

DISCOVER RIO VISTA

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Debbie Werter

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Editor's Corner

Welcome to this issue of Discover Rio Vista! We are ecstatic to include Aiden Mayhood as co-editor of the magazine. Aiden, a 25 year-old, seventh-generation resident of Rio Vista, has served on the RioVision board since September 2024. Aiden and the editor team are excited to unveil over time a refresh of the magazine's look and editorial direction. We look forward to your feedback as we experiment with design! Please send your feedback to:

drveditor@riovision.net

In the following pages, scattered with the soon-disappearing green landscapes as we enter summer, you will find a new water-based event coming to Rio Vista in June: the Wild West Watercross Tour. We look forward to its success! We also look forward to established favorites like the Tea Party in May, Courtland Pear Fair in July and Hog August Bites in August.

You will also learn some history of Rio Vista's first bridge and the surrounding water infrastructure that allow us to traverse the Delta as we know today, as well as Rio Vista's newest healthcare option.

For those looking for a fresh outdoor adventure, stop by Solano Land Trust's newest public park: Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Didi Open Space.

Learn more about the National Heritage Area's Passport Program and Rio Vista's central place in the program!

Thank you for being a part of the Discover Rio Vista family. We hope this issue leaves you feeling connected, curious, and proud of our unique community. As always, we welcome your feedback and story ideas—your voices help shape each edition.

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Finally, the Discover Rio Vista magazine has lost access to significant public funding through the city of Rio Vista. As a result, your contributions to RioVision are as important as ever. Additionally, RioVision is always looking for new advertisers that help keep this magazine alive and thriving. Please reach out to drveditor@riovision.net to inquire!

RioVision
bridge to the future



Green fields and happy cows off of Lambie Road.

CO-EDITORS

Robie Williams
robiewilliams@riovision.net
Aiden Mayhood
amayhood@riovision.net

ADVERTISING

Laurie Oleksiewicz
925-301-7389
minmayinc@aol.com

LAYOUT

Aiden Mayhood
amayhood@riovision.net

CONTRIBUTORS

Aiden Mayhood, Doris Noriega, Marilyn Nelson, Robie Williams, Tami Mitchell, Tom Surh

Discover Rio Vista is a tri-annual magazine published by the RioVision Promotions and Communications team that provides information about events, activities and places of interest in and around Rio Vista. This magazine is a volunteer effort. Call RioVision at 707-469-3080 to help!

See the Discover Rio Vista website at discoverriovista.com. For additional information about RioVision, see riovision.net. RioVision is a non-profit 501(c)(3) group.

COVER: Goose Haven Road in springtime. Photo by Aiden Mayhood.



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Event Calendar

May–August 2026

May

May 1: Cinco de Mayo Street Party. Downtown celebration featuring food, dancing and a live Mariachi band, bringing authentic festive energy.

May 2: 3rd Annual Riverfront Arts Fest. Downtown Rio Vista - 10am to 5pm. People's Choice Art Show, Youth Art Exhibit, Art in Action, Art on wheels and youth activities. Fun for the whole family.

May 2: Trilogy Community Garage Sale. Hwy 12 at Summerset Drive. Open to the Public - 9am to 3pm.

May 9: Rio Vista Foundation 4th Annual Tea Party - 1pm to 3pm. Tickets at Pets 4 All.

May 15: 25th Anniversary Marta Dron Golf Tournament by Rio Vista Rotary. Rio Vista Golf Club. Send questions to RotaryofRioVista@gmail.com. Sign up now - <https://riovistarotary.org>.

May 16th: Rio Vista CARE 'An Evening in Bloom' - 5:30pm to 10pm. St. Joseph's Church Hall. Contact Rio Vista CARE at (707) 374-5343 for tickets.

May 21: Rio Vista Certified Farmers Market Season Kick-Off - 4pm to 7pm. Sponsored by the Rio Vista Downtown Association and the Chamber of Commerce. Contact info@rvfarmersmarket.com for more information. Held monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month on June 18th, July 16th, August 20th, September 17th, and October 15th.

June

June 27-28: Downtown Association Jet Ski Exhibition. High energy river event. For more information, contact (408) 332-3552.

July

July 4: Trilogy Craft & Jewelry Vendor. Hwy 12 at Summerset Drive. Open to the public - 12pm to 5pm.

August

August 22: 12th Annual Hog August Bites Rib & Chili Cook-off featuring music, food and family fun.

Ongoing Events

RioVision Gallery: Tuesday-Saturday, 11am - 3pm. 116 Main Street. Art & See's Candies. Call (707) 469-3080 for more information.

Rio Vista Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center: Tuesday-Saturday, 10am - 1pm. 33 North Street. Call (707) 374-2700.

The Paul Family LEGO City Display: Richard's Ice Cream Parlor. 210 Main Street.

Food Pantry Free Food Distribution: 1st & 3rd Sunday. - 1105A Airport Road. 12:30pm - 1:30pm. Clothing closet open 11:30am - 1:15pm on distribution days. Call (707) 374-5406 for more information.

Open Mic @ The Art & Music Center: Last Sunday of the month. 2pm - 3pm. Comedy, music, poetry, art.

Rio Vista Museum: Saturday - Sunday, 1:30pm - 4:30pm. 16 North Front Street.

Isleton Museum: Saturday, 12pm - 3pm. 29 Main Street, Isleton.

Sewing & Quilting Group: Monday, 12:30pm - 4:00pm. Bring your project. Meet at Rio Vista Public Library.

Rio Vista 4-H Club: 2nd Mondays, 7pm - 8pm. D.H. White School.

Rio Vista Senior Center Food Giveaway: 4th Mondays, 10am - 11am. Seniors 55+ only. Bring your own bag(s).

Advisory Council to the N/S Area Agency on Aging: 1st Tuesdays, 10am - 12pm via Zoom. Serving Napa and Solano Counties. Apply to participate at www.aaans.org/advisory-council.

Knights of Columbus Delta Council General Meeting: 1st Tuesdays, 7pm. St. Joseph's Parish hall. 220 South 4th Street.

RIO Solano County Community Services Assistance: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 2pm - 4pm. Rio Vista Library. By appointment only.

Explorer Meeting: 4th Tuesdays, 6pm - 8pm. Rio Vista Fire Station. 350 Main Street.

Senior Center Chair Yoga Class: Wednesdays (except 5th Wednesdays and November 27th), 2pm - 3pm. 25 Main Street.

Community Produce Program (Lighthouse Ministries): 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 2pm - 3pm. 101 Montezuma Street.

NAMI RV Family Support Group: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 6:30 pm - 8:30pm via Zoom. For adults with loved ones with mental health challenges. For more information, contact rvfsg@yahoo.com or (707) 422-7792.

American Legion Member Meeting: 2nd Thursdays, 5pm - 6pm. 610 St. Francis Way.

