DAY TRIP TO BELLEVILLE

From Big Bear Lake · San Bernardino County, California

GOLD MINING

Photo: RuggyBearLA, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

NATIONAL FOREST

A townsite in San Bernardino National Forest on the Gold Fever Trail, a self-guided off-road tour. Open all year, weather permitting.

Belleville makes a good half day from Big Bear Lake in a high-clearance vehicle. Pick up the Gold Fever Trail brochure at the Discovery Center, then drive the self-guided tour through Holcomb Valley, stopping at the Belleville Cabin and the Hangman's Tree.

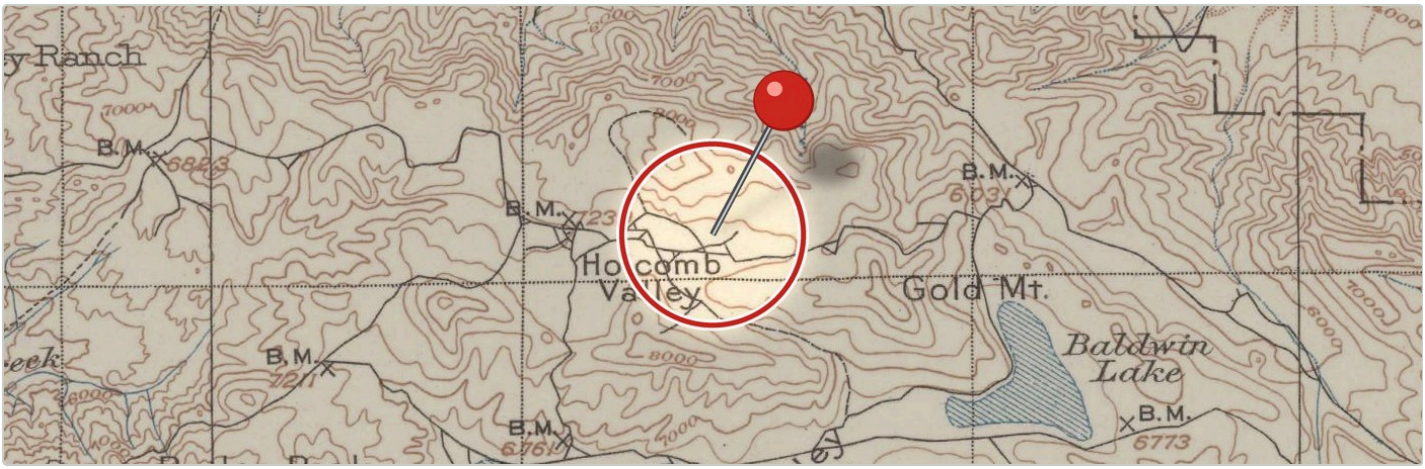
A SAMPLE DAY

☐ Morning	Stop at the Big Bear Discovery Center on North Shore Drive for the brochure and road conditions.
☐ **Morning**	Drive up to Holcomb Valley and follow the Gold Fever Trail stops: Two Gun Bill's Saloon, the Grasshopper Quartz Mill and the Hangman's Tree.
☐ **Midday**	Stop at the Belleville Cabin and Holcomb's discovery site. Bring a packed lunch; there are no facilities.
☐ Afternoon	Finish at the Pygmy Cabin site and the Metzger and Lucky Baldwin mines, then return to Big Bear Lake.

Coming from Los Angeles? Allow about three hours up CA 330 and CA 18 to Holcomb Valley without traffic.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The Belleville Cabin.** The visitor bureau calls it one of Big Bear's most notable landmarks. Step back to include the valley around it.
- **The Hangman's Tree.** Step back to fit the whole tree and its wood fence in the frame.
- **Holcomb Valley.** Stop 1, the Holcomb Valley View Trail, looks over the valley. Late afternoon light is warm on the meadows.



USGS topographic map, 1901 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	9 mi each way from the town of Big Bear Lake. From Los Angeles: 107 mi. The router times the last stretch, on Forest Road 3N16, at walking pace. Allow extra time and check conditions at the Discovery Center.
OPEN	All year, weather permitting, per the Forest Service. Van Dusen Canyon Road closes in winter.
VEHICLE	Big Bear's visitor bureau advised high clearance and four- or all-wheel drive in June 2024. The Forest Service calls the trail "one of the most easily accessible off-road trails" on Big Bear's north side but gives no vehicle advice. Ask at the Discovery Center.
BROCHURE	Big Bear Discovery Center, 40971 North Shore Drive, Fawnskin, 909-382-2790. Thursday to Monday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
RESTROOMS AND WATER	None at the site. Bring water and food.
NAVIGATION	The stop 2 marker was missing in 2024. Carry the brochure map.
SEASON	Van Dusen Canyon Road closes in winter. Late spring through late fall is the usual season.
WEBSITE	fs.usda.gov/r05/sanbernardino/recreation/gold-fever-interpretive-site

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 34.30111, −116.88417 · 34°18′04″N 116°53′03″W

Directions Google Maps

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/california/belleville/

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.