

The following interviews of Delta residents were done by Micheael Neudeck, Conner Gritsch, and Megan Davis, students at St. Mary's High School:

Brian Healy
Donna Chapman
Jane Arms
Jeff Merrill
Kathy L. Smith
Larry Bingam
Matthew Uyehutin
Mellisa Glenn
Syon Shaddox
Tammy Aldine

The following interviews of Delta residents were done by Barbara Bowers:

Alan and Belinda Tufft
Ed and Paula Almaas
Jeff Hart
Dave Hardwick

Alan and Belinda Tufft, Delta residents

What do you do in the Delta?

We kayak, watch wildlife. Cranes, egret, raccoons, muskrat can be observed, and geese feed in the backyard.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Since 1999.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

None specifically in the Delta.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Recreation and habitat, and enforcing rules that keep the Delta clean. Preserving nature and life in the Delta; the right to boat on the waterways.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

To see it cleaned up, so that it's habitat that is livable; to close the road, and make it pedestrian only; to have clean water and to make sure wildlife is able to live here.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Population growth; too many houses going into Delta; urban sprawl.

Brian Healy, Delta resident

What do you do in the Delta?

I'm general manager at Paradise Point Marina.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Fifteen years.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

I have no family in the Delta. I moved here to run Paradise Point Marina.

What does the Delta mean to you?

I make my living on the Delta. I have to balance economic considerations with environmental concerns.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

We need involvement of the coming generations to care and appreciate this valuable natural resource.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

How to balance regulation and practical sense in order to restore and maintain the Delta.

Dave Hardwick, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

Recreation, motorcycling.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Since January 1963.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Cool weather, breezes, close-in agriculture; close for boating.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

The clean-up of Delta debris; more fresh water flowing through Delta.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

If the proposed peripheral canal happens, the increase of fresh water will damage the Delta. I'm also concerned about the levees collapsing.

Donna Chapman, Woodbridge

What do you do in the Delta?

Fish and work at the marinas.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Since 1964.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

1981. I started fishing and spending the night, and did lots of skiing.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Good times, good fish, good income.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

More sheriffs on the water, more fish and game.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Pollution of the water, not building up the levees, having floods, yachts going too fast.

Ed and Paula Almaas, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

We go sailing, cruising; we're recreational users.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Since 1963.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

Our great-grandparents and grandparents lived in central CA in the late 1800s.

What does the Delta mean to you?

It means the "wow" factor (meaning that people don't know it's here). It's a recreational hidden treasure. We don't want it to become an Owen's Valley natural wildlife area.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

Preservation of the benefits for both man and nature, a balance among competing interests.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Rapid development in the low-lying areas; irresponsible growth; levee failure.

Janie Arms, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

Boating, fishing. Also, my livelihood is boat-canvas work, so I work on the Delta too.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Thirty-eight years.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

I enjoy the Delta life with my family. We have friends among the farming community, and I'm raising my kids to respect the environment.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Good fishing, fun lifestyle, great job.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

More awareness of how our ecosystem works, less water taken out, and more fish and game.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

The pollution and possible demise of more species from the Delta.

Jeff Hart, Hartland Nurseries

What do you do in the Delta?

I do habitat restoration. I have a nursery with native plants, and provide ecotours via Julie Queen II. I also grow organic vegetables and have a plan to open a restaurant and incorporate them into the menu.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Nine years. My wife, Toni, grew up in Rio Vista.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

My family owned a fishing resort on the Sacramento River near the town of Grimes.

What does the Delta mean to you?

The Delta means home, community, a place of business. It also means a troubled estuary that divides a lot of people regarding the direction it should be taken in.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

I would like to see the future of the Delta have sustainable practices. There would be no loss of soil in farming. Carbon would be sequestered with native plants on Delta levees. This could be a carbon offset, so it could also be run for profit. Currently, grass on the levees is burned and soil erodes. Levees need green engineering.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Political stupidity is what scares me the most. My greatest concern is that people will remain wedded to an ideology and not be open to new ideas. Regarding the proposed peripheral canal, whether we retain the pumps or go around the Delta with a canal there needs to be a quantity of quality water to sustain life in the Delta.

Jeff Merrill, Stockton

What do you like about the Delta?

