

# Brannan Island

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## Franks Tract

### State Recreation Areas



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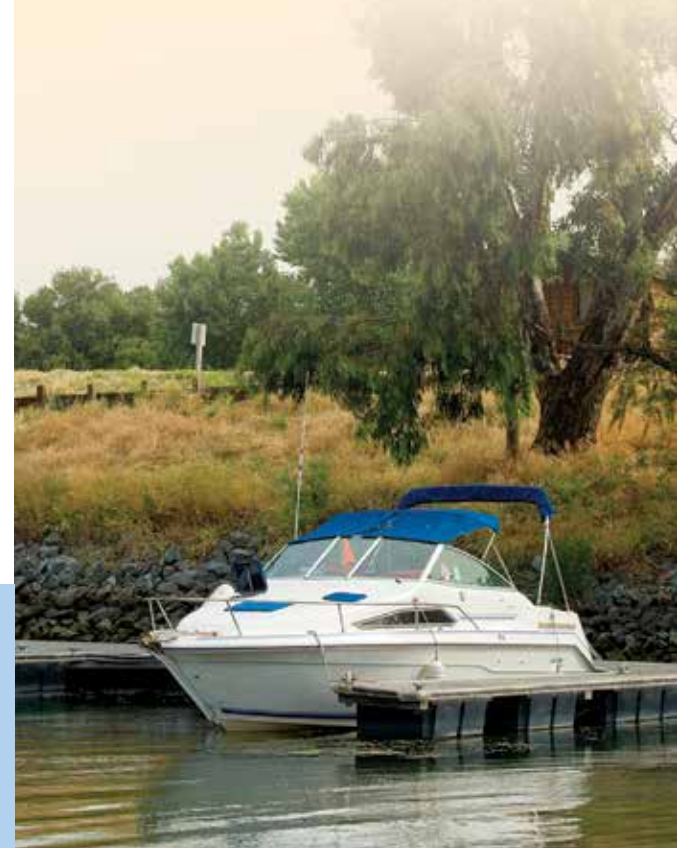
**Brannan Island SRA**

**Franks Tract SRA**

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Rio Vista, CA 94571  
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*The Delta's 700  
miles of channels and  
sloughs invite campers,  
picnickers, hikers,  
boaters, anglers  
and swimmers  
to come out and play.*



## Brannan Island State Recreation Area

is the gateway to 700 miles of rivers, sloughs, marshes, levees and river channels that make up the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

The park has long been a popular destination for year-round water recreation—boating, fishing, swimming, camping and picnicking. From its vantage point on the Sacramento River's east bank, the recreation area offers a fine view of Mount Diablo to the south.

### Early Residents

Identification of the Delta's prehistoric residents is challenging. Archaeologists speculate that agricultural activity, dredging, levee construction and reclamation efforts may have altered the locations of—or even destroyed—any identifiable Native American artifacts.

In the early 1800s, the area's abundant wildlife resources drew hunters and fur trappers, including the Hudson Bay Company. Beginning in the 1830s, Swiss immigrant John A. Sutter operated fishing and fur trapping camps on the Delta; others settled in as ranchers and crop farmers.

### PARK HISTORY

The 336-acres of Brannan Island State Recreation Area (SRA) were acquired by the State in 1954; they became a park in 1965. The recreation area is bordered by the Sacramento River to the west, Three Mile Slough on the south, and Seven Mile Slough to the east.

The island is named for Sam Brannan, who became California's first millionaire by selling supplies to gold seekers. Brannan led a pioneer group of Mormons to California in 1846. That same year, he sailed across San Francisco Bay to the Delta, where he established New Hope, the first Mormon community in the San Joaquin Valley.

Brannan Island's 40-foot elevation comes from debris deposited there during channel-dredging operations. Most other Delta islands lie below sea level.

### Franks Tract and Little Franks Tract

Six miles southeast of Brannan Island, Franks Tract SRA was once a source of peat moss processing and export. The Delta's rich peat deposits were the second-largest in the U.S., next to the Florida Everglades.



Sam Brannan

Due to repeated levee failures in the mid- and late-1930s, Franks Tract is now completely submerged. This area is known for excellent year-round fishing and seasonal waterfowl hunting. Permits are available at Brannan Island; for regulations and information, visit [www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov).

Little Franks Tract is encircled by marsh and riparian habitat along the remnants of a breached levee. The area shelters more than 70 species of birds and a great variety of fish species. Wildlife includes beavers, raccoons, mink, river otters and muskrats.

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Winter temperatures range from 45 to 55 degrees. Summer days vary from 65 to 100 degrees. Cooling Delta breezes often gust to 25 mph, and tides can vary as much as six feet in one day.

**Fishing**—Bass, sturgeon, shad, bluegill and migrating salmon are among the Delta's inhabitants. Anglers over 16 must carry a valid California fishing license. For fishing details, visit [www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov).