Citizens for Seniors Board Meeting: 4th Thursdays, 9:30am - 11:30am. 45 Main Street.

St. Vincent de Paul Conference Meeting: 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 1pm - 3pm. St. Joseph's Church Hall Conference Room. 4th & California Streets. Call (707) 374-3426 for more information.

Open Gym for Students, K-12: Fridays, 3pm - 6pm. Riverview Middle School. Sponsored by the RV Lions. Contact Tony at (530) 845-4893 for more information.

Senior Center Bingo: 1st four Fridays, 1pm - 3pm. 25 Main Street. Contact (707) 374-3349 for more information.

Food Pantry Deliveries: 1st and 3rd Friday mornings. To qualified seniors only. Contact (707) 374-5406 for more information.

Seniors Food Distribution: 2nd Fridays, 9:30am - 10:30am. 25 Main Street. 55+ low income individuals only.



Picturesque rolling green hills of the Montezuma Hills.

Wild West Watercross Rides into Rio Vista: A Weekend of Speed, Community, and Riverfront Energy

BY TAMI MITCHELL, RIO VISTA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

There's something special about the way our waterfront comes alive—and this season, Downtown Rio Vista is set to host one of the most exciting events of the year on June 27th and June 28th. The Wild West Watercross tour is making its highly anticipated stop right here on the Sacramento River, transforming our riverfront into a high-energy arena of speed, skill, and community connection.

As the third stop on the SBT Wild West Watercross “Road to Sparks” Championship tour, this event brings a new and thrilling experience to our town: a first-ever closed course jet ski race in Downtown Rio Vista. For residents and visitors alike, this is more than just a race—it's a front-row seat to a fast-growing sport paired with the charm and hospitality of our local community.

With over 150 racers and more than 80 race families traveling from across the region, the weekend promises non-stop action on the water. Competitors of all ages—from youth riders just starting out to seasoned professionals—will take on a tightly designed course that demands precision, endurance, and fearless speed. Every heat brings close finishes, splash-filled turns, and edge-of-your-seat excitement that spectators can enjoy from multiple vantage points along our scenic waterfront.

What makes this event especially meaningful for Rio Vista is the way it blends high-level competition with the spirit of our downtown. Visitors won't just be watching races—they'll be experiencing our community. Between heats, guests can stroll through downtown shops, enjoy a meal at one of our local restaurants, or simply take in the beautiful river views that make our town so unique. The event creates an economic boost for our small businesses while showcasing everything that makes Rio Vista a destination worth discovering.

The closed course format ensures a safe and controlled environment, allowing spectators to get closer to the action than ever before. You'll feel the roar of the engines, see the spray of the water, and witness firsthand the incredible athleticism required to compete at this level. It's an immersive experience that appeals to longtime motorsport fans and first-time spectators alike.

But beyond the competition, what truly defines Wild West Watercross is its community. This is a sport built around families—families who travel together, compete together, and support one another throughout the season. For many participants, this tour is not just about points or podium finishes; it's about connection, tradition, and creating lasting memories both on and off the water.



As the championship tour builds momentum toward its finale in Sparks, Nevada, the Rio Vista stop plays a critical role. Points earned here can significantly impact standings, adding another layer of intensity for racers and excitement for fans. Every race matters, and you'll be witnessing pivotal moments in the championship journey unfold right here in our hometown.

This incredible event would not be possible without strong local partnerships. We are proud to share that the Wild West Watercross Rio Vista stop is sponsored by the City of Rio Vista, the Rio Vista Downtown Association, and Hap's Taps. Their support reflects a shared commitment to bringing vibrant, high-quality events to our community—events that not only entertain but also strengthen our local economy and sense of place.

At the Rio Vista Downtown Association, we believe in creating experiences that bring people together, highlight our unique assets, and support the businesses that make our town thrive. Wild West Watercross does exactly that. It's bold, it's exciting, and it's a perfect fit for our riverfront.

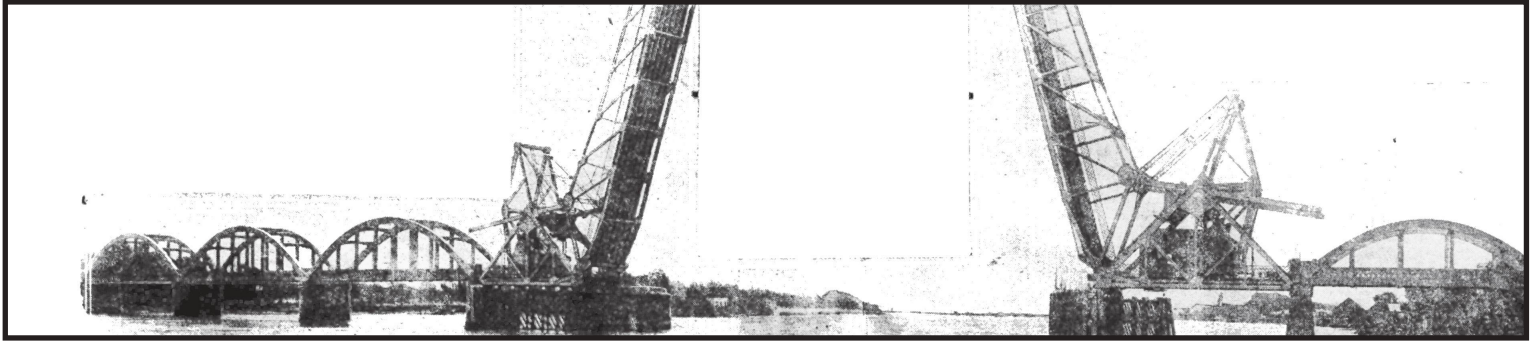
So mark your calendar, bring your friends and family, and come be part of something unforgettable. Whether you're a lifelong resident or visiting for the first time, this is your chance to see Rio Vista at its most energetic and welcoming.

We'll see you on the river!

- Tami Mitchell, RVDA President

Rio Vista's First Bridge: A Period of Profound Investment in the Delta

BY AIDEN MAYHOOD



Rio Vista has been at its present location since 1862, and it was not until 1911 that momentum started with the Rio Vista Chamber of Commerce to build for the construction of a bridge across the Sacramento River, connecting Solano and Sacramento Counties. The bridge was to be part of the Great Highway Plan, with \$18,000,000 appropriated, to connect California from Siskiyou to San Diego. Some Rio Vistans were so adamant to get a bridge at Rio Vista that they threatened the Solano County Supervisors to secede from the county should one not be promised.

By 1914, both Solano and Sacramento County supervisors approved the construction of the bridge, and all that was needed was approval from the federal War Department. Later that year, the War Department approved, with an estimated cost of \$250,000 to be borne by Solano and Sacramento taxpayers. By March 1917, bids were awarded to the Strauss Bascule Bridge Company of Chicago, who also designed the Walnut Grove Bridge. The United States Steel Products Company was awarded the contract for the steel materials used for the bridge. The bid for construction of the bridge was awarded to the Tibbits-Pacific Company.

