



News for Immediate Release
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Department of Water Resources' Lake Oroville Offers Summer Recreation
In Uncrowded Northern California Setting

OROVILLE---Lake Oroville offers exciting, leisurely summer lake recreation --- terrific salmon and bass fishing, lakeside camping, cool swimming and safe, fun boating with two marinas on one of the biggest lakes in California. Biking, hiking and horse riding are available on trails near the lake.

Warm sunny days and cool nights, pine shaded campsites, boating, swimming and fishing are the ingredients for summer vacation fun at Lake Oroville, second largest reservoir in California, surpassed in size only by Lake Shasta near Redding. Lake Oroville, with a storage capacity just over 3.5 million acre-feet, spreads 15,000 surface acres along a 167-mile shoreline, a watery magnet for anglers and water sports enthusiasts.

Uncrowded Lake Recreation

“Lake Oroville offers all the relaxing summer lake recreation you enjoy, with plenty of easy lake boating and convenient lakeside camping.” says John Ford, tour guide at Oroville Dam, at 770 feet height, the tallest in the nation. “Uncrowded except on major holidays, Lake Oroville has a natural, tranquil pace right through the summer. We also offer some unusual extras, too, such as our Visitors Center overlooking the lake, packed with photo, video and print information about the lake and the region, and the Feather River Fish Hatchery in nearby Oroville, where salmon are nurtured for the Feather River.”

Located within easy driving distance of major Northern California urban centers, Lake Oroville is about 75 miles north of Sacramento in scenic Butte County, easily reachable via State Highway 70 or US 99. Oroville Dam commands a panoramic view of the upper Sacramento Valley, including the Sutter Buttes, world’s smallest mountain range.

The lake is the key Northern California storage reservoir for California’s State Water Project, operated by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), providing at least part of

the water supply for 23 million Californians and approximately 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland.

Variety of Campsites

An array of camping facilities is available. Campsites include the 51-site Lime Saddle Campground, Loafer Creek Campground with more than 130 individual sites and six group sites, the 74-campsite Bidwell Canyon Campground and more than 80 campsites accessible only by boat. Equestrian camps in Loafer Creek Recreation Area are located near an extensive trail network. Floating camps are special attractions at Lake Oroville---two story platforms anchored in scenic coves, each with on-board restrooms and propane barbecues.

Most recreational facilities at the lake are located within the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area administered and operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

(For camping information at Oroville, call State Parks at (530) 538-2200.)

Bass and Salmon Fishing

Fishing is a prime attraction at Lake Oroville, with both warmwater (bass) and cold water (coho salmon) species to thrill anglers. Here's the fishing perspective from Eric See, DWR fisheries biologist assigned to the lake:

“Lake Oroville is the only lake in California with coho salmon, making it unique in the world of California inland fishing,” reports Eric. “The coldwater anglers really like them. They possess wonderful fighting abilities and are a great eating fish.

“Coho anglers have been doing well fishing in the river arms of the lake right now, where the water is still relatively cool. The fish have not yet moved into the deeper water. Later in the summer, anglers will need to fish deeper, either drifting with bait or deep trolling.”

“The bass fishing in Lake Oroville is absolutely phenomenal, as it always is this time of year,” says See. “Most of these fish are spotted bass in the one- to two-pound size range, with enough bigger fish, including largemouth bass, to always keep things interesting. Lake Oroville also hosts smallmouth and redeye bass, so it is possible for anglers to catch four difference species of bass in the same day. This is another special feature of the Lake Oroville fishery. There are very few places this can be done in California.”

Boating, Two Marinas at Lake Oroville

Houseboats, water skiing boats and fishing craft may be rented at the lake's two marinas: Bidwell Canyon Marina (800) 637-1767, and Lime Saddle Marina (800) 834-7517. Lime Saddle Marina has a new concessionaire, Forever Resorts that operates more than 50

marinas in the United States.

Many boaters prize Lake Oroville, a large lake with extensive arms, for its size and variety of boating conditions, as well as its safety. Like other multi-purpose reservoirs, Lake Oroville's surface level peaks in the Spring and fluctuates during the year as the lake performs its various water supply, storage, quality and flood control functions. Boaters who prefer constant surface levels may choose to recreate on the forebays, where levels do not fluctuate.

Nearby Angling Spots

“One of the best things about fishing in the Lake Oroville area is all the quality fishing available nearby beyond Lake Oroville,” advises See. The Department of Fish and Game stocks catchable trout on a regular basis in the Thermalito Forebay, the small coldwater lake just downstream of Lake Oroville, he notes. The Thermalito Afterbay, a shallow lake just downstream from the Forebay, is a productive largemouth bass fishery.

