



# DELTA VOICE

A publication of the Delta Protection Commission

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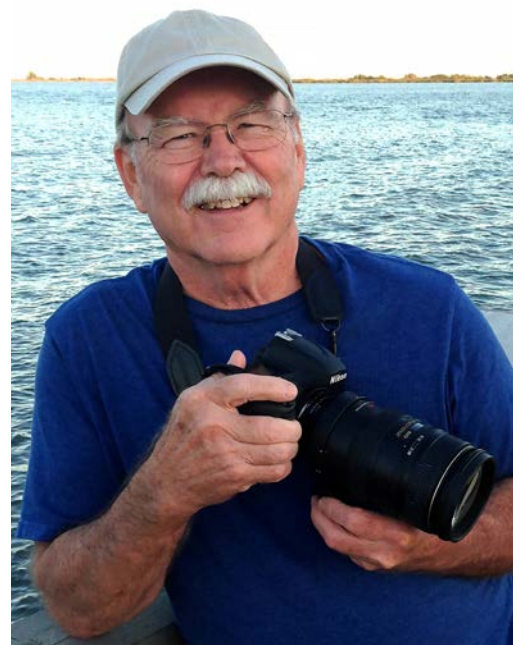


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## FOCUS ON **Rich Turner**

Rich Turner has been behind a camera for most of his life. He started this lifelong passion with photography classes at his high school in Citrus Heights, CA. Within a few short years, he enlisted in the Navy and found himself taking photographs of aircraft from the backseat of supersonic jets during his time at Lemoore Naval Air Station near Fresno in the late 1960s. A California native, he eventually joined the Navy's Antarctic research program crew as an operator of a C-130 Hercules three-camera photo mapping system, offering him a chance to explore the world beyond the Central Valley.

In 1971, after his exciting and demanding career in the Navy, Rich took on a new role back in his hometown at the Roseville Press-Tribune when he walked into the publisher's office with a rudimentary portfolio and was hired on the spot as a photojournalist. Three years later, he accepted a photojournalist position with the Stockton Record where he spent the next 16 years – and where he developed another passion – the Delta. *Continued on page 2...*

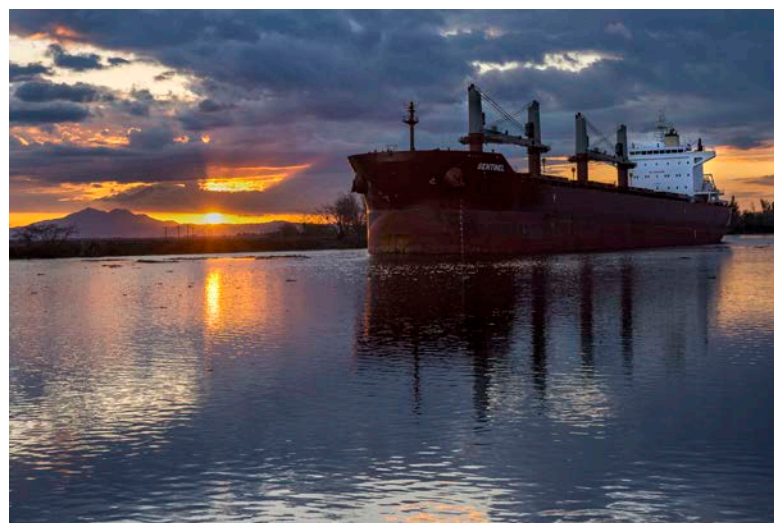


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While working busy days at a bustling daily newspaper, Rich still found time to get out and explore the region around his Stockton residence. He often spent time at what he called his “private stash” – a quiet group of poplar trees where Seven Mile Slough meets the San Joaquin River. He notes that it has become harder these days to find these places of solitude, but one thing he still loves about the Delta is that there are always new places to discover.