In November 1917, soon after construction had already started, the federal government held a hearing regarding protests from river steamer transportation interests who claimed that the bridge would better be suited north of Rio Vista at Steamboat Slough. Daniel Webster "D.W." Carmichael, for whom the town of Carmichael is named, proclaimed, "It's not fair for any transportation company to come here now and block this great development project. Steamboat people naturally wish there was not a bridge on earth. But, gentlemen, that bridge is a necessity to the great mass of our people." After one month and numerous testimonies, the War Department allowed the construction of the Rio Vista Bridge to proceed.

The last step in completion of the bridge were the motors, generators, and gears that were being installed in November 1918. Both the Great Western Power Company and Pacific Gas and Electric installed power supply lines and a substation to the bridge. When completed, it was to be the largest bascule cantilever bridge west of Chicago. On January 10, 1919, the completion of the bridge was formally celebrated, shortening the distance between Sacramento and San Francisco by twenty miles and spanning 2,422 feet in length. The bridge was to stay in the open position from nine at night until six in the morning for vessel passage.

At the time of the bridge's completion, Sacramento County had extended what is now Highway 160 from Courtland nearly to Isleton,

with six miles left to be completed to reach the new Rio Vista Bridge. Solano County had just approved the construction of what would become Highway 12 between Rio Vista, home to the largest asparagus cannery in the United States, and Suisun City. Rio Vista celebrated the opening of the bridge in June 1919 with a grand barbeque and guests of honor such as Governor William D. Stephens, Captain Beach, commandant of Mare Island Navy Yards, and more.



Bascule bridges like the Isleton Bridge still exist in the Delta today.

With the success of the new highway and Rio Vista Bridge from Sacramento to Rio Vista, the Delta roads began to further develop. The Isleton Bridge began construction in 1921 and was completed in 1923. The Paintersville Bridge was completed in early 1926. The Three Mile Slough Bridge, which was originally built in 1906 to cross from Grand Island to Courtland, was loaded on a barge and pulled by tug boat in April 1926 to its present location. An extension of the River Road was proposed and completed from the Rio Vista Bridge to Sherman Island where a bridge would eventually be built to cross into Antioch in 1926.

Over time, some of these bridges were removed and updated, refurbished, or overhauled, like the Rio Vista Helen Madere Memorial Bridge. Some are even set for much delayed and needed refurbishing in the near future. The Miner Slough Bridge, connecting Ryer Island to Yolo County on Highway 84, has been allocated \$1.264 million for repairs on its timber plank deck, extending its corrugated steel deck, and rehabilitating the surrounding asphalt pavement. As most infrastructure in the Delta is 100 years old or older, these repairs will have to be more of a common occurrence to keep motorists, farmers and residents alike in the Delta safe.

The Majestic Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park

BY DORIS NORIEGA

Would you like to be treated to stunning views of green rolling hills dotted with brilliant wildflower displays, and the glistening waterways in the Delta? Then come and spend a morning or afternoon in the hills of Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park.

There is nothing like this newest park in Solano County! This 1,800 acre park has so much to offer to the public. The 14 miles of new trails are designed for various abilities, fitness levels and interests. Hiking, biking, horseback riding, birding, and leisurely walks among the wildflowers are the main activities. In addition there are educational programs you can participate in. This park is an absolute photographer's delight!

As you drive into the park, the first thing you see is the Welcome Plaza which greets you with both practical and creative amenities and provides a comfortable and safe atmosphere for the visitors. The parking spaces are designed for ADA (American with Disabilities Act) needs, school buses, horse trailers, and standard parking. ADA accessible restrooms and a water refilling station plus water fountain are there for your added convenience. The Picnic Area is designed for people with varied abilities providing them with both standard and ADA picnic tables and shade structures. In the plaza you will see informational and educational displays and maps. The signage is both interpretive and directional.



Encelia californica at Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park.

Also at the Welcome Plaza is the Sign Kiosk. You can learn about the Patwin people who lived here for centuries. The Patwin are a Wintun-speaking Native American people indigenous to the Sacramento Valley, specifically to Yolo, Solano, Colusa, and parts of the Napa/Lake Counties.

They were organized in smaller tribes which relied on hunting, gathering, and fishing. Take a moment to study the flower and animal charts so while you are on the hike, you can identify what catches your eye.



Beautiful landscapes at Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park.

The Sensory Native Plant Garden has interpretive and educational signs designed for young children and families. The signs are in English, Spanish, and Tagalog. Here are three examples:

Station #1 Welcome: Take five deep breath's. How do you feel right now?

Station #2 Find this coyote mint plant. Touch feel and smell the leaves. What do you notice?

Station #3 Close your eyes. Listen, Feel. What do you notice?

Next take a walk through the All People's Trail. It is an ADA approved accessible designed trail for wheelchairs, strollers, and walkers. The .61 mile loop features a wide gentle path through oak woodlands and grasslands and offers panoramic views of Suisun Valley. There are educational and interpretive signs, benches, shade structures, and picnic tables scattered throughout. It is about a leisurely 30 to 60 minute walk.



Tree-covered canopies at Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park.

If you are ready to go hiking on the 8 different trails, take a photograph of the large map at the Sign Kiosk. The trails are marked Easy, Moderate, or Difficult. While on the hike you will see trail signs indicating where you are and arrows showing you where you can go from there. The distance is marked on the trail map from each junction.

Throughout Solano County there are over 100 species of birds and some of them you can find here. Take cameras and binoculars on your hike and definitely stop and listen. At the Native Plant Garden you might spot an Anna's Hummingbird, Black Phoebe, or California Towhee. In the surrounding grasslands there are Western Bluebirds, White-Crowned Sparrows, and Killdeer. Soaring in the blue skies above you are Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, and Turkey Vultures. Egrets and Kingfishers can be found along the streams. You may be lucky and spot a Great Horned Owl as you walk near the oak trees. In the park there are both year-round and migratory species. Each species has their own particular feeding and nesting habits based mainly on their anatomical features. For example egrets have spear like beaks and others like finches have beaks designed for cracking seeds.



Great Horned Owl in Solano County that can be sited at the park.

Not as easy to spot are the mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. California Ground Squirrels can be seen scurrying around borrows in the hills. Black-tailed deer browse near the tree lines and enjoy eating the woody plants. Seldom seen are the Bobcats, who by nature are very elusive and shy. They hunt for insects, reptiles, small mammals and birds. The park closes on "Wildlife Days" to give bobcats full use of the space. Lizards, frogs, and snakes round out the ecology of the park.

