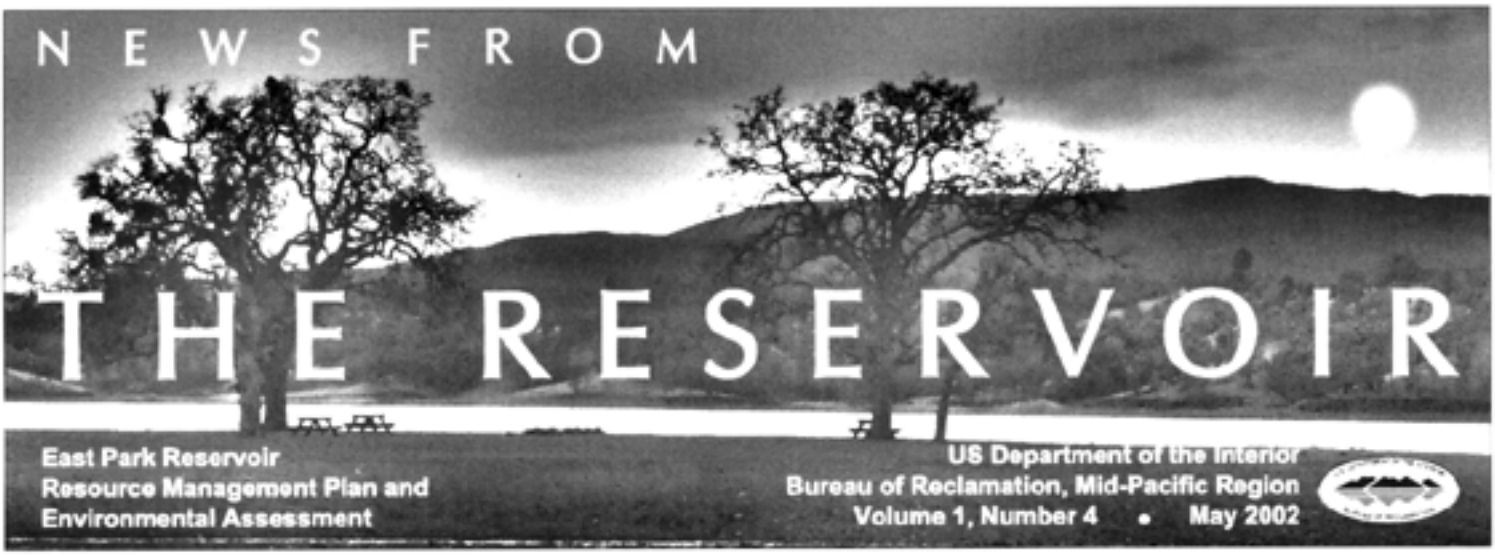

THE CORPS GIVES PRESENTATION ON BLACK BUTTE LAKE MANAGEMENT

Last month, the RMP work group heard Brad Long, Senior Park Ranger with the US Army Corps of Engineers at Black Butte Lake, discuss the history of management at Black Butte Lake. His presentation provided the basis for a discussion comparing management issues at Black Butte Lake with those at East Park Reservoir. Attendees benefited by hearing about lessons the Corps has learned at Black Butte, a lake with resource management issues similar to those of East Park.

Known as the "Backyard Lake for Orland," Black Butte Lake is on Stony Creek, eight miles west of Orland and is part of the three-lake district that includes East Park and Stony Gorge reservoirs. Black Butte Lake was formed in 1963 upon completion of Black Butte Dam. It can hold 144,000 acre-feet of water, with a surface area of 4,460 acres when full. The original purpose of the lake was to provide flood control and irrigation water storage, but today the lake is multipurpose, providing flood damage reduction, irrigation water, hydroelectric power, and recreational opportunities.

Black Butte Dam provides flood damage reduction for Orland, Hamilton City, and 64,000 acres of nearby agricultural land. Water from flood flows on Stony Creek is stored behind the dam during periods of high runoff and later is released. The Orland Water Users Association uses the stored water of the lake for irrigation.

