

New River Backcountry

Trinity Alps Wilderness - Big Bar Ranger Station
Shasta-Trinity National Forest



Land Features and Attractions

The New River drainage encompasses about 144,000 acres of forested mountains often referred to as the “Green Trinities,” 97,800 acres of which lies within the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Virgin forests and rugged mountainous terrain afford the visitor a feeling of remoteness unequalled elsewhere in the Trinity Alps. Because it lacks the high alpine lakes and glaciated landforms which characterize much of the Eastern half of the Trinity Alps, the New River area has remained off the beaten path for most backcountry travelers. It is this relative isolation that contributes to its feeling of solitude; one of its greatest attributes.

Cold, clear running streams provide excellent fishing opportunities for the adventurous angler and backpacker (there are a few exceptions, however, and before fishing you should check state fish and game regulations closely). Steelhead, silver salmon, and Chinook salmon use much of the New River and its larger tributaries as spawning and rearing habitat. Native rainbow trout abound in tributary creeks and streams. Excellent fish habitat, the beauty, and the relative isolation of the New River prompted the inclusion of 21 miles of it as a component of the National Wild and Scenic River system in 1980.

The New River drainage also offers hunters a variety of game species on which to test their skills. During the late summer and early fall, the Columbian blacktail deer can be pursued with bows or rifles. Limestone Ridge and the area referred to as Jake’s Hunting Ground are major migration routes which offer good hunting opportunities.

History

After the discovery of gold along the Trinity River in 1848, prospectors and miners came from far and wide. By 1851, placer mining operations were spreading rapidly up into the New River drainage.

Mining settlements, such as Hoboken, Francis, Lake City, and Quimby, were established and occupied, first by Anglo-Americans and Europeans, and soon after by the Chinese. While placer mining subsided during the 1870s, lode, or hardrock, prospecting activities slowly increased, particularly in the higher elevation areas near Salmon Summit Divide.

By the 1880s major lode gold deposits had been discovered, causing a second gold rush. During this period, several thriving mining towns sprang up along with support industries. Settlements like White Rock City (Coeur), Marysville, and New River City (now called Old Denny) became major centers of mining and commerce in the New River country. By 1920, with most of the major mines worked out, the last of these towns, Old Denny, was abandoned.

Lack of access was a major impediment to early settlers. The remoteness and ruggedness of the area was largely responsible for the naming of the New River. Up until the mid 1800s, the main trails totally avoided the rugged and treacherous terrain around what is now called the Burnt Ranch Gorge. Early explorers, miners, and settlers did not find the mouth of the New River until sometime after much of the surrounding area had been discovered. The search for gold along the Trinity River eventually led to the discovery of this “new” river, and it has retained its name ever since. Until 1923, the only access within the entire lower Trinity River drainage was by trail. All supplies and mail had to be hauled in by pack trains. The operation of pack trains and other support industries, including farming, grew during the period of greatest mining activity. Though mining was on the decline, by the end of 1932 a road had been constructed as far as Denny (formerly called Quimby). Since then, private property owners and mining claimants have

engaged in small farming and placer mining activities.

Another activity which has drawn people to the New River drainage in the recent past has been the cultivation of marijuana. While this use dominated much of the area for a time, recent efforts to curb this activity have been successful. Today, the New River country beckons the recreationist who seeks solitude and adventure in this wild and historical setting.

Major Trailheads and Access Points

Four main trailheads on the Big Bar Ranger District access the New River Backcountry. These are the New River, East Fork New River (Pony Buttes), Jim Jam, and Green Mountain (Limestone) trailheads. Others include the Grizzly Camp and Tish Tang trailheads located on the Six Rivers National Forest, and the Rock Lake, Granite Gulch, Hotelling Ridge, and Five Dollar Camp trailheads on the Klamath National Forest. For information regarding trailheads on adjacent National Forests, check with local Forest Service offices.

The New River, East Fork and Jim Jam trailheads are accessible via the Denny Road, a 20 mile, paved, winding mountain road which leaves State Highway 299 at Hawkins Bar and leads to the historic community of Denny. These three trailheads are located about six miles beyond the campground near Denny via gravel road.

New River, (elevation 2,200'). Accessed from Denny via County Road 402, and Forest Road 7N15, this trailhead has a public toilet.

East Fork (elevation 2,000'). Also known as the Pony Buttes trailhead, it is reached via Forest roads 7N02 and 7N01. It is at the end of road 7N02. This trailhead has a public toilet.

Jim Jam (elevation 3,400'). Situated at the end of Forest road 7N03, this trailhead can be reached via County road 402 and Forest Road 7N01.

Green Mountain (elevation 5,000'). This trailhead, also known as the Limestone trailhead, is about 15.5 miles from State Highway 299 via Forest roads 5N13, 6N04, and 6N19. Leave 299 where Big French Creek joins the Trinity River, some two miles east of Del Loma. This trailhead can also be accessed via Forest roads 5N04, 5N13,

6N04, and 6N19 near Swede Creek three miles west of Del Loma.

