Story Ideas and Suggestions for Redding and Shasta Cascade

The Great Outdoors!

Trail Capital of California – Redding is the Trail Capital of California, with over 200 miles of dog-friendly hiking, biking, ATV, and equestrian trails, including the Sacramento River National Recreational Trail. No other California city comes close to challenging Redding. Among the Redding area’s many trails are the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Lassen Peak Trail, the Bumpass Hell Trail, the Clikapudi Trail at Shasta Lake, and the Mule Mountain Trail which in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. Some points of interest along the trails are the Shasta Dam, the Stress Ribbon pedestrian bridge, and Chamise Peak, which offers 360 degree views of all things Shasta (dam, lake, mountain, and city), including the upper Sacramento River Valley.

The area surrounding Whiskeytown National Recreation Area offers abundant unpaved trails that are popular with single track bicyclists. In the Swasey Recreation Area, the Mule Mountain Pass Trail is a favorite among mountain bikers for the variety of terrain, and the Wintu Loop includes a picnic area with fantastic views of Lassen Peak and Mt. Shasta.

The pristine trails and glacier-polished peaks of Castle Crags State Park are ideal for day hikes. The Sacramento River National Recreation Trail – is a 17.4-mile paved ribbon that winds along the river between Sundial Bridge and Shasta Dam. Whichever trail you choose, amazing adventure awaits.

Top 10 Town for Fly Fishing – Redding is the only west coast city on Forbes Magazine’s list of North America’s Top Ten Fly-Fishing Towns. Forbes recognized the Lower Sacramento River as having some of the "most powerful rainbows (trout) in the world," the McCloud River for its "leaping rainbows," and Hat Creek and Fall River (all near Redding) for their "big and demanding trout." The Sacramento River flows through the center of Redding and is well known for huge trout, which can be caught just minutes from downtown. This section of river has been rated by anglers as the third-best tail water fishery on Earth. Fishing anyone?

Waterfalls here have their own month – There is a reason April is considered Waterfall Month in Redding: they’re everywhere. Dunsmuir and McCloud Falls flow to the north, to the McArthur-Burney Falls to the east, and the Whiskeytown Falls to the west. If that’s not enough to get you misty-eyed, there’s Angel Falls, Bear Canyon and Bear Creek Falls, Big Springs, Bluff Falls, Deadhorse Falls, Elephant Butte Falls, Feather Falls, Fern Falls... and the list goes on. Waterfalls around here are magnificent and plentiful; there is no shortage of cascading water over mountain ridges in Redding and Shasta Cascade. They need to be seen to be believed.

America’s Alps – Yes, there are Alps in the U.S. – in California to be exact. The Trinity Alps, 20 miles north of Weaverville in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, are considered America’s Alps. Part of the Klamath Mountain Range, these alpine peaks surround the clear blue Trinity Lake, reminiscent of Switzerland’s Lake Geneva. Created in 1961 by the damming of the Trinity River, Trinity Lake is a popular destination for boating; fishing for smallmouth bass, Kokanee salmon, and catfish; swimming, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The 517,000-acre Trinity Alps Wilderness is the second largest designated wilderness in California.

Caverns in UpState California – Go underground and back millions of years at the Lake Shasta Caverns. The caverns were voted a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service that recognizes and
encourages the conservation of sites containing outstanding biological and geological resources. Ride across the beautiful emerald waters of Shasta Lake on a 65-foot catamaran; explore the east shore caverns just below the limestone north grey rocks. The underground world of the caverns is filled with breathtaking crystal formations 250 million years in the making. Whether boating, or taking a dinner cruise on the lake, visitors of all ages will enjoy the gorgeous setting, natural wonders, beautiful sunsets, and the company of family and friends.

**Visit the Vortex** — Is Shasta Cascade the new Sedona? If sacred site treks, guided vision quests and backcountry Shamanic hypnotherapy sessions are calling your name, then consider a pilgrimage to the unparalleled city of Mount Shasta. Time your visit to the beautiful lenticular cloud formations that halo the sacred mountain, seek a guru, commune with a Lemurian, or just align your chakras. There are even Shasta Vortex Adventure Tours to ensure you get the best experience possible.

