
The El Dorado Hills Handbook

2003 Edition

*The definitive source of information about the community
of El Dorado Hills, California*

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What is *The El Dorado Hills Handbook*?

When we moved to El Dorado Hills in November 2001 we were full of enthusiasm for our new home, a community we considered one of the most beautiful and well planned that we had ever seen. We loved the rolling hills, the attractive homes, the well-appointed schools, and the obvious care that had been taken in creating the landscaping and nature trails.

We were impressed with the vision shown by people like Allan Lindsey (the “founder” of El Dorado Hills) and William (Bill) Parker (controlling partner of Serrano, the part of El Dorado Hills where we live), and how much they seem to genuinely care about the community and its future.

We set out to learn as much as possible about El Dorado Hills and the Sierra foothills both because we were curious about our new surroundings, and so that as the real estate developers finish their work and move on, we will be ready to help take stewardship of this special place. We began to investigate our new surroundings and to develop a list of questions we ought to be able to answer if we were to succeed in the role of “good citizens.”

Questions like:

- Would it be a good idea for El Dorado Hills to incorporate?
- Is there a plan to ensure that El Dorado Hills will have enough water in the years ahead?
- Will the widening of Highway 50 succeed in relieving the early-morning and late-afternoon traffic congestion?
- Is development on the western slope of El Dorado county putting an unfair burden on other parts of the county?
- What are the key similarities and differences between El Dorado Hills and our neighboring communities?
- What role did El Dorado Hills play in the Gold Rush?
- What happened in El Dorado Hills between the Gold Rush and 1962, when the real estate boom began?
- Why is the soil in our back yard so poor and rocky?
- Are there any earthquake faults in the El Dorado Hills area?
- In what month should we start watching for rattlesnakes when we walk on the nature trails?

- What's the history and significance of the El Dorado Hills rock(s)?



One of the El Dorado Hills rocks

We searched for information from all available sources, for example, local TV and radio stations, local and regional newspapers, area and state libraries, real estate offices, homeowners associations, chambers of commerce, various governmental agencies, and community Web sites.

Answers to many of our questions weren't easy to come by—especially when prerequisites for understanding often seemed to be 10 or 20 years of reading the *Sacramento Bee*, the *Placerville Mountain Democrat*, *El Dorado Hills Village Life*, and the *El Dorado Hills Telegraph*.

But we kept looking, and slowly some answers began to emerge.

As we formulated questions and collected answers, the following thought occurred to us: *Aren't other new residents (and there are a lot of them, and more expected) wondering about many of the same kinds of things we are?*

And, Why not write it all down so others can benefit from our curiosity, persistence, and hard work?

We took the challenge, wrote it down, and *The El Dorado Hills Handbook* is the result.

We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed writing it.

Contents of the *Handbook*

The *Handbook* begins with an overview of the community that includes:

- Fast facts about topics like climate, government structure, and village organization
- Community resources (for example, key commercial and government organizations, parks, schools, and points of interests)
- Contact information for government representatives
- A community yearbook

The book also contains sections on:

- Social history (divided into key historical periods like Spanish and Mexican, Gold Rush, ranching, and real estate development)
- The natural history and environment of El Dorado Hills and the surrounding area
- Key local and regional issues (for example, water and transportation)
- Short descriptions of neighboring communities like Cameron Park, Folsom, and Latrobe
- Information about prehistoric and historic resources in the community

Each section contains sources of additional information (books, maps, pamphlets, reports, and over 200 links to relevant Web sites).

The *Handbook* is fully indexed and contains over 100 pictures and maps.

The authors believe the book will be interesting and useful to both new and established residents of the community, and to anyone doing research about El Dorado Hills, El Dorado County, and the western slopes of the Sierra.

Format of the *Handbook*

The entire *Handbook* is available as a 300-page book in printed format.

In addition, excerpts from the *Handbook*, including links to over 200 Web sites, are available as a free community resource at:

www.eldoradohillshandbook.com

About the *Handbook's* authors

Anna van Raaphorst-Johnson is president/principal of VR Communications, Inc., a communications consultancy specializing in technical, scientific, business, and intercultural communications. She is the author of many books and papers dealing with technical and scientific topics, and several white papers and articles on cultural and demographic issues.

Richard H. Johnson is an independent consultant, former senior technical staff member at IBM, and secretary of VR Communications. His expertise includes technical areas like storage management, peripherals, and sub-systems, and also scientific areas like physics, geology, and the environment.

How the *Handbook* was written

To produce the first edition of The El Dorado Hills Handbook, the authors:

- Conducted extensive research using a large number of printed and online sources, including books, pamphlets, brochures, Web sites, and newspaper and magazine articles
- Interviewed and consulted with a number of local and regional business leaders, government leaders, and residents
- Drove, biked, and walked most of the major and minor roads and pathways in the community, taking hundreds of photographs along the way

The primary sources of information for the book, as well as resources for further investigation, are listed in the “For more information” sections at the end of each chapter or major section.

What is the future of *The El Dorado Hills Handbook*?

It is the authors' intention to revise the *Handbook* every year. We hope others in the community will contribute to this effort.

Future editions of the *Handbook* will be updated to:

- Reflect changes in the community
- Include a section containing interviews with El Dorado Hills residents, local and regional government officials, and commercial and business leaders
- Include additional local and regional issues
- Include additional photographs, maps, and drawings

Periodically (and more frequently than new editions of the book) we also expect to update and expand the companion Web site:

www.eldoradohillshandbook.com

Some of the profits from *The El Dorado Hills Handbook* will be donated to historical preservation efforts, including the following, which we hope can become a reality in the near future:

- An indoor/outdoor museum to house historically relevant artifacts and memorabilia collected from what open spaces remain in the El Dorado Hills area and from local residents. We would like to see the museum located at or near the site of the new El Dorado Hills branch of the El Dorado County Library.
- A reference collection, created and maintained by professional librarians and archivists, of printed material and photographs relevant to the history of El Dorado Hills.
- An El Dorado Hills "day in the life" project, in which local writers and photographers (including students at local schools) produce a historically significant "community snapshot" on a given day (not yet determined) in the first half of 2003.
- An ongoing El Dorado Hills oral history project, in which historically relevant memories of local residents, merchants, business people, and real estate developers are digitally preserved for the benefit of future generations.

We cordially invite additional ideas and active community participation in these and other similar projects. Contact information for the authors is on the back of the title page.