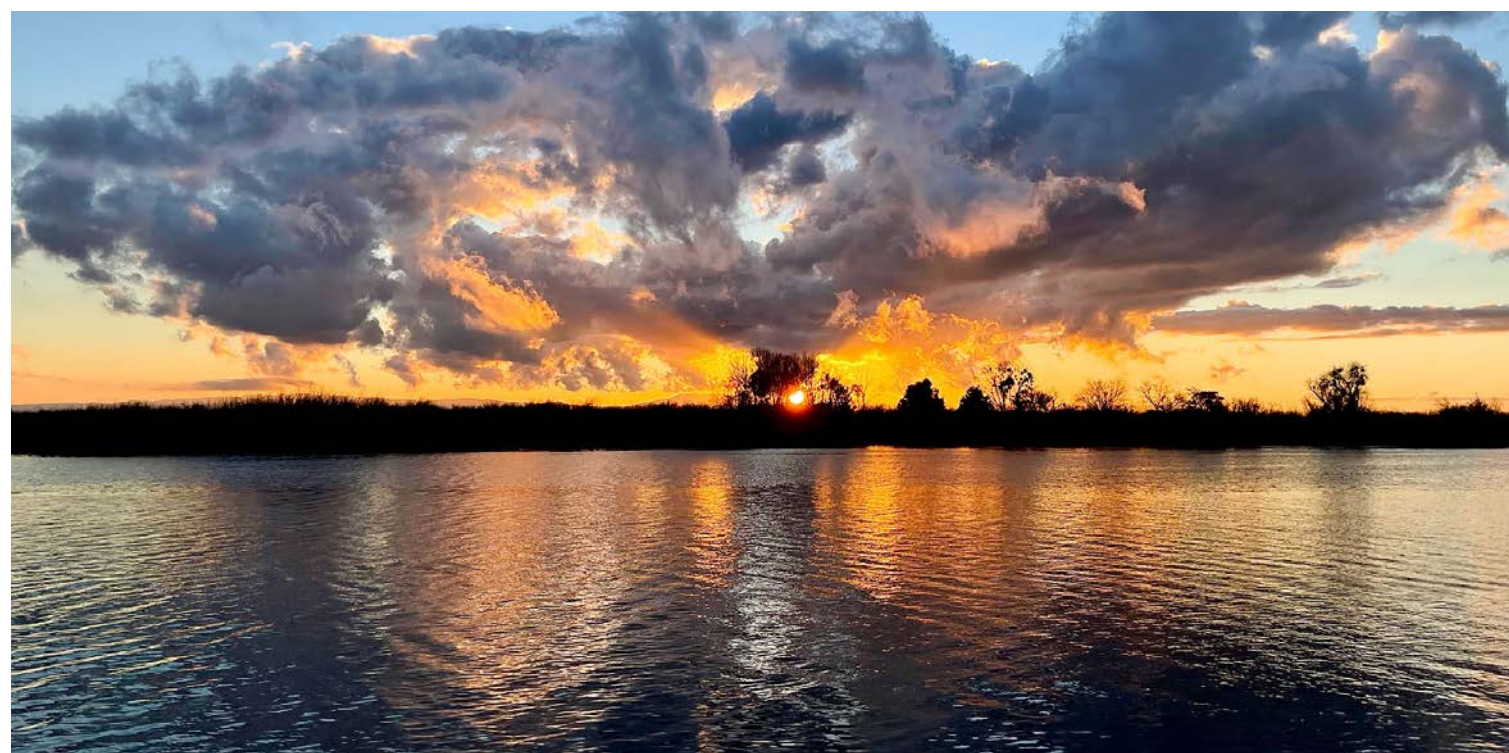
It’s that drive to discover that eventually led Rich to open his own photography studio in 1990 (eventually settling into a space at the Port of Stockton in 2000). As he continued to explore his skills in fine art, and corporate/industrial/aerial and advertising photography, he also had to navigate learning how to manage his own business. This leap of faith served him well, as you can still find him working in his office at the Port today. However, Rich has never stayed stagnant in his career, always growing and refining his profession. Most notably, after surviving a plane crash in 2003 while he was shooting aerial photography near the Delta, he really began to think about the things he wanted to do the most.

Rich went on to do those things, including showcasing his Delta photography at the California State Capitol,



publishing the book Delta Grandeur, and producing a traveling exhibit by the same name. More recently, Rich started Soundings Magazine ( [www.soundingsmag.net](http://www.soundingsmag.net) ). He has always enjoyed storytelling through his photography, but Soundings is a different outlet for him. A way to share his photography and writing while also collaborating with others. The Soundings online platform puts an intimate focus on the people, places, and history that make the Delta so special, and allows Rich to share his work and love of the Delta with a wide audience.

Fifty plus years into Rich’s photography career and he is still going strong. The only question is... what will the dynamic Deltan develop next?



# A Legacy of Libraries

The early days of European settlement in the Delta were marked by a utilitarian existence. Boats plied the river and needed docks and warehouses. Travelers needed places to stay and eat. Miners needed businesses from which to buy equipment on their way to the gold fields, and less reputable businesses where they could spend their wealth when they returned.

