

Lake Berryessa News
December 2012 e-Newsletter

Reclamation Announces Decision on Lake Berryessa Concession Contract

The Bureau of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Regional Director, Donald R. Glaser, has made the decision to terminate the concession contract with Pensus Lake Berryessa Properties, LLC.

"My decision was the result of a careful, deliberate process," stated Mr. Glaser. "I reviewed all documents in the administrative record, including the concession contract, and visited each recreation area managed by Pensus prior to my decision. I understand the importance of this decision to local residents and businesses and to those who recreate at Lake Berryessa. Things have not gone as we expected or wanted them to, but we are moving forward with the goal of providing enjoyable recreation experiences for visitors to Lake Berryessa."

Mr. Glaser will explain the basis for his decision at three public meetings where he will also introduce Lake Berryessa team members and discuss plans for recreation services at Lake Berryessa during the 2013 season, over the next five years and in the long-term. Further, he will present plans to create a forum to provide for public involvement regarding recreation and land use activities at Lake Berryessa and to promote effective communication, consideration of interests and the resolution of problems.

The public meetings will be held:

Monday, Dec. 10, 6-8 p.m., Berryessa Senior Center, 4380 Spanish Flat Loop Road, Lake Berryessa

Tuesday, Dec. 11, 6-8 p.m., Napa Valley College, Little Theatre, 2277 Napa-Vallejo Highway, Napa

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 6-8 p.m., Winters Public Safety Facility – Fire House Apparatus Bay, 700 Main Street, Winters

Pensus Responds to the Bureau of Reclamation Contract Termination Notice

Reclamation Decision to Sever Ties with Pensus To Disserve Recreation and the Community at Lake Berryessa

Lake Berryessa, California: Last evening, Thursday, Dec. 6, after much speculation, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) officially notified Pensus Lake Berryessa Properties LLC (Pensus) that the agency has decided to terminate Pensus's 40-year concession contract to develop and manage six recreation sites at Lake Berryessa. This misguided and unsupported decision marks the latest misstep in a long history of USBR mismanagement of visitor services at the Lake.

USBR's decision, which follows months of good faith effort by Pensus to resolve differences between the parties regarding implementation of the contract, is based on inaccurate statements of fact, misstatements of the plain language of the contract, and inconsistent readings of its own past approvals of Pensus activities. Throughout the past year, rather than pursue a serious, good faith effort to work through these differences, USBR has appeared to be determined to undo its contract with Pensus at all costs. This latest action is the culmination of that determination.

In a remarkable showing of bad faith, USBR's decision is to take effect Sunday, December 9, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Pacific standard time, giving Pensus less than 72 hours to cease operations and vacate the premises. Given the weeks of advance notice given by the agency to the public of the public meetings scheduled to discuss this decision, the short notice the agency has provided to Pensus is unconscionable, not to mention by no means in the interests of the public users of visitor services at the Lake.

On February 27, 2012, USBR notified Pensus of alleged violations of the concession contract. On March 29, 2012 Pensus supplied USBR with its full response and offered to cure every deficiency. To date, USBR has not answered and has refused to even acknowledge that any of Pensus's proposed "cures" are acceptable or unacceptable to USBR. Instead, USBR ratcheted up the conflict on May 7, 2012 by proposing to terminate the agreement alleging different grounds for that action than it had described in February.

In July, September and August, Pensus made formal offers to USBR to fully perform the contract and settle all disputes. USBR responded with excuses, curt e-mails and dilatory tactics, but no substance.

USBR's continuing gross mismanagement of visitor services at the Lake, as most recently demonstrated in this latest decision to sever its relationship with Pensus, disserves the interests of the local community and the overall public in the development and operation of improved visitor services at Lake Berryessa. Pensus continues to be committed to providing outstanding recreation and visitor services at Lake Berryessa. Unfortunately, USBR has proven to be neither a willing nor constructive partner in working with Pensus - nor any private entity -- in pursuit of this commitment.