**California’s Yellowstone** — Shasta Cascade’s Lassen Volcanic National Park, home to Lassen Peak, is the world’s largest plug dome volcano. All four types of the world’s volcanoes can be seen in this region: plug dome (lava dome), shield, cinder cone, and composite (stratovolcanoes). Lassen Peak is an active volcano, having erupted more than once between 1914 and 1921. The national park’s 106,000 acres contain all sorts of colorful and dramatic volcanic activity: steam vents, fumaroles, bubbling mud, geysers, boiling lakes, and painted dunes. Explore the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center, the first structure in a national park to earn a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum rating for its innovations in environmental design. Inside, interactive exhibits take visitors into the “Vulcan’s Eye,” immersing them in the science, history, and drama of Lassen Volcanic National Park.

**National Recreation Trails with Gold Rush History** — Among the Shasta Cascade’s many nationally recognized trails is the Callahan National Recreation Trail. This 10-mile trail winds through spectacular scenery along a path taken by cattlemen, prospectors, and trappers in the mid-1800s. The trail then linked the Callahan Ranger Station with the forest headquarters in Sisson, now Mount Shasta City, providing a shorter route than the old wagon road for Forest Service officers traveling between the two stations. Near Deadfall Lake, the Sisson Callahan National Recreation Trail intersects with the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, a 2,600-mile trail that stretches from Canada to Mexico. One of America’s longest trails, its midpoint just happens to be the Shasta Cascade. Callahan is a remote community with a rich gold rush history and a small population of residents eager to swap stories with passing hikers at the town eatery, the Callahan Emporium.

**South Warner Wilderness** — One of California’s hidden treasures is the South Warner Wilderness, which offers visitors looking for solitude an amazing escape from everyday life. Often described as rugged and remote, the South Warner Wilderness has snowcapped peaks and mountain meadows, sparkling streams for trout fishing amid grandeur, and a profusion of colorful flowers, shrubs, and birds. There are ample opportunities for “leave no trace” backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing along its 79-miles of trails. Enjoy!

**Happy, Healthy, Family and Dog-Friendly**

**Turtle Bay Exploration Park** — Turtle Bay Exploration Park is a fun, 300-acre gathering place in Redding featuring a museum, forestry and wildlife center, arboretum, botanical gardens, and the unforgettable Sundial Bridge. As the gateway to the Sacramento River Trail, Turtle Bay celebrates northern California as part of the world we share. Visitors of all ages enjoy entertaining and stimulating exhibitions and programs that interpret the complex relationships between people and their environments. Using the unique cultural, historical, and natural resources of the Sacramento River region, Turtle Bay serves as a catalyst for exploring universal human experiences.

**Boston Marathon Qualifier Races** — The annual Redding Marathon is one of three marathons in Shasta Cascade designated as a Boston Marathon qualifying race. Known as “26.2 with a view,” runners from all over the world gather for the Redding Marathon every January, running along the beautiful wintry river from the Shasta Dam visitor center to the finish line at Sundial Bridge.
**Golf in Graeagle** – Offering six breathtaking mountain courses, the community of Graeagle, nestled in the Plumas National Forest, attracts golfers far and wide. Its courses are recognized for their wooded settings and mountain backdrops, with scenery so distracting that golfers are never criticized for losing sight of their drives. Offering four 18-hole championship golf courses and two nine-hole locations, there is no shortage of hole-in-one opportunities.

**Shape Up on the Water in Shasta** – California’s Sacramento River is a major player for the paddle sports gaining in popularity across America. Northern California has world-class rivers and lakes perfect for shape-up sports like paddle boarding, which burns an average of 600 calories per hour; kayaking, burning between 360-950 calories an hour; canoeing, which shaves 400 calories per hour; and river rafting, burning at least 230 calories per hour. Get healthy and stay happy in UpState California.

**Dam Stories** – Just north of Redding, Shasta Dam is a curved gravity dam across the Sacramento River at Lake Shasta. The dam generates hydroelectric power and at 602 feet high, is the ninth-tallest dam in the U.S., and forms the largest reservoir in California. Shasta Dam served an important role in World War II, providing electricity to California factories, and still plays a vital part in the management of state water resources today. Free, guided tours are available year round, with a 428-foot elevator ride to the base of the dam, and visits to the dam’s inner galleries, powerhouse, and other points of interest.