**Boating**—A ten-lane launch ramp has parking and nearby restrooms.

**Swimming**—The day-use area has







a swim beach. The swim area at Seven Mile Slough is closed to powerboats.

**Family Camping**—Cottonwood and Willow Campgrounds have 102 tent or RV sites with no hookups. The Olympic Loop RV Campground has 12 sites with water and electric hookups. A sanitation station is nearby. A small, hike-in cabin can accommodate four campers.

**Boat-in Camping**—Thirty-two slips take boats up to 35 feet long and 10 feet wide.

**Walk-in Camping**—These 13 sites have tables, stoves and cupboards. Drinking water and restrooms are nearby.

**Group Camping**—Six group sites each hold up to 30 people; larger groups may reserve multiple sites. Sites accommodate RVs up to 36 feet long.

**Picnicking**—Four family picnic areas stretch along Seven and Three Mile Sloughs. Reservable group sites have shade ramadas.

**All Reservations**—call (800) 444-7275 or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

## THE DELTA

The estuary is an “inverted” river delta; rather than a river’s typical wide exit to the sea over an alluvial (fan-shaped) outlet, the alluvial shape lies inland.

Once the Delta tributaries join together, they taper into a channel, entering the ocean through narrow Carquinez Strait.

## The Delta’s Water

The State Water Project’s pumping, storage, and power facilities join 700 miles of canals and pipelines to bring water to suppliers throughout California.

Nearly 7.5 million acre-feet of freshwater travel down the California Aqueduct, irrigating millions of acres of farmland and providing drinking water to 24 million Californians.

## The Delta Smelt

The health of the endangered delta smelt may reflect the condition of the Delta’s ecosystem. These tiny native fish have a one-year lifespan—spent entirely in Delta waters. Estimated at one time to have declined by 95 percent, the once-abundant delta smelt’s numbers are rising.

## HABITATS AND WILDLIFE

- A diversity of birds—including Swainson’s hawks and sandhill cranes—overwinter and migrate or breed in the Delta.
- In marshes, herons, river otters and turtles live among tules, sedges and cattails.
- Riparian scrub supports several dozen bird species. Various fish and mammals live among willows and cottonwoods.
- The riparian habitat hosts many species of rare plants—such as Mason’s lilaepsis and Suisun marsh aster—at or below the high tide zone.



*Delta smelt (actual size)*

- In open water channels, gulls, terns and cormorants can be found, along with stray sea lions.
- Backwater areas hide the herons, rails, bitterns and sandpipers hunting tule perch, Sacramento suckers and other fish.

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- All park features are protected by law and must not be disturbed or removed.
- Visitors and animals are allowed only in developed areas. Keep dogs on a six-foot maximum leash and confined in your tent or vehicle at night.
- The island’s sandy cliffs are steep, unstable and very dangerous.
- Bicycle riders and passengers under 18 must wear helmets.
- Alcohol is not permitted in day-use areas.
- Service reductions are in force. For current park status, visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Accessible picnic areas, campsites, restrooms and cold showers are available. The wooden fishing pier has a platform equipped with handrails and curb guides. Two boat slips are accessible. Wet weather may make surfaces slippery.

Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Locke Boarding House (in Locke)  
13913 River Road, Walnut Grove 95690  
(916) 776-1828 or 776-1661
- Caswell Memorial State Park  
28000 South Austin Road, Ripon 95366  
(209) 599-3810



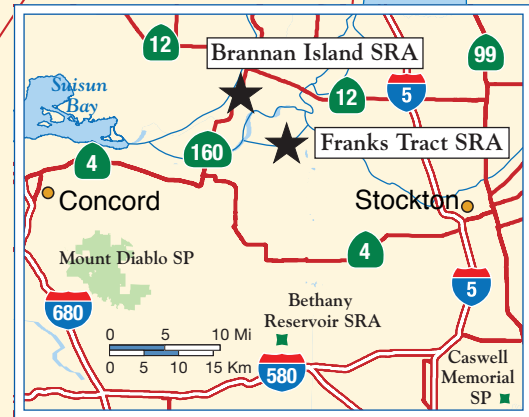
# Brannan Island Franks Tract State Recreation Areas



## Legend

- |  |                      |  |                       |
|--|----------------------|--|-----------------------|
|  | Major Road           |  | Fishing               |
|  | Paved Road           |  | Gas Station           |
|  | Paved Trail          |  | Locked Gate           |
|  | No Power Boats       |  | Parking               |
|  | Parking Area         |  | Picnic Area           |
|  | Accessible Feature   |  | Picnic Area: Group    |
|  | Boat Launch: Vehicle |  | Restroom              |
|  | Cabin                |  | RV Sanitation Station |
|  | Campground           |  | Showers               |
|  | Campground: Group    |  |                       |

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Map by Eureka Cartography, Berkeley, CA



to San Joaquin River (1 mile)