Lake Berryessa Recreation Area Developments

Scoping Report

Lake Berryessa Central Valley Project, California



January 2015



U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation

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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.

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Scoping Report

Lake Berryessa Central Valley Project, California

Prepared by:



North State Resources, Inc. 2020 L Street, Suite 340 Sacramento, California 95811

Chapter 1 Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has involved the public in decisions regarding development of the recreation areas (RAs) at Lake Berryessa since early 2013. The Lake Berryessa Community Forum has been the primary venue for engaging the public. In January 2014, Reclamation initiated an informal scoping period for the long-term development of the RAs. In November 2014, Reclamation initiated a formal scoping period specifically for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. "Scoping" refers to the process of soliciting input from the public and interested agencies on the nature and extent of issues and impacts to be addressed in the environmental documentation for the proposed action and the methods by which they will be evaluated. The scoping and public involvement processes have also been used to solicit input from the public and other agencies on the designs for development of the RAs. This report primarily discusses the NEPA scoping process and issues raised during the process by the public and interested agencies.

A public scoping open house was held on December 10, 2014, at the Winters Public Safety Facility, with the goals of introducing the public to the proposed action that would be evaluated in the NEPA document and allowing them the opportunity to provide input regarding the environmental review process. Information on the meeting was provided through news releases on Reclamation's website (See Appendix A). The public's input will assist with the formulation of the long-term development plans for the RAs and the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA).

Chapter 2 Project Background

Lake Berryessa is in the Coast Range in northeastern Napa County, approximately 60 miles northeast of San Francisco and 40 miles west of Sacramento. The lake has a storage capacity of approximately 1.6 million acrefeet and is one of the largest bodies of fresh water in California. The lake was created in the late 1950s by construction of Monticello Dam across Devil's Gate Canyon, which is at the southeastern edge of the lake. Reclamation manages seven RAs at the lake for the primary purpose of providing short-term recreational uses. Reclamation is preparing conceptual site plans and infrastructure design plans for five of the RAs and is preparing an EA to evaluate the environmental consequences of developing the RAs with a diversity of short-term use facilities and supporting infrastructure.

Chapter 3 Scoping Process

In early 2013, Reclamation established the Lake Berryessa Community Forum in accordance with the Visitor Services Plan/Future Recreation Use and Operation of Lake Berryessa Record of Decision (VSP ROD), which required Reclamation to establish and sponsor a forum of public agencies, with meetings open to the public, to promote communication and collaboration in implementing the VSP ROD and addressing issues of mutual concern. Since then, Reclamation has held several community forum meetings and solicited input from other agencies, stakeholders, and the general public to guide management of the lake and determine the appropriate levels and types of recreational developments that would benefit the public. Meeting topics have included general discussions about the forum, its purpose, the status of recreational developments at the lake, and updates on the environmental review process; selecting names for the RAs; identifying recreational needs and desires at the lake; and getting feedback on preliminary design plans for the RAs. On January 16, 2014, Reclamation held an open house to obtain public input on the conceptual design drawings for the five RAs. On November 19, 2014, Reclamation initiated a 30-day scoping period to solicit input on the scope of the EA. A scoping open house was also held on December 10, 2014. Additional forum meetings will continue to be held during 2015, and the public will have additional opportunities to provide input and comments on the EA and proposed development plans.

Chapter 4 Meeting Overview

The meeting held on December 10, 2014, was an open-house format with four information stations. Seventeen members of the public, other agencies, and stakeholders attended the meeting. The sign-in sheet for the meeting can be found in Appendix B. A representative of Reclamation greeted attendees at the entrance to the meeting room, oriented them, provided them with informational materials, and requested that they sign in. Participants were free to investigate each station at their leisure, discuss the plans with representatives, ask questions, and provide input.

