

Pyramid Lake Scenic Byway

Pyramid Lake, sponsored by Native Americans, takes you to one of the largest desert lakes in the world. It is landlocked on the barren desert floor and its colors change from green, to turquoise, to deep blue. The lake is also a resting place for a variety of migrating waterfowl.



Length: 30.2 miles / 48.3 km

Time Two hours to drive
to (including backtracking) or
Allow: all day to enjoy the byway.

Local Information

Pyramid Lake Rangers

775-476-1155

Pyramid Lake Museum

775-574-1088 Send E-mail

Visitor Services



Fees

A \$9 day-use permit is required for camping, swimming, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and/or driving off-road.



Camping

Camping is available at Dayton State Park and the Lahontan State Recreation Area.



Food

There is food in Sparks, Sutcliffe, and Wadsworth, Fernely, and Nixon.



Gasoline

The best place to fill up with gasoline near the byway is in Wadsworth, near I-80.



Information

The Pyramid Lake Museum and Visitor Center is in Nixon at 709 State Street.



Lodging

There is lodging in Sparks, Sutcliffe, and Wadsworth, Fernely, and Nixon.



Phone

Pay phones are available at gas stations and the Visitor Center in Nixon.



Restrooms

There are restrooms available at the gas stations along the way and at the Visitor Center in Nixon.



Retail

Sparks provides a fun shopping experience.

Special Considerations

Many of the road shoulders are sandy, and vehicles can get stuck easily.

Restrictions

Byway roads are maintained year-round.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

The byway is pleasant all year round, with fall being the best time to take a walk along the Truckee River.

High Season

High season is July and August, due to swimming and boating.

Map and Directions



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

- The byway begins at the intersection of Washeim St. and Main St. in Wadsworth.
- Drive north on Washeim St. It turns into State Hwy 447.


- Continue on State Hwy 447 until the junction with State Hwy 446. Here the byway splits into north and northwest sections.
- North Section (10 miles):
 - Continue on State Hwy 447 through Nixon and until you reach the byway terminus.
- Northwest Section (16.4 miles):
 - Take State Hwy 446 towards Sutcliffe. Byway ends where State Hwy 446 meets Hardscrabble Canyon Rd. (west of Sutcliffe).

Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities

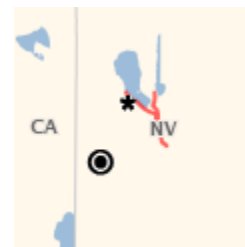
Reno, NV (30 miles / 48.28 km, 38 minutes)

Start:  I-80 eastbound, Reno, NV
[N 39.536° W 119.811°](#) [?]

Directions:

- Take I-80 east to Sparks.
- Get on NV-445 and go north to the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation where the byway begins

Junction with byway: * NV-445 at Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation, NV
[N 39.886° W 119.597°](#) [?]



Road Trip: Pyramid Lake Tour

Departure: Sparks, Nevada

Destination: Wadsworth, Nevada

Time to allow: 1 day

Byway travelers can start in either Sparks or Wadsworth, because the driving directions given here start and end in the Reno/Sparks area. Beginning in Sparks you can take State Route 445 north bound to Sutcliffe to enjoy fishing, swimming, and having a picnic along the west shore of Pyramid Lake. On your way you'll pass places like Mullen Pass, you can stop at the turnout on the left for a scenic vista of the lake. If you get a chance to visit here as the sun sets, the Pyramid, Anaho Island, and the slopes of the Lake Range may be bathed in a red glow.

From the view of Pyramid Lake the Tufa Rocks formed by hot springs await your arrival just a few minutes down the road. As you venture on you'll come to the Visitor Center and Tribal Museum and fish hatcheries to find out about the area's natural history and the tribe's fisheries program. Take a walk along the wetlands nature trail where you can experience the unique habitats of the river valley.

