

California Department of Water Resources

News for Immediate Release

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LAKE OROVILLE OFFERS MANY CHOICES FOR LATE SUMMER, FALL RECREATION

Oroville - As summer heat fades into cooler fall weather, Lake Oroville offers a rich menu of recreational choices for campers, boaters, anglers, riders, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Cool nights and moderate daytime temperatures make late summer and early fall an ideal season at Oroville.

Lake Recreation

The second-largest reservoir in California, Lake Oroville offers excellent boating and fishing. With 167 miles of shoreline, Oroville is surpassed in size only by Shasta Lake among reservoirs in California. It's easily accessible via State Highways 70 and 99, about an hour's drive north of Sacramento.

Oroville Dam is the nation's tallest, with a commanding view of the valley, the Sutter Buttes, and nearby Table Mountain.

As school resumes, more diverse campground choices become available in the Oroville State Recreation Area, administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Major campsites include the 51-site Lime Saddle Campground, opened in July 2001, Loafer Creek Campground with more than 130 individual camp sites and 6 group sites, the 74-camp site Bidwell Canyon Campground, and several floating campsites.

Special Events

Special events looming on Oroville's fall calendar include the community's annual Salmon Festival on September 28, two major bass angling tournaments---the U.S. Angler's Choice Regional Tournament of Champions on October 18-19, a Celebrity Bass Tournament on November 22-23, and an annual equestrian endurance race on November 2. A "ride and tie" competition has been added to the traditional horse endurance race.

The Salmon Festival will offer a variety of displays at venues, including downtown Oroville, the Feather River Nature Center and the Feather River Fish

Hatchery. DWR biologists will have a booth displaying their fish studies and activities, and flycasting lessons will be offered. Festival activities scheduled include a craft fair, exhibits, a farmers market, and barbecued salmon.

Salmon Migration

The end of summer brings an annual migration of salmon up the Feather River and an intense pace of salmon egg-taking activities at the Feather River Fish Hatchery, located on the Feather River near downtown Oroville.

Built by the Department of Water Resources in 1966 and 1967, the hatchery was expanded in 1998.

Operated by the Department of Fish and Game, the fish hatchery fills a vital role in Feather River salmon reproduction.

Recently modernized to accommodate handicapped visitors, the hatchery offers dramatic new educational exhibits and is open to visitors.

The hatchery opened its fish ladder on September 3. A viewing window at the hatchery provides a fascinating closeup of the mature salmon.

Equestrian Endurance Ride

November brings two noteworthy equestrian events to Lake Oroville.

The fourth annual Lake Oroville Vista Endurance Ride (LOVER) will be held on Saturday, November 2. Equestrian endurance riding is a fast-growing sport, well suited to the scenic and well maintained trails at Lake Oroville.

Supported by almost 40 volunteers, including veterinarians and health care providers, the LOVER event offers a choice of two distances---A 30 mile ride that must be completed in seven hours, and a 50-mile ride with a 12 hour deadline. Riders camp over the Friday night prior to the competition and attend a pre-ride meeting that familiarizes them with the ride, veterinary checks, and procedures. Horses must pass vet checks during the event in order to continue the endurance ride.

“Our ride is always the first Saturday in November,” says Kathy Papa, one of the event organizers. “So far, the weather has been perfect---in the 70 degree range, and without rain.”

This year, a “ride and tie” competition has been added to LOVER.

According to Cheryl Domnitch, ride manager for the event, ride and tie is a team sport featuring two humans and one horse per team. The humans alternate

running and riding. The Lake Oroville Ride and Tie will offer riders and runners a choice of two distance events, a 12-miler and a 30-mile distance.

Biking, Riding, Fishing

Biking and horse riding can be enjoyed year-round on extensive trails at the lake. Marinas at Loafer Creek and Bidwell Bar are focal points of boating activity. Campgrounds are located at many venues around the lake, convenient to trails and boat ramps.

For anglers, Lake Oroville offers both cold water and warm water fisheries.

While bass angling has slowed from the summer peak, some bass still are being caught off the points in deeper water. Lake Oroville boasts an outstanding fall bass fishery. Local experts expect the bass fishing to improve with the change of season.

Some Chinook salmon are currently being taken in the deeper, cooler water. This fishing is likely to improve as lake temperatures cool.

Last June, about 50,000 Coho salmon fingerlings were planted in Lake Oroville. This was the first planting of Coho in Oroville since 1991. Another 150,000 will be planted during the fall. These fish will be about 10 inches long when planted, according to DWR fish biologist Eric See.

Below Lake Oroville, the Feather River offers spectacular salmon angling opportunities during late August and early September. Fish are very evident in the low flow section of the river.

DFG has planted Oroville's Thermalito Forebay on a regular basis throughout the summer. The result is a great fishing opportunity for both bank and boat anglers, according to Biologist See.

Oroville's Many Uses

Lake Oroville provides a maximum storage capacity of just over 3.5 million acre-feet, capturing runoff from the Feather River watershed. Lake Oroville serves many purposes, including flood control for the Oroville region of Butte County; water to benefit Feather River fisheries; the Delta environment and water quality; and water for users locally, as well as downstream.

A hydroelectric plant under Oroville Dam generates much of the electricity needed to pump water throughout California's State Water Project.

Lake Levels

As is common with most multi-purpose reservoirs, Lake Oroville's level declines gradually as fall progresses. At its fullest in spring, the lake crested last April at just over 838 feet above sea level.

In late August, the lake level was at 750 feet. For Labor Day weekend the lake was 730 feet. At this level, all boat launching facilities except Loafer Creek remain usable. As the lake continues to drop after Labor Day, fewer boat ramps will be usable.

Visitors Center

A Visitors Center overlooking Lake Oroville provides information and exhibits about the lake, its construction and history, and its many recreation opportunities. Admission is free. Just east of the dam, the center is located at the north end of Kelly Ridge Road.

Displays include film of Oroville Dam's construction in the early 1960s and informational exhibits on Oroville's important role in storing water and generating power for the State Water Project. A 47 foot viewing tower offers a panoramic view of the lake and surrounding terrain.

Operated jointly by DWR and the Department of Parks and Recreation, the center is open daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The Visitor Center phone number is (530) 538-2219.

For More Information

While much information is available at the Visitors Center, you can learn a great deal about Oroville by checking the agencies, phone numbers and Websites listed below:

Campgrounds---Department of Parks and Recreation, (530) 538-2200.
Equestrian endurance event---Kathy Papa (530) 534-9057 or by email at <mailto:pcpapa@jps.net>
Equestrian Ride and Tie event---Cheryl Domnitch (530) 273-5668 or by email at <mailto:cdefpe@aol.com>

Oroville Visitors Center--- (530) 538-2219.
Oroville community activities and special events:
Oroville Visitor and Tourism Bureau---1-888—OROVILLE
Oroville Area Chamber or Commerce---1-800-655-GOLD.
Oroville Chamber Website---<http://www.oro-ville-city.com/chamber>

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.

Visit DWR 's Website at <http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov/>