

Summary of Lake Berryessa Community Forum Meeting

Date: June 22, 2016

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Berryessa Senior Center

Welcoming Remarks

Mid-Pacific Deputy Regional Director Pablo Arroyave welcomed the members of the Coordinating Team. Since the March Forum meeting, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Estevan López has met with Napa County to discuss management options at Lake Berryessa, and Reclamation delayed the Forum until June in order to have representatives of both Napa County and Reclamation attend.

Membership on the Coordinating Team

Central California Area Office (CCAO) Area Manager Drew Lessard discussed current membership on the coordinating team. Several positions were up for new terms. Lonny Lopez, representing Water-based Recreation, has been selected for an additional term. Several positions remain vacant and will remain so until filled, including representatives for Local Ranchers, Land-based Recreation, Conservation Groups, and Gateway Communities. Nominees should be able to serve a two-year term, fairly represent an interest group, and be results oriented, collaborative and courteous. Please send nominations to Park Manager Margaret Bailey, 5520 Knoxville Road, Napa, CA 94558 or m Bailey@usbr.gov.

Margaret Bailey, Lake Berryessa Park Manager, and Molly Rattigan, Principal Management Analyst for Napa County, introduced themselves, and Facilitator Louis Moore presented the agenda.

Lake Berryessa Operations

Margaret Bailey discussed current operational activities at Lake Berryessa. The lake is approximately two feet higher than it was at the same point last year, which will favorably impact the access to the boat launch ramps. CAL FIRE conducted a 100-acre burn to portions of the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area on the east side of the lake as a combined training exercise, invasive plants treatment, and fuels reduction activity. Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) has secured a grant from the California Department of Boating and Waterways to fund ten interns to continue the invasive mussel prevention activities. SCWA is also pursuing a boat-washing station. Lake Berryessa has been involved in the national “Every Kid in a Park” initiative to bring 4th graders to national parks and recreation areas. Lake Berryessa has conducted water education programs and tree-planting programs as part of the Every Kid in a Park initiative. In coordination with Visit Napa Valley, Lake Berryessa hosted a media tour of the lake in April. Formerly vacant positions on the park staff have been filled, including an administrative assistant and heavy equipment operator. As well, five seasonal laborers, four of

whom are local, and six seasonal park rangers, three of whom are local, were brought on to help with summer operations. Memorial Day weekend was very busy, concession areas were filled, and Reclamation's day use areas and boat launch were well attended. The ninth floating restroom was put in place on the lake. Park staff is actively preparing for the Fourth of July.

Markley Cove Prospectus

Drew Lessard provided an update on the Markley Cove business opportunity. The prospectus for Markley Cove was posted May 13, 2016, and is to close on June 27. Once it closes, Reclamation will review the bids in a panel, with the objective to have selected an operator and negotiated and executed a long-term contract prior to the end of the year. Reclamation will have a press release to announce the selection.

Potential Managing Partner Agreement with Napa County

Drew Lessard identified that at the March Forum meeting Reclamation reviewed several different options for a path forward after the previous Lake Berryessa Prospectus received no responsive bids. Reclamation also held discussions with the bidders and with Napa County in order to identify a path forward. As part of those meetings, Napa County expressed interest in exploring the concept of a Managing Partner Agreement (MPA). Reclamation provided Napa County with sample agreements and copies of the relevant laws and policies. Reclamation and Napa County also met to discuss the areas under consideration.

Pablo Arroyave explained that Reclamation generally pursues two methods to manage lands. One is to directly manage concession operations. The other, and one that often is better, is to develop an MPA with other agencies that are better prepared to meet local needs. Reclamation has many MPAs, including with East Bay Regional Parks for Contra Loma Reservoir and California Parks and Recreation for Folsom Lake. MPAs may offer management flexibilities that are not available to Reclamation direct-managed recreation areas.

Molly Rattigan expressed that Napa County has reviewed several sample agreements and visited sites at Lake Berryessa as part of their due diligence investigation. Napa County has retained attorneys to assist with the planning. The Board of Supervisors has directed county staff to move to negotiations regarding developing an MPA and has put no initial restrictions on the scope of the agreement. Napa County and Reclamation hope to move quickly to identify the parameters of any agreement. Napa County does have some flexibilities and opportunities in the solicitation process that may help to find the right operators and developers for a business opportunity, including the use of brokers. Napa is not signing an agreement right now but is committed to developing a successful partnership. Napa is prepared to move into a negotiation phase and wants to continue to take costs, liabilities and revenues such as taxes into consideration.

Drew Lessard identified that the next step was to develop a team from Reclamation and Napa County to work out the key points of an MPA. Drew wanted to stress that there was not an agreement ready to be signed but that one must be developed through negotiations. The Coordinating Team asked if under an MPA Napa County could meet the concerns of potential bidders, including the opportunity to recapture investment over a long-enough term, ownership of improvements, and opportunities for off-season revenue such as annual occupancy. Drew

identified that there is the potential for more flexibility; however, the management under an MPA must still meet all federal, state and local laws as well as relevant polices.

Public Comment (*Q: indicates a question or comment, with the answer(s) following. Similar questions or comments have been combined.*)

Q: Does the County have resources and commitment to partner with Reclamation?