**Fall Color** – Take a seat, east coast, because Northern California has the longest and most diverse fall color seasons of any region in the U.S. One of the prime fall color viewing areas is Plumas County; various microclimates and elevation levels give birth to vivid colors on big leaf maple, Indian rhubarb, black cottonwood, mountain dogwood, and California black oak, which don brilliant reds, yellows, and oranges. Fall color is abundant in mid-October throughout the Shasta Cascade region, and is at its best along CA-299 between Redding and Arcata. Pockets of color can be seen well into early November from Whiskeytown Lake to Weaverville, and from the Salyer rest area to Berry Summit.

**Olive Capital of the World** – Extra virgin olive oil is no stranger to Northern California, particularly around the Tehama County hub of Corning. Olive trees grow in such abundance that Corning has legitimately earned the sobriquet “Olive Capital of the World.” Several olive farms offer free tastings to visitors, including Lucero Olive Oil and The Olive Pit. Every type of olive product imaginable is available: lotions, flavored dipping oils, and locally made California soaps, jams, and honey. Learn how to make extra virgin olive oil from growing to harvesting and pressing the olives in this amazing Northern California artisan region.

**Dog-Friendly Shasta Cascade** – Among the first cities covered by DogTrekker.com, this breathtaking region is brimming with dog-friendly hotels, restaurants, shops, historic sites, parks, and vacation rentals. There are plenty of trails for dogs and their owners to explore where rivers, mountains, wildlife, and spectacular scenery collide. There are also dog-friendly events including the annual Ducky Derby, Art in the Park, and the Bark, Wine, and Brew celebration.

**Back on the Farm in Orland** – The Farm Sanctuary in Orland, about 45 minutes south of Redding, is a haven for rescued farm animals, where families and pet-friendly folk can participate in caring for residents. Overlooking beautiful Black Butte Lake, this 300-acre sanctuary is home to more than 300 pigs, sheep, cattle, chickens, and other farm animals that travelers can meet face-to-face. Hour-long tours with one of the knowledgeable tour guides are offered for free. Orland is also home to the Pedrozo Dairy and Cheese Co., a family business dedicated to raising the finest grass fed-dairy cows for quality milk and rich, handcrafted, small-batch cheeses.

**Spawning Fish and Flying Donkeys Explained** – Want to get fishy but don’t have a boat? Young Chinook salmon and steelhead trout can be viewed in pools and raceways at the Coleman National Fish Hatchery, near Anderson. Celebrate the Chinook at the annual Salmon Festival in October, and learn about research programs from the US Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. If four-legged creatures are more your speed, visit miniature donkeys at the “When Lil’ Donkeys Fly Ranch” and learn about their habitat. Directions to these unusual attractions and more can be found at the California Welcome Center in Anderson, 13 miles south of Redding, where you can get oriented to the entire Shasta Cascade region, donkeys and all.
**Gothic Monastery Rises in CA** – The stones of an 800-year-old Spanish monastery’s gothic chapter house are sturdy walls once more, at a monastery 20 miles north of Chico in Vina, CA. Architectural scholars say that when finished, the restored chapter house at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, will be the most complete and beautiful example of original Cistercian gothic architecture in the Western hemisphere. Its master stonemason, Frank Helmholz – who is also restoring the temple at Luxor, Egypt – says this chapter house is considered among master stone masons to be the world’s most important historic reconstruction occurring today. The “sacred stones” of this ancient structure were originally acquired by famed newspaperman and art collector, William Randolph Hearst. The chapter house stones laid in Golden Gate Park for decades until the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco awarded them to the Abbey. The vaulted, gothic interior of the chapter house at this humble rural monastery is a beautiful sight. Visitors have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see this structure being rebuilt throughout the reconstruction period. When the chapter house is completed, it will enjoy daily use by the monastery, and remain open for public visits.

