

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Summary of Public Meeting to Discuss Lake Berryessa Community Forum

Date: June 18, 2014

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Location: City of Winters Community Center

Update on Trails: Lake Berryessa Community Forum Coordinating Team Member representing Land-Based Recreation, Carol Kunze, provided a summary of trail conditions and upcoming trail maintenance at Lake Berryessa. Maintenance is needed on some trails, often little more than weed whacking on trails off of Steele Canyon Road and the Pope Canyon Trail, which is a 1.5 mile trail along the old Pope Canyon Road. Carol has asked Reclamation to assess several abandoned roadways that people use as trails to identify necessary maintenance. As well, Carol proposed that Reclamation explore creating loops along the Smittle Creek Trail by using existing paths that go from the trail to restrooms. The Smittle Creek Trail, and the new trail through Smittle Creek Day Use area are in good shape. There is a need for new trail maps. In the last month, the Berryessa Highlands Fire Wise Council established a firebreak along the “Hidden Trails” making it passable for hikers and addressing several erosion problems.

Status of Recreation Services: Park Manager Jeff Laird provided an update on current recreation services. All Reclamation-managed areas are open, and several concession areas including Markley Cove, Pleasure Cove, Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat, and Putah Canyon are operating with the same services as identified at previous Forum meetings.

Current concession improvement activities are underway at Spanish Flat, Steele Canyon and Putah Canyon. At all three areas, accessible spaces, including signage and car-stops will be installed at the vault toilets soon. As well, an access plan for the northern vault toilet at Spanish Flat is currently under review. At Spanish Flat, there is exploratory digging for the water distribution system, and once that is completed, digging will commence for the RV dump station. Potable water supply trenches and associated directional boring has been completed at Steele Canyon, and pipes and valves will be installed over the next two weeks in order to be operational by the 4th of July. At Steele Canyon, the holding tanks for the RV dump stations are in-ground, and the next activity at the RV dump station is to provide a non-potable water supply. At Putah Creek, the RV dump station holding tanks are in the ground, and work on the water distribution system will commence when the potable water well is drilled. A contract for that well will be awarded soon, and drilling is scheduled for August. On county roads near the lake, road directional signs have been installed, and signs for state highways 121 and 128 are awaiting an approved CalTrans permit.

Red and green channel marker buoys are being installed and Reclamation is looking for feedback on placement of buoys. Once the locations have been made permanent, Reclamation will number the buoys and create a map. Because of the current and possible future water levels due to the drought, and the potential impacts of those water levels on recreation, Reclamation is seeking data to confirm the bottom elevations of boat ramps at Steele Canyon, Putah Canyon, and Capell Cove. Current information indicates that at Steele Canyon and Capell Cove the ramp ends at 400 ft. above mean sea level, and the ramp at Putah Canyon ends at 370 ft. above mean sea level. Reclamation is looking for any additional information about the elevations of the boat launch ramps constructed by non-federal entities. Members of the Coordinating Team indicated that the Solano County Water Agency has bathymetric data about the lake bottom.

Recently the Spanish Flat Fire Station reestablished the Berryessa Pines firebreak as a training exercise for a bulldozer operator. As well, CalFire is conducting the third controlled burn on approximately June 26 on the northernmost 80 acre parcel of the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area.

Update on East Side Management Planning: Park Manager Jeff Laird advised the Forum that Reclamation has selected the Blue Ridge-Berryessa Partnership as a future managing partner for the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area. Reclamation is scheduling a meeting to start the process of developing a partnership agreement. The agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is still in effect, and the area office is coordinating with the Regional Director to make a decision to mutually end the current agreement with Fish and Wildlife.

Marketing Update: Reclamation and members of the Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce have met with the staff of Visit Napa Valley to find ways to promote recreational opportunities at Lake Berryessa. They have begun to update information about Lake Berryessa on their website. As well, Reclamation is posting events and activities on the Napa Valley Now calendar. Some members of the Coordinating Team have met with Reclamation to brainstorm other ways to promote recreation at Lake Berryessa, and a follow-up meeting is coming in the next week.

Future Meetings/Potential Topics: The next Lake Berryessa Community Forum meeting time and location is to be determined. Future topics will continue to include updates on the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area management agreement, improvement in concession areas, and long-term planning. Members of the Coordinating Team asked about the proposed legislation regarding change of management of Lake Berryessa, and Reclamation indicated that Reclamation has no opinion regarding draft legislation, and will operate under the laws and plans currently in effect.

Public comment:

Members of the public at the Forum raised several issues or questions. Several raised questions about the proposed legislation regarding change of management of Lake Berryessa, and Reclamation indicated the Reclamation has no opinion regarding draft legislation, and will have whatever role any final legislation would define regarding management of land or water at Lake Berryessa. As well, members of the public had concerns about the possibility of the Berryessa-Snow Mountain National Conservation Area, or National Monument proposal, and Reclamation reiterated that Reclamation has no opinion regarding draft legislation.

Member of the public also voiced support for the new navigational buoys. The old Boy Scout camp was mentioned, with concerns for reinstating it as a recreation facility. This area is currently under re-development as a new outdoor education center called "Camp Berryessa" by the Napa County Parks and Open Space District, in partnership with Reclamation.

Update on Long-Term Concession Area Development:

Drew Lessard and Peggi Brooks provided an update on long-term concession area development, including a summary overview of the proposed public services and facilities and the initial analysis of financial feasibility for each concession recreation area. Members of the public asked questions regarding why some recreation facilities had different financial assessments at different areas, and Reclamation indicated that there were differing infrastructure costs and other planning elements at each area that had to be factored into the costs to develop and operate different recreational facilities. Members of the public and members of the coordinating team were invited to visit stations around the meeting room to view conceptual plans for facilities and infrastructure proposed in each concession recreation area, and to review the draft reports on market assessment, conceptual site design and conceptual infrastructure design. The public was informed they can access these same documents on Reclamation's Lake Berryessa website at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/documentShow.cfm?Doc_ID=2745.

For questions, comments, or other issues regarding Lake Berryessa, contact Park Manager Jeff Laird, either by e-mail (JLaird@usbr.gov), mail (Lake Berryessa Office, Park Manager, 5520 Knoxville RD., Napa CA 94558) or by phone (707-966-2111, ext 0).

For additional information, please visit the Lake Berryessa website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/berryessa> and click on *“Recreation Updates”* in the light-blue navigation column on the left.