

## The Sacramento River Recreation and Public Access Guide

Chuck Nelson

### Abstract

The Sacramento River Recreation and Public Access Guide ([www.sacramentoriver.org](http://www.sacramentoriver.org)) is a spatially based inventory of recreational opportunities on publicly owned lands along California's major river. Properties are linked to the site database. Each site lists agency ownership, contacts, site opportunities and includes links to aerial photography. The search engine can query on outdoor activities or facilities available. SacRecWeb also contains articles of interest on the Sacramento River, a glossary of river terms and agency acronyms, a Sacramento River Atlas running ArcIMS, aerial photography and a river photo gallery. It would be easy to apply SacRecWeb's map and data base technology to any waterway, watershed, or stream in California.

### Paper

The Geographical Information Center (GIC) received funding in 2002 from the California Department of Water Resources-Northern District office in Red Bluff to build a guide for recreation and public access on the Sacramento River. The concept was to build a spatially based Website that highlighted all publicly accessible parcels located along the river between the Northern California cities of Colusa and Red Bluff. A large percentage of river property (approximately 55%) is publicly owned land but much of the area is relatively unknown and unused by the public.

# Sacramento River

A Guide to Recreation and Public Access



**The Sacramento River** provides a wide range of recreational opportunities. On this website, you will find out ways to access the river along its entire extent from Suisun Bay to Keswick Dam. We are currently extending the Cantara section from Lake Shasta to Lake Siskiyou.

The river and adjoining public lands are home to a wide variety of fish, birds, mammals and other wildlife. Many public and private agencies are involved with managing these natural resources. While each has a specific role, their sheer number, variety, and overlapping boundaries can be confusing. The Sacramento River Recreation and Public Access Guide was conceived as a way to help you find your way through the many jurisdictions that manage land along the river. At the core of the Web site is a map linked to an extensive database of recreation sites that list opportunities available to you on public and private lands.

In addition to access information, we have included an Issues and Education section with articles about the Sacramento River and a glossary of river terms. Because we all like maps, we have included the Sacramento River Atlas, an easy-to-use collection of maps and aerial photography.

While this site uses the most accurate and up-to-date property information available on the Sacramento River, it must be understood that errors do exist. Property boundaries along the Sacramento River are often difficult to determine as the river is constantly changing due to forces of nature.

Keeping the Sacramento River Recreation and Access Guide up to date is a large task. If you or your agency would like to help us to maintain the site by becoming a sponsor, please call or email [Chuck Nelson](mailto:Chuck.Nelson) and he will discuss options. Thanks for visiting the site and we hope that it helps you to more fully enjoy the river.

### Public Access Sites



Find details on over 100 federal, state, local, and private agency sites located between Redding and Colusa. Many have public access while some are conservation lands. The initial guide was developed to complement information gathered for the Sacramento River Public Recreation Access Study, a CalFed project undertaken by EDAW for The Nature Conservancy's Sacramento River Project. We are excited about our recent extension of the project through the City of Redding to Keswick Dam and to the Delta. Our next update will extend north to Lake Siskiyou and will go online this summer.

### Issues & Education



Find interesting articles about education, news, and general interest on the river. The glossary contains common river terminology and acronyms.

### Sac River Gallery



Find photos of events and places on the Sacramento River.

### Sac River Atlas



A great deal of spatial information has been collected on the Sacramento River and is available digitally. The Sacramento River Atlas is available in two formats: GIF, navigable here, and Adobe Acrobat PDF downloadable from each page. A link will soon be added to allow downloading of GIS (geographical information system) files via FTP.

The *Sacramento River Recreation and Public Access Guide* (SacRecWeb) now includes almost the entire river. SacRecWeb uses maps linked to an SQL database. Each site has ownership and location information, agency contacts, and lists site facilities. We are adding ground photography to each site and a spatial link to a color aerial mosaic of the river. A browser can search sites between selected river miles for available launching ramps, sites with rest rooms, hunting and fishing areas, i.e., over 25 different criteria.

The GIC hired a web service to help design the initial Website. We wanted a straightforward site that was painless to administer and easy to use. Our goal was to show where public land is accessible, using maps but also including a database listing facilities and amenities available at each site.

The site can be found at [www.sacramentoriver.org](http://www.sacramentoriver.org). It is a work in progress but we are very excited about the results thus far. We have been getting positive input and continue to update information. The *San Francisco Chronicle* gave the site a full page article in its Thursday, Dec. 16, 2004 *Outdoor* section.