***TRIO OF LAKES.** Area nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts have a choice of destinations. The management issues at Black Butte Lake near Orland have many similarities to those of East Park Reservoir.*

Project authorization for Black Butte Lake did not include recreation, unless there was a managing partner. The Corps turned over lake management to Glen County for fifteen years, during which time the county paid for several upgrades of recreation facilities. Since then, the Corps has investigated options for providing funds to maintain recreation facilities at Black Butte. Mr. Long explained that, like the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps also operates under operations and maintenance, rather than recreation; the terms of managing recreation were interpreted differently at the Corps' management level and includes provisions for maintaining existing recreational facilities. No new recreation facilities can be constructed without a managing partner.

Today, Black Butte Lake is a popular recreation attraction, providing opportunities for camping, boating, and fishing.

The Corps maintains campsites at two campgrounds-the Buckhorn and Orland Buttes, which are at opposite ends of the lake. Both provide telephone service, drinking water, picnic tables, firepits, launch ramps, trailer dump stations, and restroom facilities with showers. Many campsites can accommodate recreational vehicles up to 35 feet in length, but no electrical hookups are available. The Buckhorn Campground contains 92 campsites and is open year round; Orland Buttes Campground has 35 campsites and is open April through September. The campsites can be reserved free of charge to users.

(Continued on page 2)

The Corps Gives Presentation on Black Butte Lake Management (continued from page 1)

BLACK BUTTE LAKE is a popular recreation attraction, providing opportunities for camping, boating, and fishing.

Boating is also a popular activity at Black Butte Lake, which is equipped with three boat launch areas and a private marina that sells and rents fishing, boating, and camping supplies. There are boat ramps at Buckhorn, Orland Buttes, and Eagle Pass recreation areas. Black Butte hosts a warm water fishery, and the best fishing is during the spring and early summer. Crappie, largemouth and smallmouth bass, spotted bass, striped bass, channel catfish, Florida bluegill, and green sunfish are the major game fish. A 75-acre all-terrain vehicle area is open June through February on the north side of the lake, and a variety of hills and trails are available for exploration by all-terrain vehicle enthusiasts and motorcyclists alike.

Recreation facilities at Black Butte Lake are more developed than those at East Park Reservoir. However, during the early years at Black Butte Lake, the Corps experienced similar challenges to those that the Bureau of Reclamation faces at East Park Reservoir.

In the early 1980s the Corps prepared operational maintenance plans (similar to Reclamation's RMP) for Black Butte Lake, which contain the framework for managing the lake. The Corps was not required to go through the NEPA process at that time and prepared the OMPs in-house at the district office in Sacramento. Mr. Long explained that the Corps has had problems getting the public involved in managing the lake, perhaps because communication between visitors and managers at the lake are done informally via telephone or e-mail. Mr. Long explained that people call the Corps regularly to ask questions or give comments on the "backyard lake for Orland."

Managing Black Butte Lake required the Corps to consider water quality, water safety, and historic properties protection. As at East Park, Black Butte facilities also require maintenance, including repairing roads and upgrading restroom facilities. He explained that the Corps has had the benefit of time and money to deal with these management issues because it typically has fairly good funding for such projects.

Managers at Black Butte face visitor safety issues and have been successful in safety education programs among young children. The Corps also maintains agreements with Glen and Tehama counties' sheriff departments to patrol the facilities and pays a full salary for off-duty officers to patrol the area. The on-site presence of law enforcement officials is recognized as an important component of visitor safety at the lake. The Corps also provides both counties with funds for boat patrols.

Managers of Black Butte must address water quality issues associated with high arsenic and lead levels originating from natural sources. The Corps tests the lake's water quality twice a year, and yearly the state and the Corps test fish for toxins; currently there are no fish advisories at Black Butte Lake. Algal blooms are a problem in shallow, high temperature areas of the lake, and dogs have become sick from ingesting water containing the algae.

Black Butte Lake imposes user fees for overnight campsites ($14/night) and boat launching ($2/launch). The Corps also leases areas for use, such as private concession areas and the private marina at Black Butte Lake, through a bid process. Previously, collected fees would automatically go into the general fund and not necessarily back into the upkeep of recreation facilities. But recently, the Corps has agreed to allow a portion of the money to go into a pool for all Corps-managed recreation areas. Each year the pool goes toward improvements at one particular facility. Other facilities have instituted a recreation day use fee of $2, and Black Butte Lake managers will likely move toward a similar system.

