

GUIDE TO THE AHJUMAWI LAVA SPRINGS STATE PARK PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

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Park History

Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park contains roughly 5,930 acres of natural and cultural resources. Located in the northeast corner of Shasta County in the Fall River Valley basin, the park lies along the northern shorelines of Big Lake, Horr Pond, Ja She Creek (formerly "Squaw Creek"), and the Little Tule River; it is roughly 57 miles east of Mount Shasta. Visitors may only access the park by shallow boat. The closest public boat launch, called "Rat Farm," is located at the southwestern tip of Big Lake.

Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park derives its name from one of eleven bands that constitute the federally recognized Pit River Nation. Spelled alternately "Ajumawi," "Achumawi," and "Achomawi," the name roughly translates to "where the waters come together" and "river people." Having made the Fall River Valley their home for thousands of years, the Ajumawi people left distinct archaeological evidence—bedrock mortars, obsidian and stone tool fragments, earth lodge depressions, stone fish-traps, trail remnants, ceremonial rock cairns, and a cupule petroglyph boulder—that indicates their long-standing presence in the modern-day park. Visitors are asked to help protect these artifacts by leaving them where they find them.

After decades of growing outside encroachment, beginning with Spanish explorers and culminating with the massive influx of Euro-American prospectors and settlers, the Ajumawi people had all but been displaced in the region by the 1860s. Many died from disease, violence, or starvation, while others were force-marched to the Round Valley Reservation. In later years, the surviving Ajumawi slowly began to return to their ancestral home, using Mount Shasta as a navigational tool.

In 1870, the area in and around the present-day park was declared swamp and overflowed land and deeded to the state. Two years later, John Boggs purchased most of the land (except ranchland owned by John Craig) for one dollar per acre from the State Lands Office. After the turn of the twentieth century, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) purchased the area for its rich riparian lands to generate hydroelectric power. Retaining all water rights, PG&E sold the land to Harry and Ivy Horr in 1944. The couple grazed cattle and leased portions of the property to local sporting clubs for hunting and fishing before Harry Horr died in 1966.

In 1974, Ivy Horr approached California State Parks Director William P. Mott, Jr. personally to create a state park from her property. With its purchase funded by the 1974 Park Bond Act, most the land was acquired by the State the following year, with Ivy Horr gifting the remainder. In 1977, the State Park and Recreation Commission held public meetings to name and classify its new acquisition. The new park was administered by the Department of General Services until 1983. The following year, Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park employed its first full-time ranger, Steve Moore, as well as park aide and native Ajumawi, Floyd Buckskin.

In addition to its many known and countless unknown cultural resources, Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park also contains a sprawling expanse of natural resources (**Figure 1**). Roughly two-thirds of the area is blanketed by 3,000- to 5,000-

year-old lava flows from neighboring Medicine Lake Volcano. The park hosts several plant and animal species, including endangered American bald eagles and Shasta crayfish. The park also offers various forms of recreation, hosting three camping areas and about twenty miles of hiking trails. Visitors may also traverse the local waterways by shallow-draft boat and enjoy several fine fishing spots. Hunting is strictly prohibited.



Figure 1. Ahjumawi Lava Springs, November 8, 2010. Catalog # 090-P71014.

Scope and Content

The Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park Photographic Collection spans the years 1977-2011, with the bulk of the collection covering the years 1981, 1987, and 2010. There is a total of 113 cataloged images, including 34 35mm slides, and 79 born-digital images. Photographs originated from California State Parks staff.

The collection depicts the park's landscape. Imagery includes numerous ground views of Big Lake's shoreline, which incorporate such features as fish traps, trees, tule reeds, thistles, and waterfowl with Mt. Lassen and sprawling hills in the background. Also depicted further inland are campsites, shoreline cabins, the historic Craig Ranch farmhouse, and the Ajumawi petroglyph. The collection also includes aerial and oblique views of the park that feature local waterways, inlets, fields, shorelines, Mount Shasta, Mount Lassen, and lava beds.

Although the Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park Photographic Collection illustrates the scenic qualities of the park, it does comparably less to convey the natural and cultural resources contained therein. While trees, reeds, and brush are well represented (aside from a few pictures of waterfowl and cattle) the park's various animal species are vastly unrepresented. Likewise, the lava fields—from which the park derives part of its name—appear only a handful of times and only from distant vantages as part of the landscape. The collection also fails to depict the park's cultural resources. Though the shoreline fish traps are well documented, the Ajumawi petroglyph only appears twice, and the rock cairns and trail remnants are entirely absent.

Related Collection

Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park Collection, California State Parks Archives.

Catalog Subject Search Terms

Aerial view
Barn
Fish trap
Lake
Lava rock
Lava bed
Mt. Lassen
Mt. Shasta
Mountains
Oblique view
Petroglyph
Shoreline