Bring your family, friends and maybe a picnic basket or small backpack to enjoy what the park can offer. The park is located at 2061 Rockville Rd, Fairfield, Ca 94534 and is an easy 35 minute drive from the Delta. The park is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m during the peak season. Parking costs \$5. Dogs are not permitted. Bring water, snacks, sun/rain protection, and walking sticks if needed.

solanolandtrust.org

707-432-0150



American Kestrel in Solano County that can be sited at the park.

The Rio Vista Foundation Annual Tea Party

BY MARILYN NELSON

Be sure not to miss the 4th annual Tea Party hosted by the Rio Vista Foundation. The event will be held on May 9, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the Senior Center on 25 Main Street. It is sponsored by Ralene Nelson of GRUPE Real Estate.

The Party is sure to be a good one. The tea is personally imported from Japan by the son of a Board member. The delicious refreshments you will enjoy will be prepared by the fabulous Sam's Custom Cakes and Catering. In addition, there will be a raffle of other tasty baked goods made by members of the Foundation's Board.

Besides being a good excuse for a party, the occasion is a fund raiser for scholarships for students graduating from Rio Vista High School. The scholarships are for Trade Schools for those students who are often overlooked because they are not going to college.

The Foundation was established to benefit the community of Rio Vista. This event is one of several different successful ones they have held. For example, they have helped finance the community swimming pool and worked on a project to improve the High School softball field.

Don't miss out! Please help The Rio Vista Foundation support graduating high school students by attending The Foundation's Annual Tea Party. Tickets are available at Pets 4 All at 167 Main Street in Rio Vista. Tickets for the Party are \$40 each. Tickets for the Raffle will be \$5 for 6 tickets. Get your tickets now so you won't be left out!

There's a Doctor in the House!

BY TOM SURH

In the many years since the last physician departed Rio Vista, the community has been calling for, demanding, seeking and not finding another physician to locate here. The long wait is now over with the opening of the NorthBay Health Primary and Urgent Care clinic at 327 Main Street. This building, like most commercial buildings in Rio Vista, has a long history. Known for many years as the Awender building, it sat unoccupied for many years, needing substantial structural upgrades until NorthBay Health stepped in and completely transformed it into a beautifully appointed, fully-equipped modern medical clinic.

The clinic offers urgent care on weekdays from 9am to 7pm and on weekends from 9am to 5pm. Also available is a primary care physician, Dr. Nadir Matti, who is in the clinic every weekday.

Urgent care is available for walk-ins and addresses:

Minor injuries; Cough or sore throat; Flu, fever, infections; Eye irritation or redness; X-rays, stitches, sprains; Rash or allergic reactions; Joint pain, stomach pain, UTIs and more.

Primary care is by appointment and offers an opportunity to develop a long-term relationship with a family physician who provides:

Annual exams and routine screenings; Preventive care; Chronic condition management; Referrals and care coordination; High-quality personalized care.

NorthBay Health was founded in 1959 as a non-profit community healthcare provider and has grown to become a major health care network in Solano County. Its main hospital and medical center campus is in Fairfield with another hospital in Vacaville. There are NorthBay clinics in Dixon, Vacaville, Fairfield, Winters, Benicia, American Canyon, and now in Rio Vista.

Learn more about NorthBay Health in Rio Vista at <https://northbay.org/location/rio-vista>.



Olcott Lake at Jepson Prairie Preserve.



Aging tree groves of the Montezuma Hills.

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bridge to the future

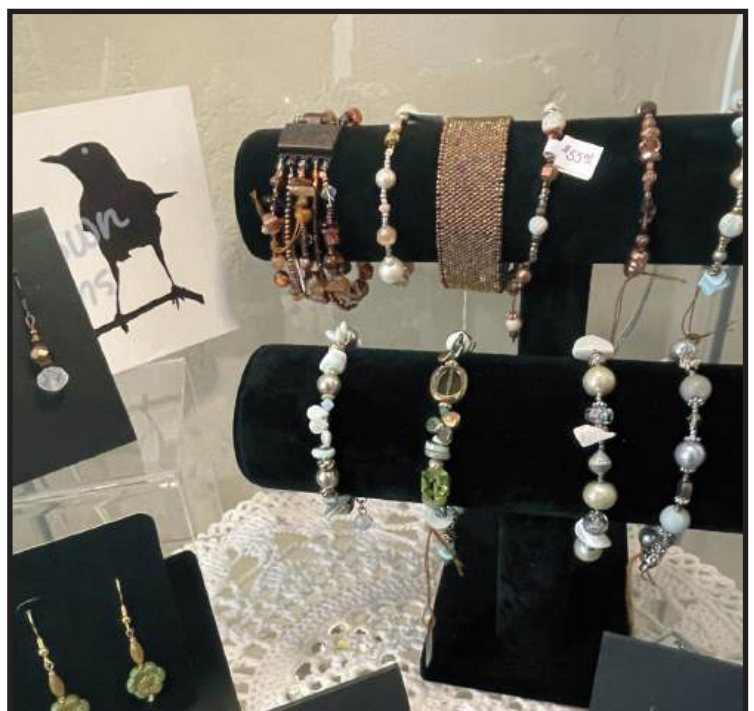
The Discover Rio Vista magazine is a not-for-profit endeavour undertaken by RioVision and its volunteers. RioVision has lost access to significant public funding through the city of Rio Vista for the Discover Rio Vista magazine. As a result, your contributions to RioVision, whether as donors, advertisers, or volunteers, are as important as ever to keep the magazine alive and thriving.