The following representatives from Reclamation and North State Resources participated in the scoping meeting:

Reclamation

Jessica Andrieux Peggi Brooks Jeff Laird Jason Jordan Kyle Keer Janet Sierzputowski

North State Resources

Leslie Perry Andrew Minks

Large display boards with information about the environmental review process, maps of the RAs, draft development plans, and possible concerns were displayed at the stations. Project representatives were positioned near the stations to answer questions from meeting participants. Participants were encouraged to review the display boards and discuss the proposed action and NEPA process with the project representatives. Comment cards were available for participants to fill out during the meeting or mail to Reclamation by the end of the scoping comment period. The information stations addressed the following topics and included related display boards:

- The NEPA Process, Natural Resources Information and Current Management Plans
- Conceptual Site Plans and Conceptual (30 Percent Design Level) Infrastructure Designs
- Prospectus Information
- Comment Table

Chapter 5 Public Comments and Questions

During the public scoping open house participants expressed concern or had questions regarding the following issues:

- The cost of project implementation versus the benefits the completed project would provide
- Where funding for the development would come from
- Whether phased development has been considered
- Lodging facilities other than camping
- How drought would affect water levels and in turn recreation opportunities provided at the lake
- The development buffer in relation to the high water mark of Lake Berryessa

- Trail development and connectivity through the RAs
- Vacation properties
- Hazardous materials sites
- Boat/Hike in areas
- Costly areas to develop

One comment letter was received at the meeting, and one comment letter was received during the scoping period. Table 1 summarizes the comments received, and copies of the comment letters are included in Appendix C.

Table 1: Summary of Comments Received During Scoping

Commenter	Date of Letter	Key Issues Addressed	Summary of Comments
Bob Schneider	December 10, 2014	Trail connectivity	 Plans need to ensure connectivity with the future trail around Lake Berryessa.
Tuleyome	December 17, 2014	Recreational activities, trails, day use areas, water supply, facilities, protected beach access, campsite landscaping, boat slips and storage, and concession size.	 There is a discrepancy between the bubble diagrams and the bullet points listed on handouts, which is correct? Can concessions that are limited to campgrounds be commercially profitable at reasonable rates for the public? Prospective concessionaires should be asked how they intend to attract and serve the full market for the area. Alternate trail locations and restoration of old trails should be considered. Increase the number and size of day use areas. The RAs should not contain vault toilets. Running water should be provided at each RA to support full restrooms and showers. Provide for diverse recreational activities. Exclude undeveloped land and excessive lake areas from concessions. Provide more and larger protected beach access areas. Campsites should have a reasonable amount of space and be landscaped to provide privacy. Rental boat slips and boat storage facilities should not be so numerous as to damage the economic viability of the existing private boat storage businesses around the lake.

Chapter 6 Next Steps for Public Involvement

Reclamation will continue to provide opportunities for public involvement during the formulation of the development plans and the NEPA process.

- Additional forum meetings will continue to be held during 2015 to provide updates about activities at Lake Berryessa.
- Status updates will be provided by Reclamation and will be available on the Lake Berryessa website.
- The draft EA will be made available for public review and comment, likely during the spring 2015.



Public Notice





Mid-Pacific Region Sacramento, Calif.

MP-14-226

Media Contact: Erin Curtis, 916-978-5100, eccurtis@usbr.gov

For Release On: Nov. 19, 2014

Reclamation Announces 30-Day Scoping Period for Lake **Berryessa Long-Term Concession Development Plans** Public Scoping Open House to be Held Wednesday, Dec. 10, in Winters

NAPA, Calif. – The Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, invites the public to participate in a 30-day scoping period concerning proposed long-term concession development at Lake Berryessa, the reservoir for Reclamation's Solano Project. Public scoping will initiate the environmental review process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Reclamation is seeking the public's comments on draft conceptual plans for Lake Berryessa's five concession areas: Putah Canyon Recreation Area, Monticello Shores Recreation Area, Berryessa Point Recreation Area, Spanish Flat Recreation Area and Steele Canyon Recreation Area. The draft plans identify the services and facilities that are being proposed for development at the concession areas. The draft plans may be viewed at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa/updates/index.html.

Information gathered during this scoping period will assist Reclamation in defining the scope of an Environmental Assessment for future development of the concession areas. Reclamation has undertaken this planning process as part of the continued implementation of the 2006 Record of Decision for Future Recreation Use and Operations of Lake Berryessa, which may be viewed online at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/documentShow.cfm?Doc ID=2745. The process will culminate in the development and management of necessary and appropriate long-term recreation facilities and services at the five Lake Berryessa concession areas.