When agriculture took hold in the Delta, and permanent residents settled here, the need for community services became more pronounced. As populations expanded, towns and settlements along the river in Sacramento County needed resources beyond law enforcement and fire protection. They needed education and opportunities for life-long learning. They needed libraries.

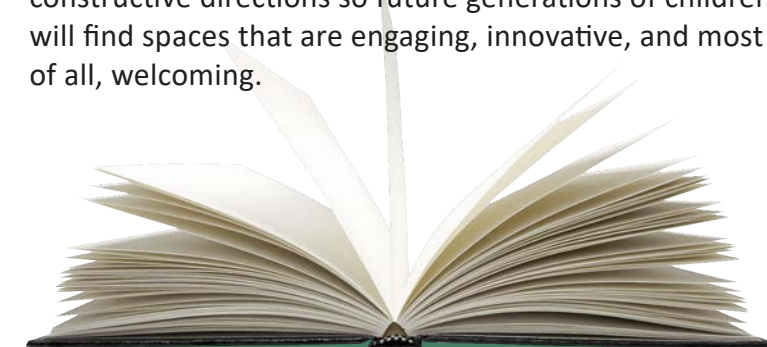
With few resources and no fixed locations, libraries in the communities of Courtland, Isleton, and Walnut Grove started in private homes, operated by volunteers and the owners of the books themselves. Interestingly, or perhaps with the assistance of a little friendly small-town competition, all three libraries trace their beginnings to within ten years of each other. Courtland is the oldest, started in 1909, followed by Isleton in 1911, and Walnut Grove in 1919. As collections and services grew over the past century, so did the libraries, each eventually becoming a branch of the Sacramento Library.

Natalie Beaver is now the branch supervisor for all three of Sacramento County Delta libraries. Natalie has been in the position since 2017, but her library career spans more than 30 years. Originally from the Bay Area, she moved to Isleton and graduated from Rio Vista High School in 1980. Today, she and her husband operate a farm on Grand Island.

A lifelong lover of reading, one of the most satisfying aspects of Natalie’s job is greeting children and encouraging them to love the library as much as she does.

Pre-COVID, there were weekly class visits during which one hundred schoolchildren came through the doors, eager to find items to spark their imaginations. During the pandemic, the libraries refocused their efforts and took advantage of technology by providing online services, including live reading sessions. “We are fortunate to have a talented library staff, committed to making our libraries accessible and useful to our community,” says Natalie.

But Natalie knows the doors of the libraries will open again soon and looks forward to returning to serve the public in new and creative ways. With over 100 years of history and success, these Delta libraries will continue to thrive into the future. Natalie, the staff, and volunteers will remain a positive influence for the communities they serve and steer their libraries in meaningful and constructive directions so future generations of children will find spaces that are engaging, innovative, and most of all, welcoming.



The Sacramento County Delta Libraries offer so much more than books. You can also rent DVDs, video games, audio books, and other items. There are also meeting spaces, classes, and free internet and computer access. For a full list of services, contact the library directly.

## Nonie Wetzel Courtland Library

170 Primasing Ave. Courtland, CA 95615  
(916) 264-2920

[www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Nonie-Wetzel-Courtland](http://www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Nonie-Wetzel-Courtland)

