

Butterfly Valley Botanical Area

Plumas National Forest

Mt. Hough Ranger District



GENERAL INFORMATION

Distance from Quincy: 9 miles, 25 minutes

Elevation: 3,590-3,800 feet

Topographic Maps: Crescent Mills and Quincy

Management: 500 acre area managed by the Plumas National Forest to protect special botanical resources.

Attractions: Nature Study of 4 species of insectivorous plants including *Darlingtonia californica*, the California pitcher plant. Although *Darlingtonia* can be seen year round, the peak blooming season is May through July.

Special Regulations: Collection of plants in the botanical area is prohibited. No vehicles are permitted off of designated roads. Please tread lightly when walking through the botanical area.

Facilities: None. The nearest campground is Spanish Creek Campground, 1 mile downstream from Keddie on Hwy 70.

ACCESS

From Quincy go 3.5 miles north on Hwy 70 to Blackhawk Road (0.3 miles north of Mt. Hough Ranger District Office). At junction of Hwy 70 and Blackhawk Road, set odometer to zero.

The mileages below indicate noteworthy stops along the way. Be sure to stay on the main road while traveling west on Blackhawk Road.

1.4-Begin on gravel forest road #25N12. Stay on 25N12 while passing 25N13 junction at mile 3.1 and 25N46 at mile 3.5.

3.9-Fern Glen: Immediately after passing the sign "Butterfly Valley Area," Fern Glen is on the left. This is the best spot to view fern diversity in the botanical area. Seven kinds of orchids have been found here.

4.8-Rubble Gap: At this point there is a roadcut through a reddish rock and soil formation.

Another area of fern diversity is adjacent. The attractive Palm Tree Moss grows 10 feet upstream from the culvert.

5.3-Turn right onto Bog Road (forest road #25N47).

5.4-Beargrass Glade – follow trail 300 yards west up an old logging road to a small trickle of water.

While following the ravine back down towards Bog Road, search for small numbers of Beargrass plants along with several species of lilies.

6.0-Darlingtonia Bog. The population of California pitcher plants is found on both sides of the road. On the east side of the road is the Sweetwater Marsh, which slopes gradually downward and southeastward to Pond Reservoir. Sundews are found in this marsh, hidden under taller vegetation in saturated areas. The pond, located 200 yards east of the road at the downstream end of the Sweetwater Marsh, is home to the bladderworts.

Retrace the path to return to Highway 70.



HISTORY

Butterfly Valley and the surrounding area have been utilized since the early 1850's for many uses. Mining operations and the old mining town of Butterfly Valley occupied the area initially. After the mineral values were mined out and the town of Butterfly Valley was abandoned, grazing and logging operations were prominent in the area. Grazing became important in Butterfly Valley when the Galeppi brothers brought their cattle into the area in the early 1900's. The Murphy Lumber Company began some railroad logging in the early 1900's, until the Quincy Lumber Company moved in with a larger railroad operation after purchasing the Murphy Lumber Company. Since the cessation of logging operations about 1950, the area was used primarily for grazing until designated as a botanical area in 1976. The Butterfly Valley Botanical Area was designated as a protected area due to its outstanding abundance and diversity of plant life present. It is managed to provide the public with an opportunity to enjoy an undeveloped area of profuse floral display.

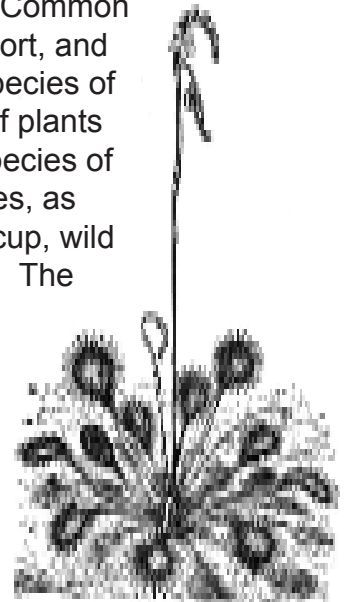
Butterfly Valley has long been recognized as a botanical treasure. Rebecca Merritt Austin first made botanical collections in the area from 1873-1878. Walter and Irja Knight and John Thomas Howell wrote a manuscript in 1970 titled "A Vegetation Survey of the Butterfly Botanical Area" after 4 years of field survey work. Jim Battagin updated their work in 1997 and published the "Flora of Butterfly Valley Botanical Area and the Butterfly Creek Watershed."



ATTRACTIONS

The Butterfly Valley Botanical Area, the home of the California Pitcher Plant (*Darlingtonia californica*), is an Eden of natural splendor. The California Pitcher Plant is a rare and unusual insect eating plant that only grows in scattered boggy areas from southern Oregon down through northern California where the Sierra and Cascades meet. Also known as the Cobra Lily, *Darlingtonia* has a unique leaf adaptation that allows it to capture and digest insects to gather nutrients for the plant. The long snake-like leaf has an opening under the top of the leaf with small sun-lit windows that attract flies, bees and other insects into the tube. The waxy smoothness of the upper portions of the chamber provides the next step in the one-way trip to the waiting doom below. Downward pointing hairs on the inside of the lower leaf tube force insects down to a pool of secreted plant juices where the insects decompose and provide nutrients to the plant.

In addition to the rare California Pitcher Plant, there are 3 other species of insectivorous plants (Common and Lesser Bladderwort, and Round-leaved), 12 species of orchids, 24 species of plants in the Lily family, 9 species of ferns and fern relatives, as well as poppy, buttercup, wild rose and lady slipper. The list of vascular plants found here exceeds 500 species.



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