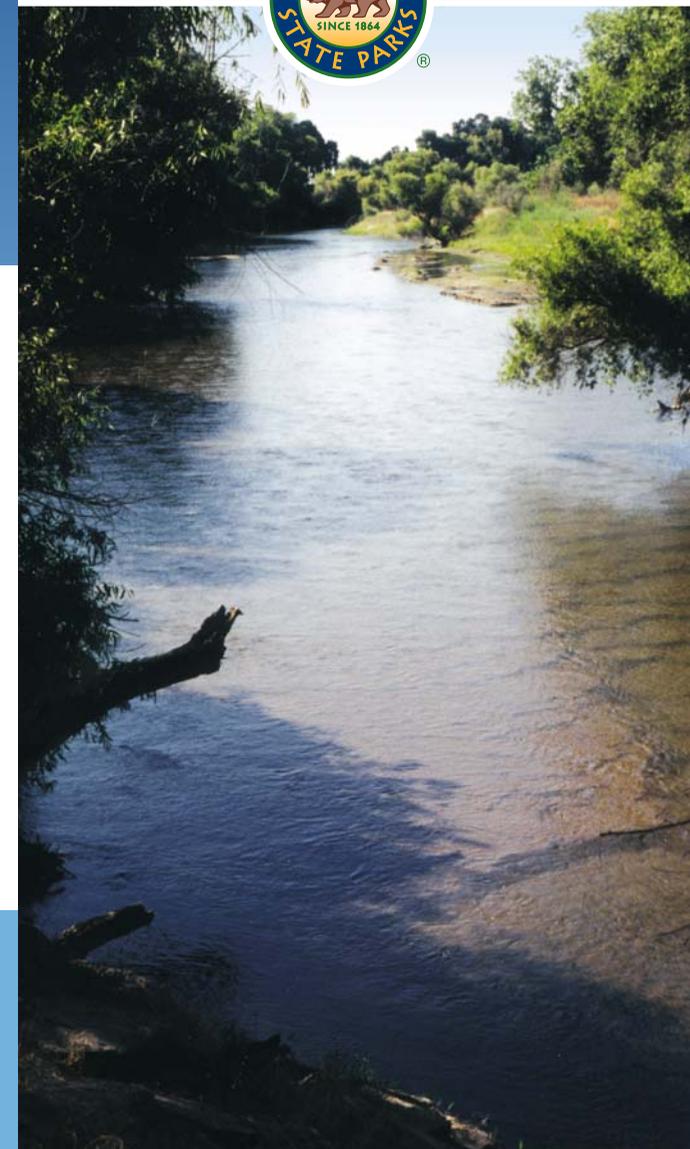


# McConnell

## George J. Hatfield State Recreation Areas



*Spring, summer and fall offer fishing, camping, picnicking, river wading, sunbathing, hiking and nature study.*

### Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

GRAY DAVIS  
Governor

MARY D. NICHOLS  
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN  
Acting Director, California State Parks



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

<b>CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS</b>	For information call:
<b>P.O. Box 942896</b>	(800)777-0369
<b>Sacramento, CA 94296-0001</b>	(916)653-6995, outside the U.S. (888)877-5378, TTY (888)877-5379, without TTY

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**McConnell State Recreation Area**  
8800 McConnell Road  
Ballico, CA 95303  
(209) 394-7755

J

**he Merced River,**

after coursing its way through the Yosemite Valley, becomes calm and inviting as it flows through McConnell State Recreation Area. Towering cottonwoods and sycamores offer relief from the dry heat of the central San Joaquin Valley. Where the Merced passes through George J. Hatfield State Recreation Area, visitors are inspired



*Accessible picnic area and bench on the Merced River at McConnell SRA*

to take advantage of a riparian habitat that offers fishing, swimming, rafting and other water-related activities. The two parks are about 20 miles from each other, and because of their proximity, they share essentially the same ecology.

The native streamside habitat may be observed while rafting or canoeing down the river. The river flows slowly during the summer months, and there are limited access points. Allow plenty of time to relax and enjoy the scenery.

The typical Central Valley climate can reach from 90 to as much as 105 degrees in the summer, with mild spring and fall temperatures. In winter the weather can drop to below freezing. The average annual rainfall is 12 inches.

**NATURE PRESERVED**

The bottomland along the river consists of a rich sandy soil. Before the arrival of European settlers, this soil supported a luxurious growth of trees, shrubs, vines and wildflowers that provided abundant food and a place of refuge for the Native Americans and the wildlife that inhabited the valley. Today rich farmlands surrounding the parks nourish field, row and nut crops. Poultry and cattle ranching flourish in the area.