Pensus is gone for good; Reclamation is running some resorts; New bid process to take place next year.

At a three hour detailed presentation on December 10, 2012 at the Berryessa Senior Center, which included intense questioning by the audience of local residents and business owners, the Bureau of Reclamation provided their recovery plan for the lake. The bottom line is that Pensus is gone and won't be back. Reclamation seems confident that their decision can withstand any legal challenge brought by Pensus.

Reclamation has committed to reopening as many resorts as possible for public recreation in 2013. Their intent is to seek out interim concession contractors who will manage the resorts while the new prospectus is being written and the competitive bid process take place. They intend to invest Reclamation funds in basic infrastructure for water, power, and restroom facilities at these resorts as an incentive to interim contractors - and claim to have redirected Reclamation budget money to these improvements.

Reclamation also claims it is committed to re-establishing the widest range of recreation opportunities possible including all form of motorized boating. They said that they will not be overly influenced by any one group, including radical environmentalists, as they sincerely seek public input for planning Lake Berryessa's future.

Steele Park, Spanish Flat (day use only), and Putah Creek are open now from 7 AM to 5 PM daily for FREE boat launching. Camping has been re-established at Oak Shores. Reclamation acquiesced to the overwhelming public desire to return to the historical resort names, Steele Park, Spanish Flat, Rancho Monticello, Berryessa Marina, and Putah Creek, at least until new concessioners are chosen.

Many, many details still need to be worked out, but Reclamation appears to have developed a reasonable plan to recover from the difficult situation that they themselves in large part created. Stay tuned – much more to come. Below is the formal Reclamation public statement.

Questions & Answers: Pensus Lake Berryessa Properties Contract Termination and Future Recreation Opportunities at Lake Berryessa

Impacts

Q: Why is Reclamation terminating the Pensus contract? Weren't they just getting started with developing the concession areas?

Reclamation and Pensus entered into a 30-year concession contract in April 2010 after Reclamation accepted Pensus' bid and the two parties negotiated the contract terms. The contract required Pensus to provide specific

visitor services and recreation facilities according to certain standards and within established development timelines. Pensus failed to comply with the contract terms despite repeated efforts by Reclamation to have Pensus "cure" the deficiencies. In order to fulfill our commitment to the public to provide quality recreation opportunities at Lake Berryessa, we took the necessary actions that ultimately have led to termination of the Pensus contract.

Q: With Pensus' contract terminated, what happens to recreation at the lake?

Reclamation is committed to continuing to provide visitor services and recreation opportunities at Lake Berryessa. We are planning for immediate government operation of several concession areas this winter and spring. We also plan to seek out interim concession contractors in time for the summer 2013 recreation season, to assist in operating several of the recreation sites to provide similar types of services (e.g. boat launching, day use, and camping).

Markley Cove Resort will continue to operate under the current contract until May 2013 and will offer marina services including wet slip rentals, fueling station, launching, retail store and overnight lodging. Reclamation is pursuing options for continued operation of Markley Cove Resort under an interim contract after expiration of the current concession contract.

Pleasure Cove Resort will continue to operate under their long-term contract and will offer tent and RV camping, marina services including wet slip rentals, fueling station, launching, retail store and overnight lodging.

Reclamation is developing options to provide the same or improved levels of service and appropriate facilities and services until new long-term concession agreements can be solicited and awarded. More information will be provided as plans are finalized. For information updates, please visit the Lake Berryessa website at www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/berryessa or contact Jeff Laird, Lake Berryessa Park Manager, at 707-966-2111 or jlaird@usbr.gov. For media inquiries, contact Louis Moore, Public Affairs, at 916-978-5106 or wmoore@usbr.gov.

Q: Will wet slips be available at Lupine Shores any time soon?

Reclamation intends to seek interim concession contractors willing to install wet slips and provide some marina services; however, because of the lead time needed for environmental review and permits to install floating structures on the lake and construct related land-based facilities, it is not likely that wet slips will be available at Lupine Shores in 2013. These types of facilities may be available as soon as summer 2014.

