

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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Officials Evaluate Boat Salvage at Lake Oroville

LAKE OROVILLE - Officials today (January 24) are working to salvage a 42-foot boat owned by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) that sank Friday afternoon in Lake Oroville, the reservoir behind Oroville Dam.

A robotic observation vehicle was scheduled to take photos of the submerged boat today. The pictures will help officials in their efforts to develop a plan to salvage the craft.

The boat, which has been used since the 1960's to access reservoir facilities and remove floating debris, had been moored to a floating barge before it sank. No one was on board the craft and there were no injuries.

Responders deployed booms at the site to contain any leakage of diesel fuel from the boat. The boat's fuel tanks, containing about 120 gallons of diesel fuel at the time of the sinking, are believed to be intact.

Though no pollution problems are expected, DWR is monitoring the lake's water quality.

Lt. Terry Hodges of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) headed the initial response team on Friday. Jess Whitt, DWR Operations Superintendent at Oroville Dam, is the incident commander. Emergency responders to the incident included personnel from DFG, DWR, and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Rolland Williams, Sr., Chief of DWR's Oroville Field Division, said the cause of the sinking is now known.

With a maximum capacity of 3.5 million acre-feet, Lake Oroville is second in size only to Lake Shasta among California's reservoirs. (Lake Shasta has a maximum capacity of slightly more than 4.5 million acre-feet.)

Lake Oroville's current storage is slightly over 2.6 million acre-feet, about 75 percent of its full capacity. The reservoir is a key storage facility for the State Water Project.

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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](#)