

The Hidden Delta

Steamboat Acres & Steamboat Landing

By Susan Whitesell

Photos by Jan Vick

This is the first of a series of articles on the "Hidden Delta," guided by Delta area tour guide Barbara Daly, owner of Delta Heartbeat Tours.

Just 30 minutes north of Rio Vista and 30 minutes south of downtown Sacramento along the Sacramento River on State Hwy 160 at Steamboat Slough, two fun destinations beckon. Steamboat Acres offers a taste of life on the farm, and Steamboat Landing, an intriguing new eatery opening May 1, 2016, offers a unique dining experience by the river.



Tim Neuharth

Tim and Laura Neuharth and son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Tara, represent the family that first settled at Steamboat Slough in 1848. Originally farmers from Tennessee, the family arrived in the area hoping to catch the Gold Rush. Instead, capitalizing

upon the abundance of water and fruitful soil, the family decided to farm at the convergence of Sacramento River and Steamboat Slough on Sutter Island. They also recognized an advantageous location, roughly half way between Sacramento and San Francisco. At that time, barges and steamboats were the primary transportation, and the Sacramento River was what Interstate 5 is today. Steamboat Slough was a shortcut, reducing the trip between Sacramento and San Francisco by over two hours.

Steamboat Acres - "Taste Life on the Farm"

Currently, Steamboat Acres agricultural production is primarily certified organic pears and cherries. Some of the pear trees on the property are over 125 years old. The farm also grows alfalfa and chardonnay wine grapes.

Steamboat Acres is actively engaged in agri-tourism and agri-education, encouraging the general public to participate in agricultural events on the property. Neuharth vividly recalls a Sacramento radio show addressing farm issues in the 1980's, when a caller declared, "I don't really care what happens to farmers. I get my food from Safeway!" Tim states, "Ever since then, it's been a goal to let people know what we are doing. We can't talk about all the crops in the world, but we can talk about what we do with our pears and what we do with our cherries and our grapes and so forth. We're also trying to get people to be aware that not only is there a Delta but there's value here. We're doing things that contribute to employment and the economy and we're doing it in a way that's sustainable."

Neuharth's family and Steamboat Acres is a founding member of Sacramento River Delta Grown Association, whose mission is to promote the agricultural sustainability and profitability of local farmers in the Sacramento River Delta area through agri-tourism and agri-education. Steamboat Acres is a participant in the "Passport Event" for the Delta Farm & Winery Trail in August, a Pumpkin Patch in October, sells fresh fruit and vegetables in the summer, and is soon adding curriculum-based school tours. The farm also participates in Sacramento Farm to Fork festivities. A quaint barn on the premises is available for special events such as weddings and private parties.

Visit Steamboat Acres to taste farm fresh vegetables, organic pears and cherries and to experience seasonal activities and "life on the farm." Steamboat Acres is located at 15989 Sutter Island Road, Courtland, CA. The contact number is (916) 775-1166.



Gas Station at Steamboat Landing #1

Steamboat Landing - "A Place by the River"

The Neuharth family's latest endeavor is the "new" Steamboat Landing, an eatery, deli and bakery. Steamboat Landing has a long history. Neuharth is unsure when it was built, but the original Steamboat Landing stood on the river side of the highway, operating into the 1940's. After it burned down, Steamboat Landing #2 was built on the opposite side of the highway, operating into the 1980's. Then the structure stood vacant for 35 years. When it proved unfeasible to remodel, the old structure was torn down and replaced by a new structure built upon the historical foundation.

The Steamboat Landing Eatery, Deli and Bakery plans to open May 1, 2016. In addition to rotisserie chicken, ribs and smoked brisket or tri-tip, side dishes and other deli items, the Steamboat Landing Eatery, and Deli will feature many products grown at Steamboat Acres, such as pear cider and pear shakes and vegetables. The Bakery will feature scratch baked pear-themed items such as pear pies, pear tarts and pear breads. The emphasis will be "grab and go," catering to farm visitors, picnickers, beach goers, boaters and highway travelers. A small inside seating area accommodates about 25 with additional seating outside on the beautiful wrap-around deck overlooking the pear orchard. Beer and local Delta wines will also be available.

Visit Steamboat Slough to soak in the history, enjoy

the natural sand bar beach, swim, picnic, fish, or simply relax along the river. Most importantly, visit the new Steamboat Landing Eatery, Deli and Bakery for wonderful food and the beautiful setting at "A Place by the River." Steamboat Landing is located at 12414 State Highway 160, Courtland, CA. The contact number is (916) 775-1121.

Directions

To visit Steamboat Acres or Steamboat Landing, take one of two scenic routes from Rio Vista:

Land Route 1 – From State Highway 12, cross the Rio Vista Bridge, then turn left onto State Highway 160. Continue to follow CA-160 for about 6 miles. Following the CA-160 signs, turn left across the Isleton Bridge, then right, continuing north along CA-160 /State Highway 160 on the opposite side of the river for about 14 miles. Cross the Steamboat Slough Bridge then turn left onto Sutter Island Rd.

Ferry Route 2 – From Main St in Rio Vista, turn left on Front St continuing under the overpass. Turn right on River Road and drive about 2 miles to the Ryer Island Ferry. After crossing the river, turn right on East Ryer Road for about 6 miles to the J-Mack Ferry. After crossing the river, turn left on Grand Island Rd and continue for about 6 miles. Turn left at the junction of CA-160 /State Highway 160. After crossing the Steamboat Slough Bridge turn left onto Sutter Island Rd.