Reclamation will hold a Scoping Open House to present the public with draft conceptual site plans, infrastructure designs and a draft market assessment. Reclamation will also solicit input on topics to be addressed in the environmental review process, including potentially significant impacts and concerns regarding the proposed facilities and services. The public's input will assist with the environmental analysis of the infrastructure phase of construction and preparation of an appropriate NEPA document.

The Public Scoping Open House will be held:

Wednesday, Dec. 10: The public may drop by any time between 4-6 p.m. at the Winters Public Safety Facility (Training Room), 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694

Written suggestions or comments to be included in the scope of the environmental planning process must be received by close of business Wednesday, Dec. 17, and should be sent to Jessica Andrieux, Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom CA, 95630, or emailed to jandrieux@usbr.gov, or faxed to 916-989-7208. For additional information, please contact Andrieux at 916-989-7208 (TTY 800-877-8339).

To request special assistance to attend the Open House or to be added to the Lake Berryessa email or mailing lists, please contact Janet Sierzputowski, Public Affairs Office, at 916-978-5112 (TTY 800-877-8339) or jsierzputowski@usbr.gov. For additional information on Lake Berryessa, please visit the project website at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa/index.html.

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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. Visit our website at http://www.usbr.gov.



Sign-In Sheet

SIGN-IN SHEET

Lake Berryessa NEPA Scoping

Date Dec. 10, 2014 Time 4:00-6:00 p.m. Location Winters Public Safety Facility

(Please Print)

Name	Organization	E-mail Address - OR - Mailing Address
David Clarker	/	
MARy Horsex	Restor	mholder e churpavalley. Com
John Holner	Contempeter	y ve 4
An West	Self	Shullius at Lake @ Att. com
Tim Cayley	Solf	1051 8 lux Ridge Dr
Bob Schneider	Tuleyone	bschneider @ tuleyone.org
Jerry Rehnte	Senior Center/chamber	
Jant aguiar	/	
Vate Fair		
LARRY FINKEL	NERID	COOLNINER 1 & G MAIL. COM

SIGN-IN SHEET

Lake Berryessa NEPA Scoping

Date Dec. 10, 2014 Time 4:00-6:00 p.m. Location Winters Public Safety Facility

(Please Print)

		(Fredse Frint)
Name	Organization	E-mail Address - OR - Mailing Address
Choic Reynolds	PIRATES DE MAKING	Crayle Q Pirajes Den Regant. Com
Chang Launbe	17	(Clacombe 17 @msw.com
CRAIG MUDZON	Chanh	
Janet Laird		
(asol Kunze	Tuleyone	
Lonny lopez	monticello Striclub	
Bethan/Burrous X	BURROWS CAMP	



Public Comment Letters

RECLAMATION Managing Water in the West



NEPA Scoping Comment Form Lake Berryessa

Please mail your comments to Jessica Andrieux by COB Wednesday, December 17, 2014.

Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630 or e-mail them to jandrieux@usbr.gov, or fax them to 916-989-7208.

For questions, please contact Jessica at 916-989-7192.

(Please print clearly) Name Bob Schwider Organization and Address Toloyome, 607 North St. Woodland CA 95695-Phone (530) 304-6215 FAX () E-mail b Schneider etule young.org Dec 10 2014 All of the reset plans needs to provide a trail al to ensure connection with a future trail overal take &

Tuleyome Comments on the Preliminary Draft Site Diagrams for Five Recreation Area Concessions

Tuleyome has reviewed the preliminary draft site diagrams for five of the Lake Berryessa recreation area concessions. Our comments below should be read in conjunction with the additional comments made on each of the attached concession diagrams.

As a general overview the Lake Berryessa Recreation Area should provide:

- 1. Day use,
- 2. A weekend getaway,
- 3. A vacation destination,
- 4. Overnight accommodation and meals for those enjoying the other 60,000 acres of public land in the area, and
- 5. One or more small conference centers (especially for the winter).