Q: How does the contract termination affect the contract I signed with Pensus for a boat slip and what about my down payment?

Reclamation has instructed Pensus to cancel any contracts and agreements for use of wet slips or other services at its Lake Berryessa concession areas. Please contact Pensus directly regarding a refund of any funds that you paid them for services not yet rendered at 707-966-9088.

Q: How does the contract termination affect the year-long contract I signed with Pensus for dry boat storage 6 months ago?

Reclamation immediately took over management of the concession areas when Pensus ceased its operations at Lake Berryessa as of 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 9, 2012, including temporary management of the dry storage area at Lupine Shores; however, except for a short transition period, we will not be able to continue to provide dry boat storage as a service until new interim concession contracts are in place. Pensus has been requested to contact all of its customers regarding cancellation of existing contracts including those for dry boat storage. For further information, please contact Pensus at 707-966-9088. If you currently have your boat in storage with Pensus at Lake Berryessa, please contact Reclamation to find out more information on how to access or retrieve your boat.

Q: I have heard that the existing launch ramp and paved roads at Lupine Shores can't be used

anymore starting in 2013. Is this true?

As part of a legally binding agreement with a former concession operator, the existing launch ramp and main road can only be used for commercial purposes until early February 2013. In order to prevent an interruption in services to the public, Reclamation is investigating options, including discussions with the current owner of the existing launch ramp and paved main road, to allow use of those facilities beyond February 2013.

Q: I have camping reservations at one of the Pensus concession areas. What will happen to that reservation?

We have requested Pensus notify its customers of the cancellation of any pending camping reservations at its Lake Berryessa concession areas. Please contact Pensus for information regarding your future camping reservations. For 2013, camping and lodging will continue to be available by reservation at Pleasure Cove Marina, located at 6100 Highway 128, Napa, CA 94558, 707-966-9600. In addition, we are investigating options to make camping available at the following locations for summer 2013: Oak Shores, North; Lupine Shores; Chaparral Cove; and Foothill Pines. More information will be provided as plans are finalized. For information updates, please visit the Lake Berryessa website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/berryessa>

Q: Will the future concessionaire at Lupine Shores be required to pay a share of the assessment for use of the Napa Berryessa Resort Improvement District facilities?

Reclamation will require future concessionaire/developers at Lupine Shores to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to Lupine Shores, consistent with the previous prospectus, including connections for water and wastewater with NRBID and payment of future assessments.

Timing

Q: With a notice of termination, how long until Pensus leaves?

Reclamation's notice of termination required Pensus to cease operations and turn the concession areas over to Reclamation at 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 9, 2012.

Q: When will there be running water and regular plumbed restrooms at the concession areas?

The development of restrooms and showers is contingent upon the development of water and wastewater infrastructure and utilities at the concession areas, and that depends upon the selection of a long-term operator for each site. In the mean time, we are exploring the feasibility of developing some basic utilities such as potable water and restroom facilities in advance of awarding new long-term contracts.

Q: Where can I camp, launch, and fuel my boat, stay overnight, and enjoy day use at the lake now and until interim contracts are awarded?

Full service campgrounds, boat launch, boat fuel, day use and overnight cabins are available for a fee at Pleasure Cove Marina. Except for campgrounds, the same services are available for a fee at Markley Cove Resort. Free boat launch is available at the Reclamation-operated Capell Cove boat launch. Day use and picnicking are available free at Oak Shores, Smittle Creek, Etcuera, and Olive Orchard day use areas. Foothill Pines, Lupine Shores, and Chaparral Cove may be available for camping by Memorial Day weekend 2013, and a concession contractor may be able to operate the northern end of Oak Shores as an 85-site campground as we did in 2009 and 2010. The Dufer Point Visitor Center provides current information to visitors about all recreation opportunities at Lake Berryessa and is located at 5520 Knoxville Road, Napa, CA 94558.