The 5500-acre Oroville Wildlife Area, just west of State Highway 70 along the Feather River below the fore- and afterbays, is studded with dozens of small ponds. The wildlife area features excellent Spring fishing for bass and sunfish. This wildlife area is ideal for bank fishing, or angling from small boats or float tubes.

Biologist See recommends the wildlife area as a great place to hike, explore and fish some remote, seldom-fished waters.

Lake Oroville Visitors Center

Located on Kelly Ridge overlooking the lake and dam, the Lake Oroville Visitors Center provides visual displays, videotapes, maps and publications describing the lake and regional attractions. Videotapes vividly show construction of the massive Oroville Dam during the early 1960s. A 47-foot-high viewing tower, equipped with free telescopes, provides a sweeping view of the lake, dam and surrounding region. Operated jointly by DWR and State Parks, the Visitors Center is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Admission is free. The phone number is (530) 538-2219.

Trails Abound

Riders, bikers and hikers will find more than 40 miles of scenic, multipurpose trails available to meet their needs at Lake Oroville.

Oroville Community Attractions

The City of Oroville and its surrounding region offer many attractions beyond those of the lake. Oroville is a historic Gold Rush era community, with lovely neighborhoods, a developing recreational attraction at Riverbed Park along the Feather River, motels, hotels and restaurants, beds and breakfast accommodations, and leisure entertainment at two major

Indian casinos.

History buffs will appreciate Oroville's historic legacy by viewing the Bidwell Bar Suspension Bridge, built in 1856, first of its kind west of the Mississippi River, and visiting the Ishi Monument. It memorializes Ishi, last of the Yahi Indians. Ishi's final years helped University of California anthropologists understand and document California Indian folkways.

Nearby Table Mountain is a visually memorable landmark on the local horizon.

Feather Falls, at 640-feet the sixth highest waterfall in the United States, is located east of Lake Oroville. Hikers can view the falls by taking trails from a trailhead on Lumpkin Road near the historic community of Feather Falls. To reach the trailhead from Oroville, take Olive Highway east to Forbestown Road, and then go north on Lumpkin.

More information and free Visitor's Packets on regional attractions and lodging can be obtained from the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce (1-800-655-GOLD or <http://www.oroVILLEchamber.net/>) or by visiting the web site dedicated to family fun at Lake Oroville (<http://www.lakeoroville.net/>).

Summer-Fall Events

On the night of July 4 a spectacular fireworks display, free of charge, is presented at Oroville Dam. This fireworks event is a popular mid-summer Oroville tradition. Thousands enjoy a magnificent display of pyrotechnics over the lake, with skybursts reflected in the waters of Lake Oroville. Free bus transportation from downtown Oroville is available for fireworks spectators

From mid-August to mid-November, people can view Chinook salmon---a large and easily seen salmon species---in the Feather River near the Feather River Fish Hatchery as they gather for spawning.

Seeing salmon close up is possible through viewing windows built into the fish ladder leading from the river into the fish hatchery. Best time period for viewing adult fish in the ladder is September to mid-October. The most opportune season for seeing artificial spawning in the hatchery is October.

Oroville holds a traditional Salmon Festival the fourth Saturday in September each fall in conjunction with the spawning period for Feather River salmon. This year's Salmon Festival will occur on September 25, with events and celebrations focused at the Feather River Fish Hatchery.

Feather River Fish Hatchery

The Feather River Fish Hatchery nurtures huge numbers of salmon to assure continuation of Feather River salmon populations. Run by California's Department of Fish and Game, and

staffed by fish experts, the hatchery is located alongside the Feather River and is easily accessed via a bridge from the City of Oroville.

The hatchery parking lot affords excellent views of spawning season Chinook salmon starting in mid-August as they begin to congregate near the fishing ladder entrance to the hatchery.

The Feather River Fish Hatchery is worth a visit to see displays and information panels describing salmon life cycles. It was built by DWR during the 1960s to mitigate for loss of Feather River spawning habitat to construction of Lake Oroville.

Open year round free of charge, the facility is handicapped accessible, with modern informational displays. For information on the hatchery operations and visiting opportunities, contact Anna Kastner, manager, at (530) 538-2222.

For more information on Lake Oroville, you can visit DWR's "Welcome to Lake Oroville" website. The address is: <http://www.lakeoroville.water.ca.gov/>.

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.

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