LAKE BERRYESSA

VISITOR SERVICES PLAN (VSP)

Since the late 1960's, Reclamation has had contracts with seven private concessionaires to manage recreation programs and facilities at Lake Berryessa. The contracts expire in 2008 and 2009. As specified by Public Law 96-375 and Reclamation policy, the current concessionaires have no right of renewal. In June 2000, Reclamation began a plan for the types of facilities and services needed at this Federal property after the concession contracts expire. This plan, the VSP, is being developed with public input. A website was created and update letters have been sent to keep the public informed on the VSP.

Lake Berryessa can become an outstanding center for outdoor recreation and can provide a great opportunity for businesses that offer environmentally sensitive facilities and programs to a wide spectrum of the public. Based on decisions resulting from the VSP, Reclamation will develop new concession contracts to provide commercial visitor services supporting diverse recreational opportunities. As part of the VSP, a detailed environmental study was performed, and four Alternatives have been developed. The Alternatives feature a range of possible new facilities and programs to include lodging, restaurants, campgrounds, boat-in campsites, upgraded marinas, houseboat rentals, RV parks, trails, stores, etc. Future concessions will remain within the existing concession area 'footprint.' A brief summary of the four Alternatives follows:

ALTERNATIVE A

Alternative A outlines what the situation would be at the lake if no action is taken to address expiring concession contracts or other Reclamation programs within the coverage of the 1992 Lake Berryessa Area Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A 'No Action Alternative' is a requirement in an EIS as a benchmark for the action alternatives, which would introduce some level of change. If chosen, Alternative A would be implemented when the contracts expire or prior to expiration if a concessionaire were to discontinue current operations.

Selection of this alternative would require Reclamation to plan for the closure of the existing resort facilities at contract expiration. Reclamation would then provide access and support by issuing new competitive concession contracts not directly tied to the VSP. The new contracts would use the existing contracts as a guideline. Alternative A does not meet many applicable codes, regulations, standards, and policies.

ALTERNATIVE B

In Alternative B, the focus at the lake would be the development of new facilities and programs to better serve the short-term visitor. This alternative would permanently remove all private exclusive-use trailer sites and provide increased and improved short-term use opportunities. Camping, RV sites, cabins, and other overnight accommodations, food and beverage outlets, retail sales (groceries, camping, boating, hiking supplies), houseboating, marinas, picnicking, etc. would be increased and improved. Another major area of attention would be the improvement of lakeshore access in and around the resort for day use activities, some of which would be free. Under Alternative B, Reclamation would have an expanded involvement in providing visitor facilities including a focus on the development of a major trail system around the lake. Water surface zoning would be implemented, including additional 5 mph areas and adding/expanding facilities and areas for non-motorized watercraft.

ALTERNATIVE C

Alternative C would reintroduce a minimal number of long-term, exclusive use sites. Under Alternative C, all existing trailers and infrastructure would be removed and required improvements would be made, with a limited number of trailers reintroduced in a more appropriate configuration. Trailers would not be permitted within 100 linear feet uphill of elevation 455 feet above mean sea level, resulting in the availability of all shoreline areas for use by the general public. New facilities for short-term visitors would be created and access to the lake for the general public would be improved. Alternative C retains some exclusive use but reduces the footprint of this use while increasing emphasis on short-term recreation. Exclusive use, even on a limited level, is counter to Reclamation's National concession policy.

ALTERNATIVE D

Reclamation would manage more of the services for the public, and the locations where traditional commercial services exist would be reduced. Water surface zoning would be implemented including additional 5 mph areas and expanded facilities/areas for non-motorized watercraft.
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

RECLAIMATION POLICY

Reclamation Policy LRD-002, dated March 2002, sets the policy for planning, development, management, and operation of concessions at Reclamation projects. The policy requires that Concessions Projects be governed by the following:

A. Concessions will provide quality recreation facilities and services accessible to persons with disabilities and appropriate to goods and services at reasonable rates.

B. Concessions will provide for the protection, conservation, and preservation of natural, historic, and cultural resources.

C. Concessions will be planned through a commercial services planning and public involvement process.

D. Concessions will provide for the opportunity for public participation in decision making.

E. Concessions will provide for the opportunity for public participation in decision making.

F. Concessions will provide for the opportunity for public participation in decision making.

G. Concessions will be operated in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

VSP CONTACTS

Public Relations/Team Leader, Steve Rodgers
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PUBLIC HEARINGS

On Saturday, November 22, 2003, Reclamation will hold an Open House at 9:00 a.m. at the Expedition Hall, Salinas Valley, California. The Open House will consist of informational displays staffed by VSP House staff and members. The purpose of the open house is to discuss the contents of the DES.

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LAKE BERRYESSA

VISITOR SERVICES PLANNING EFFORT

LAKE BERRYESSA

IMPACT STATEMENT (DES)

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Western Region

www.usbr.gov/mp/berryessa

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