Q: What is the story behind the trail plan I have heard about? Will the trail go all the way around the lake? When will the trail be finished?

In fall 2012, Reclamation completed a Trail Management Plan to determine possibilities for a future Shoreline Trail encompassing most of the federal lands around Lake Berryessa. Trail development is contingent upon the ability to identify funding and development partners for various trail sections. This fall and winter, we are implementing the Trail Management Plan by performing maintenance on portions of the Smittle Creek Trail. Working with our partners, opportunities are being sought to provide additional funding for rehabilitation of the North End Trail. A Student Conservation Association (SCA) trail crew is currently helping with the work on the Smittle Creek Trail, and when completed, will work on other trails at the lake.

Q: What trails are available now?

Several trails are open to use at Lake Berryessa including the Smittle Creek Trail, a native plant trail at the Dufer Point Visitor Center, and the North End Trail. The North End Trail is currently scheduled for major rehabilitation and re-routing work and may be very rough or impassible in some locations.

Q: I have ideas about how to improve recreation services at Lake Berryessa; how can I get involved so that my voice is heard?

Reclamation is in the planning stages to establish and sponsor a forum of public agencies, with meetings open to the public, to promote communication and collaboration in implementing the Visitor Services Plan and addressing issues of mutual concern. Reclamation welcomes public involvement and invites your participation in this new forum. It is anticipated that this public forum will be in place early next year. More information will be announced as plans are finalized. For information updates, please visit the Lake Berryessa website at www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/berryessa or contact Jeff Laird, Lake Berryessa Park Manager, at 707-966-2111 or ilairdusbr.gov.

Q: Who should I talk to if I have more questions?

For public inquiry - Contact Jeff Laird, Lake Berryessa Park Manager, at 707-966-2111 or jlaird@usbr.gov For media inquiry - Contact Louis Moore, Public Affairs, at 916-978-5106 or wmoore@usbr.gov.

One of the most unpopular Pensus actions was the renaming of the Lake Berryessa resorts. Below is my story about that issue and what we should do about it. You should let Reclamation know your ideas about this subject and any other issues by submitting them to Jeff Laird as described above. Reclamation wants to know what you think. Let's see if they listen.

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**A Sense of Place, A Sense of History, A Sense of Adventure and Romance: Naming the Lake
Berryessa Resorts**
by Peter Kilkus

Now that the Pensus contract has been terminated, both local folks and the Bureau of Reclamation have returned to using the historical names of the Lake Berryessa resorts. I believe it is important to retain those names, or some version of them, for the good of the lake's future. I will make such a recommendation to Reclamation for inclusion in its next bid prospectus.

In the business world there is a financial concept known as "goodwill". Goodwill is an accounting concept meaning the value of an asset owned that is intangible but has a quantifiable value in a business. Goodwill typically reflects the value of intangible assets such as a strong brand name, good customer relations, good employee relations and any patents or proprietary technology. Goodwill includes assets with value that are exceptionally difficult to quantify such as brand recognition, customer loyalty, and employee happiness.

The original names of the Lake Berryessa resorts possess this type of financial "goodwill". In one case, Putah Creek Resort, the case could be made for negative goodwill due to its reputation as a rowdy party spot. Three years ago a new concessioner such as Pensus may have been justified in changing that name to be able to attract different, more family-oriented customers. But four years later the Putah Creek name, which is of such historical significance, is no longer linked to the previous generation of rowdies and, I believe, can and should be used again.

The Pensus decision to use plant names for its resorts may have been influenced by the Bureau of Reclamation. But despite protests against the names – even at the first public meeting between Pensus and the local residents – they went forward with them. Unfortunately it was part of the Pensus penchant to ignore the advice of local people familiar with the history and operation of Lake Berryessa.

Below are my original suggestions to David Ffinch more than two years ago when he signed the concession contract and we all learned about the name changes. If you are interested in making your own suggestions, send a message to Jeff Laird, Park Manager at Bureau of Reclamation, Lake Berryessa Field Office, 5520 Knoxville Road, Napa, CA 94558 or e-mail them to jlaird@usbr.gov, or fax them to (707) 966-0409.

