin L. Z'berg Natural Preserve**

The Dolder Nature Trail circles the preserve named for Edwin L. Z'berg, who served in the California State Assembly and actively promoted such environmental legislation as the federal Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Tahoe preservation, the Forest Practice Act, and the allocation of grants for the restoration of special habitats. The preserve is an unmanaged sub-alpine meadow habitat allowed to evolve with as little human intervention as possible.

#### **Junior Ranger Program**

Led by park staff each summer, the Junior Ranger Program offers activities designed for children ages 7 to 12.

Its goal is to help children develop an appreciation for their cultural and natural heritage and an awareness of their relationship to each other.

#### **Interpretive Trails and Guided Cross Country Ski Excursions**

Interpretive publications are available for many trails. Spring, summer and fall hikes are conducted if staff is available. Sugar Pine Point also hosts such winter activities as snowshoe and cross country ski outings led by park staff. Call or write to the park office for an interpretive guide or an activity schedule, or visit the Web site at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).



*Gray Squirrel  
Track*

## YEAR-ROUND RECREATION

Shady lawns gently slope to the shoreline providing the perfect picnic site.

A pier and 7,000 feet of beachfront offer swimming and fishing. The Hellmans' tennis court is open to the public first-come, first-served. In Pine Lodge's two boathouses, you can see original boats that helped launch the Lake Tahoe boating events—from racing regattas to rowing—that continue today.

### Trails

- **Lakefront Interpretive Trail**—Starting at the North Boathouse and following the shoreline to the South Boathouse, this flat, paved trail is 1/4 mile long. Borrow a guide from the Nature Center that will lead you past ten stops along the trail.
- **Rod Beaudry Trail**—Beginning between the Nature Center and the park office (Caretaker's House) and leading through the forest, this paved trail is 1/2 mile long. Interpretive markers along the way describe the area and history. The trail ends at Highway 89.

- **Dolder Nature Trail**—To reach this 1 1/2-mile loop trail, start on the paved Rod Beaudry Trail. The Dolder trail begins at approximately 1/4 mile and is the first dirt path to the right. The trail leads through mixed forest and circles the Edwin L. Z'Berg Natural Preserve. Along the way it passes the world's highest—in elevation—operating navigational light, and includes excellent views of the lake.



- **General Creek Trail**—This dirt trail is a 6 1/2-mile loop. The three entrances to this trail are:
  - The campfire center in the campground
  - Between campsites 76 and 125
  - From the Rod Beaudry Trail, cross Highway 89 into the campground. The trail follows the General Creek watershed.
- **Lily Pond Trail**—A side trip goes four miles to Lily Pond. Starting adjacent to campsite 150, follow the unpaved North Fire Road. Stay to the right and do not cross General Creek. When the main road turns into a trail, follow it, staying to the right and following the signs to Lily Pond. The Lily Pond branch can be used to access Desolation Wilderness or Lost Lake on U.S. Forest Service lands. Hikers to these farther destinations must obtain wilderness permits and should equip themselves with more specific maps before starting out.

### Cycling

The paved West Shore Bike Trail begins in Truckee with bike lanes paralleling Highway 89 and continuing south to Squaw Valley, Tahoe City and Sugar Pine Point State Park. The map indicates trails that permit mountain bikes. Please stay on designated riding trails only.

### Winter Activities

The park grooms two cross-country ski trails and offers ski and snowshoe lessons or tours many weekends during the winter. Call or write to the park office for a list of winter activities, or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

## Swimming and Boating

Sugar Pine Point State Park's beach and pier are open to swimmers. Nearby marinas provide boat launching, mooring and rentals. Due to space limitations, boats may not be beached or moored overnight at the park. A boat camp is available at Emerald Bay State Park.

### Camping

The campground has 175 sites and is open throughout the year. During the winter months, the entry road and parking spaces are cleared of snow. No showers are available in winter.

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The paved 1/4-mile Lakefront Interpretive Trail is flat. The paved 1/2-mile Rod Beaudry Trail has a significantly steep grade at its beginning. Visitors in wheelchairs may need some assistance.

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- Lake Tahoe's waters are extremely cold. Swim with appropriate caution.
- Diving and jumping off the pier is not allowed.
- Stay on designated trails.
- Dogs must be on a leash. They are permitted in the developed areas and on paved roads and trails, but not on natural-surfaced park trails.
- Winter conditions at this elevation (6,200 feet) include snowstorms and deep snow packs. Temperatures can drop to near zero. Dress and prepare accordingly.