**Unusual Tree Hunt** – The Shasta Cascade region is known for several unusual trees, including some of the rarest. Between the Milford and Beckworth Ranger Districts in the Plumas National Forest, you’ll find the famous Squaw Valley Snake Tree, a tree with a trunk twisted like a cork screw. Butte County has the oldest of all Northern California orange trees: the Mother Orange Tree, originally planted in 1856. The world’s biggest Tanoak is found at the intersection of CA-299 and FR6N12, 45 miles west of Weaverville in Trinity County. The lovely, weeping Brewer Spruce, one of the rarest species on the planet, is found in the Siskiyou Mountains between Happy Camp and the Oregon Caves National Monument. Distinctive trees from the world’s Mediterranean climates can be seen at the McConnell Arboretum and Gardens in Redding.

**Cycling America’s Newest National Recreation Trail** – The 17.4-mile paved Sacramento River National Recreation Trail, winding from Sundial Bridge to Shasta Dam, is an easy and entertaining cycling route for Redding visitors who like to explore by bike. A half-day bike ride wanders over the iconic Sundial Bridge, the 1914 Diestelhorst Bridge, and the Ribbon Bridge: the first concrete stress ribbon bridge in the U.S. The trail also follows an old railroad line, passing through a railroad tunnel built in the 1800s. The scenery of pink oleander and riparian oak woodland inhabiting the banks of the clear waters of the Sacramento River is calming and inviting. Free tours are given daily at Shasta Dam, where visitors can enjoy the deep blue lake with the snowy Mt. Shasta backdrop.

**Hiking and Biking Mt. Shasta** – Once the snow begins to melt from Mt. Shasta (14, 179 ft.), the mountain – a favorite of skiers and snowboarders in winter – becomes a wonderland for hiking, biking, and backcountry exploration. The mountain has several marked hiking trails for beginners, but for adventurous souls, hikes can head in any direction from trailheads like Bunny Flat or Horse Camp, where you can plan your own route to Hidden Valley, Helen Lake, or perhaps to a ridge top. Attractions that shouldn’t be missed include the original ski bowl destroyed by avalanche in the 1970s, a tiny library in an historic cabin at Horse Camp, and if you can find it, the Wilkin’s harebell wildflower: this rare, delicate flower grows along the creeks at South Gate Meadows during Shasta’s frost-free summer, so watch your step while you explore.

**Unique Road Trips and Tours**

**Backcountry Byways** – Taking a road less traveled is common here. The Buckhorn Road Backcountry Byway takes you off the beaten track and into a high desert where cowboys still ride the range east of the Lassen National Forest and wild horses and herds of antelope play across the brush land. In autumn, Aspen flicker their golden leaves against a deep blue sky. The 65-mile byway is gravel, but relatively smooth and crosses the border into Nevada. It is accessible from late spring through fall and can be easily negotiated by automobiles with higher clearance. The Lassen Volcanic Scenic Byway is another scenic driving route through similar country. This federally designated All-American Road, the highest national standard for scenic highways, travels from Lake Almanor through Lassen Volcanic National Park, past the Subway Caves and Burney Falls, around Mt. Shasta and across lava strewn plains before entering Oregon on its route to Crater Lake National Park.
Off the beaten Path Locals Tip – For a shortcut between the Shasta Cascade and Reno, avoiding the long drive to Sacramento or the summit of Donner Pass, take CA-36 or CA-44 from Redding to Reno. Pass through Lassen Volcanic National Park or around it through Lassen National Forest, and be rewarded with breathtaking views of Lassen Peak and Mt Shasta along the way. Traveling south, the two highways converge at Susanville, a rural oasis in eastern Lassen County and, from there, drop down into Nevada on US-395 to Reno.

California’s Other Gold Rush – The largest gold nugget found in California was uncovered in Paradise, Calif., and its discovery still attracts gold seekers looking for quick pay dirt. The nugget weighed 54 pounds and was known as the Dogtown Nugget, after a mining camp of that name. Paradise celebrates the discovery with an annual festival called Gold Nugget Days and a nearby museum commemorates the area’s gold rush history. More gold rush history can be found in the town of Old Shasta, west of Redding.