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Peter Kilkus <pkilkus@gmail.com>
David Ffinch (Pensus)" <finch@pensus.com>
Fri, May 7, 2010 at 9:32 AM
Berryessa feedback - resort names

Good morning David,

Thanks for all the info on your web site. People remain excited about the future of the lake.

But the biggest disappointment among the people I talked to on my 200 mile "paper route" to distribute the paper Wednesday and Thursday, and the phone calls and email I have received so far, is the resort names. They are highly unpopular.

Personally I believe you are giving up significant financial "goodwill" by changing them so drastically, especially Steele Park, which has always been known in the Bay Area and Sacramento as the "best resort at Lake Berryessa".

In my opinion, from a marketing perspective, the new names have no sense of place, no sense of history, no sense of adventure and romance. Although a certain amount of re-branding may be necessary, such as changing the name of Putah Creek Resort because of its rowdy history, the chosen names don't elicit any images of recreation or geographical location, nor will they be easy to remember.

Putah Creek Resort could be named Pope Canyon Resort, for example. It places the resort at the north end of the lake and connects it to Pope Valley - a major gateway to the lake for the north Napa Valley, St. Helena, and Calistoga.

Steele Park could have become Steele Canyon Resort - keeping the value of the brand, locating it geographically, and sounding more adventurous. Lupine Shores Resort is hard to say and basically meaningless, definitely not memorable. And as someone pointed out, there is very little lupine inside the resort boundary.

None of the names use the words Berryessa or Monticello which have great historical significance and regional name recognition. For example, Rancho Monticello could be Monticello Shores; Berryessa Marina could be Berryessa Point, because of its peninsula, or Big Island Marina since it's close to Big Island which is one of the major features of the lake. Spanish Flat Resort didn't even need a name change. It is integral to the historic Spanish Flat area and community center and well-known around Napa and the Bay Area.

Markley Cove perhaps needed a name change and Mahogany Bay rolls off the tongue but doesn't signify anything special. I actually never knew that there was a California mahogany tree. "The Mountain Mahogany is a shrub or small deciduous tree that grows in the California chaparral." Most people think of mahogany furniture with wood from the Philippines. With Markley's position so close to the dam and the Yolo County recreation basin, there has to be a better name from a marketing viewpoint.

Again, these are my opinions and I don't want to offend you or the people you have developing marketing strategy. But if there is any way you can change the names that have been proposed, I believe it would be a positive move.

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In a later email I said, "I'd like to repeat my previous suggestion to rethink your proposed resort names. There is a wide general dissatisfaction with the names, especially Lupine Shores. Our local CBS affiliate, KPIX, just completed an Eye on the Bay two-part segment about the Lake Berryessa region that will air in late September. Part of the story they will tell is the history of the Berryessa Valley and the flooded Town of Monticello. The history of our region stretches back hundreds of years. I think you are missing an opportunity by ignoring that.

Since I haven't been privy to your detailed marketing strategy, I don't know what "themes" you proposed for the various resorts as was required in the bid. But using the well-known local history and geography in your thematic marketing (and resort names) would seem to be one approach."

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On a more humorous note here are arguments I sent to David Ffinch against the use of Lupine Shores as a resort name. He had a very good sense of humor and enjoyed my comments. He actually told me that he agreed to change the name from Lupine Shores to Lupin Shores. Later he was apparently convinced by someone in his company to retain the original name.

Lupins or lupines (North America) are the members of the genus *Lupinus* in the legume family.

Lupine may be one of several things: Predatory or wolf-like, something that is like, or relating to, a wolf (*canis lupus*); a variant spelling for lupin, a flowering plant – lupine is not the primary spelling.