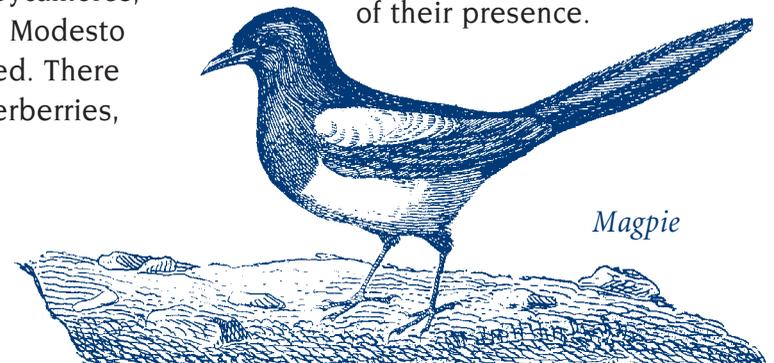
Valley oak, box elder and cottonwood are the primary native trees. Sycamores, fruitless mulberries, elms and Modesto ash trees have been introduced. There are dense areas of native elderberries, wild grapes and blackberries.

The careful observer may see raccoons, opossums, weasels, muskrats, skunks, ground squirrels, cottontail rabbits, jackrabbits and even an occasional beaver or black-tailed deer.

Common birds include valley quail, woodpeckers, robins, crows, yellow-billed magpies, scrub jays, ring-necked pheasants and several kinds of hawks, as well as ducks, geese and band-tailed pigeons during their annual migrations.

**McCONNELL STATE RECREATION AREA**

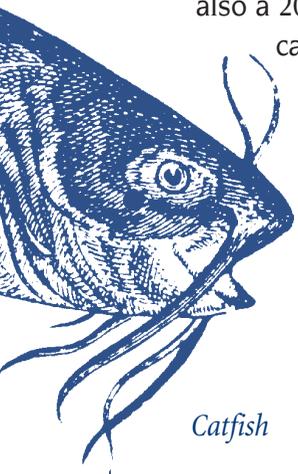
The earliest residents of what is now McConnell State Recreation Area were the Northern Valley Yokuts, who lived in small groups in an extensive area between the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada. The Yokuts, known for their artistry in creating both coiled and twined basketry, depended on hunting and gathering for their needs. Salmon fishing, acorn harvesting and deer hunting provided a rich, stable food supply. When Europeans arrived, they discovered a native people willing to defend their lands and their way of life. About four miles upstream of the park, a Yokut village site provides evidence of their presence.



*Magpie*

McConnell State Recreation Area is a shady oasis, a small island of peace and quiet. Named after Thomas McConnell, a sheep rancher and pioneer who homesteaded the site in 1871, it offers year-round recreation. As the first state park in the San Joaquin Valley, this 74-acre recreation area opened in 1950. Several grassy fields offer youngsters ample room to play. While the low, easy summer flow of the Merced River is great for swimming, swimmers should watch out for deep holes. No lifeguard service is available. Anglers can fish for catfish, black bass and perch. A valid California sport-fishing license is required.

The park's tree-shaded camping and picnic areas have rock fireplaces, tables and piped drinking water. Family campsites are provided with food lockers and hibachi-like grills mounted on convenient, waist-high supports. A 50-capacity group camping area has two rock fireplaces, a horseshoe pit and a large barbecue with an adjustable grill. There is also a 20-person group campground. Two modern restroom facilities include individual coin-operated shower enclosures. The picnic area, overlooking wide, sandy beaches, features shade trees, picnic tables and hibachis.



*Catfish*

When park personnel are not on duty, campers will find convenient self-registration envelopes for paying camping fees. Firewood is available at the park office,



*Campground at McConnell SRA*

and a pay telephone is located at the front entrance. Groups must register in advance. To reach the park, take the Shanks Road exit off Highway 99 south between Turlock and Livingston, and follow the signs. Northbound, take the Collier Road exit, turn right, and follow the signs.