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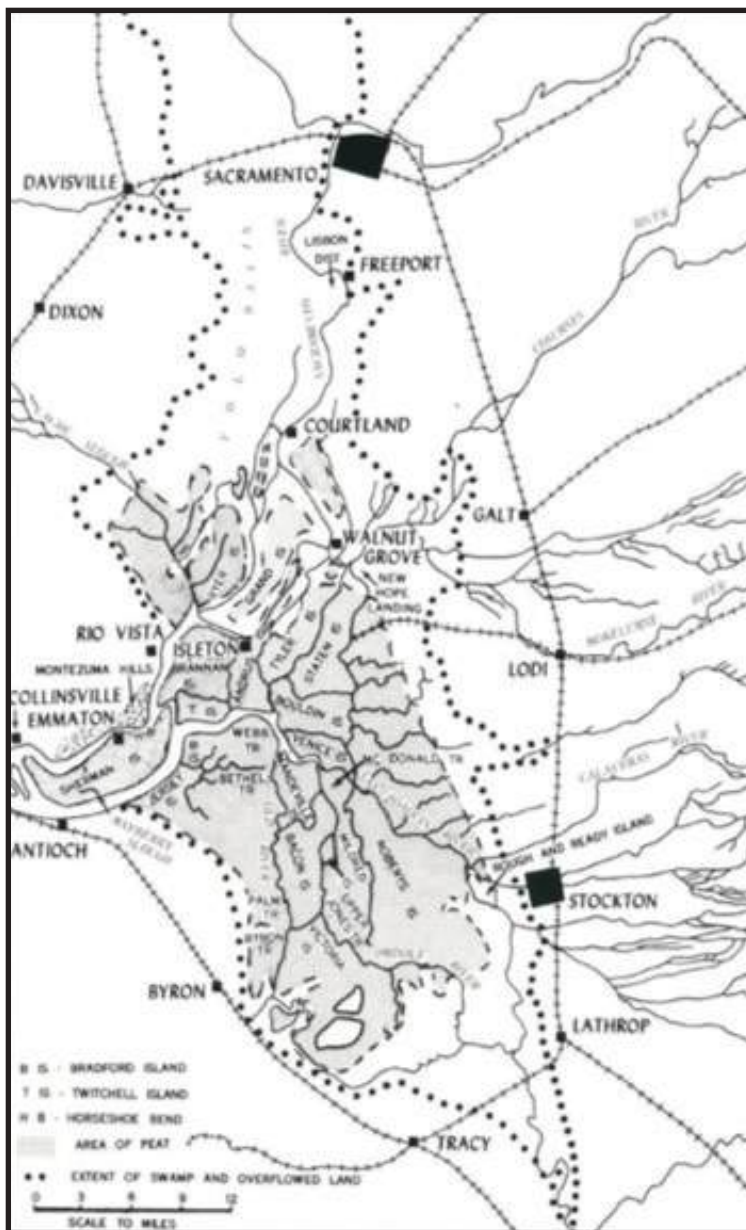


Birdtown Designs' bracelets available at the RioVision Gallery.

Rising Tides, Flooding Futures: Taming the Sacramento River

BY AIDEN MAYHOOD

The waters above present-day Rio Vista and Cache Slough flowing down the Sacramento River had destroyed the livelihoods of many over the course of a few decades. The original settlement of Rio Vista, established in 1858 at the meeting of the Sacramento River and Cache Slough, was destroyed in a flood only a few years later in 1862. In 1878, this problem still persisted. Should the primitive levees at that time fail, thousands of acres of farmland would be devastated, dozens of settlements would be destroyed, the town of Maine Prairie would be inundated, and all the lands west of the Cache Slough adjoining the Montezuma Hills would be submerged.



The “pristine delta” of the 1880s before largescale reclamation.

In 1879, the commissioners of the Sacramento Drainage District discussed the first potential solution. The California Legislature had just approved the construction of a canal from Knight’s Landing to the basin of Nurse Slough in Solano County, through the Montezuma Hills and out through Suisun Bay. However, this idea was soon abandoned. Instead, the state would put more money and effort towards the maintenance of its existing levees, suffering from debris from mining interests in the foothills. Yet, even with a system of levees, water would take down levees, flooding over areas like Steamboat Slough and Grand Island, where it would then accumulate against the Montezuma Hills and sweep back into the Sacramento River.

In December 1888, a committee calling themselves the Sacramento Valley Navigation and Drainage Committee sought to enforce anti-hydraulic mining laws. They consisted of representatives from Colusa, Yolo, Solano, Sutter, Yuba and Sacramento Counties. The group once again discussed the proposed canal through the Montezuma Hills floated in the past. It was to be the “greatest drainage and reclamation work ever attempted outside of Holland.” Once again, the idea was condemned, as some argued the cut through the Montezuma Hills with a separate canal would “result in the further rapid filling of the river channel with silt.” Additionally, its cost and effectiveness were questioned.

In 1902, a Convention of Sacramento Valley Swamp Land-owners was held. They claimed, “These brave Hollanders have a motto - ‘God made the world, but the Dutch made Holland.’ Gentlemen of the Convention: You are here to make California the greatest country in the world and your united action to-day will put courage into the hearts of thousands of people who are waiting to hear what you will say and propose.”

Old ideas faced renewed calls. The proposed cut bypassing Horseshoe Bend and cutting through the Montezuma Hills, creating the man-made Decker Island, would succeed years later. The proposed cut at Horseshoe Bend south to the San Joaquin River, as well as the canal from Cache Slough through the Montezuma Hills to Suisun Bay, never materialized. The San Joaquin delegation opposed such diversion of flows to the San Joaquin River and instead fought for the canal through the Montezuma Hills, which was also favored by Panama Canal Commissioner Carl Grunsky.

[ARTICLE CONTINUES ON PAGE 12].



Decker Island was once connected to the Montezuma Hills.

