

NATURAL BRIDGES TRAIL



Hiking Distance: About 1.5 miles
roundtrip
Difficulty: Easy
Start Elevation: About 1420 feet
Elevation Change: About 200 feet
Location: 3 miles north of Columbia
Map: USGS

Area's Blooming Season	March		April		May		June		July		August		September	
	Early		E	Mid		M	Late		L	Very Late		V		

Description:

This trail begins just off Parrot's Ferry road just about 1 mile north of the Parrot's Ferry bridge. There is parking off the road along an abandoned section of roadway for numerous cars with posted hours that the area is open and then the gate is locked. The area is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Central Valley Project New Melones Dam. The trail is generally downhill to the creek that is fed by a stream that seeps through a rock overhang and grotto. There have been markers that correspond to a trail pamphlet that may or may not be available at the trailhead that identifies some interesting trees and plants along the trail. As this area is at a fairly low altitude and is heavily dependent on winter period rains, it dries out rather quickly and is one of the earliest blooming spots in Tuolumne county in a normal year. Rangers from the New Melones Dam project conduct periodic walks throughout the year and are knowledgeable about the trail plant life as well as providing historical information and stories about the past of the area. This moderate trail leads to Natural Bridges, which is a unique series of caves with Coyote Creek running through them. Natural Bridges is an outstanding but sensitive geologic resource at New Melones Lake.



Trailhead Directions:

Parking and the trailhead are located on Parrots Ferry Road approximately 3 miles (4.8 km) north of Columbia. There is limited parking available at the trailhead. There are vault toilets at the parking area, but no drinking water.