Pensus may wish to form a sister resort arrangement with Lupin Lodge in Los Gatos: <http://www.lupin.com/>

"Lupin Lodge: A Clothing-Optional Getaway For All Seasons Luxury Camping...Try a Lupin Yurt at Lupin Lodge ...the ultimate value in clothing-optional relaxation and nude recreation in the San Francisco Bay Area. Members escaping the pressure-cooker of nearby Silicon Valley swear that only a few hours spent au naturel at Lupin provide the de-stressing equivalent of a seven-day cruise. Just imagine how relaxing an Eden-like vacation or holiday getaway might feel at one of California's most scenic naturist resorts. Consider a romantic weekend in a comfortable cabin, try an enchanting overnight in an exotic yurt or simply camp under the stars and trees in the fabulous Santa Cruz Mountains."

David declined.

Give Big Island Lagoon Back to the People!

I continue to encourage people to write recommendations about the future of Lake Berryessa to the Bureau of Reclamation. They have asked for our input. It's important that we give it to them. And the new public forum they want to start will be extremely important.

Here's my latest recommendation to reverse the arbitrary closure of Big island Lagoon to motorized family recreation:

Jeff Laird, Park Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
Lake Berryessa Field Office
5520 Knoxville Road,
Napa, CA 94558
jlaird@usbr.gov

12/26/12

Dear Mr. Laird,

Recommendation: Immediately Return Big Island Lagoon to a 5MPH Zone for Family Recreation

In a highly unpopular move with no real public support, the Bureau of Reclamation arbitrarily closed Big Island Lagoon to motorized recreation several years ago. This area was an historical 5 MPH zone and a heavily-used family recreation gathering spot. It provided a quiet, safe respite from the activity on the main body of the lake.

This action was taken with no public input or evaluation of its effects on lake users. Monitoring of the area for the last several years shows there has been no appreciable use by non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks. This action simply created a wasted recreational resource that had previously been used by hundreds of boaters on a regular basis.

Willi's Cove near Steele Park Resort was also designated as a non-motorized zone but enforcement was never implemented. This is a precedent for the lack of importance of this type of classification.

Although the creation of non-motorized zones was discussed in the VSP DEIS, the closure of Big Island lagoon was stealth action hidden in the 2006 Record of Decision section excerpted below. This section also implied that no changes would be made until the public forum referenced in this same section was created.

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2006 Record of Decision: 6. Land and Water Use Classification.

The WROS is not adopted as part of the VSP ROD. Existing requirements developed in conjunction with Action 17, "Water Surface Zoning and Restrictions," of the 1993 RAMP ROD are carried forward on an interim basis pending future adoption by Reclamation of the WROS or other land and water use classification system in consultation with the forum established in paragraph 1c. In the interim, certain areas will be reserved for use by non-motorized watercraft and electric trolling motors only. These areas are identified in Appendix B, map number 413-202-8.

The 1993 RAMP ROD excerpted below was very general about what zoning enforcement might be done in the future. It did not authorize Reclamation to close Big Island Lagoon and Willi's Cove to motorized recreation.

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~1993 RAMP ROD Action 17. Water Surface Zoning and Restrictions.

~Preferred Action: Establish and implement (after coordination with the Napa County Sheriffs Dept.) specific zoning and/or restrictions for water surface uses and activities to promote public health and safety, foster

compatibility of recreational uses, and protect and enhance natural resources, including water supplies, wetlands, and riparian habitats.

~Activities or areas subject to zoning restrictions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

~Water skiing and similar activities in Neither Cove (between Steele Park and Spanish Flat).

~Parasailing around power lines in the Narrows, Wragg Canyon, and Neither Cove.

~Jet skiing in Oak Shores.

~Closure of specific areas because of water supply intakes, endangered species issues, approved construction projects, etc.

~Aircraft operations / Speed zones for specific areas / Floating structures.

~Establishment of boat traffic patterns on lake surface.

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The public forum referenced in the 2006 ROD section below was never created. This omission was deemed a mistake by Mr. Glaser in his public comments at the December 10, 2012 public meeting at Lake Berryessa.