### **GEORGE J. HATFIELD STATE RECREATION AREA**

George J. Hatfield, former California Lieutenant Governor and State Senator, donated this land to the State to establish the recreation area, which was dedicated September 20, 1953. A bronze plaque honoring

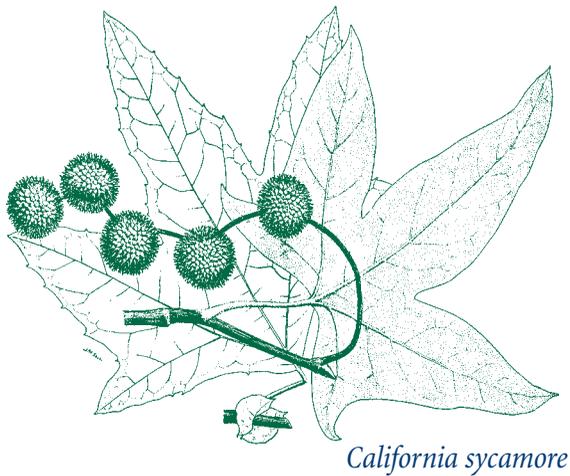
Louisa Jane Cox, grandmother of Mrs. Hatfield, is placed in a group of oak trees. As a girl in 1849, Louisa traveled with her family over the Santa Fe Trail to California.

Bordered on three sides by the Merced River, the 46.5-acre park has more than a mile of river frontage. Visitors may swim and fish in the river, but swimmers should be aware of deep holes. No lifeguard service is available, and the riverbanks are narrow



*Group campsite at George J. Hatfield SRA*

and steep. This recreation area, a less frequently visited unit of the State Park System, provides significant outdoor activities for families and fishermen. Spring, summer and fall offer fishing, camping, picnicking, river wading, sunbathing, hiking and nature study.



Several small campsites are equipped with tables and grills, and drinking water and two restrooms are nearby. Campers must use the self-registration envelopes. Fees are posted at the park entrance. Though the parking lot is limited to 20 spaces, the group campground can serve groups up to 50 people. It has a large barbecue pit, sinks, water, work and serving areas, picnic tables and benches. Groups must register in advance for camping. Most of the picnic sites have tables and grills, and are under the shade of a grove of box elders and valley oaks. A public telephone is located at the main entrance to the park.

The park is located five miles east of Newman. From I-5, take the Newman exit between Crows Landing and Santa Nella, and drive east for about nine miles to the park entrance on Kelley Road. The park currently has no developed accessible facilities. For more information, call the park at (209) 632-2852, or the district office at (209) 826-1197.

### ACCESSIBLE FEATURES &

- At McConnell SRA—two paved campsites and two picnic tables; restroom facilities with coin-operated showers; picnic tables on level terrain at the edge of the river; a campfire center; and a paved trail to the river. Call for specific details.