## Isleton Library

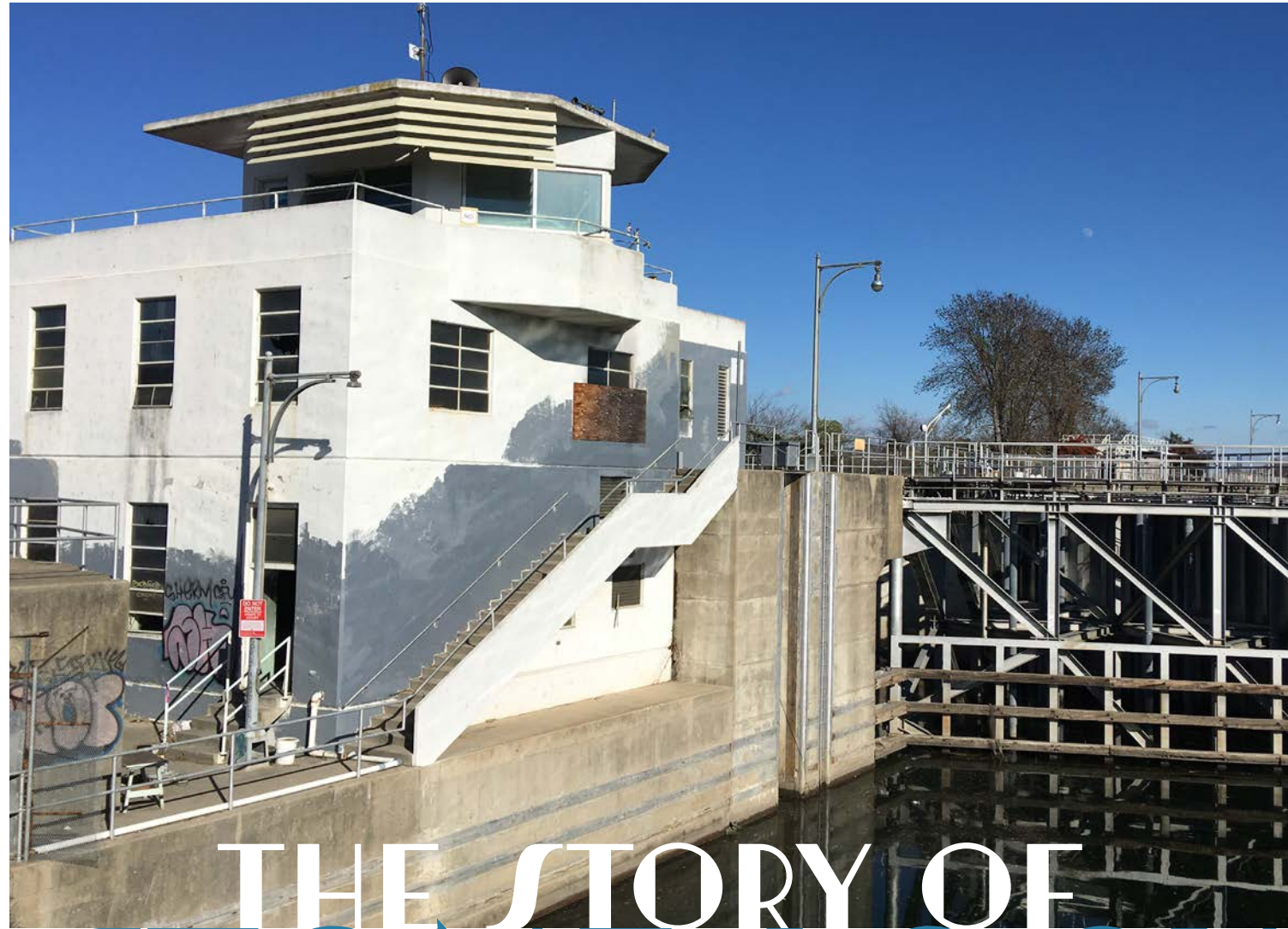
412 Union St., Isleton, CA 95641  
(916) 264-2920

[www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Isleton](http://www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Isleton)

## Walnut Grove Library

14177 Market St., Walnut Grove, CA 95690  
(916) 264-2920

[www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Walnut-Grove](http://www.saclibrary.org/Locations/Walnut-Grove)



# THE STORY OF STONE LOCK

Paul Norboe was born in 1857 in Kern County. He was a surveyor for various counties and eventually became an engineer. In 1907, he was appointed as Assistant State Engineer for the newly created California Department of Engineering. While working in Sacramento, Norboe realized the city could benefit from a deep water port.

In 1916, Norboe convinced the state legislature and the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce to complete a feasibility study for the idea. While it looked good on paper, the project never moved past the study. Norboe died in 1921 but the idea remained on the minds of several people, including William Stone.

Stone was a traffic manager for the Thomson-Diggs Company of Sacramento, a wholesale supplier of tools. During a business trip to Houston in 1924, he took note of the economic benefits of the city's inland port, some 40 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and decided Norboe's idea needed to be reconsidered.

His efforts led Sacramento's City Council and Chamber of Commerce to create the Sacramento Deep Water Commission, which would go on to lobby Congress for the next 24 years for federal funds towards a port and deep water channel. Congress finally approved the project in 1949, but the first ship would not arrive at the port until construction was completed in 1963.



