

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

January 29, 1998

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DWR Boat is Recovered Safely From Lake Oroville

LAKE OROVILLE---Officials today announced that a 42-foot boat that sank in Lake Oroville, the reservoir behind Oroville Dam, has been safely recovered.

The boat was raised from a depth of 219 feet on Tuesday. It has been removed from the lake to an adjacent service area to be inspected.

Initial inspection shows that the boat is in good shape. The fuel tanks remained intact, with no fuel spillage. Officials expect that, with some mechanical and electrical work, the boat will be restored to operational capacity.

The boat is owned by the California Department of Water Resources, which operates Oroville Dam. Since the 1960s, the boat has been used to access reservoir facilities and remove floating debris from the lake, and for other maintenance work.

By further examination of the boat, officials hope to learn the cause of the sinking, which occurred Friday afternoon, January 23.

The steel-hulled boat was brought intact to the surface yesterday by crane, secured to a barge and lifted from the lake. The craft was placed on a trailer and then towed to a service area.

HazMat personnel successfully contained and mitigated a minor petroleum film, possibly from bilge water, which was visible in the approximate location of the submerged vessel. Water quality monitoring is underway, though no pollution problem is anticipated.

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 facility for the State Water Project, providing water storage, flood control and recreational benefits.

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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.

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