There are so many things I like about the Delta, I couldn't possibly list them all. For one, it's a total escape from the pressures of everyday life. It's like taking a vacation to a remote location, without the travel. You feel like you are in the middle of nowhere, but you're right in your own backyard. The scenery and wildlife are abundant. One of the most gorgeous views I have ever seen is the sun setting behind Mt. Diablo as its rays reflect off of the tranquil water. And when it comes to water sports, there is no better place to go. The levees make the perfect windbreak to provide picture-perfect glass for wakeboarding and waterskiing.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

I spent most of my childhood on the Delta. I moved away for college and then work, but was always excited to come back home and enjoy some time out on the Delta. I moved back to the area four years ago. The biggest draw in moving home was being close to the water. Last year my wife and I bought a house that backs up to one of the canals. I can now enjoy the Delta from my backyard. There are a multitude of reasons to move elsewhere, but the one thing that keeps me tied to this area is my love for the Delta.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

I would like to see the Delta treated with the respect it deserves. It provides so much for so many, but that will not last if current trends continue. People need to become aware of what a great resource the Delta is. Measures need to be put in place to not only stop the damage but reverse it.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

It scares me that the Delta is being written off by our elected officials. The water treatment plant routinely dumps untreated sewage into the Delta and does nothing to undo this damage. The demand for water in the southern part of the state just keeps increasing. The current proposal to divert the major fresh water input to the Delta will spell the end to already damaged Delta. I fear that there will be lots of talk and slanted studies that will somehow show that this will help the Delta. And I am scared that people may actually believe this nonsense.

Kathy L. Smith, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

We lived on a boat for a few years and enjoyed the tranquil feelings of the gentle rocking and the wildlife I had no idea existed in the middle of Stockton. Raccoons, ducks, nite heron, variety of birds and fish. We now enjoy cruising, fishing, and observing the islands and farmland.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Forty-five years.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

When our family was young, we spent the summers boating, waterskiing, and later jet skiing with other family members. We also spend many relaxing weekends on the Delta.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Farming, recreation, leading to a boost to our economy. Boat sales, repairs, marinas, restaurants based around the water, not to mention our deep-water port.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

Keeping it as free from toxins as possible, so it's safe for fish, animals, birds, and humans.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Levee breaks, toxins, water pollution.

Larry Bingham, Delta resident

What do you do in the Delta?

Boating.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Thirty-seven years.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

Recreation and boating.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Fun fun fun.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

Keep it clean.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Overuse; tearing down the levees.

Matthew Uyehutin, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

I work, ski, and jet ski.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

Been around it since I was about 10.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

My mom's boyfriend brought my mother, sister, and myself here.

What does the Delta mean to you?

Fun, work opportunity.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

Cleaner water.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

Levee breaks and overcrowding.

Melissa Glenn, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

I work and hang out with family on the houseboats and jet skis.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

I've grown up out here with my family, who lived at the marina.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

My family has lived at the marina since 1993. My grandparents at one time thought of buying Lost Isle in the 80s.

What does the Delta mean to you?

To most people, it doesn't look like much.... But it was always somewhere the family could escape to. And the sunsets are beautiful!

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

I'd love to see more houseboaters and to see the water get cleaned up a bit, a little less pollution.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

My concerns are about pollution and the area's becoming more crowded. More houses are being built, more people are finding out about the Delta, and the marinas are becoming more crowded. But that's good for business I suppose!

Syon Shaddox, Stockton

What do you do in the Delta?

I work at Paradise Point Marina as a dockhand and also do houseboat maintenance.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

I've only been coming here since last year. That was the first time I'd ever been here.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

None of the rest of my family has been to the Delta.

What does the Delta mean to you?

The Delta is a place to relax and hang out with friends. My job allows me the opportunity to spend a lot of time here that I otherwise wouldn't.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

I'd like to see better appreciation for wildlife and people in the Delta.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

My biggest concern is the pollution of the water.

Tammy Aldine, Valley Springs

What do you do in the Delta?

We take our family vacations on the Delta and stay on a houseboat. We swim, knee board, and wake board.

How long have you lived in the Delta?

I have lived by the Delta for 14 years.

What is your family's history with the Delta?

I've lived out here most of my life, and I currently working in a rental office.

What does the Delta mean to you?

The Delta is one of the "funnest and most exciting" places to be in the summertime.

What would you like to see for the future of the Delta?

The Delta is perfect the way it is—it could be cleaner.

What scares you the most for the future of the Delta? Your greatest concern?

The water being so polluted that we're unable to swim in it.