Discover Caving by Boat and Lava Tubes – Spelunking, also known as caving, is one of the many fun and unusual things to do in the Shasta Cascade. The U.S. Forest Service station offers access by boat to Samwel Cave on the McCloud Arm of Shasta Lake. A plethora of fossils and cultural artifacts dating back to the ice age have been found on site and mythical lore still presides. Maps are available at the Forest Service Station for spelunkers interested in exploring the cave’s ins and outs. In addition, Lava Beds National Monument and Subway Cave near Lassen Volcanic National Park offer visitors the opportunity to walk into the cool depths of the earth through ancient lava tubes.

Head Out for some Regional Fun

Volcano Vines – Yes, wine grows in the mountains! And the volcanic soil found in Northern California makes for perfect growing conditions. The Shasta Cascade Viticulture Association promotes the growth and quality of the North State Wine Country Region, consisting of Butte, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity Counties. This up-and-coming wine region offers guests a chance to meet owners and winemakers and have a hands-on experience learning to crush and blend.

Alpen Cellars grows Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grape varieties to fit the microclimate of this tiny mountain valley in Trinity County and the tasting room is open daily. Visitors can watch the winemaking process from the field to cask in the company of a family expert eager to talk about the process. Butter Creek Ranch Vineyard and Winery, located above Trinity County’s Hyampom Valley teaches travelers how Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are grown organically and pesticide-free. In harvest season, guests at the winery are welcomed to participate in the grape-crushing process.

Home on the Range – Visiting Modoc County is like stepping back in time over a hundred years. Cattle outnumber people and numerous homes and commercial buildings date from the late 1800s. The Cressler and Bonner Building in Cedarville was completed in 1885 to house a dry goods store, hardware and grocery stores, and the Bank of Cressler and Bonner. The current home of the Warner Mountain Weavers began as the Deep Creek Schoolhouse in 1874, and the Community Church, built in the 1880s, was the first church building in Modoc County. Many residences remain as they were during the early days of the pioneers. Come and explore the history of how the west was won.

On the Wall Art – Chico and Oroville have deserved reputations for “on the wall art.” Chico was named among the “Top 10 Places for Big City Art with a Small Town Feel” by USA Today. The recognition accounted for Chico’s numerous artists, dancers, musicians, and its college city culture, which reveres public art. Maps of Chico’s many murals are available at their visitor’s center. Oroville, located 25 miles southeast of Chico, is another oasis of art amid rural California farmland, with 13 murals downtown that proudly depict the area’s heritage.

Ride an ATV into the Past – ATV tours of Plumas County’s historic sites are provided by the Sierra Touring Company in Portola. The tours begin at the ranch museum, which is packed with memorabilia and farm, ranch, and logging tools, before covering 1,750 acres of western landscape following the route of steam
trains that brought supplies to the area. Riders will visit a Maidu Indian grinding rock on the Feather River, and finish with a meal of barbecue tri-tip to round out a day well spent.

**Drive a Historic Locomotive** – One of America’s most spectacular railroad features is the Keddie Wye Railroad Junction along the Feather River near Portola, a town known as ‘the Pride of the West.’ This scenic convergence of tracks, trestles and tunnels was created by the historic Western Pacific Railroad in 1909 and remains active today. At the Western Pacific Railroad Museum located in Portola, visitors can actually drive a locomotive. The museum stresses a hands-on approach to discovering the history of the railroad.

**Rails to Trails: The Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail** – The Bizz Johnson Rail Trail was once part of the Southern Pacific’s 130-mile Fernley and Lassen branch railway. Today, the trail travels between Westwood and Susanville. Along its 26-mile length are 12 bridges, two tunnels, and many beautiful views. In a rails-to-trails conversion, the refurbished trail now provides opportunities for walking, jogging, mountain biking, horseback riding, access to fishing, and cross-country skiing. For those daunted by a long round-trip hike or ride, cab companies and bus services provide shuttle services from one end to the other, making a one-way trip easy. Every October, the community celebrates the trail with the Rails to Trails Festival, which includes a crafters fair, farmers market, trail bike ride, and chili cook-off, among other events for a weekend of family fun.

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