



# The Delta Conservancy

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Spring 2013

*"A partner for balanced ecosystem restoration and economic development in the Delta."*

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## Delta Waterway Cleanup, April 13

**D**elta Conservancy will host the first Delta Waterways Cleanup on Saturday, April 13. The Conservancy partnered with the Sacramento Area Creeks Council to expand the Council's creek cleanup into the Delta. The Conservancy is sponsoring two sites: Upper Beach Lake, near Freeport, and a section of Sherman Island.

### Upper Beach Lake

Conservancy partner Sacramento County Regional Parks identified Upper Beach Lake as one of the 'dirtiest' areas. "The Conservancy and volunteers will have their work cut out for them," said Sacramento County Regional Park Ranger.

Upper Beach Lake is located on Morrison Creek and is downstream of several urban drainage tributaries. Heavy winter water flows carry accumulated trash and debris from all of these tributaries and deposit them in this slower moving area of the watershed. A special team with experience in cleaning out large items has already conducted their onsite visit to assess the equipment and manpower they will need for the job.

Upper Beach Lake is a portion of the Upper Beach Lake Wetlands Preserve, which is part of

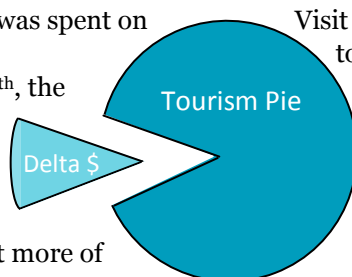


the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands, formed in 1978 when the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plan was constructed. The Preserve contains more than 2700 acres that form an island of open space between South Sacramento and Elk Grove, between Interstate 5 and Franklin Blvd. Upper Beach Lake Wetlands Preserve was developed to optimize foraging for waterfowl, shorebirds and waterbirds; 233 bird species have been documented including: Western Sandpipers, Great Blue Heron, Swainson's Hawk and Burrowing Owls.

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## Delta Can Increase Its Share of Tourism Pie

**I**n 2012, over \$100 billion was spent on travel-related spending in California. On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Conservancy—in partnership with the Delta Protection Commission (DPC)—hosted a lunchtime workshop to help Delta business owners get a bit more of the tourism pie.



Visit California—the state's official tourism promotion organization—and the Central Valley Tourism Association presented participants with concrete tools to help promote businesses, destinations, and events. Both organizations

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**Chair's Perspective**

# Delta Dialogues Highlights “How Much We share In Common”

*By Ken Vogel, San Joaquin County Supervisor and Chair Delta Conservancy Board*

The Delta Dialogues, in which I was a participant, completed Phase 1 in October 2012. The Conservancy is working to continue this valuable discussion between key in-Delta stakeholders and others with interests in the Delta. An excellent summary report of Phase 1 can be found at the Conservancy’s website <http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov> or at the Delta Dialogues website <http://delta.groupaya.net>.

As a participant I appreciate the opportunity to express my understanding of the interests

and issues, and to learn from the other participants about their interests and issues. It is beneficial to all to see how much we share in common, especially in our shared desire for a healthy, vibrant Delta.

I look forward to Phase II of the Delta Dialogues, as the participants continue to build shared understanding of Delta challenges and potential remedies to some of these challenges.

*Delta Can Increase Their Share of Tourism Pie Continued from page 1*

have robust websites that allow users to easily upload information.

One topic of particular interest—both during and after the workshop—

was how to promote the Delta region as a whole. The Delta is comprised of parts of multiple counties and is technically represented by multiple state-sponsored tourism associations. With so many entities

involved it can be difficult to develop a unified plan for addressing Delta-wide marketing and promotion. The Conservancy and the Commission are optimistic that together we can build on these discussions to develop a Delta brand and marketing campaign and a National Heritage Area that will address many of these concerns. With that intention, the Conservancy plans to organize similar workshops over the coming months.

In the meantime, residents, businesses, non-profits—and anyone with a destination or event to promote—are invited to promote their tourism businesses using Visit California and the Central Valley Tourism Association

resources. Visit California can be found at [www.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.visitcalifornia.com) and the Central Valley Tourism Association can be found at [www.visitcentralvalley.com](http://www.visitcentralvalley.com).



The most efficient way to take advantage of Visit California is to upload event or tour information directly to their site. Visit California

has an online platform for directly submitting information. Conservancy staff is available to assist in navigating this tool. The website promotes destinations, events, and activities.



The Central Valley Tourism Association is a member-based visitors’ association with an online

presence as well as an annual travel magazine that is distributed throughout California. The 2013 magazine devotes a one-page spread to The Delta, arranged by the Conservancy. If you’re interested in learning more about membership, visit [www.visitcentralvalley.com](http://www.visitcentralvalley.com).

