PYRAMID LAKE

Pyramid Lake Recreation Area, operated and maintained by Parks Management Company under permit from the California Department of Water Resources, is located in the Angeles National Forest about 60 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Pyramid Lake provides regulated storage for Castaic Powerplant, flood protection along Piru Creek, which it dams, and recreational opportunities, such as boating, fishing, swimming and day use picnic areas. For overnight camping, the Los Alamos Campground is conveniently located less than two miles from Pyramid Lake.

PYRAMID LAKE AND DAM STATISTICS

Lake

Gross capacity.....171,200 acre-feet
Shoreline.....21 miles
Surface area.....1,297 acres
Maximum depth.....355 feet

Dam

Volume.....6,860,000 cubic yards
Length.....1,090 feet
Height of dam.....400 feet
Elevation.....2,606 feet

Our Mission

To manage the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore and enhance the natural and human environments.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit DWR's Website at
http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov
or email us at PAOPublications@water.ca.gov

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4/14

CALIFORNIA STATE WATER PROJECT

PYRAMID LAKE

THE STATE WATER PROJECT

Planned, designed, constructed and operated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the State Water Project (SWP) is the largest state-built, multi-purpose water project in the United States.

The SWP, spanning more than 600 miles from Northern California to Southern California, includes 34 storage facilities, 20 pumping plants, four pumping-generating plants, five hydroelectric power plants and approximately 700 miles of canals, tunnels and pipelines.

The SWP's main purpose is to provide a water supply—that is, to divert and store water during wet periods and distribute it to areas of need during dry periods in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast and Southern California. Other project purposes include flood control, power generation, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement and water quality improvements to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The $1.75 billion bond measure approved in 1960 provided initial funding for the SWP and payments received from 29 contracting agencies are paying off the bonds. These 29 urban and agricultural water agencies have long-term contracts for the delivery of SWP water. Approximately 70 percent of SWP water goes to urban users and 30 percent to agricultural users. These SWP contracting agencies are repaying the cost, including interest, of financing, building, operating and maintaining the SWP water storage and delivery system.

HISTORY

In 1843, gold was discovered near Pyramid Lake and in the Santa Feliciana Canyon, just south of what is now Pyramid Dam. The small find failed to trigger a rush to the mountainous countryside. Only Jose Francisco de Garcia Lopez, owner of Rancho Temescal, a Mexican land grant, and a handful of ranchers attempted to settle the region.

Pyramid Lake and Dam, completed in 1973, were named after a pyramid-shaped rock carved out by

engineers building the Old Highway 99. Travelers between Los Angeles and Bakersfield christened the landmark "Pyramid Rock," which still stands just adjacent to the dam.

POWERPLANTS

William E. Warne Powerplant, owned and operated by the Department of Water Resources, is located on the Gorman Creek arm of the lake. The powerplant, which can generate up to 358 million kilowatt-hours a year, helps meet the Project's need for electricity.

Water flowing from Pyramid Lake through the 7.2-mile-long Angeles Tunnel spins the turbines in Castaic Powerplant.

Castaic Powerplant, a cooperative venture of DWR and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, generates electricity during on-peak periods (weekday daylight hours) when extra power is needed in the Los Angeles area. During off-peak periods (nights and Sundays) when local power is cheaper, the plant pumps water back into Pyramid Lake.

BOATING

The lake is open year round to boating and offers three unique picnic areas with courtesy docks. These sites are only accessible by boat and offer spectacular views of the lake. Each of the three sites offer up to ten shaded picnic shelters complete with tables. Each boat-in site is also equipped with a double sided restroom. There are two separate launching areas. Emigrant landing has an eight lane launch ramp for all boats and Vaquero Beach (day use area) allows up to 12-foot car-top non-motorized launching.

Boating speed limits differ in parts of the lake. Canoes, rubber rafts and rowboats are often seen in the canyons where power boats are restricted to low speeds. High speeds for waterskiing are allowed on the main body of the lake.

The reservoir's water levels can change every day since Pyramid Lake provides regulated storage for Castaic Powerplant.

FISHING

The facility offers some of the finest fishing opportunities for small and largemouth bass, striped bass, trout, catfish, crappie, and bluegill.

BEACH

There are two beaches open during the summer season located at Emigrant Landing and Vaquero Day Use Area. Both areas offer a wide sandy beach to relax and enjoy the sun and have adjacent picnic areas with spectacular views.

CAMPING

Pyramid Lake Los Alamos Campground includes 93 sites with fire rings and picnic tables and is available for tents and RVs. There are three group sites that can accommodate up to 25 people per site. Restrooms and community spigots providing fresh drinking water are located throughout the campground. A dump station with potable water is available free of charge to all overnight guests. *All campers have first priority to the lake, but must have a current camp tag.*

VISITORS CENTER

Overlooking the beautiful Pyramid Lake, Vista del Lago Visitors Center offers educational exhibits about California's water, State Water Project, ancient civilizations, natural habitat and water treatment. You can also gain knowledge about the earth and how ocean currents affect the weather.

The center offers FREE admission and is open daily from 9am to 5pm except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. Located off Interstate 5, north of Santa Clarita, take the Vista del Lago exit. For center information, call 661-294-0219.

INFORMATION

For information on fees, hours, day use and camping, please contact the Parks Management Company at (661) 295-7155 or visit their website at: **www.campone.com**

(Top to bottom) Scenic view of Pyramid Lake from Vista del Lago Visitors Center's balcony. Outside view of center located 30 minutes north of Santa Clarita. Inside view of the center's water and Delta exhibits.Visitors enjoy picnic at Pyramid Lake.