About the Trails

There is an extensive network of trails extending into the New River Backcountry. Most of these were constructed by the early miners and settlers as a means of linking mines, farms, and communities with each other and the outside world. Between the 1930s and 1950s several trails were constructed and maintained by the Forest Service for fire prevention, detection, and suppression. As the use of aircraft increased for the detection and suppression of wildfires, many of these trails were no longer maintained.

Today, efforts to maintain the major trails for recreational use have been stepped up. However, portions of some trails may still be overgrown with brush and difficult to follow. Contact the Forest Service station at Big Bar for the latest information about trail conditions.

In contrast to trails elsewhere in the Trinity Alps Wilderness, such as those in the more well known and well traveled eastern half, many of the trails within the New River drainage are loop trails. These enable the visitor to make a circular excursion through the backcountry without having to backtrack. Several of the following trails can be linked together to form loops of varying length, depending on individual interests and time available.

New River (7E05). This trail begins at the New River trailhead and follows the New River northward for about 3.0 miles to a junction with the Virgin Creek and Slide Creek trails. This is the main trail accessing the northern portion of the New River drainage.

Virgin Creek (7E03). Extending northward for about 14.6 miles, this trail parallels Virgin Creek, traversing heavily forested slopes until it breaks out above the timberline and joins the Salmon Summit Trail.

Virgin Creek Buttes. Starting at the junction of the Virgin Creek and Slide Creek trails, this trail extends up the ridge for about 2.5 miles to the site of an old Forest Service fire lookout. From here there is an unobstructed panoramic view of the entire New River drainage.

Slide Creek. This trail provides the most direct access to the historic mining centers of the New River drainage. Beginning where the New River trail ends, the Slide Creek trail extends 9.5 miles into the heart of this once active mining area. The trail passes several historic sites, including Robber's Roost, Old Denny, and the Cinnabar Mine, eventually linking up with the Salmon Summit Trail.

Battle Creek (8E19). Originating at the Slide Creek trail near the site of Marysville, this trail heads west and north to meet the Salmon Summit trail. This is a main tie-through trail connecting the Slide Creek, Battle Creek, Eagle Creek and Salmon Summit trails.

East Fork New River (12W08). Starting at the East Fork (Pony Buttes) trailhead, this trail follows the East Fork of the New River up to the mouth of Cabin Creek. The trail then climbs up Blue Ridge where it intersects the Green Mountain (New River Divide) trail on Limestone Ridge, a distance of 10.4 miles from the East Fork trailhead. This trail is one of the main links between the New River and North Fork drainages and their respective trail systems.

Pony Creek (12W07). Beginning about 3.0 miles up the East Fork New River trail, this trail parallels Pony Creek for several miles before turning east to climb past Pony Lake and Mullane Corral. The trail terminates at Election Gap on the Salmon Summit trail, approximately 9.1 miles from its starting point. The trail passes by such historic sites as Lake City, Mullane Corral, and Election Gap.

Jim Jam (12W11). This trail begins at the Jim Jam trailhead and follows Jim Jam Ridge to an intersection with the Green Mountain (New River Divide) trail along Limestone Ridge, a distance of 7.7 miles. Starting at an elevation near 3,400 feet, the trail climbs to over 7,000 feet near Limestone Ridge. This trail provides the most direct access to higher elevation white and red fir forests from trailheads within the New River drainage. This trail also links up with trails within the North Fork drainage via the Green Mountain (New River Divide) trail.

Green Mountain (12W09). Also called the New River Divide trail, this one begins at road 6N19, climbing over Brushy Mountain and around Green Mountain to join Limestone Ridge about 2.0 miles

north of the Thurston Peaks. The trail follows Limestone Ridge until its junction with the Salmon Summit trail, a distance of about 20.4 miles. Water is scarce along this trail, particularly north of Pony Camp. This trail links several trails originating in the New River drainage with the Salmon Summit trail and other trails within the North Fork drainage.

Salmon Summit (12W02). This trail extends along the crest of the Salmon Mountains, encompassing the whole of the upper New River drainage. It is the main access route from trailheads on the Klamath National Forest, to the north, and it links many of the trails within the New River drainage to form loops of varying lengths. Several old mining areas are accessed by this trail, including the sites and remains of the Mary Blaine and Summit Mines.

Several other trails, including the *Emigrant Creek (8E05)*, *Semore Gulch (8E08)*, and *Milk Camp (8E16)* trails are tie-throughs which connect with other trails to form loops of varying lengths. It is possible to plan trips which begin at one trailhead and end at another only a short car shuttle away. Even better... it is easy to plan a trip beginning and ending at the same trailhead and requiring little or no retracing of footsteps.

There are other trails in the New River drainage that crisscross the major trails discussed above. Many of these secondary trails may be passable and in good condition. However, they may not all be signed nor are all of them depicted on maps of the area. Refer to the map on the back page of this handout or the Trinity Alps Wilderness map.