**Central Valley Travel Assn’s  
2013 Travel Magazine devotes  
one page to The Delta**

## Campbell's Corner

# Open House Welcomes 50 Visitors



**O**n Friday February 15, we held an open house, to celebrate the opening of our new office here

in West Sacramento. It was a great turn out and a wonderful opportunity to share information and creative ideas with members of the Delta community, agency staff working in the Delta, partners from the universities, and a variety of other interested groups. I would like to extend our sincere appreciation



Vasiliki Vassil and Mary Boblet discuss possible trails through the Delta

to the Delta EcoFarm, the Kingbird Farm, the Six Hands Winery (who supplied our door prize) and the Miyamoto Group for their generous contributions of locally grown produce and other refreshments. Also, thank you to the Conservancy board members and staff for all their hard work putting the event together, and of course thanks to all who attended.

If you didn't get a chance to stop by during the open house, please feel free visit anytime. We are now located at 1450 Halyard Dr., Suite 6, in West Sacramento.



Mike Hartly and Lysa Voight

*Delta Waterways Cleanup April 13  
Continued from page 1*

### Sherman Island

On Sherman Island, the Conservancy is partnering with Rio Vista Windsurfing Association (RVWA) and Sherman Island Kiteboarding Organization (SIKO) in their annual pre-season cleanup. "This pre-season cleanup is part of our contribution to the community," says Mike Conner, President of RVWA. "It's about being a good neighbor and ensuring all who vacation here can enjoy the waters. It'll be great to partner with the Conservancy on this project." Volunteers from California Striped Bass Assn and Friends of Marsh Creek Watershed will also be joining the cleanup. After the event, Delta Windsurf & Watersports will be demonstrating paddleboarding, and if the winds are good, SIKO members will provide a kiteboarding demonstration.

A special thanks goes to volunteer Desiree Dumas who designed our Delta Waterway Cleanup logo. Desiree has a degree in Fine

Arts from Saint Mary's College and has launched her own graphics design business. She can be reached at [desiree.dumas@gmail.com](mailto:desiree.dumas@gmail.com)

Volunteers are needed at both sites and families are encouraged to register online at: [www.creekweek.net](http://www.creekweek.net). For questions about the cleanup, contact Susan Roberts at 916-375-2088 or [sroberts@deltaconservancy.ca.gov](mailto:sroberts@deltaconservancy.ca.gov).



**Join us for a day of cleaning the Delta's natural waterways!**



Sacramento-San Joaquin

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## Boating on the California Delta

### Delta Fairs, Festivals, & Events

**Stockton  
Asparagus Festival**  
April 26-28  
[asparagusfest.com](http://asparagusfest.com)

**ZinFest, Lodi**  
May 17-19  
[zinfest.com](http://zinfest.com)

**Walk on the  
Wildside, Freeport**  
May 18  
[fws.gov/stonelakes/  
wow.htm](http://fws.gov/stonelakes/wow.htm)

**Contra Costa  
County Fair  
Antioch-Pittsburg**  
May 30-June 2  
[ccfair.org](http://ccfair.org)

**Isleton Crawdad  
Festival**  
June 16  
[isletoncoc.org/  
crawdad.html](http://isletoncoc.org/crawdad.html)

**Great American  
Camp Out  
Discovery Bay**  
June 22  
[backyardcampout.org](http://backyardcampout.org)

Every year in the spring when the weather turns warmer and the rains subside, thoughts turn to boating in the Delta. Certainly there are many die-hard boaters about in the winter months too, but the advent of spring brings them out in force. Most resorts and restaurants that close for a winter vacation reopen in mid-April and opening day of yachting parades are scheduled all around the Delta and San Francisco Bay area.

The term “opening day” was coined in 1903 when the drawbridge in Belvedere was opened to let the “arcs” or houseboats travel from Belvedere Lagoon to their summer location in Belvedere Cove. Since then the various yacht clubs have called the beginning of yachting season in the area “opening day.”

Opening day parades are held all over the Delta during April with major parades sponsored by the Stockton Yacht Club, Sacramento Yacht Club and the San Joaquin Yacht Club. You don’t need to be a club member to participate in a parade with your boat. You contact the sponsoring club to register beforehand and generally there is a small fee to cover administrative expenses. No boat? No problem! There are many shore side venues where you can watch the parades as they pass by.

After the opening day celebrations, boating season begins in earnest. By mid- May the weather is generally consistently warm and there are parties and events all over the Delta every weekend from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Barron Hilton has been sponsoring a

fireworks display at Venice Island on the San Joaquin River for more than 50 years. Hilton explains that he originally started setting off fireworks for his children at his duck club. “I began shooting rockets and fountains on the levee for the benefit of my eight children,” he said. “I noticed that four or five boats stopped by to watch, then a dozen the next year, and about three times that number the third year. From there, it just seemed to grow like an amoeba.”