A: Molly Rattigan said that in MPA, “partner” is key word. Reclamation has demonstrated that partnership is key, and Reclamation has been very active in responding to Napa County’s needs and questions. Both agencies committed to moving forward. Pablo Arroyave added that Reclamation is ready to proceed to an MPA and is excited at flexibilities that an MPA can have. Molly Rattigan added that Napa County has concerns regarding costs and liability and will need to continue a detailed review and get in-depth answers to questions that may come up. Napa has committed to not enter a situation that would not work out.

Q: Can an MPA have longer terms such as 50 years and can it have the option for long-term use?

A: Drew Lessard stated that terms of 25 years are commonplace, longer terms, such as 50 years, may need further approvals. In regard to long-term use, the operations under an MPA must still meet federal laws. Pablo Arroyave added that the operations under an MPA must still meet the goals and standards of the 2006 Visitor Services Plan Record of Decision.

Q: What is the timeframe for an MPA?

A: Pablo Arroyave expressed Reclamation’s desire that major progress would happen prior to October and that a draft agreement could be developed by the fall in best case. Drew Lessard added that Reclamation has committed to meeting the public’s needs that we can under the current situation. Interim contracts could be extended up to 2 extra years to avoid any disruptions in visitor services while Reclamation and Napa County develop the MPA.

Q: Napa County Regional Parks & Open Space District has met with relevant Napa County staff and the County Board of Supervisors and is willing to be involved and ready put energy into this.

Q: Is a partnership 50-50, and how are roles defined?

A: Drew Lessard stated that the federal agency turns over management of lands and the local agency manages.

Q: When will there be progress to reduce fire hazards on government land near Berryessa Pines?

A: Geoff Bellyea, Assistant Chief, Pre-Fire Division, CAL FIRE, identified that CAL FIRE has annually managed some fire concerns and conducted defensible space inspections. The CAL FIRE battalion in the area has engaged homeowners as partners in defensible space projects. Reclamation has completed all of the environmental work, and CAL FIRE will have a bulldozer at Berryessa Pines soon to re-establish the fuel break. CAL FIRE has worked with Park Rangers on public education of the dangers of campfires. As well, CAL FIRE has worked with Napa County Sheriff Deputies to patrol lakeshore for illegal campfires. Napa County provides chipping service at no cost. CAL FIRE has maps of all hydrants and has water-trucks to ensure that sufficient fire flow is available.

Q: Where is the gas station that was proposed in the past?

A: Drew Lessard expressed that Reclamation understands the public's desire for fueling stations. It was identified as one of the requirements at Putah Canyon in the recent prospectus, but Reclamation received no bids for Putah Canyon. Reclamation is willing to discuss a fueling station as a business opportunity if someone makes a proposal. The tank that was formerly located at Putah Canyon did not meet current requirements and standards and was disposed of.

Q: How can people keep informed about the progress of the MPA?

A: Molly Rattigan said that the Napa County Board of Supervisors meets two Tuesdays a month and has a website with videos and agendas. Louis Moore mentioned that anyone can get on an e-mail list from Reclamation by signing in at the welcome table.

Q: The public has expressed that all seven of the concession areas should be open. Should Napa County take on all seven so they are operating under the same policies?

A: Molly Rattigan stated the Napa County Board of Supervisors gave county staff the clearance to negotiate on anything related to recreation management at Lake Berryessa. Napa County does not want to have so much competition that businesses fail. Napa may exert an option to start with one area and expand, or not, based on the market demand. Napa is committed to building opportunities and successes, not just opening places to fail. Napa wants to explore using brokers to help match the market and the opportunity to potential businesses. Pablo Arroyave noted that Reclamation still has a commitment to manage all lands but that how that is done is a matter of some flexibility. The two areas currently under contract may need to be analyzed to identify the possibility of transferring contracts if that is the direction that negotiations with Napa County lead. Drew said that Reclamation and Napa County would have to discuss the scope of an MPA, and that in the case of Markley Cove, potential bidders should submit a bid.

Q: Is the County working with Visit Napa Valley to understand market and demand, especially in regard to "glamping" proposals that people have heard about?

A: Molly Rattigan answered that Napa County staff has been communicating with Visit Napa Valley. There are opportunities to Napa's flexibilities within the scope of the Visitor Services Plan Record of Decision. There are varieties of "glamping" that range from upgraded campgrounds to high-end tents and cabins.

Q: What is Napa County Board of Supervisors' role?

A: Molly Rattigan mentioned that any agreement with Reclamation is made with the Board of Supervisors but that daily management would be delegated to Napa County staff. When an MPA is proposed or any decision needs to be made, the Board of Supervisors would make decisions for Napa. Daily operations could be conducted by a contractor, Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District, or Napa County staff.

Q: Are there plans for a committee or a public sounding board?

A: Molly Rattigan stated that had not been discussed yet. As the negotiations proceed, the idea may be discussed. As well, Lake Berryessa Community Forums will provide opportunities to inform the public and get input.

Closing Remarks:

Pablo Arroyave thanked the public in attendance and the Coordinating Team for their patience and willingness to provide feedback. The next Forum meeting will likely be in October, including a progress report on development of an MPA.

Drew Lessard stressed that summer is the primary season for recreation, so Reclamation will delay the next meeting to the fall. Reclamation hopes to use the Forum as a venue for public feedback and comment; however, negotiations for an MPA will likely proceed under a non-disclosure agreement. Reclamation is expecting to have an award for Markley Cove or to be close to it in by the next meeting.

For questions or comments regarding Lake Berryessa, contact Park Manager Margaret Bailey, either by email (mbailey@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/cca0/berryessa> and click on “Recreation Updates” in the light-blue navigation column on the left.