

Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program Defined

Click here for Great short drone video of South Lake Berryessa

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/Lake-drone-from-Highlands.mp4>

The Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program, also known colloquially as "Renaissance Lake Berryessa", describes a process for rebuilding the Lake Berryessa resorts, five of which were demolished by the Bureau of Reclamation in 2009. Although there is no formal government program with this name, this is a de facto (definition: a legal concept used to refer to what happens in reality or in practice) program (definition: a set of related measures or activities with a particular long-term aim) with only positive goals for the Lake Berryessa community. This program has a set of goals, a detailed plan with timelines, and a Program Manager (Napa County Concessions Manager). The actual revitalization process is based on four core documents:

1. Visitor Services Plan - Record of Decision for Future Recreation Use and Operations of Lake Berryessa (VSP-ROD,2006)

(<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/2006-Record-of-Decision.pdf>)

2. The Ragatz Report: Lake Berryessa An Untapped Resort Development Opportunity (2017)

(<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/2017-Ragatz-Report-Full.pdf>)

3. Managing Partner Agreement Between the United States of America and Napa County for the Administration, Operation, Maintenance and Development of Recreation Uses and Facilities at Lake Berryessa Area Project Lands (2020)

(<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/2020-Managing-Partner-Agreement.pdf>)

4. Napa County Request for Proposals (November 24, 2020)

(<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/Napa-County-Request-for-Proposal-2020.pdf>)

Visitor Services Plan - Record of Decision: The first key document provides the Bureau of Reclamation's guidelines for future recreation develop at Lake Berryessa. Any new resort development will be required to meet these basic goals.

"Recreation Program Management. The following principles and actions will be used to guide and manage recreation activities at Lake Berryessa: To the extent practicable, Government and commercial recreation operations at Lake Berryessa will be developed, implemented, and managed on an integrated, lake-wide basis to (1) provide the widest practical spectrum of recreation experience for the visiting public, (2) preserve and protect natural resources in and around the lake, (3) promote the safety and security of people and facilities, (4) support the economic goals of surrounding communities, especially gateway communities, and (5) maintain the opportunity for a fair and reasonable profit by concession contractors."

Ragatz Report: The second document is an excellent review of Lake Berryessa's potential to become the premiere recreation of Napa County and northern California taking its rightful place alongside the world-renowned Napa Valley.

"Lake Berryessa itself, the five concession areas and the surrounding environs offer many unique and outstanding attributes, as discussed in the previous section – accessibility, size, extensive shoreline and surface area, beautiful scenery in a very natural setting, some of the best fishing in the state, large enough to offer both nature-based and motor-based activities without interference, and a wide array of family-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

The challenge and opportunity are to redevelop the five concession areas into resorts that more appropriately reflect the lifestyle of today's participants in outdoor recreation – higher quality, more variety, greater convenience, more nature-based (but not forgetting the ever-popularity of motor boats and RVs), more family oriented, etc. If more care is given to these important trends, Lake Berryessa has the opportunity to:

(1) become a significant year-round destination for the almost 10 million people in the PMA (Primary Market Area); (2) significantly impact the economy of Napa County; (3) be profitable to appropriately selected concessionaires; and (4) do so while maintaining and enhancing the natural environment."

Managing Partner Agreement: The MPA codifies the responsibilities of Napa County as the new lake managing entity and Reclamation's role in supporting the goals of the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program. The MPA also provides a proposed schedule to accomplish the MPA goals.

The MPA's first phase paves the way for the county to choose developers for three lakeside resort sites, Monticello Shores, Spanish Flat and Steele Canyon Recreation Areas. Under Phase 2, by or before Nov. 1, 2030, the county will determine whether to take over recreation management responsibility for two other sites, Pleasure Cove Marina and Markley Cove Resort, currently under multi-year contracts with Reclamation.

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In Phase 3, by 2030 the county may elect to assume recreation management responsibility for Berryessa Point Recreation Area and Putah Canyon Recreation Area.

Napa County Request for Proposals: This document described the initial plan for rebuilding three of the resorts - Steele Park Recreation Area, Spanish Flat Recreation Area, and Monticello Shores Recreation Area (previously Rancho Monticello). It provides the basic guidelines as well as the detailed requirements any bidder must meet to be considered as a qualified concessioner. It also provides a summary of a user survey of more than three thousand verified Lake Berryessa recreationists that was included in the Ragatz Report.

The Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program and Renaissance Berryessa have been referenced many times during the previous seven years.

In February 2016, the Lake Berryessa News and Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce began a Renaissance Lake Berryessa campaign aimed at returning management of Lake Berryessa to Napa County. They actively campaigned for this goal during the following months writing, "As this process unfolds the Lake Berryessa News and Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce sincerely ask Napa residents to encourage their supervisors to support a Renaissance Lake Berryessa."

In March 2016, the Lake Berryessa News began its Renaissance Lake Berryessa campaign to return management of Lake Berryessa to Napa County with the lead story "A Path Forward To Revitalize Lake Berryessa: Fire The Feds!"

The Napa Register wrote on August 24, 2018, "Talks continue on Berryessa resort redevelopment and what role Napa County might play in a long-awaited Lake Berryessa resort renaissance."

Lake Berryessa Revitalization Takes Another Step Forward, Lake Berryessa News, November 16, 2021

The Lake Berryessa Renaissance Project is moving slowly. Lake Berryessa News, April 1, 2023

Napa Register: Napa County continues Berryessa resort redevelopment. It is continuing its efforts on several fronts to revitalize Lake Berryessa resorts (Oct 18, 2023)

Napa Register: Progress Towards Lake Berryessa Renaissance, Napa County Moves Forward.

November 7, 2023, Supervisors' meeting agenda: "The County hopes that the private investment associated with a long-term concession agreement will improve recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, provide new employment opportunities, and possibly become an anchor for revitalization of the Lake Berryessa community."

Some people raised the issue of the Napa County General Plan and its applicability to the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program (Renaissance Lake Berryessa). Lake Berryessa News: November 26, 2023.

The Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program: Support Grows For "Renaissance Lake Berryessa"

Lake Berryessa News: November 10, 2023: The Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program, dubbed "Renaissance Lake Berryessa" ... Lake Berryessa News: December 10, 2023.

Reader's Letter to the Supervisors: November 20, 2023 "Renaissance Lake Berryessa - Revitalization Overdue - I write in support of Renaissance Lake Berryessa and its efforts to revitalize a long dormant valuable asset of Napa County.