Mr. Long concluded his discussion by commending the working group members for their efforts and stated that they were successful in achieving goals that had taken Black Butte managers years to resolve.

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Or visit: http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/cespk-co/lakes/blackbuttle.html.

The Minutes Corner

What follows is a synopsis of the East Park Reservoir work group meeting of April 25. Goals and objectives planning continues in the categories of East Park management and land use.

CATEGORY A: East Park Manangement

5. Management Measure or Opportunity: Fire Management

Goal 5-1: Maintain Adequate Agreements for Immediate Fire Protection.

- **Objective:** Continue mutual aid cooperation with the Indian Valley Fire Department (volunteer) and the US Forest Service. A mutual aid agreement is currently in place with these agencies, and the objective is to maintain this agreement.
- **Objective**: Continue appropriate long-term grazing agreements.
- **Objective**: Identify water sources for fire extermination in the long term.

6. Management Measure or Opportunity: Facilities and Roads

Goal 6-1: Provide Adequate Safe and Suitable Road Access to Designated Use Areas, While Protecting the Area's Resources

- **Objective:** Spread gravel and grade main roads yearly to maintain public access. Spread gravel and grade minor roads yearly, or as needed, to provide adequate access to designated use areas during the season most desired by the public. Prohibit access by eliminating those braided roads not necessary for access to established areas. Post signs at prohibited roads until they are revegetated or cabled off.
- **Objective:** Pave roads (as budget permits), particularly those that prevent access to the park and cause the most problems.
- **Objective:** Establish a carrying capacity for various areas of the park and tie it into the resources at the reservoir.
- **Objective:** Deter overcrowding and illegally entering the park by posting signs closer to towns (such as Maxwell) so visitors won't have to drive all the way to the reservoir only to be turned away.
- **Objective:** Deter illegal activities by including the nonemergency phone number for the sheriff's office on signs so that people can call if they see violations.
- **Objective:** Deter off-road vehicle use by installing road blocks.
- **Objective:** Deter illegal uses of the reservoir by maintaining high visibility of officers (staff availability permitting).
- **Objective:** Make loop campground road to allow emergency personnel and their vehicles easy access to the campgrounds (the draft Recreation Development Proposal includes proposed loop campgrounds).

Goal 6-2: Investigate the Opportunities to Obtain Managing Partners or Concessionaires to Provide Recreational Facilities and Improvements

- **Objective:** Contact county, state, and federal agencies and private organizations to assess their interest in becoming a managing partner, either solely or as part of a joint managing authority;
- **Objective:** With a managing partner, provide adequate picnic tables, boat ramps and docks, trails, and other recreational facilities in areas designated as campgrounds, as suggested in the Recreation Development Proposal.

7. Management Measure or Opportunity: Season of Use

Goals and objectives for 7 are expressed under Goal 6-1 and are summarized as follows:

- Paved roads
- Physical barriers;
- Safe and adequate turns;
- Signs with nonemergency phone numbers;
- Signs in Maxwell to alert the public that the lake is full or closed;
- Loop road;
- Carrying capacity; and
- High visibility of officers.

Additional Goals and Objectives for 7:

- **Objective:** Bring on personnel earlier to extend the season (there may be some planning on the part of personnel that could speed up the process);
- **Objective:** Limit access to areas supporting wildlife and natural resources (nesting birds, including a bald eagle, are affected during certain seasons);
- **Objective:** Limit access to Catholic Point during fawning period (if open to public access in the future); and
- **Objective:** If season were expanded (and no paved roads were constructed), impose vehicle size or weight limits.

CATEGORY B: Land Use

1. Management Measure or Opportunity: Sites Reservoir Future Impacts

Goal 1-1: Achieve Effective Implementation of the East Park RMP Through Appropriate Planning and Communication

- **Objective:** Assign a liaison between the Sites Project planning process and East Park RMP implementation process to keep current on applicable events that may affect the RMP. The liaison would be a voice to express concerns about potential access problems.

HOW TO CONTACT US

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East Park Reservoir Web page:
http://www.mp.usbr.gov/ncao/eastpark/index.html

Campground Update Hotline: (530) 968-5274

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EAST PARK RESERVOIR

Mark Your Calendar

Next work group meeting:
Wednesday May 29th
The Maxwell Inn, 6 to 8 p.m.