Day 1

- **Start: Sparks**

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours

Visit the Sparks Heritage Museum, the Family Adventure Park, or the Victorian Square. Around the end of July or the beginning of August you can visit Hot August Nights, the largest automotive event within the United States.

- **Stop 2: Sutcliffe**

From previous stop: 45 minutes / 33.39 mi (53.4 km)

Directions: Drive on State Road 445, also known as Pyramid Way, northbound until you reach Sutcliffe, NV.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

Stop in Sutcliffe to prepare for some fishing.

- **Stop 3: Pyramid Rock**



From previous stop: 8 minutes / 4.3 mi (6.9 km)

Directions: From Sutcliffe you can make your way down to the Marina, or any side road that leads to the lake to view Anaho Island or The Pyramid at Pyramid Lake. Since these places are closer to the east side of the Lake it's best to bring your binoculars along.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Pyramid Lake is a popular spot for outdoor recreation and water sports, as well as unique geological features.

- **Stop 4: Anaho Island**



From previous stop: same location

Directions: From Sutcliffe you can make your way down to the Marina, or any side road that leads to the lake to view Anaho Island or The Pyramid at Pyramid Lake. Since these places are closer to the east side of the Lake it's best if you bring your binoculars along.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Anaho Island, located in Pyramid Lake, is one of the only pelican nesting sites in North America.

- **Stop 5: Tufa Formations**



From previous stop: 3 minutes / 1 mi (1.6 km)

Directions: Continue southward along State Road 446, also known as Sutcliffe Highway. Stop when you arrive at Indian Head Rock.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

The tufa formations at Pyramid Lake are made of calcium carbonate deposits formed by precipitation over hot springs.

- **Stop 6: Paiute Tribe Museum & Visitor Center**



From previous stop: 17 minutes / 11.39 mi (18.2 km)

Directions: Continue southeast on State Road 446, turn left onto State Street in Nixon, the address is 709 State Street, Nixon, Nevada 89424.

Suggested time at this stop: 45 minutes

This Pyramid Lake Tribal Museum in Nixon will acquaint visitors with the history and culture of the Paiute Tribe of Pyramid Lake.

- **Stop 7: Marble Bluff Fish Hatchery**

From previous stop: 10 minutes / 4.3 mi (6.9 km)

Directions: From the Tribal Museum and Visitor Center follow State Road 447 northward. Keep following State Road 447, once you pass Winnemucca Street turn left onto the next road on State Road 447, follow this road town to the Marble Bluff Dam where the Marble Bluff Fish Facility is located.

Suggested time at this stop: 45 minutes

The Marble Bluff Dam prevents the endangered cui ui, threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, and other fish from migrating up into the Truckee River to spawn. Marble Bluff Fish Facility is critical to moving the endangered Cui ui around the dam.

- **Stop 8: Historical Marker 148**

From previous stop: 30 minutes / 11 mi (17.6 km)

Directions: If you wish, from the Marble Bluff Fish Hatchery you can continue driving north on State Road 447 and take a side road to get a closer look at The Pyramid and Anaho Island on the east side of the Lake. Otherwise, the Historical Marker 148 is 7 miles south of Nixon along State Road 447. Follow State Road 447 southward until you find signs for the Historical Marker 148.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

In 1860, two battles occurred between the white settlers and the Paiute Indians at Pyramid Lake.

- **Stop 9: Numana Fish Hatchery**

From previous stop: 7 minutes / 2 mi (3.2 km)

Directions: The Numana Fish Hatchery is located on State Road 447 south of the Historical Marker 148. Look for the signs just a few miles down the road.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

This visitor center explains the purpose of the hatchery and includes a photo display of the people of Pyramid Lake.

- **End: Wadsworth**



From previous stop: 30 minutes / 11 mi (17.6 km)

Directions: Continue south along State Road 447 to Wadsworth.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

This town is known as the gateway to the Pyramid Lake Scenic Byway.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 78.38 miles / 125.4 km

Total Travel Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 6 hours 25 minutes