

# Sutter Gold Mine -- where you can pan for gold and learn about the mining process

**Pam Bauserman, Lodi News-Sentinel, 12-24-10**

Sutter Gold Mine is a modern hard-rock mine located north of Sutter Creek. Originally, the mine was developed for gold extraction in the 1980s. The mine is not currently active, but has been opened for public tours since the late 1990s. Lisa Boulton, marketing director, recently took some time to talk about what visitors can do at the gold mine.

**Question:** What is there to do at Sutter Gold Mine?

**Answer:** (Visitors) can take the underground tour. They can do gemstone mining and gold panning. They can watch a movie in the gold theater and shop in the gold store. We have picnic tables so they can also bring a picnic, hang out and enjoy their surroundings.

**Question:** What do people enjoy the most?

**Answer:** I think they really love going down into the shuttle into the gold mine. The fact they get to see an authentic gold mine is a bit of a thrill for people. Everybody also wears a hard hat. You get to immerse yourself in what it feels like to be a miner underground. In the beginning, we tag everyone in to make sure we know who is underground. It's a safety precaution that miners go through.

**Question:** What are some reactions to learning about the gold mining process?

**Answer:** I think they are often surprised at the fact that gold is found in small quantities and can barely be seen with the naked eye. They expect to see chunks of gold and that is generally not what you see. They are also probably surprised to see the kind of hard work and conditions that miners had to endure. They might also be surprised to know that when they used to have donkeys underground, they would often spend their whole lives underground.

**Question:** What about the gold mine is most interesting to you?

**Answer:** The geology is most interesting to me. It is beautiful underground.

**Question:** What is one thing people don't know about the gold mine?

**Answer:** I guess people always wonder if it's an operating gold mine, and it isn't. Another thing they may not realize is that the rock found underground is quite beautiful. The Motherlode is named after the quartz vein that runs under the gold country. The quartz vein holds the gold. People don't realize that fools gold, or pyrite, and real gold are often found together. We have examples where you can see the pyrite and real gold in the same area.

**Question:** What one word best describes the gold mine?

**Answer:** I would say, "fascinating."

**Question:** What is a must-see in the gold mine?

**Answer:** I think the jack leg drill is a really cool drill. You can see what it was like. I think all of the equipment we have down there is a must-see. It shows the mining of the times.