Lake Berryessa and The Outdoor Recreation Economy

It is important to understand the regional economic context for Lake Berryessa. The Outdoor Industry Association has provided an economic report on 10 different categories of outdoor recreation use including bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, motor cycling, off-roading, snow sports, trail sports, water sports and wildlife viewing. Nine of those categories of recreation (we don't have snow) are available at the lake or in the region.

The outdoor recreation economy is responsible for \$646 billion in spending and 6.1 million jobs. The highest level of trip related sales is attributable to those engaged in camping (\$125 billion), followed by bicycling (\$70 billion), trail sports (\$68 billion) and water sports (includes kayaking) (\$67 billion). All four activities are or will be available at the Lake. Additional information can be found in the report available at

http://www.outdoorindustry.org/research/economicimpact.php?action=detail&research_id=167.

The California outdoor recreation economy is responsible for \$85.4 billion in spending and 732 thousand jobs. Additional information on this can be found at http://www.outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/economy.html.

The primary market for Lake Berryessa is the San Francisco Bay Area with a population of over 7 million people. An additional million people reside in the Sacramento region.

Equally relevant to the economic future of Lake Berryessa are the economic reports by the Army Corps of Engineers on their 422 recreation lakes. The 2012 report for Rend Lake (attached) is particularly relevant as it is similar in size to Lake Berryessa. Of particular note in that report is the 2.8 million visits, the \$79 million in spending attributable to visitors to the lake in the surrounding 30 mile area, the 741 direct jobs, and the fact that boaters make up only one third of the users. Perusing reports on other Army Corps lakes indicates that these numbers are not unusual. We also attach a copy of the 2010 report for Lake Sonoma, which is close but much smaller.

What this information tells us is that the economic potential for Lake Berryessa should be substantial and that two thirds of the users may come for reasons other than boating. In short, it will be critical to ensure that the recreational opportunities are more diverse than they have been in the past.

In the context of the economic importance of trail sports, and the fact that a majority of lake visitors may come for reasons other than boating, it is clear that development of the Lake Berryessa Trail represents a recreational facility that could be very important to the success of the concessions and the lake economy. With this in mind, we would like to discuss the future of trail development beyond the North End Trail.

Our specific comments on the concession proposals are below.

1. <u>New Proposals</u>. The proposal for concession areas is a dramatic change from the plans in the former Request for Proposals. It seems there are two full resorts (Steele Canyon and Putah Canyon) with tent and RV camping, yurts, cabins, park models, boat launching, marina, retail and a restaurant, two primitive campgrounds (Monticello Shores and Berryessa Point) and one hybrid (mostly camping, some cabins, boat launch, no marina, retail store, no restaurant).

There is a discrepancy between the bubble diagrams and the bullet points listed on handouts for the concession areas. In particular, the diagrams for Monticello Shores and Berryessa Point indicate there will be only vault toilets (see <u>Restrooms</u> below) and no launch ramps. The bulleted lists state otherwise. Which is correct?

Can concessions that are limited to campgrounds be commercially profitable at reasonable rates for the public, or is the intention to seek another government agency to operate these sites? We firmly believe that seven profit centers are too many, and we would therefore welcome public campgrounds at the Lake. We note that many Army Corps lakes that have conferred substantial economic benefits on the local region have extensive public campgrounds

and a more limited number of concession areas. This is the model Lake Berryessa should follow.

2. <u>Diversity</u>. Diverse recreational activities, including both land and water-based, and motorized and non-motorized recreation, will be important to expand both the season and the market for Lake Berryessa, and is a critical factor in its economic success.

Previous history at Lake Berryessa indicates that specific requirements to ensure this diversity must be spelled out in the concession contracts. For instance, in addition to motor boats, the concessions need to provide <u>an appropriate number</u> of canoes, kayaks, sailboats, paddle boards, paddle boats, and mountain bikes for rent. Retail stores should include books and equipment needed to learn about and enjoy the natural environment, including wildlife, birds, wildflowers, geology, etc.