While it took a lot of work to compile all of the information into the guide, it is most impressive to see the amount of land being restored and set aside for future generations to enjoy. This is land in the river floodplain that has traditionally caused society lots of problems.

In order to handle the over 300 river miles, the river was divided into three regional sections. Each regional section has a series of map extents where public parcels are shaded and named.

**Sacramento River**  
A Guide to Recreation and Public Access

Public Access Sites | Issues & Education | Sac River Atlas | Photo Gallery

Home / Access Sites / Extent: 10

**Public Access Site Search**

Search [Advanced Search]

Show by Map Extent

**Extent: 10**

Click a site name below for access site details.

**List by Activity**

- Motor Boating
- Kayaking/Canoeing
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Swimming
- Tubing
- Birding
- Photography
- Nature Observation
- Nature Walk
- Tent Sites
- Group Camp Sites
- Trailer Sites
- RV Sites
- Cabins
- Walking
- Hiking

View all

The map displays the Sacramento River flowing through Glenn, Butte, and Tehama counties. Key sites highlighted in yellow include Balsam's Landing Unit, McIntosh Landing North and South Units (SRNWR), Irvine Finch River Access, Pine Creek Day Use Area (Landing), Pine Creek Unit (SRNWR), Scotty's Boat Landing, Pine Creek Unit (DECC), Indian Fishery Day Use Area, Cupay Unit (SRNWR), Big Chico Creek Day Use Area, Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, Site 321, Phelan Island Unit (SRNWR), Sam's Slough, Sacramento River Parcel, Murphy's Slough/Golden State Island, Shannon Slough Unit, Jacinto Unit (SRNWR), North Ord Unit (SRNWR), and Dead Man's Reach Unit (SRNWR). Major roads shown include CA 99, CA 32, CA 45, and CA 29.



Access sites are clickable and bring up a site page with a locator and description, along with ownership details, an access description, agency links, activities and facilities available (searchable), and a direct link to the site location on a river aerial mosaic. Site pictures and description boxes become active as information is added.

Home / Access Sites / Pine Creek Day Use Area (Landing)

## Pine Creek Day Use Area (Landing)

images: [00] [01]

**Public Access Site Search**

**Search**

[\[Advanced Search\]](#)

**List by Activity**

- Motor Boating
- Kayaking/Canoeing
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Swimming
- Tubing
- Birding
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- Nature Walk
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- Group Camp Sites
- Trailer Sites
- RV Sites
- Cabins
- Walking
- Hiking

[\[View All\]](#)

**Show by Map Extent**

**Access Site Details**

Rivermile: **196.5**  
 Owner: **Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) (530) 342-5185**  
 City: **Chico**  
 County: **Butte**  
 Ownership: **Public**  
 Public Access: **yes**  
 Location: [Click Here](#)  
 Access Via: **Public road**

**Activities Available**

- Motor Boating
- Kayaking/Canoeing
- Fishing
- Nature Observation

**Facilities Available**

**Parking**

- Gravel Lot

**Boating Facilities**

- Boat Ramp(s)
- Boat Trailer Parking

**Picnic Facilities**

- Picnic Table(s)
- Tree Shaded

**Bathrooms**

- Porta-Potties

**Location Description**

Located on the left (east) side of the river, west of Chico on River Road just south of Highway 32.

**Topology Hydrology**

Prone to flooding.

**Vegetation Wildlife**

Characterized by a mix of valley oak woodland, mixed riparian forest and willow scrub.

**Current Land Use**

Recreation uses available at the Pine Creek Day Use Area include boat launching, fishing, kayaking/canoeing, and nature viewing.

