

# Family Fun Outdoors

## Local Summer Fun

American River Raft Rentals:  
916.635.6400

River Rat Raft & Bike:  
916.966.6777

Sacramento Sportfishing Guides:  
916.487.3392

W.E.T. River Trips:  
888.723.8938



Kimberly Horg-Webb

It's that time of the year again: the sun is out, the kids are home for the summer, and everyone is looking for something fun to do. If the family is burnt out on video games or television and wants to get outdoors to become one with nature (count your lucky stars), you don't have to waste money on gas traveling—Sacramento has countless family-friendly activities close to home.

Sacramento-area rivers offer not only their pristine beauty to those passing by but also give locals and visitors the

chance to cool off when temperatures rise. Whether it is rafting, kayaking, fishing or biking, the river is the perfect place to spend time with loved ones.

"I think that rafting and biking are great family outdoor activities due to the fact that it's very relaxing to get away from the everyday hustle and bustle. It helps take away stress and you can see what untouched beauty the American River holds," says American River Raft Rentals Manager Kirk Granthem.

Granthem believes it's important for families to do any outdoor activities due to the fact that they promote fitness and wildlife awareness, they teach younger children the importance of preserving nature, and they bring families closer together.

For 11 years, Granthem has been the manager of American River Raft Rentals and in that time he has seen his share of sunburns. He tells all his customers to bring sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, snacks and beverages (no glass containers), small ice chest(s), shoes or sandals and anything else people may think of that would make your trip more comfortable. The only things people can't bring are pets.

Children are allowed to ride the rafts, but the recommended age is 5 years old and at least 40 pounds. American River Raft is open May through September, weather permitting. Reservations are recommended; not only does it ensure that you get a raft (and the size that you want), it lets River Raft know if it's going to be busy or slow, how many busses it needs to put out and how many people to expect.

Sacramento Sportfishing Guides is another fun way to enjoy the outdoors. Captain Jack Findleton takes adventurers on a seven-hour fishing trip in Rio Vista aboard his vessel. He brings with him 27 years of experience giving guided fishing tours. The boat is fully equipped with shaded areas, fishing rod and reel, bait, tackle and a restroom. Guests just need to bring food and nonalcoholic beverages and their fishing licenses.

He travels to Alaska during the summer, so the guides are available in spring (during March and April) or in the fall (during September, October or November). He gives private guides so you have the boat and Findleton all to yourself for the day. The minimum is two people and the maximum is four so reservations are required. Saturdays are the busiest days for him so he recommends going during the week if you need to book on a shorter notice.

"I create memories," Findleton says. "A lot of people remember the biggest fish they caught when they were young with their

dad. This also gets you out of home, away from the television and video games (and hopefully the cell phone, too). It teaches lessons in life and the environment."

He says he usually sees older kids with their parents, but all ages are welcome. The cost is \$150 per person for children and adults.

River Rat Raft & Bike Rentals has been providing American River raft and bike rentals to families for over 30 years. American River raft and kayak rentals are available April through October and whitewater rafting rentals are available year-round, as well as mountain bike rentals. The bike shop is open Tuesday through Sunday. Children who are at least 5 years old and know how to swim are allowed on the rafts. There are no pets allowed, and pricing varies depending on the size of the raft.

W.E.T. River Trips take place within a one- to three-hour distance of the meeting place. Beginning, intermediate and advanced rafters and paddlers are welcome. Rafting trips are available throughout the year, but group rafting trips are the most popular during summer months. Packages include one- or two-day trips, wilderness rafting, rafting with lodging, camp rafting trips and youth groups. Early reservations are advised during June, July and August.

If families are tight on cash and want to cool off, there are public pools available that are open to through Sept. 1. The Fruitridge Aquatics Center, located at 4000 Fruitridge Rd., or the Rutter Swim Center, located at 7350 Palmer House Dr., in Sacramento, have family swim nights: June 20 at the Fruitridge Aquatic Center and Aug. 1 at Rutter Swim Center. The family swim nights include swimming and all-you-can-eat ice cream sundaes. It is from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. and costs \$4.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children.

"No matter what you plan on doing this summer, make sure that some of it is outdoors. Also if you do go boating this summer please wear the proper safety equipment, drink lots of water and make life an adventure," Granthem says.