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2006 ROD 1.c. Collaboration. Reclamation will sponsor a regular forum with the opportunity for public involvement to promote communication, thoughtful consideration of interests, consistency and uniformity, and constructive resolution of problems or conflicts. In addition, the Area Manager or his/her designee will meet on a regular basis with concession contractors to coordinate Governmental and concession operations and to jointly address operational issues.

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Therefore, since there was neither public input nor public support for this arbitrary action; there was no statutory authority or other justification for Reclamation's decision; and the action is in opposition to Reclamation's stated purpose to support and expand recreation at Lake Berryessa, Big Island Lagoon should immediately return to its long-term 5 MPH status in anticipation of the 2013 recreation season.

In the future any action of this serious an impact on the recreating public must require public input and should be an item for the immediate item of attention of the new public forum.

Thanks you for your assistance in this matter,

Peter Kilkus
Owner/Editor

Bureau of Reclamation Management Structure (12/26/12)

Jeff Laird is Lake Berryessa Park Manager

Peggi Brooks is Jeff Laird's supervisor and serves as the Chief, Recreation Resources Division.

Peggi Laird's supervisor is the Deputy Area Manager, who is currently Richard Stevenson (Acting for Drew Lessard).

The Deputy Area Manager's supervisor is the Area Manager, who is currently Drew Lessard (Acting since Mike Finnegan's retirement).

The Area Manager's supervisor is the Mid Pacific Regional Director, who is David Murillo.

Don Glaser is working as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner and Lake Berryessa is one of his projects.

California Inland Fisheries Foundation, Inc. and the Department of Fish & Game Partner to Make Lake Berryessa One of the Strongest Trophy Fisheries in the State of California:

The day began with ominous dark clouds and rain showers. The volunteers had been lined up for several weeks and canceling the "event" was considered, but not seriously. The guys were ready to go and the word was out...bring raingear! Everyone gathered at Markley Cove store at 8:45AM, and at that point, the clouds began to dissipate and spots of blue sky could be seen...definitely a good sign. It took a short time to organize the tools the volunteers had brought – generator, power washers, hoses, etc. Lee Gray of Markley Cove produced the two additional winches and handles, and it was off to the pens. Rick Soto's boat proved to be invaluable, hauling supplies and people!

The weather cooperated, the equipment ran well, and as Stan Wong orchestrated and Willie Carroll worked his mechanical miracles, it was over and done in not quite three hours! It was a fun project and productive at the same time, with friends working together. Fish & Game will deliver small fish for the pens on January 3rd, 2013. CIFI supplies the fish food. These fish will be maintained by Lee Gray & staff of Markley Cove through the winter months, until release in the early spring. The real reward comes in early January when the small fish are transferred into the pens by DFG. The really big deal is when the pens are opened in the spring, and two to three pound rainbows swim lazily into the lake to grow even larger. (CIFI - <http://www.ciffi.org/>)

Napa Firewise Awards Wildfire Mitigation Grants

Napa, Calif. December 1, 2012 — The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation (NCFW) announced today the award of nearly \$65,000 in wildfire mitigation grants to six local Fire Safe Councils. These Councils include Atlas Peak (\$11,000); Berryessa Estates (\$10,200); Circle Oaks (\$6,000); Berryessa Highlands (\$16,000); Mt. Veeder/Dry Creek (\$10,000), and Soda Canyon (\$10,000).

Stephen Gort, NCFW vice president and treasurer, says the grants are a vital part of Napa County's ongoing wildfire mitigation efforts that started in 2005 with a highly successful Firewise free chipping program. "The grants are targeted at concentrated, on the ground mitigation work," says Gort. "We are talking about building shaded fuel breaks around key infrastructures and critical access routes, clearing brush-choked roadways, and maintaining once-cleared vegetation from years past."

The grants were awarded through a competitive process that required each Fire Safe Council to submit a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). For more information about Napa Firewise and wildfire in general, visit their website at www.napafirewise.org or their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/napafirewise.