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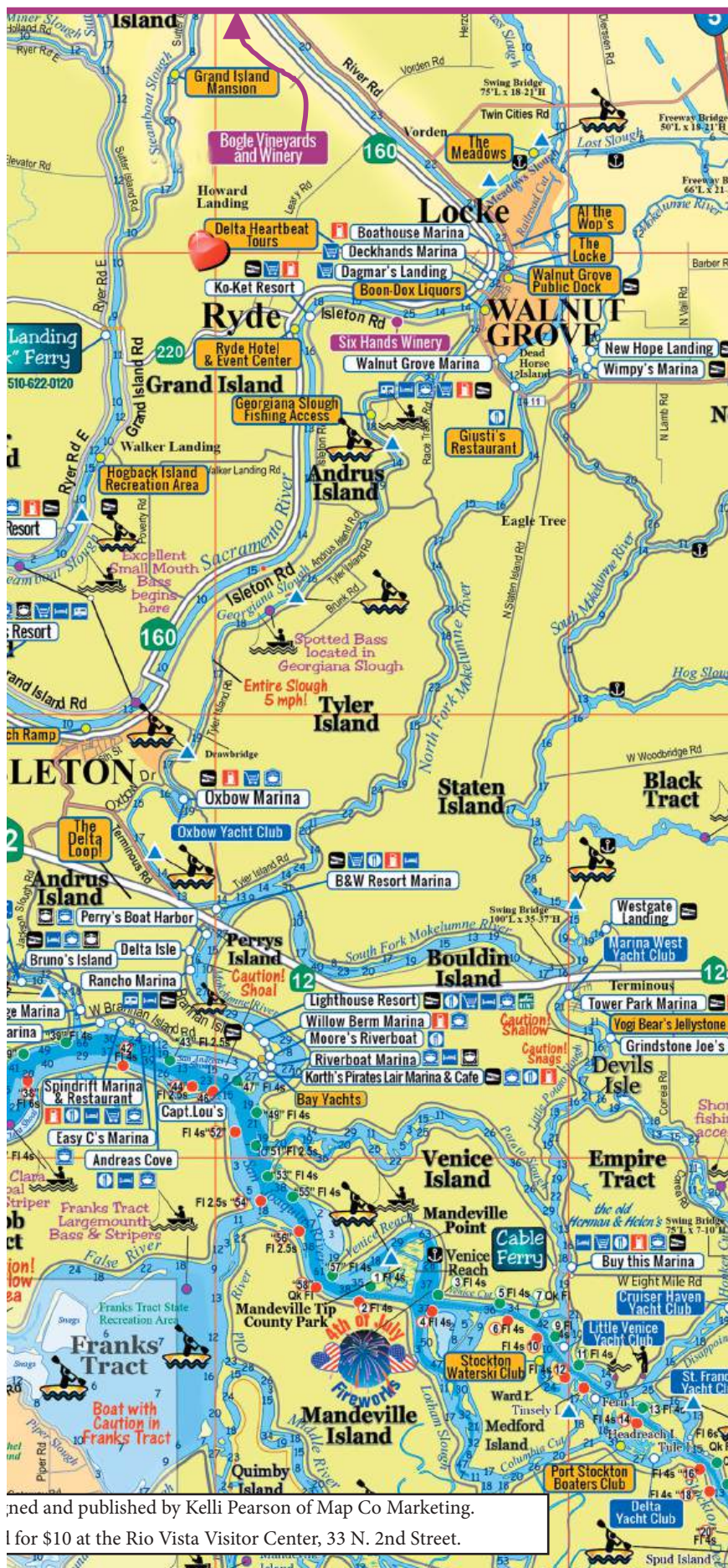
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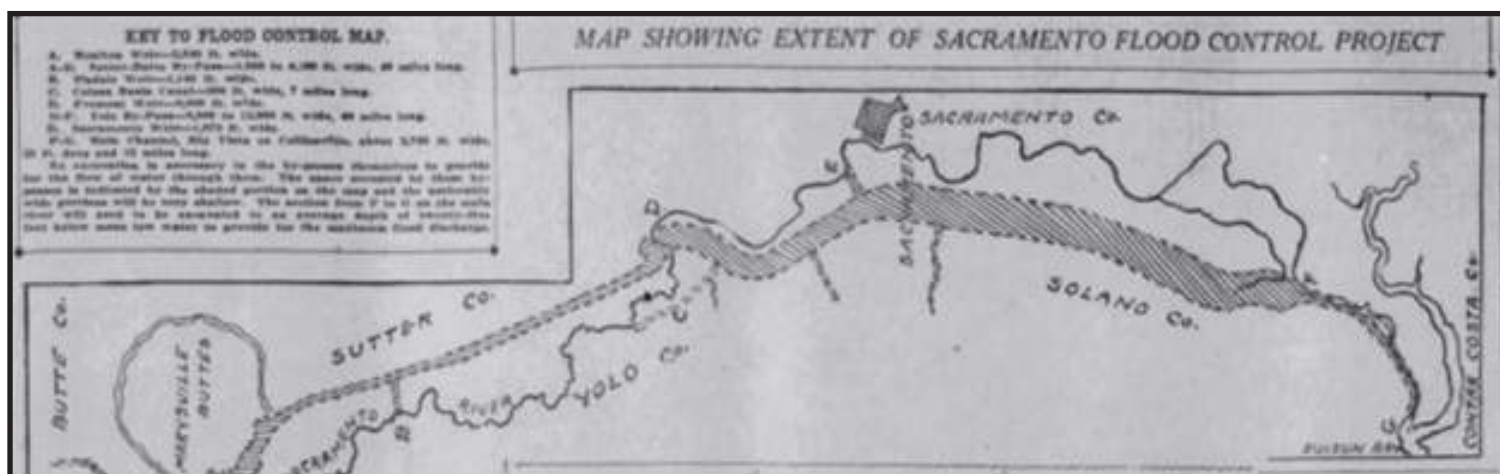
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A depiction of the extent of the Sacramento Flood Control Project.

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9] By 1904, talk had occurred for decades, but no results showed. Multiple islands throughout the Delta flooded that year. Sherman Island was entirely under water. Egbert Tract was submerged. Bouldin Island suffered from levee breaks. In 1909, Winters resident Henry Craner summarized the frustration:

"I remember after the waters had subsided (in 1861) a meeting was called by some of the most prominent people of Yolo and Solano counties to see what could be done in regard to stopping overflows... It was the opinion of all present that a canal from above Knights Landing to Suisun bay or Cache slough would be the proper thing. Forty-seven years have passed since then, nearly all of the men that attended that convention have gone to their silent home in the great beyond, millions have been spent in reclamation, but the floods are still in evidence today as much as they were then, and will continue to be so until a good, big canal is dug to give the people on the rivers relief."

In 1912, the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Improvement Association, consisting of government officials and business interests, met in Rio Vista, to discuss a new project given the green light by both the federal and state governments. A series of weirs, bypasses,

canal, and flow improvements from north of Colusa all the way to Sherman Island, costing an estimated \$33,000,000, was to be undertaken. What would become the Moulton Weir, Sutter Bypass, Tisdale Weir, Colusa Basin Canal, Fremont Weir, and Yolo Bypass were put into motion.

By 1913, the federal government finally took action on the Great Valley Flood Control Project. Work first began at Sherman Island, and locally, the federal government purchased right-of-way and sued to condemn lands along the Montezuma Hills to straighten and deepen the Sacramento River to its modern course, creating Decker Island, and obtaining the last of the land needed in 1916. By 1922, the last of the Great Valley Flood Control Project was completed, marking one of the largest and most comprehensive land reclamation and water diversion schemes in American history at the time.

Rio Vistas, Deltans and Californians alike recognize the region today by some of the distinct features of the Great Valley Flood Control Project. Later projects like the Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel, approved in 1946 and completed in 1963 with the arrival of the Taipei Victory as the first ocean going ship to travel through the channel, would further define the Delta as known today.



A map showing the proposed canal and the proposed cuts near Sherman Island.

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"Three English Cows" by local artist Kathie Boissiere available for purchase at the
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The Courtland Pear Fair: A Celebration of Heritage and Agriculture

