

Rio Vista: Wind and Water

Windsurfing, Kiteboarding and More

By Everett Upham and Tom Surh

Perched on the shores of the largest river in California with the famous Delta breezes during summer months, the Rio Vista region is one of the premier spots for wind and water sports. This is particularly true for the sport of windsurfing, which requires strong steady winds as well as great skill.



Photo by Everett Upham

Ranking with Maui and Hood River Oregon, the San Francisco Bay Area has several locations with the requisite conditions for first class windsurfing — but the lower Sacramento River has the fresh water and sunny summer weather absent in other Bay Area spots. The stiff summer winds provide sizeable chop and swell that windsurfers love. That is why on typical summer weekends from May to August, one can see the Sherman Island County Park at the south-west tip of Sherman Island full of families, RVs, and wind-water sports equipment of all kinds.

Windsurfing is a sport that requires the knowledge and skill of sailing and surfing. Unlike the more staid sport of sailing, windsurfing brings the adrenaline rush of surfing as the windsurfer performs jumps, inverted loops, spins and other freestyle moves.

The other major wind-water sport is kiteboarding, which requires less wind than windsurfing. It is more easily learned and requires less equipment that is more easily transported than windsurf equipment. This accounts for its growing popularity. Both are relatively new sports and equipment design is continually evolving and improving.

Another water sport found in Rio Vista waters is stand-up paddling which is even more easily learned and does not, of course, depend on the wind. In addition to being a great core exercise, it provides a waterborne perspective superior to kayaking.

There are two local web sites where you can learn much more about these sports.

The joint website for the Rio Vista Windsurfing Association and the Sherman Island Kiteboarding Organization is rvwa-siko.com. These are organizations of sports enthusiasts that promote

safety, maintain water access locations, provide programs for young people and generally promote the enjoyment of their sports.

Located on Sherman Island near the beginning of the access road from Highway 160 is Delta Windsurf and Watersports Company, which stocks windsurf and stand-up paddle board equipment, provides repair services and arranges lessons in these sports. Their website is deltawindsurf.com, phone: (916) 777-2299.



Photo by Jan Vick