

Gold Panning at Bridgeport 2016 Begins May 28



Imagine squatting on the bank of an icy river in 1850... working twelve hours a day in all sorts of weather, swirling pans of gravel in search of a fortune. Some struck it rich, while others struggled in vain to find the prize – gold!

When you visit Bridgeport in South Yuba River State Park this summer, be sure to stop by the troughs near the Visitors Center to try your hand at gold panning. Learn from docents how the old 49ers used simple pans to find hidden treasure in the shallows of the Yuba River. After a panning demonstration, practice your technique in the troughs before heading down to the river to do your own prospecting.

Docents at Bridgeport provide step-by-step panning lessons, share stories about the history of our area, and describe other ways the precious metal was extracted during the California Gold Rush, such as hard rock mining and hydraulic mining. Gold panning is fun and educational for the entire family and kids get to keep the treasures they find in the troughs.

Docents offer gold panning demonstrations at Bridgeport from noon to 2:00 p.m. every weekend and holiday, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Gold panning sessions for private groups and school talks can be arranged at other times by prior reservation. Call South Yuba River State Park for more information at (530) 432-2546.

Written by Cheryl Pirtle

Photos by John Field