### NEARBY STATE PARKS

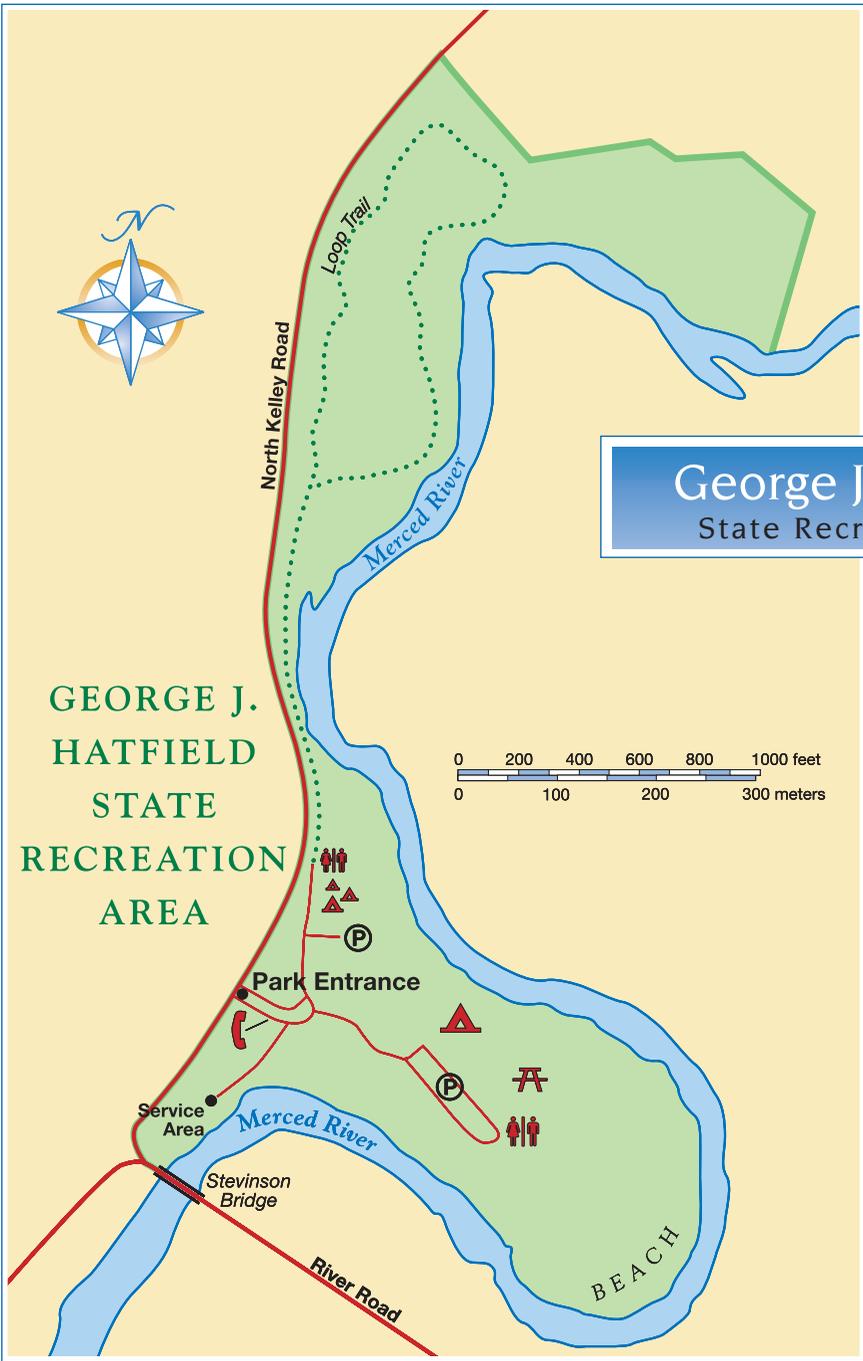
- Great Valley Grasslands State Park, 5 miles east of Gustine (209) 826-1196
- San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area, 12 