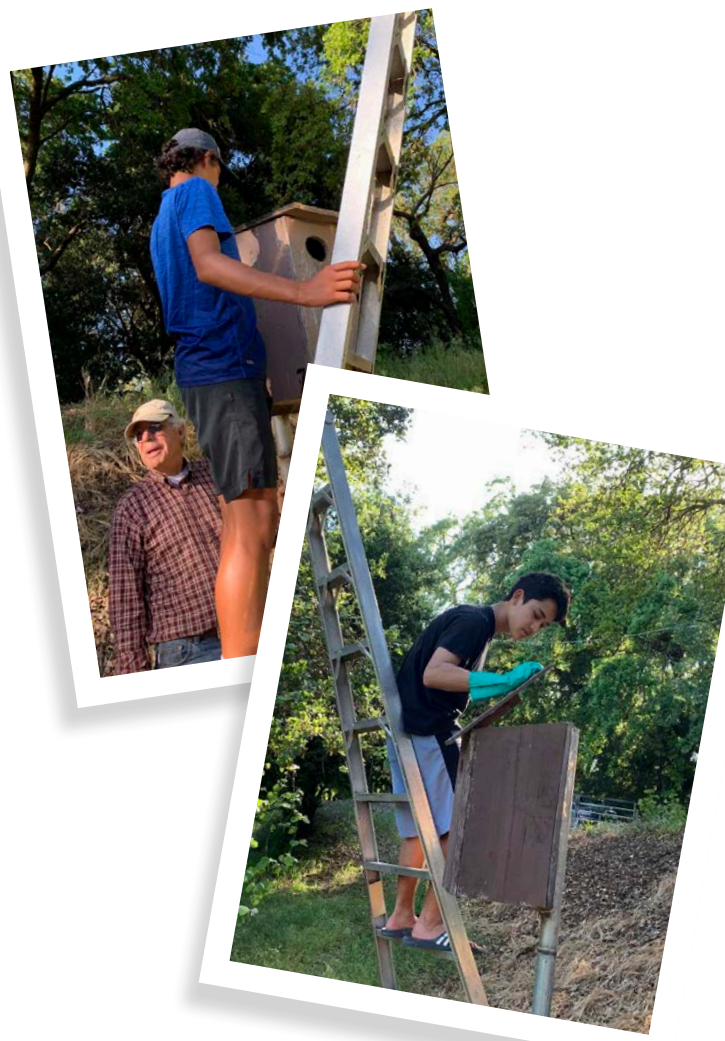
As part of the project, a set of locks were added at the eastern end of the barge canal to allow for a short-cut between the port and the Sacramento River. Because the height of the river can tower some 20 feet over the barge canal at the river's high water mark, the locks were built with a transition height of 21 feet. In honor of Stone's unofficial title as "Father of the Port of Sacramento," the locks were named for him.

Unfortunately, traffic through the locks was never brisk and because federal projects would not allow for tolls, the locks were considered expensive to operate. The federal government considered closing the locks in 1972 as a cost-saving measure, but they remained open with funding support from state and local agencies. In 2000, the locks were finally decommissioned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and turned over to the City of West Sacramento.

Today, the locks can still be seen between Jefferson Boulevard and South River Road. With the completion of the Mike McGowan Bridge in 2014 and the buildup of sediment and foliage on the eastern side of the locks, passage through them is no longer possible. The City of West Sacramento, after opening a public trail along the south side of the barge canal in 2020, has plans to continue redeveloping the area around the locks with its Pioneer Bluff and Stone Lock Reuse Master Plan. Learn more about these new plans to revitalize this unique area at: [www.cityofwestsacramento.org/government/departments/economic-development-housing/pioneer-bluff-stone-lock](http://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/government/departments/economic-development-housing/pioneer-bluff-stone-lock).



# Raising WOOD DUCKS



Today, Russell and his grandchildren Yuuto and Emon tend the wood duck boxes and continue to install new ones. Early spring is an important time to clean the boxes and prepare for the upcoming nest season. The 85 boxes tended by van Loben Sels will foster 1200-1500 hatchlings annually; he estimates the boxes have fostered more than 22,000 ducklings over the years! Wood duck will lay about 14 eggs over a two-week period (an egg a day). Sometimes more than one hen will use a box, and a single hen might even incubate two batches of eggs (25-30 eggs). If you clean out the boxes after the first batch of ducklings depart, you might get another set of nests in June.

Upon hatching, the wood ducklings will leave the nest with their mother and move to water. Ducklings are susceptible to predators, namely great blue herons, hawks, and even bullfrogs. Those that mature are mostly resident birds – wood ducks do not migrate far.