**Adjacent Land Use**

Mainly agriculture

**Access Description**

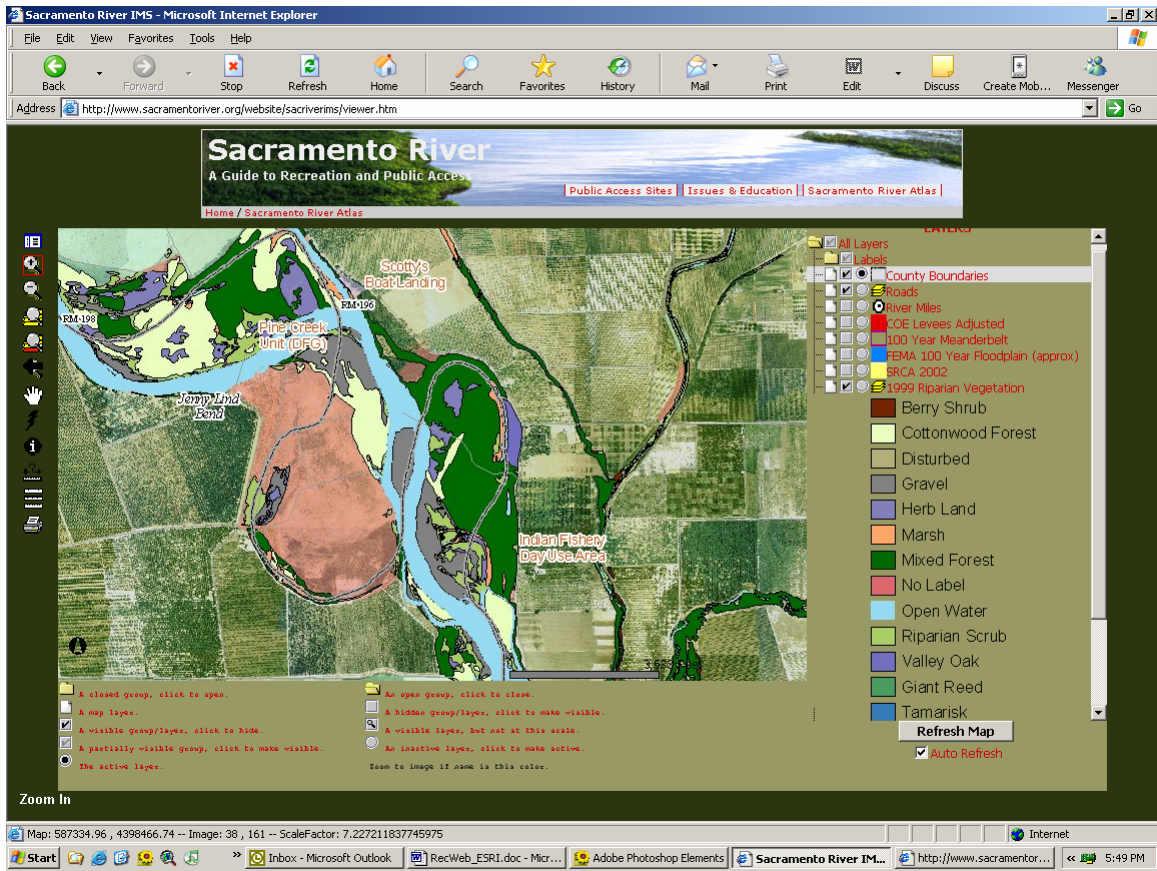
Accessible from the public roads.

**Facility Signage**

- Entrance
- Facility Rules

In addition to access information, the guide contains an *Issues and Education* section listing news and educational articles on the Sacramento River by searchable category. Articles are of public interest and are exclusive to the river and its geography. Many are linked to Web sites. We have included a glossary of river terms and agency acronyms.

One of the most exciting parts of the guide is the *Sacramento River Atlas*. The atlas includes a Sacramento River mosaic as its base and a series of GIS layers running on ArcIMS. Access sites are shaded according to characteristics (public, public-no access, and private w/access) and each site is linked back to the database file. Many thematic layers (geology, riparian vegetation, etc) can be queried. Many have database information including classification, area and perimeter statistics. Layers have clickable, user-friendly folders which display legend information. Refresh is automatic.



Finally, we have also built-in a *Photo Gallery* which includes photography of the river taken by Geoff Fricker, a well-known local photographer and others. Geoff's award winning Sacramento River photographs are found in many California museums including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art collection. The gallery is nature and river oriented and images can be downloaded.

The GIC expanded the site in three phases. Additional funding came from CalFed, the Great Valley Center, the Cantara Trustee Council (through the California Department of Fish and Game), the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, and the California Department of Boating and Waterways.

Our final Upper Sacramento River-Cantara section (Lake Shasta to Lake Siskiyou) was recently uploaded and is awaiting comment. Because the guide is online, the GIC has been able to take advantage of agency input and the public for commentary.

Finally, the guide is a continual work in progress as we search for a permanent source of funding.

### Acknowledgments

Stacy Cepello, California Department of Water Resources-Northern District, developed the RecWeb concept and was responsible obtaining the initial funding.

### References

McHugh, Paul. "A river flowing to the past: Sacramento has its charms". San Francisco Chronicle, Outdoors Section, December 16, 2004. [www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2004/12/16/SPG4SACGU31.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2004/12/16/SPG4SACGU31.DTL) .

### Author

Chuck Nelson, Director, Geographical Information Center, California State University, Chico  
35 Main Street, Chico, CA 95929-0327, 530-898-4469, [cwnelson@csuchico.edu](mailto:cwnelson@csuchico.edu)