BY ROBIE WILLIAMS

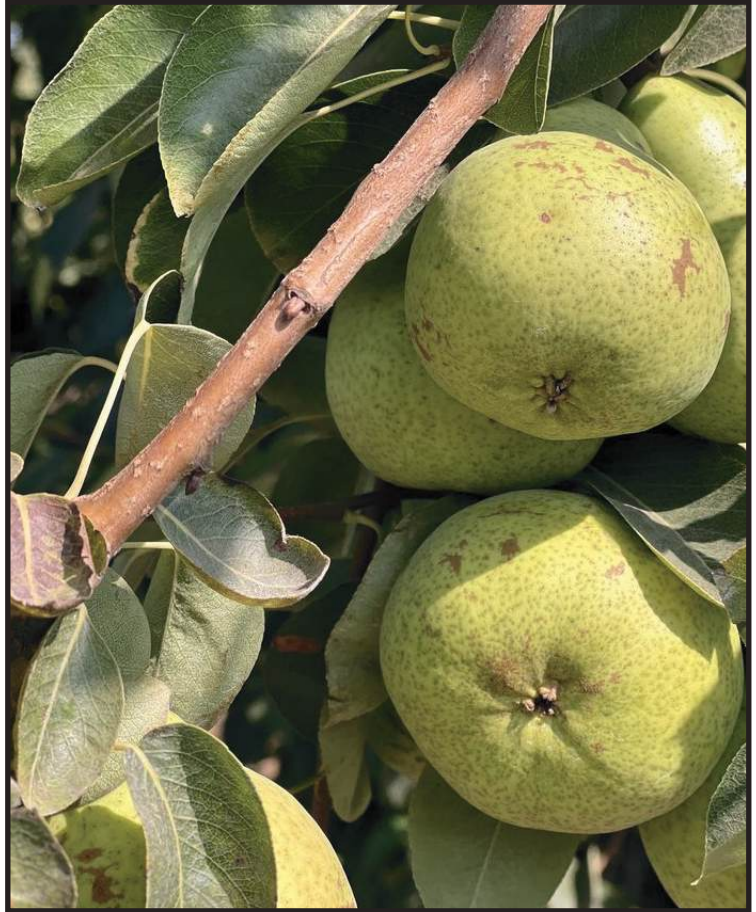
Nestled in the fertile heart of California's Sacramento River Delta, the Courtland Pear Fair stands as a vibrant tribute to the region's agricultural roots and keen sense of community. Each year, on the last Sunday in July, the small town of Courtland welcomes friends, families, and visitors from everywhere for a celebration that has become a cherished tradition since its founding in 1972. The Pear Fair is more than just an annual event—it is a living testament to the enduring legacy of the area's famed Bartlett pears and the resolute farmers who nurture them from orchard to table.

With its roots deeply intertwined with the history and culture of the Sacramento River Delta, the Pear Fair offers an experience that celebrates both the agricultural achievements and the close-knit bonds of Courtland's residents. The festival's main street comes alive with a colorful parade featuring decorated floats, vintage tractors, marching bands, and community groups. This procession is a highlight for many, capturing the pride and unity that defines the town. Live music echoes throughout the fairgrounds, with local bands and performers providing a soundtrack that ranges from country and folk to rock and blues. The entertainment continues with talent shows, dance performances, and interactive activities that engage audiences of all ages.



Pear crates of historical pear farmers of the Delta.

A central attraction of the Pear Fair is the array of pear-themed delicacies that tempt the taste buds of every guest. From baskets brimming with freshly picked Bartlett pears to homemade preserves, jams, and jellies, there is something for everyone. Local bakeries and residents highlight their skills with delicious pies, turnovers, and cakes, all featuring the star ingredient: the pear. Whether you are sampling a classic pear pie or indulging in innovative new creations, the flavors reflect the hard work and passion of Courtland's farming families. Food booths also offer savory options, and visitors can enjoy refreshing drinks made from locally grown fruit.



Delicious locally-grown pears of the Delta.

Beyond the culinary delights, the Pear Fair offers a variety of activities designed to educate and entertain. Guided orchard tours provide guests with an insider's perspective on pear cultivation, including the history of farming in the Delta and the techniques used by local growers to produce high-quality fruit. Arts and crafts booths display the creativity of area artisans, with handmade jewelry, pottery, paintings, and decorations available for purchase. Educational exhibits highlight the importance of sustainable agriculture, water management, and environmental stewardship in maintaining the region's productivity and beauty. The custom car show attracts enthusiasts with its impressive collection of classic vehicles, adding another layer of excitement to the festivities.

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Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Passport Program Launch

BY TOM SURH



Congressman Garamendi at the Passport Program Launch at the RioVision Gallery.



The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area.



The stamp and stamp book for the Passport Program.

Rio Vista sits in the middle of California's first and only National Heritage Area (NHA). NHAs are designated by Congress as places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. The NHA program is within the National Park Service, but unlike national parks, NHAs are large lived-in areas that collaborate with communities within its boundaries to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs. There are more than 60 NHAs throughout the nation and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA is the very first one in California, having been fully approved in January 2025 after years of work and effort by the Delta Protection Commission, a California state agency (see the article in Discover Rio Vista Jan-Apr 2023). With its approved Management Plan and soon-to-be fully funded budget, the NHA will be working in the following areas:

Historic Preservation – preserving and protecting special places and living traditions.

Cultural Conservation and the Arts – creative placemaking through conserving living traditions and using arts as an economic driver.

Interpretation and Education – sharing the places, traditions, and the important stories they hold with visitors and students of all ages.

Natural Resource Stewardship and Enhancement – conserving natural resources and building on scenic and recreational opportunities for people to enjoy.

Heritage Tourism – driving visitation by supporting marketing and/or developing tourism infrastructure.

Community Revitalization and Economic Development – using heritage assets as economic drivers through tourism and revival.

Most of this work will be accomplished through partnerships with cities, agencies and organizations within the NHA, RioVision being one such partner. The first Delta NHA partnership program is the Passport Program whereby there are now 27 locations within the Delta NHA where visitors can get their National Parks Passports stamped. The program - a way to commemorate your travels to the nation's most beautiful, historic, and culturally significant places - kicked off Saturday, February 28, at RioVision Gallery in Rio Vista. Congressman John Garamendi celebrated the occasion with a ceremonial first passport stamp and stating "This exciting new initiative will inspire a new generation to explore the Delta's breathtaking landscapes, rich history, and vibrant communities. "Through the Passport Program," he noted, "visitors can capture stories, preserve memories, and discover America's natural and cultural treasures in a hands-on way. I invite everyone to visit the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area and experience the Delta for themselves."

Much more information may be found online at the website of the Delta Protection Commission, see www.delta.ca.gov.

Gallery Artists

You can enjoy high-quality art without leaving town. The RioVision Gallery at 116 Main St., Rio Vista features impressive and distinctive pieces by more than twenty Delta artists, spanning styles such as acrylics, oils, watercolors, photography, jewelry, gourds, and more. On the third Saturday of each month, you are invited to a reception where you can meet these remarkable artists, view their creations, and connect with fellow art enthusiasts.

BY ROBIE WILLIAMS

Birdtown Designs is the May artist of the month

Introducing the creative minds known as Birdtown Designs: Cindy Stewart, Joann Hill, Jill Graham, and Lane Sennett.

Cindy Stewart was raised in Birds Landing alongside her sister, Joann Hill. Jill Graham moved to the Delta region in 1982 with her late husband Kevin; together, they ran Paul Graham Drilling and settled just three miles away from Cindy and her husband, Wes Stewart. Jill and Cindy share a bond as strong as that of sisters. Cindy and Wes have been married for 44 years and recently retired from Napa Auto Parts, a business they owned for nearly as long. Lane Sennett, who is married to Joann and Cindy's brother, also joins this group. Collectively, they form a vibrant and creative consortium.

