

## California Department of Water Resources NEWS

---

**May 1, 1997**

### CONTACTS:

- [Rolland Williams Sr., Chief, Oroville Field Division](#) -- [w] (916) 534-2323
  - [Pete Weisser, Information Officer](#) -- [w] (916) 653-9712
- 

## **Aquatic Center and Dam Open House Events Are Scheduled May 9-10 at Lake Oroville**

OROVILLE---Oroville community leaders and State officials are inviting the public to attend special events on May 9 and 10, drawing attention to outdoor recreation opportunities at Lake Oroville.

A recently completed aquatic center is scheduled to open on Friday, May 9, at North Thermalito Forebay, a portion of the Lake Oroville water storage and recreational complex, about 70 miles north of Sacramento.

### **Oroville Dam Open House on May 10**

On Saturday, May 10, as part of Oroville's annual celebration of Feather Fiesta Days, an open house will be held at Oroville Dam.

### **Aquatic Center Opening On May 9**

On May 9, starting at 10 a.m., Oroville area officials and dignitaries and State water officials will hold grand opening ceremonies for the new \$100,000 center, dedicated to improved sailing recreation at the forebay. Participation is expected from members of the Butte Sailing Club and the Lake Oroville Bike Organization (LOBO).

To reach the aquatic center, take Highway 70 to Oroville, exit at Garden Drive, proceed west to the park entrance kiosk. Once inside the park, turn left and follow the road to the end.

A private vendor will be onsite from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. selling food and drink.

Ground was broken for the center in July 1996. Funded by the Department of Water Resources as part of a concerted effort in recent years to upgrade recreational facilities at Lake Oroville, it will be used in part as a teaching center.

California State University at Chico and the Butte Sailing Club will operate the center under an agreement with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Oroville City Councilman Mike Morgan, who is vice-chair of the Oroville Recreation Advisory Committee (ORAC), and Bob Horne, representing a group called Citizens for Fair and Equitable Recreational Use of Lake Oroville, are among key planners for the event, along with Terry Erlewine, a staff engineer with the State Water Contractors, Rolland Williams, Sr., Chief of DWR's Oroville Field Division, and Steve Feazel of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

## **Oroville Dam Open House**

On Saturday, May 10, the Department of Water Resources will host an open house at Oroville Dam. Free tours to the Edward Hyatt Powerplant in the bedrock under the dam will be featured between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

The tours will begin in the Oroville Dam Area Control Center where tour staff will use small scale models to familiarize visitors with powerplant operations.

From the control center, a one-quarter mile walk takes visitors down an access tunnel into the underground powerhouse. The powerhouse was built in a manmade cavern the length of two football fields and located 600 feet below Lake Oroville.

With a tour brochure to identify powerplant features, directional arrows and a large staff of tour personnel to answer questions, visitors can tour three levels of the powerhouse.

To reach the Hyatt Powerplant, take Oroville Dam Boulevard east from Oroville about six miles. Powerplant tour signs will identify the powerplant entrance. An alternative is to park in downtown Oroville and take the "Dam Tour Shuttle" (sponsored by Hobbie Chevrolet and Pahl-Goodhue Ford) leaving from Montgomery and Myers streets in downtown Oroville.

For those with limited mobility, transportation will be provided into and out of the powerplant.

For further information on the powerplant tours, contact John Ford at 916-534-2303.

Lake Oroville is the reservoir created by Oroville Dam, key facility in the State Water Project. Completed in 1967 and rising to 770 feet at its crest, Oroville Dam is the tallest earthfill dam in the United States.

Lake Oroville has a gross storage capacity in excess of 3.5 million acre-feet, 167 miles of shoreline and a surface area greater than 15,800 acres. Among California reservoirs, only Lake Shasta is bigger.

## **Lake Oroville Recreation**

Recreation opportunities available at Lake Oroville include camping, fishing, boating, horseback riding and bicycling.

In recent years, the Department of Fish and Game has planted more than 1 million fish in Lake Oroville. At Lake Oroville, anglers can fish for chinook salmon, trout, bass, catfish, bluegill and crappie. Houseboats and floating campsites are available for those wishing to spend a lot of time on the water.

In recent years, substantial improvements have been made to Lake Oroville recreation facilities. Last summer, a \$1.5 million improvement was made to the boat ramp and parking lot at the lake's Lime Saddle Recreation Area. A horse camping facility has been built at Loafer Creek to provide easier access to the lake's equestrian riding trails.

A 41-mile mountain bike trail now circles the North and South Thermalito Forebays, Thermalito Afterbay and crosses the crest of Oroville Dam. The trail offers a variety of riding challenges and a panoramic view of the lake and the upper Sacramento Valley from the dam crest.

DWR proposed many of these improvements in Oroville's recreation attractions in response to an order by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. FERC grants the license that allows DWR to operate the power-generation facilities at Oroville. (When the original license was granted in 1957, a recreation plan was not required. But when FERC amended its regulations in 1965, recreation was written into the license approval process.)

The Oroville Recreation Advisory Committee (ORAC) was formed in 1994 to review and comment on the planning and construction of facilities outlined in the amended recreation plan for Lake Oroville. ORAC provides public input from the Oroville community into recreation planning and improvements at the lake.

## **Visitors Center at Oroville Lake**

DWR and the Department of Parks and Recreation jointly operate the Kelly Ridge Visitor Center which overlooks the lake. The center is located at 917 Kelly Ridge Road. The phone number is (916) 538-2219. The visitors center offers exhibits about the dam's construction and the Oroville area's Native American heritage. A 46-foot-tall viewing tower offers visitors a sweeping view of the lake.

The visitors center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For information on the visitors center, call John

Ford of DWR at (916) 534-2306.

For further information on recreation at the Lake Oroville Recreation Area, call Steve Feazel of DPR at (916) 538-2200.

###

*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.*

---

For more on-line information, see [Find DWR Info](#) or return to the [DWR California Water Page](#)