

Big Break Regional Shoreline

Year opened: 2005 Acres: 1,648

Highlights: Hiking, birdwatching, picnicking, canoeing/kayaking, Big Break Visitor Center. Did you know? Big Break got its name from a levee failure in 1928 that flooded asparagus farmland.

HISTORY Welcome to the homeland of the Julpun, a Bay-Miwok speaking tribe whose members lived and thrived in this region for untold aeons. The most northerly tribe along the place now known as the Old River of the San Joaquin River, the Julpun managed the landscape in a manner that increased the health and numbers of the plants and wildlife on which they relied.

The Julpun world was upended after non-Indians began to enter the region – the Fages-Crespí expedition in 1772, the Juan Bautista de Anza expedition in 1776, followed by American trappers, including Jedediah Smith, then French trappers in 1832, who sent beaver pelts to Europe. Between 1806 and 1827, the Julpun entered the Spanish mission system, their choice to do otherwise gradually foreclosed. Later, some Julpun became serf-like laborers on the Mexican rancho that included this parkland of Jose Noriega, then John Marsh, who wrote in 1846 about his Native workforce, “without them the business of the country could not go on.”

The entire Delta was dramatically transformed by the California Gold Rush of 1849, which accelerated local settlement and spurred widespread wetland “reclamation,” or drainage. Some unsuccessful gold-seekers left the mother lode to farm the Delta’s rich soils. Chinese immigrants built farming levees after laying the first railroad tracks through the Sierra Nevada. Portuguese, Italian, and Dutch immigrants, and immigrants from other nations, were also drawn to the region. Seagoing ships navigated the rivers, transporting supplies, tallow, and furs.

By 1930, Delta reclamation was almost complete, with some 57 human-made islands encompassing over 550,000 acres. Today, agriculture is the primary land use, particularly for growing corn and other grains, to-

matoes, asparagus, pears, and other specialty crops. Also today, Bay Miwoks continue to honor their aeons-old ties to this place, including advocacy for the protection from development of ancestral village and burial sites.

CALIFORNIA DELTA Big Break Regional Shoreline is part of the great 1,150-square-mile California Delta. The water flowing past Big Break through the Sacramento and San Joaquin – the state’s two greatest rivers – drains half of California and is the largest estuarine environment on the Pacific coast. The area, known as the “Inland Coast,” is a small bay or estuary at the edge of the San Joaquin River that lies in the zone where salty seawater meets fresh snowmelt and runoff from the Sierra Nevada mountains. The mixing of saltwater and freshwater produces an “edge effect,” increasing habitat and species diversity. It makes Big Break a fine home or stopover spot for a wide variety of species, particularly birds and fish.

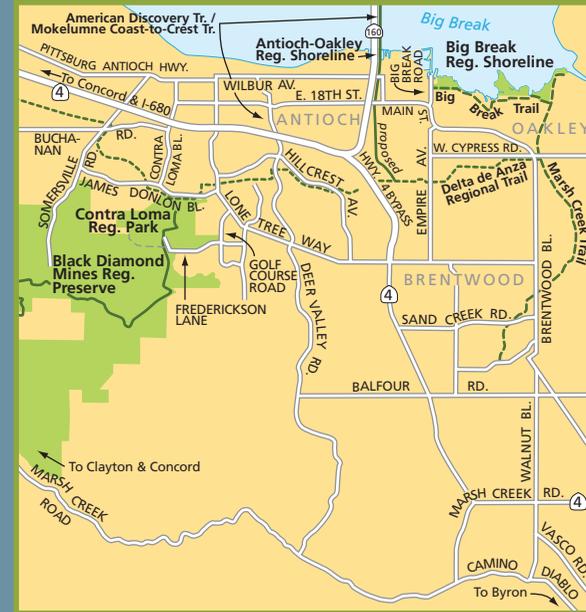
RECREATION Observe wildlife, enjoy cool marine breezes in the summer, fish from the observation pier, or simply appreciate the solitude. Kayakers and canoeists can launch, while other boaters can enjoy the open, shallow waters of Big Break and beyond.

Big Break Regional Trail provides flat, paved access to the southeastern edge of the estuary. The trail connects to Marsh Creek Regional Trail, which runs south through Oakley and Brentwood, and joins the Delta de Anza Regional Trail, which runs west to Bay Point.

WILDLIFE The open waters and tidal sloughs of Big Break are home to a variety of wildlife including an assortment of fish, and mammals such as beavers, river otters, and muskrat. Migratory waterfowl share habitat with wading birds like great blue herons, snowy and great egrets, and green herons. American white pelicans forage alongside grebes, double-crested cormorants, and American coots. There is habitat for a variety of protected species, such as black rail, northern harrier, Swainson’s hawk, white-tailed kite, and yellow-breasted chat.

BIG BREAK VISITOR CENTER AT THE DELTA This visitor center is the site for interpretive and school programs, with a focus on the Delta, its ecosystems, and wildlife. The nearby Delta Discovery Experience is a 1,200-square-foot interactive map that demonstrates water flow through the Delta region. There are picnic and meadow areas, a sand-play area for kids, a shaded amphitheater, and a kayak launch area.

POLICE, FIRE, MEDICAL EMERGENCY9-1-1
EBRPD HEADQUARTERS..... 1-888-327-2757
PARK OFFICE1-888-327-2757, option 3, ext. 4525
BIG BREAK VISITOR CENTER..... (510) 544-3050
TRS RELAY FOR HEARING IMPAIRED7-1-1



To Reach Big Break Regional Shoreline:

From Hwy. 4 in Antioch, take Hwy. 160 northbound towards Sacramento/Rio Vista. Take exit 1A east and turn right onto Main Street. Proceed east a little over 1 mile and turn north onto Big Break Road. Turn right just past the last houses on the right into Big Break Regional Shoreline. You can also enter the park by way of the Big Break Trail at its intersection with the Marsh Creek Regional Trail just adjacent to Marsh Creek north of E. Cypress Road in Oakley, east of its intersection with Main Street.

Public Transportation: Tri Delta Transit #300 provides service to Vintage Parkway and Big Break Road on weekdays. Call to confirm route: Tri Delta Transit–(925) 754-4040 or see www.trideltatransit.com.



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www.ebparks.org Rev. 3/16

Big Break Regional Shoreline

Oakley, Antioch, Brentwood

East Bay Regional Park District

