

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Planning for the Future at the New Melones Lake Area

The Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an integrated Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the New Melones Lake Area. New Melones Lake is managed by the Central California Area Office, part of Reclamation’s Mid-Pacific Region.

The RMP/EIS will evaluate current and future resource conditions and analyze whether updated or new management actions are needed. These management actions include public health and safety, recreational and land use, traffic and transportation, cultural and archaeological resources, and sensitive species and habitats. All actions will be incorporated into a single document to guide the management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources at the lake.

Public Participation Milestones
Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register December 18, 2006
Public Scoping Period December 18, 2006, to February 16, 2007 Comment Period extended to March 19, 2007
Public Scoping Meetings January 29, 30, and 31, 2007
Scoping Summary Report available Spring 2007
Alternatives Workshops September 28 and 29, 2007
Revised Alternatives and Prepared Draft Chapters 1-3 November 2007-August 2008
Draft Alternatives Chapter 1-3 available for public review August 2008-September 2008
Public Workshops on Draft Chapters 1-3 September 4 and 5, 2008
Revise Chapters 1-3 and Prepare Draft RMP/EIS October 2008-December 2008
Draft RMP/EIS with Plan Alternatives available for Public review and comment Winter 2008-2009
Prepare Final RMP/EIS Spring 2009
30-day public review for Final RMP/EIS Summer 2009
Record of Decision and approved RMP/EIS Fall 2009
<i>Shading indicates steps complete. Subsequent project updates will be distributed throughout this planning process. Schedule is subject to change.</i>

Where are we in the RMP/EIS process?

During the winter 2006/2007, Reclamation solicited input from the public and cooperating agencies regarding the RMP/EIS through a formal scoping process. Workshops were held in the fall 2007, and additional public and cooperating agency input was collected. The suggestions and concerns Reclamation received were considered when developing the range of draft alternatives for the RMP/EIS. A visitor use survey and a Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WROS) inventory were completed and used in drafting chapters 1 through 3 of the RMP/EIS. Public meetings are scheduled on September 4 and 5, 2008, to give the public an opportunity to comment on the RMP/EIS draft chapters.

Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report

On September 28 and 29, 2007, two public Alternatives Development Workshops were held at the New Melones Lake Visitor Center; 51 people attended these meetings and 147 comments were submitted as of October 31, 2007. Most comments focused on recreation (31 percent), public safety (21 percent), and fees (9 percent). The alternatives development process involves creating a reasonable range of alternatives to address Reclamation’s stated Goals and Objectives and the Purpose and Need for the RMP/EIS. Reclamation used this input to further develop alternatives that will be incorporated and analyzed in the RMP/EIS.

Visitor Use Survey Results

During the 2007 recreation season (May through October), a survey was conducted to gather information about characteristics, attitudes, and perceptions of New Melones Lake users. The survey consisted of on-site and telephone surveys, and 982 people provided input. The survey was also designed to learn what other opportunities or facilities visitors would like to have at the lake.

The results showed that New Melones serves a variety of outdoor recreational users who think highly of the services and activities available; 12 percent of these visitors have visited New Melones Lake within the past 5 years, and the Glory Hole area was identified as the most frequently visited site during the past 12 months. Most visitors to the area participated in water-based activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, water skiing, and wake boarding. Camping, beach activities, bicycling/mountain biking, and wildlife viewing are also important to visitors. There was not a significant call for increased activity opportunities at New Melones Lake.

Final WROS Inventory and Management Alternatives Report

Reclamation recognizes that water recreation management is more than simply building a boat ramp, dock, parking area, and restrooms. Water recreation management involves a thorough understanding of the water resource and its capability, current and future visitors, the type of experiences sought, regional recreation demand and supply, resource management planning, economic and non-economic valuation, visitor capacity, and other dimensions.

Mark Your Calendars!

Draft Chapters 1-3 of the New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS will be released on August 18, 2008, for public review. Written comments on the Draft Chapters 1-3 should be received by close of business Wednesday, September 17, 2008, and should be sent to Ms. Brockman, Project Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630. Public workshops will be held to answer questions:

Thursday, September 4, 2008
Columbia College
Manzanita-ComEd Room
11600 Columbia College Drive
Sonora, CA 95370
6-9 p.m.



Friday, September 5, 2008
Calaveras County Fairground
Frogeteria Room
101 Frogtown Road
Angels Camp, CA 95222
1-4 p.m.

Contact Information

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U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Reclamation

Central California Area Office

New Melones RMP/EIS

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In order to manage water-based recreation areas for diverse recreational opportunities, Reclamation has adopted the WROS to delineate different classes of recreation. The WROS is used for the inventory, planning, and management of water bodies where recreation is an important public use and benefits the local communities. The six WROS classes include: (1) urban, (2) suburban, (3) rural developed, (4) rural natural, (5) semi-primitive, and (6) primitive, and each class is defined by particular activities, attributes, experiences, and benefits. Reclamation utilized the WROS to help inventory, classify, map, and describe the current recreation situation for New Melones Lake. The data gave Reclamation a set of considerations that will be useful in guiding future planning and management decisions.

Visit the project website to view the documents listed below: http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cca0/field_offices/new_melones/rmp.html

- Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report
- Visitor Use Survey Results
- Final WROS Inventory and Management Alternatives Report
- Resource Inventory Report.

Reclamation Mission Statement

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Water Information

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits.

