

PRESS RELEASE

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CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS WELCOME RECORD OF DECISION ON LAKE BERRYESSA

The public is well-served by the Bureau of Reclamation decision on Lake Berryessa.

June 6, 2006, NAPA, Calif. — The Bureau of Reclamation released their decision on the future recreation use of Lake Berryessa today. The decision ends the controversial era of exclusive use that resulted in the concession areas at this federal lake being dominated by more than 1300 private vacation trailers and mobile homes.

Created by the construction of Monticello Dam on Putah Creek in the 1950's, Lake Berryessa lies to the east of Napa Valley, in a beautiful setting surrounding by hills and ridges with the Blue Ridge to the east and Cedar Roughs, an area proposed for wilderness status, to the west. The lake provides drinking water for much of Solano County. The seven concessionaires at the lake established the private vacation sites in the 1960's. Reclamation policies now prohibit this type of private, exclusive use.

The private sites will be replaced by accommodations for the public that will include cabins, lodges, and possibly motels and hotels, with restaurants, retail outlets, and marinas. There will also be campgrounds for both tents and RV's.

One of the most eagerly awaited proposals is the development of a 150 mile shoreline trail. Hikers, bikers, and equestrians are looking forward to the opportunities this trail will provide. Additional public day use areas will be developed at Steele Canyon Cove and Eticuera Creek, including parking, trailheads and kayak launch areas.

Reclamation has also decided to create two no-motor areas, one at Steele Canyon Cove and the other between the islands and the shoreline of the two public parks. This will serve family recreation, allowing safe swimming and kayaking.

Implementation of elements involving locations outside the concession areas, such as much of the shoreline trail, can begin now. Changes to concession areas will have to wait until current contracts expire in 2008 and 2009.

"This decision is very welcome. The impact will be equivalent to creating an entirely new 30,000 acre recreation area, including a 20,000 acre lake", said Carol Kunze, executive director of Berryessa Trails and Conservation. "We are eager to start working with Reclamation on trail building and conservation

projects, and to create a team of volunteers that can work with staff to help care for this federal recreation lake. With a broader array of recreational opportunities available and accommodations for the public, this lake can become a community asset for Napa residents and a financial asset to Napa County.

“The 10 million people who live within a three hour drive of Lake Berryessa need places to recreate and enjoy nature,” said Ray Krauss of the Blue-Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Partnership, a coalition of private landowners and public land managers dedicated to conserving 750,000 acres in portions of Napa, Yolo, Solano, Colusa and Lake counties. “Lake Berryessa is one of the most important recreational features of the BRBNA, in part because it represents the only location within this natural area where visitors can find accommodations from which they can easily explore the region. By opening up private sites to public access, Reclamation has made a decision that will serve well the public’s interest in outdoor recreation.”

Marc Pandone of the Napa Sierra Club praised the many years of effort Reclamation staff put into this project. “They have devoted countless staff hours to planning a recreation area that will substantially improve the public’s use and enjoyment of this lake. There is strong public demand for places to interact with nature and to enjoy the outdoors, and Lake Berryessa can now fill that need.”

“There was enormous public support for Reclamation’s proposals for Lake Berryessa”, said Debra Chase, the executive director of Tuleyome, a non-profit conservation organization that works to protect the Putah and Cache Creek watersheds. “Lake Berryessa has been a tarnished jewel. We are pleased to see a decision that will mean improved facilities and access for the public and that will allow the lake to fulfill its early promise of becoming an important vacation and weekend getaway destination for those seeking to be outdoors with their families.”

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Berryessa Trails and Conservation (www.berryessatrails.org)

Berryessa Trails and Conservation (BT&C) is a non-profit organization located in Napa County devoted to protecting, enhancing and furthering appreciation of our natural resources. BT&C carries out its mission by supporting the development of public trails and other nature-based recreational facilities, providing informational materials and educational programs, and engaging in conservation work to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment.

Blue-Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Partnership (www.brbna.org)

The Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Partnership (BRBNACP) promotes the conservation and enhancement of the expansive landscape that comprises the BRBNA by encouraging the sensitive management of its natural, agricultural, recreational, archeological and historical resources. As a voluntary and inclusive organization, the BRBNACP facilitates coordination and collaboration among its public, private, and nonprofit partners; provides research, information, and education services to partners; and conducts outreach to the public.

Napa Sierra Club (<http://www.redwood.sierraclub.org/napa/>)

The Napa Group Sierra Club is the local organization representing Sierra Club members in Napa County. It’s seven member executive committee, whose members come from up and down Napa Valley and Napa’s Lake District in the east where Lake Berryessa is located, have been active in the public process to redevelop the Lake since the project began in 2000.

Tuleyome (www.tuleyome.org)

The primary objectives and purposes of Tuleyome are to protect the wild and agricultural heritages of the Putah Creek and Cache Creek watersheds for existing and future generations. Tuleyome works to ensure

- The protection, enhancement, and restoration of the watersheds’ environmental resources
- Public enjoyment of the watersheds, compatible with resource protection
- A greater public appreciation of the natural environmental resources within the watersheds
- A long-term sustainable agricultural base in the region