Today, Hilton produces a 30-minute show, choreographed to patriotic music, and fired by professional technicians from Pyro Spectaculars. Bill Dutra of the Dutra Group provides a barge that serves as a floating launching pad

for the fireworks. Even though the fireworks show itself only lasts a half hour, the boats start arriving for the event weeks beforehand. Many people anchor their yacht near the island and use their shore boats to commute to work at their area jobs. The thousands of boats are grouped so that there are pathways to travel between boats and many groups secure the same space year after year.

Later in July local folk head to Village West Marina in Stockton for the annual “Taste of the Delta” event. This is a strolling wine and food tasting showcasing Delta area wineries and restaurants. It is accessible by boat (or car) and is a very popular event, one of the many available to boaters in the Delta.

With almost 60,000 acres of water and 1,000 miles of waterways, the Delta fun never ends.

*Written by Bill Wells, Executive Director,  
California Delta Chambers & Visitor’s  
Bureau*



## "Largest Juvenile Salmon Ever Measured in Central Valley"

Last year began a three year research project to determine if rice fields can serve similar functions for salmon as the wetlands that once dominated the Central Valley. After the rice harvest, about 10,000 hatchery-born Chinook salmon were released on 5 acres owned by Knaggs Ranch LLC, in the upper Yolo Bypass.

"These fish grew so fast that we've dubbed them our 'floodplain fatties,'" said lead researcher Jacob Katz of the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences. "Best of all, the clear success of this first year of the study strongly supports the notion that production agriculture and protecting salmon need not be at odds."

This February, 50,000 more juvenile salmon were released onto a 20-acre rice field in the Yolo Bypass to find the optimal duration of flooding that can benefit salmon while avoiding conflict with rice planting. They also hope to identify the ideal flooding depth and whether bare ground, weedy ground, or rice stubble is the better flooded habitat.

Historically, the floodplains of the Central Valley have served as a sort of nursery for young salmon. When rivers overflowed their banks carrying juvenile salmon onto the floodplain, the warmer and slower-moving water over open land provided safety from predators and plentiful food. The time on the floodplain allowed the young salmon to grow larger and harder in preparation for their trip down through the Delta and out to the ocean. Research has shown that salmon raised on floodplains are known to grow faster and bigger, feed more successfully when they enter the ocean, and are more likely to return to spawn.

"Frequent flooding limits farming in the bypass," says Knaggs Ranch manager John Brennan. "Over the past twenty years with the increase in interest for habitat creation, I have seen large sections of bypass ground converted from agriculture to seasonal wetlands for waterfowl. The Knaggs property could easily go that way too, but I think we can do a better job for everybody by leaving farming in the mix."



Photo by J. Katz

"The ranch is already managed for rice and waterfowl hunting, bringing salmon habitat on as an additional use will only help to ensure that we will be able to continue to farm. Plus, if we can move the ball forward on some of these fish issues, that will be good for all of California agriculture. Farmers, with their intimate knowledge of how the land actually works, need to take a leading role designing and implementing the next generation of environmental solutions."

The project is led by Jacob Katz of CalTrout, in close partnership with the Center for Watershed Sciences at the University of California, Davis, and the California Department of Water Resources, in cooperation with landowner partners Cal Marsh, Farm Ventures and Knaggs Ranch, LLC, and is supported by the Resource Legacy Fund, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California Waterfowl Association, California Department of Fish & Wildlife and the NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center.

***"Best of all, the clear success of this first year of the study strongly supports the notion that production agriculture and protecting salmon need not be at odds."***



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## Conservancy Hosts Chinese Delegation

**O**n January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Delta Conservancy staff met with a 20-member delegation from China's Zhejiang Province.

Officials from both provincial and local levels wanted to discuss the Conservancy's strategic planning process and its dual roles of environmental protection and economic development. Their visit was associated with a recent World Bank loan of \$100 million to improve urban environmental infrastructure services in selected small towns in the Qiantang River Basin in Zhejiang Province.

The Qiantang River, known as the "mother river" of Zhejiang, is the province's largest river and a major water source for the cities and towns in the basin. However, Zhejiang's rapid

growth and urbanization has put significant pressures on the water quality of the Qiantang River. It is estimated that only 62% of the



monitored river water quality samples are meeting its stipulated quality standard criteria.

The Delegation appreciated the opportunity to learn about the Delta, and the current ecosystem restoration and economic development efforts that are undertaken by the agencies and organizations.

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## Cleanup Funds for Farmers

**S**oon after the Conservancy announced its April Delta Waterway Cleanup, a farmer called seeking help to remove old tires that were dumped in a slough on his property, about 200 of them! Good news for farmers and ranchers, CalRecycle funds a Farm and Ranch Cleanup Grants program to cleanup illegal solid waste sites on farm or ranch property.

To access these resources, farmers can contact their local Resource Conservation District (RCD). RCD staff will assess the waste site, apply for the grant and arrange for the cleanup. For more information, visit [www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Grants](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Grants) or contact Conservancy staff Susan Roberts at 916-375-2088 or [sroberts@deltaconservancy.ca.gov](mailto:sroberts@deltaconservancy.ca.gov).



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