The Commission has direct connection to wood duck efforts through our volunteer leaders. Commission member Jim Paroli (representing Central Delta reclamation districts) manages the Delta wood duck program for California Waterfowl Association, and Delta Protection Advisory Committee member Craig Watanabe manages an impressive wood duck program on Mandeville Island. In addition, a duck egg rescue program is managed by North Delta Conservancy.

Delta farmers are avid conservationists, nowhere more apparent than in efforts to foster *Aix sponsa*.

Wood ducks (*Aix sponsa* in Latin) are so named because their fine, distinct features and brilliantly colored plumage appear to be carved from wood. About half the size of a mallard duck, wood ducks are cavity-nesting waterfowl that can fly through a tangle of branches to reach their nest. With fewer old trees, wood ducks adapt nicely to nesting in boxes.

Clarksburg farmer Russell van Loben Sels knows wood ducks well. For 26 years, he has led an effort to install and tend wood duck boxes along Elk and Babel Sloughs and other Reclamation District 999 waterways near Clarksburg. After putting up a few boxes in 1994 (initially fostering more owls than wood ducks), the effort was aided by a couple of Eagle Scouts from the Clarksburg Boy Scout troop who built and installed 40 boxes.

The initial nest boxes were attached to trees, but raccoons (and mink) were a predator problem for the vulnerable wood ducks. So now the boxes are installed on metal poles.



# Delta Agency Happenings

## April

April 22 - Delta Stewardship Council Meeting  
[www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings)

April 23 - Due Date for Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC) applications  
[www.delta.ca.gov/delta-protection-advisory-committee](http://www.delta.ca.gov/delta-protection-advisory-committee)

April 29 - Delta Marketing Workshop Series - Websites  
[www.delta.ca.gov/marketing-workshop-1](http://www.delta.ca.gov/marketing-workshop-1)

April 30 - Due Date for Public Comment on the Commission's Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Update  
[www.delta.ca.gov/vision-2030](http://www.delta.ca.gov/vision-2030)

## May

May 4 - Delta Protection Advisory Committee  
[www.delta.ca.gov/delta-protection-advisory-committee](http://www.delta.ca.gov/delta-protection-advisory-committee)

May 6 - NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee  
[www.delta.ca.gov/NHA](http://www.delta.ca.gov/NHA)

May 20 - Delta Protection Commission Meeting  
[www.delta.ca.gov/commission-meetings](http://www.delta.ca.gov/commission-meetings)

May 26 - Delta Conservancy Board Meeting  
[www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/board-meeting-materials](http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/board-meeting-materials)

May 27 - Delta Marketing Workshop Series - Social Media  
[www.delta.ca.gov/marketing-workshop-2](http://www.delta.ca.gov/marketing-workshop-2)

May 27 - Delta Stewardship Council Meeting  
[www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings)

## June

June 24 - Delta Marketing Workshop Series - In-person Marketing  
[www.delta.ca.gov/marketing-workshop-3](http://www.delta.ca.gov/marketing-workshop-3)

June 24 - Delta Stewardship Council Meeting  
[www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings)

# Gregory Kondos (1923-2021)

We mourn the passing of Gregory Kondos. Gregory was a true friend of the Delta and a painter who captured the beauty of the Delta land and water-scape. Gregory and his wife Moni Van Camp Kondos were strong supporters of the Delta Leadership Program, and Moni was the founder of the Delta Regional Foundation. We send our deep condolences to Moni and the extended Kondos family.

"Kondos learned to drive on one of the Delta's river roads and spent many days as a teenager on its waters. He recalls with fondness a Greek fisherman who had a one-room cabin on the Sacramento River and "an old chug-chug boat" from Greece. "Just the sound of that boat was really something in life to me," he said. He was in high school at the time and badly wanted a boat, but didn't have a job. One day, he happened upon a classified listing for a little green rowboat for sale in Placerville. "So I went up there and I bought it for \$25 and I towed it down here and put it in the water..." The Greek fisherman let him tie it to the piling next to his boat. Kondos would lie down in the boat to look up at the sky or down into or across the water, studying the very hues he paints today. He loved the slap-slap of the waves and the sunlight glinting off the river. "I was between heaven and heaven," he said." - *Excerpted from an interview with Gregory published in the Summer 2014 Issue of Delta Voice*



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