

Take an autumn stroll through history

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

SUMPTER — Although the trails at Sumpter Dredge State Heritage Area are open all year, autumn is an especially nice time for a stroll.

About 1.5 miles of trails wind through this park, which is dedicated to the mining history of the area. At the center is the Sumpter Dredge, a hulking contraption used to dig rocks that passed through several sorting layers to extract flakes of gold. This particular dredge

THE DETAILS

441 S. Mill St.

Sumpter

Hours: 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

The dredge is open May-October

Trails are open all year

<https://stateparks.oregon.gov/>

mined the Sumpter Valley from 1935 to 1954, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During that stint, the dredge unearthed an estimated \$4 million in gold.



Lisa Britton/Go! Magazine

About 1.5 miles of trails wind through the Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area in Baker County.



Lisa Britton/Go! Magazine

The Sumpter Dredge dug up \$4 million in gold during its operation from 1935 to 1954.

After closing, the dredge sat, neglected, until the early 1990s when local residents took an interest in preserving this part of history. The Sumpter Valley State Heritage Area opened to the public in 1994.

You can tour the dredge through Oct. 31. It closes after

that date, but the trails remain open. (If you visit in the next two weeks, you'll see the handiwork of local residents who have decorated for the Haunted Dredge experience on the evening of Oct. 29.)

The trails are easy to follow because all are lined with rocks.

Benches are located throughout the park, and sometimes you'll see wildlife that has made homes among the ponds and tailings.

The park is also the headwaters of the Powder River, which flows into Phillips Reservoir then through Baker City and along Highway 86 to the Snake River.

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