Birdtown Designs specializes in creating signature crocheted jewelry lariats. Inspired by a similar concept, Cindy recognized its potential and introduced the foundational technique to Joann, who then organized Cindy's beads and yarn while efficiently mastering the required specialized crochet skills. Jill, preferring not to crochet, contributes by designing the necklaces. Lane also quickly became proficient in the new technique, further strengthening the team's collective expertise.



A lariat and earrings designed and created by the Birdtown Designs team.

Each of these imaginative ladies have various talents which lead them to create a collective business. Cindy says, "We have the opportunity with Birdtown Designs to individually sell our goods – whatever we want to sell and take responsibility for." Their individual artistic offerings include earrings, crocheted blankets and scarves, wreaths, and paintings. "We're all independent, but we're all together."

Cindy enthuses "Everyone has so much to offer because these guys are so creative with their color theory. They understand it. I just feel it. They add so much more to what we're doing."

Join the Birdtown Designs team for their reception on May 16, 2026, from 3 to 5 pm, and meet the talented women behind their creations.

Michelle Blazius is the June artist of the month

Michelle Blazius began her involvement in the Rio Vista art community in the summer of 2025. Michelle's mother, an artist herself, gave Michelle her brushes, canvases, and paints. Michelle eagerly tried painting and soon discovered her own creative talents. She regularly shares her artwork with her mother to get insightful feedback from her.

Michelle's paintings are influenced by the understated beauty of California's landscapes, featuring wildflowers, birds, and the distinctive coastal light. She takes great pleasure in conveying the joy she experiences while capturing ephemeral scenes, such as fog drifting over cliffs, bees lingering near blossoms, and the radiance of a Sierra sunset. Her artistic process is founded on careful observation, continual refinement, and a strong appreciation for color harmony. Each painting contributes to a unified collection that is thoughtfully crafted to evoke a sense of collectability, tranquility, and purpose.



The talented Michelle Blazius and her artwork.

Michelle creates large California landscape paintings alongside 4 x 4-inch miniature works that depict scenes from around California. Her use of soft, harmonious colors evokes a sense of peace and tranquility.

Michelle says that "Whether you're drawn to coastal scenes, majestic mountains, or florals with busy foragers, I hope these paintings bring a bit of California's magic into your space."

Come out and meet Michelle on June 20th between 3 and 5pm at the RioVision Gallery.

of the Month

Ed & Kathie Boissiere are the July artists of the month

There will be a “Double Artist of the Month” for July 2026! Married for 55 years, Ed and Kathie Boissiere will hold the spot for July.

Kathie has been with the gallery for 7 years, a professional artist for 45+ years, and has painted all of her life. She had encouragement from a very young age, started selling her work in her twenties, and showing in multiple galleries in her thirties. Her medium and style have changed over her career from Watercolor to Mixed Media to Collage and Abstraction and every combination of these. She is a self-taught artist with access to many fine workshop instructors such as Christopher Schink, Skip Lawrence, Catherine Chang Liu, and Charles Reid.

She grew up on the San Francisco Peninsula, has spent time at Lake Tahoe and Europe and has found inspiration in all of these places. Kathie is a Master Signature Member of California Watercolor Association (CWA) and has received multiple awards in CWA's International Exhibitions.

Ed Boissiere grew up with a very artistic painter, his mother Lise Boissiere, who was a respected local artist. Then he spent 52 years living with Kathie and supporting her in her art career. Suddenly, three years ago, he asked for some paper and started painting, having never touched a brush before or had an actual lesson. He started entering the Annual Exhibitions at Trilogy and received awards from the first show.

You are invited to their reception on July 18th from 3:00 to 5:00. They will be serving refreshments and would be delighted if you could attend.



Abstract art by Ed Boissiere.

Joyce Gilstrap is the August Artist of the month

For more than 40 years, Joyce has dedicated herself to art. From her childhood, drawing animals and birds, she has always had a creative spirit. Constantly observing her surroundings, Joyce finds inspiration in the colors and shapes that excite her imagination. She works with oils, acrylics, watercolor, and pencils, painting on everything from traditional canvases to walls, rocks, and any surface she discovers. For Joyce, painting feels as natural as breathing—she simply must do it. Her artwork sometimes transports her to distant places, while other pieces keep her grounded at home. Over the years, Joyce has exhibited her creations and received several awards at various shows. Joyce is proud of the awards as it shows that people like what she does. Painting is a part of her, and she loves to share it.

You are invited to meet Joyce on August 15th between 3:00 and 5:00 pm and view her work.



Lovely flower art made by Joyce Gilstrap.



More abstract art from Kathie Boissiere.

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The 12th Annual Hog August Bites: Community, Barbecue, and Fun

BY ROBIE WILLIAMS

The 12th Annual Hog August Bites event on August 22nd from 10am to 11pm is set to light up downtown Rio Vista with the tantalizing aroma of barbecue, the sounds of live music, and the laughter of friends and families coming together. This beloved community festival has become a signature summer tradition, drawing barbecue enthusiasts, local vendors, and visitors from all around to celebrate the best of what our town has to offer.

This year's event promises even more excitement, featuring a lineup of talented pitmasters competing for top honors in the barbecue cook-off. Attendees can vote for their favorite sample mouth-watering ribs at the People's Choice competition. Enjoy performances from talented bands on the main stage at the foot of Main and the 2nd Street Stage. You will be tapping your toes and groovin' to the beat to R&B, Latin, and more. The festival also boasts a classic car show, craft booths, and activities for kids, making it a fun-filled day for all ages. Explore the beer and wine booth, where you'll find craft beers and locally produced wines. If beer or wine isn't your preference, you might enjoy a refreshing margarita instead.

Another highlight of the festival is the highly anticipated chili contest, where local chefs and home cooks compete to serve their best, most flavorful chili recipes. Attendees can sample a variety of chili styles—from spicy and smoky to rich and savory—and vote for their favorites, making the contest a deliciously interactive experience for everyone.

The festival atmosphere is electric, with savory barbecue smoke drifting through the streets and colorful decorations setting the scene for a day of celebration. Visitors can stroll through vendor booths offering everything from handcrafted jewelry to homemade preserves, while the kids delight in interactive games, bounce houses, and face painting. Many local businesses participate in the festivities, providing exceptional deals and giveaways that add to the excitement and highlight the vibrant spirit of Rio Vista. Friendly competitions encourage everyone to join in the fun and create lasting memories with neighbors and friends.

If you are interested in participating in the fun event, applications are online at hogaugutbites.com for craft and information vendors, nonprofit organizations, rib, and chili cooks to compete in both a juried and People's Choice competition and car show contestants.



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