miles west of Los Banos (209) 826-1196
- Turlock Lake State Recreation Area, 22 miles east of Modesto (209) 874-2056



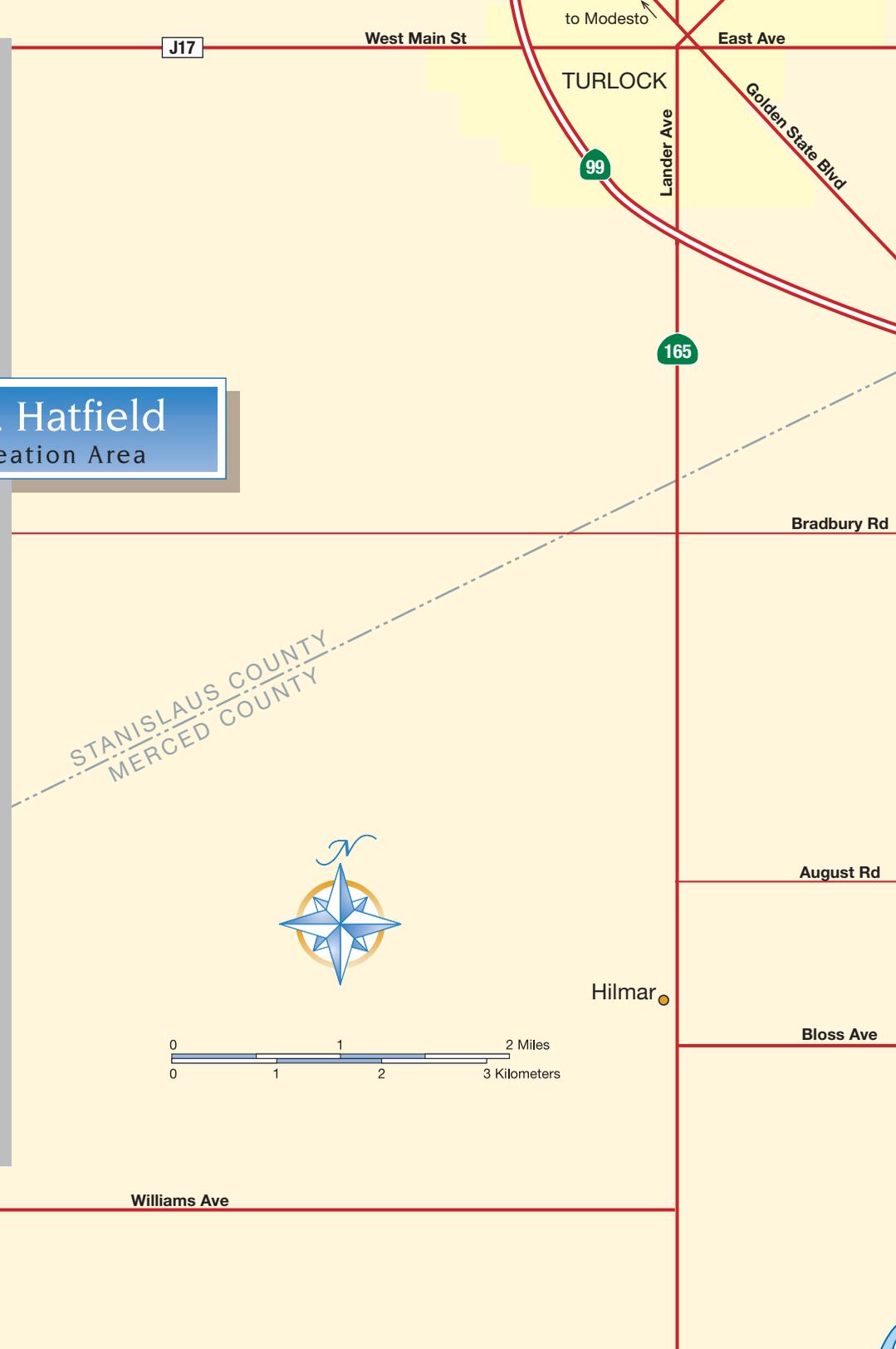
*Tree shaded campground at George J. Hatfield SRA*