Prospective concessionaires should be asked how they intend to attract and serve the full market for the area including mountain bikers, hikers, trail runners, sailboaters, equestrians, birders, wildlife watchers, wildflower enthusiasts, anglers, swimmers, motor boaters, water skiers, kayakers, etc. In addition, they should be asked how they will market the lake to these groups *year round*, and what conferences they will try to attract.

- 3. <u>Trails in the concessions</u>. Overnight and vacation visitors should be encouraged to walk within the concession areas. This can best be encouraged by providing them with trails that lead from the beach/protected lake access areas, to cafés, picnic areas, cabins and campsites. These trails would provide a very different, more natural experience than having to share the concession roads with automobiles and effectively represent an additional form of recreation. Both the trails and the obligation for maintenance need to be included in the concession contracts.
- 4. <u>Day use areas within the concessions</u>. Are the concession areas to provide recreational day use access to the <u>general public</u> or simply to customers using their overnight accommodations and boat launch? If the former, the day use areas (picnic tables, shade shelters, beach areas, protected lake access, trails and other day use recreational amenities) should take up a much greater portion of the concession area, so that day use access is commensurate with the fees charged.
- 5. <u>Restrooms and water</u>. The quality and cleanliness of a restroom can play a significant part in the public's overall opinion of a campground or park. Vault toilets can be to put it mildly overly aromatic. They are not favored by the public and they will negatively impact the public's attitudes toward the Lake's campgrounds, particularly those hoping for a lengthy stay. In remote areas pit toilets may be the only option, but that should not be the case at Lake Berryessa.

And we strongly oppose the development of campgrounds without running water and showers. The best way to avoid having the lake return to the alcohol-abuse and illegal or unsafe activities of the past is to attract families to the area. This will be a difficult task without showers and running water.

All of the former concessions had water systems, and full restrooms and showers. Providing only vault toilets and no running water is a dramatic and unwarranted decrease in the service provided. We strongly recommend investigating the possibility of including the west shore resorts in the Spanish Flat Water District. Otherwise, full water systems should be reinstalled.

6. Exclude undeveloped land and excessive lake areas from concessions. Historically, unused land within a concession area has not been maintained, and it becomes weedy landscapes taken over by invasive species with deteriorating trails. When these areas are fenced but unused, they block public access to the lake. In addition, long stretches of lakeshore with no concession facilities may impose the financial burden on the operator of building an expensive link to the Lake Berryessa Trail, especially if bridges are required.

With respect to water surface, we are at a loss to understand the extent to which some of the concession boundaries extend into the lake (see concession area maps from the last RFP). In the case of the Putah Canyon Recreation Area, the concession area appears to extend almost a mile and a half into the lake. Areas in the lake which will be included within a concession should encompass only the water surface needed for marinas, protected lake access, and other approved uses.

7. Protected lake access

We strongly support the requirement <u>in all concessions</u> for areas to enjoy beach activities and safe access to the water marked off with rope bouys. However, as the purpose of these areas is in fact to allow protected access to the water, we suggest these areas simply be called "Protected Lake Access" instead of "Boat Exclusion Zone".

In general, the proposed beaches and "protected lake access" should be much larger. It should be confirmed that the areas selected actually provide suitable access with a firm and sloping, as opposed to a flat and muddy, lake bed. In addition, some flexibility is needed to adjust the area as necessary to the differing lake levels.

8. <u>Landscaping and siting for campsites</u>. Campsites should have a reasonable amount of space, with landscaping to provide some privacy and to demarcate the site, and a grass/turf to reduce erosion, rather than a dirt surface. This needs to be a requirement included in the contract. Reclamation might put some thought into fast growing plants, and perhaps trees, that would be appropriate, and grasses for the surface.

The need for landscaping might be partially met by using some of the former trailer sites as campsites, rather than clustering campsites within a smaller area. By carefully selecting which sites to use, this could provide roomier sites as well as added privacy.

9. <u>Boat slips.</u> Rental boat slips and boat storage facilities should not be so numerous as to damage the economic viability of the existing private boat storage businesses around the lake. Nor should they be so numerous that the concessionaire does not feel the financial need to attract members of the public to their location, during all seasons.





























