

Sights & Stops

Twelve things worth stopping the car for

Everything here is free or nearly free, open on a Saturday, and within reach of the drive. Ordered roughly as you would meet them.

At the lake

Warm Springs Dam overlook ★ DO THIS

3333 Skaggs Springs Rd, Geyserville, CA 95441

Free · no hours · 5 min

Three hundred and nineteen feet tall, three thousand feet long, thirty million cubic yards of earth. Five minutes of your morning, and it reframes the entire day — you are looking at the thing that drowned the valley you are about to float on.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Milt Brandt Visitor Center KIDS

3333 Skaggs Springs Rd, Geyserville, CA 95441

Daily 9 AM–4 PM · (707) 431-4533 · call ahead

Exhibits on the watershed, the dam and Pomo history. Free, and a genuinely good twenty minutes with kids. It is volunteer-staffed, so the Corps itself recommends calling before you count on it.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Don Clausen Fish Hatchery

3333 Skaggs Springs Rd, Geyserville, CA 95441

Free

Directly behind the visitor center. Honest assessment: this is a January-to-April attraction. Spawning season is when the fish and the tours happen. In mid-August you will see tanks and raceways, not fish. Ten minutes if you are already there; not worth its own stop.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Lake Sonoma Overlook Trail DOGS OK

Rockpile Rd near the dam, Geyserville, CA 95441

Short, leashed-dog-friendly, big views over both arms of the lake. Brutally exposed in August — morning only, and carry water for the dogs.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Geyserville — two blocks, three good things

Bosworth and Son General Store ODD

21060 Geyserville Ave, Geyserville, CA 95441

A working general store that also runs a small Geyserville history museum in the back. Exactly the kind of odd, genuinely local roadside stop that is worth ten minutes.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Olive Hill Cemetery

Canyon Rd, Geyserville, CA 95441

Where the Upper Dry Creek Valley pioneers are buried — the families whose descendants were later flooded out by the dam. Quiet, and it connects to the rest of the day.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Healdsburg

Healdsburg Plaza ★ FREE SHADE

Healdsburg Ave & Matheson St, Healdsburg, CA 95448

A 19th-century town square with a band shell, a fountain and mature shade trees, ringed by cafés and bookstores. Leashed dogs fine, kids fine, free, always open. It is also a *Scream* location — see History & Screen Time.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

221 Matheson St, Healdsburg, CA 95448

Hours *unverified*

Housed in the 1910–11 Carnegie Library building. Local history and Native American heritage, free or donation. Verify Saturday hours before routing to it.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

River swimming — the dog question decides it

Del Rio Woods ★ DOGS OK

2668 S Fitch Mountain Rd, Healdsburg, CA 95448

7 AM–sunset · \$12 summer parking

A picnic area with stairs down to a gravel beach on the Russian River, free loaner life vests in summer, and — the part that matters — **leashed dogs are allowed**. Quieter and smaller than Memorial Beach with less parking pressure. This is the dog-friendly river stop.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach NO DOGS

13839 Old Redwood Hwy, Healdsburg, CA 95448

7 AM–sunset · \$12 summer parking · (707) 565-3112

A seasonal inflatable dam creates a calm swimming lagoon from July through Labor Day, with lifeguards, showers and free loaner vests. **But dogs are prohibited on the beach and in the river**, alcohol is banned year-round, and the entrance closes when the lot fills on summer weekends.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

South on 101

Windsor Town Green KIDS

701 McClelland Dr, Windsor, CA 95492

Open lawn, shade, a playground, ringed by food. Sixty seconds from Russian River Brewing and directly off 101. The best free place to let two kids run for fifteen minutes.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Charles M. Schulz Museum KIDS

2301 Hardies Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Peanuts and Snoopy, with Snoopy's Home Ice next door — an ice rink is a legitimate way to cool two kids down in August. Ticketed; verify Saturday hours.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Downtown Petaluma ★ ON FILM

Petaluma Blvd N & Kentucky St, Petaluma, CA 94952

Iron-front Victorian blocks that still look exactly like what they are: the town from *American Graffiti*. Free, walkable, and fifteen minutes here beats a gas-station stretch every time.

[Apple Maps](#) · [Google Maps](#)

Sources

- [USACE — Lake Sonoma Visitor Center](#)
- [USACE — Don Clausen Fish Hatchery](#)
- [Sonoma County Parks — Del Rio Woods](#)
- [Sonoma County Parks — Memorial Beach](#)
- [Sonoma County — things to do in Healdsburg](#)