Before You Begin Your Trek

Make sure you have your Wilderness and Campfire Permits.

Before you fish

Check current California State fishing regulations. Some streams are closed to fishing.

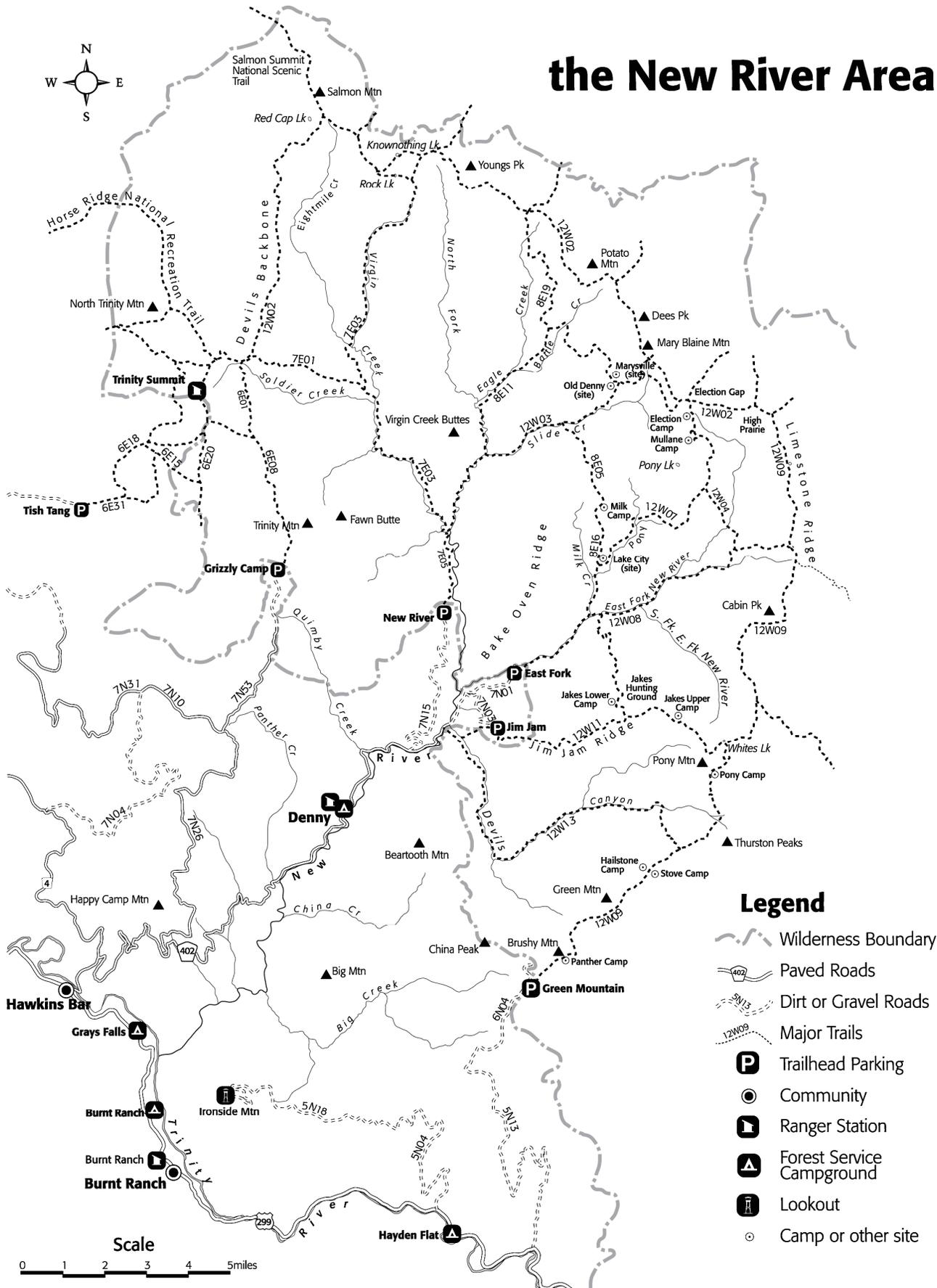
For More Information

Additional information on the New River area, and the Trinity Alps Wilderness, including Trinity Alps Wilderness topographic maps (\$9), Wilderness Permits and Campfire Permits, may be obtained by writing, phoning, or visiting the Big Bar Ranger Station, or other Shasta-Trinity National Forest Offices:

Big Bar Station, Trinity River Management Unit, Route 1 Box 10, Big Bar, CA 96010.

(530) 623-6106 (voice), or 711 (TTY)

the New River Area



Legend

- Wilderness Boundary
- Paved Roads
- Dirt or Gravel Roads
- Major Trails
- Trailhead Parking
- Community
- Ranger Station
- Forest Service Campground
- Lookout
- Camp or other site

All Are Welcome

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