### PLEASE REMEMBER *(Applies to both parks)*

- Family campsites are limited to eight persons and two licensed vehicles. Call (800) 444-7275 for camping reservations.
- All vehicles must be confined to designated roadways and parking areas.
- The campground speed limit is 15 MPH.
- All features of the parks are protected and must not be disturbed or removed.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times and in a tent or vehicle at night. PLEASE CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR PET.
- Loud noise and music are prohibited at all times. Quiet hours are 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- Generators may only be operated between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- Weapons, including firearms and bows and arrows, are not permitted.
- Please do not gather dead wood, twigs or other plant material for fires. Decayed vegetation helps the growth of trees and other plants.
- Bicyclists under 18 must wear approved helmets. At night bicyclists must be equipped with headlamps and reflectors in compliance with vehicle code regulations.
- Campsites are vulnerable to theft at any time. Secure your valuables and equipment, and report any suspicious activity.
- Check out time is 12:00 noon. Check in time is 2:00 p.m.

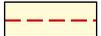


**George J. Hatfield**  
State Recreation Area

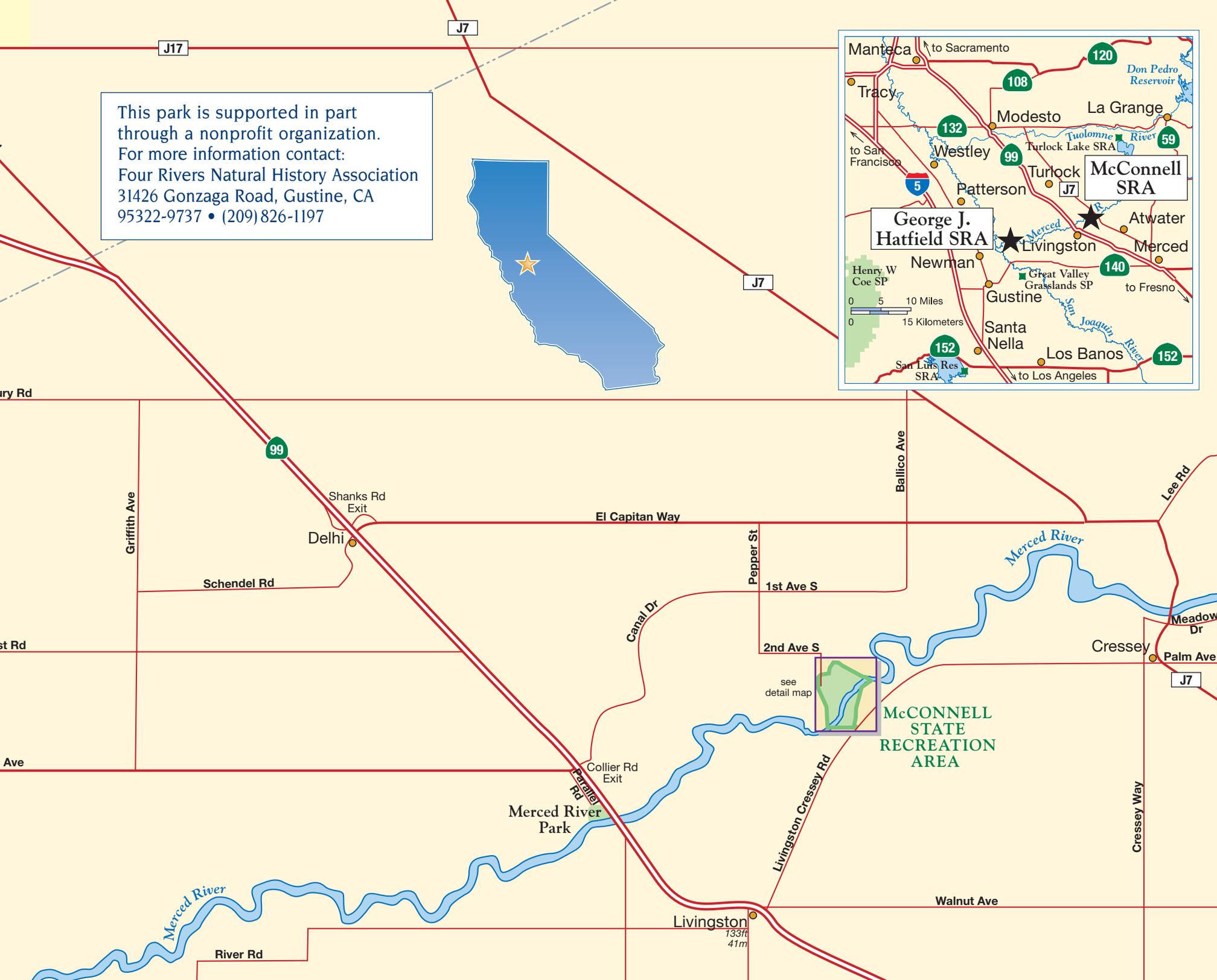
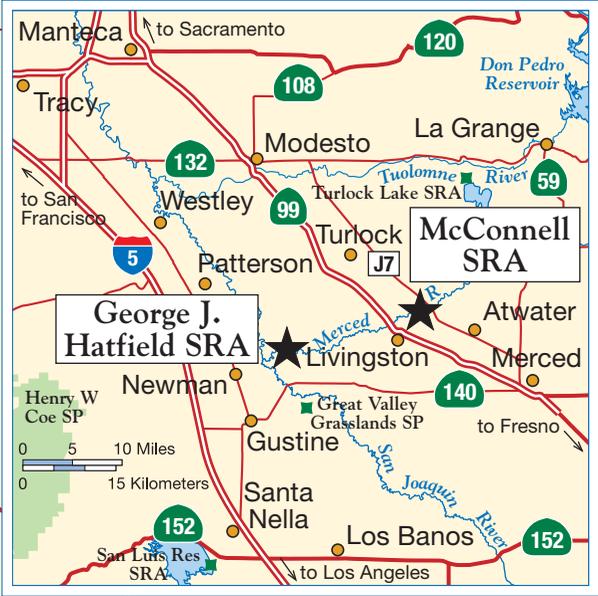




**Legend**

-  Freeway
-  Major Road
-  Road
-  Unpaved Road
-  Trail
-  Campground
-  Group Campground
-  Picnic Area
-  Campfire Center
-  Telephone
-  Restrooms
-  Shower
-  Accessible Feature
-  Parking

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact: Four Rivers Natural History Association 31426 Gonzaga Road, Gustine, CA 95322-9737 • (209) 826-1197



**PLEASE NOTE**

When boating or rafting on the Merced River:

- Tell family or friends where and when your river trip is to take place, including start and finish points.
- Currents in low flow periods are very slow. An hour of padding may result in only 1 to 3 miles of travel, depending upon the water's depth and the extent of water hyacinth.
- Wear life jackets at all times.

**Floating Distances  
Between Points**

McConnell SRA to Merced River Park	2.5 miles 3.5 km
Merced River Park to Hagaman County Park	6.5 miles 10.4 km
Hagaman County Park to Hatfield SRA	9.0 miles 14.4 km
<b>McConnell SRA to Hatfield SRA</b>	<b>18.0 miles 28.3 km</b>

**McConnell  
State Recreation Area**

