

Addendum 2. The Napa Register View

Reclamation to revamp lake shoreline: February 25, 2001

Nathan Crabbe

Hundreds of mobile home tenants will likely be evicted from Lake Berryessa by 2008, no matter who wins the political battle for control of shoreline resorts. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 2008 might have to cede management to a rival federal agency, the Bureau of Land Management, after poorly monitoring lakeside resorts for some 15 years. The BLM has police powers, while Reclamation does not. Reclamation created the reservoir by flooding the Berryessa Valley in the mid-1950s, but didn't take control of resorts until after more than 15 years of management by Napa County. Reclamation claims the county in that time let land and water in the area be degraded by mobile home parks. Reclamation officials acknowledge they have failed by allowing those parks to continue to dump sewage into the ground and lake.

Cleve Dufer, who oversees the resorts for Reclamation, said the agency must take a lion's share of the blame. The agency has inconsistently enforced its own contracts, Dufer said. Hoping to retain control, Dufer said, Reclamation over the next several weeks will conduct a media campaign to try to build support for correcting problems at current resorts. An independent study to be released later this year will make recommendations on the lake's future. Dufer said Reclamation is in a no-win situation in having to please resort managers, mobile home tenants and other government agencies. "On one hand, we're criticized for not being extreme enough. On the other hand, they say we're heavy handed," he said.

Steve Rodgers, also of Reclamation's Berryessa office, said he's worked for five other government agencies and has never seen anything like the situation. "It's the only place I've been where people ignore (regulations) and think they have the right to do so," Rodgers said. Dufer said Reclamation's enforcement agenda is largely influenced by the will of the local Congressional representative, currently U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena. Members of Thompson's office met with Dufer last week on the issue of Berryessa's future. Thompson first floated the idea of the BLM taking the reins from Reclamation when the resorts' 50-year contracts run out in 2008, said Rich Burns, field manager of BLM's Ukiah office. The office manages the 17,700-acre recreation area to the north of the lake.

The blueprint for the plan comes from Lake Havasu, a 45-mile-long Reclamation-created reservoir on the southern Colorado River in Arizona. The reservoir is also surrounded by a undeveloped recreation area and an adjacent resort. The resort includes the reconstructed London Bridge, moved from Great Britain in 1971, and the English Village, a multi-million dollar complex of shops, restaurants and lodging facilities. BLM manages both the resort and the undeveloped land. The deal works because BLM has the muscle Reclamation lacks, Burns said. It has law enforcement authority, he said, while Reclamation doesn't. Some current resort managers seem sure BLM will be eventually chosen to manage resorts.

Chuck Vaughn, manager of the Lake Berryessa Marina Resort, sees his resort in Berryessa's future regardless of what agency is in charge. "I think if you run a good, clean resort you're on sound footing," Vaughn said. Dufer said the area likely will undergo a dramatic transformation if Reclamation retains control. A shift to more open shoreline for camping and structures built for short-term use, such as lakeside cabins and hotels, is a possibility. Using the Havasu model, BLM

also seems likely to make the resorts live up to their name, rather than be used mainly as lakeside trailer parks. Vaughn said a resort such as his could make much more money by using choice beach property for cabins and camping. Reclamation also envisions increased revenue.

Dufer said resorts currently pay 2-4 percent franchise fees. That currently brings in about \$10 million per year in revenue, Dufer said. Reclamation believes a revamped Berryessa would be a much greater attraction to Bay Area residents. Dufer said more prominent federally managed recreations areas, such as Yosemite National Park, charge private resort owners up to 15 percent fees. BLM said it would require a huge federal investment to correct sewage and other problems and transform the area. If BLM is picked for the task, he said, it would need a substantial Congressional allocation to make it work.

Dufer said Reclamation has no choice but to take more responsibility over the land surrounding reservoirs it created as it runs out of rivers to dam and its reason for existence. The only thing certain, no matter which agency manages Berryessa, is that major change is afoot. Dufer said a variety of health and safety regulations the current resorts have avoided following through grandfathering would be required in new contracts. He said regulations restricting structures built in the flood plain alone will wipe out more than 40 percent of the almost 1,500 mobile homes on the lake. New requirements for more loosely spaced mobile homes will eliminate even more trailers, he said. "The no change option is really not an option," Dufer said.

Report says Berryessa better off without trailers: November 9, 2003

Gabe Friedman

A new environmental impact report on Lake Berryessa concludes that the best thing for the lake would be the removal of all 1,300-plus trailers near the shoreline to make way for park amenities and to restore the natural environment.

A separate economic feasibility study by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation concludes that removing the trailers under the preferred scenario leaves many uncertainties about who would use the lake in the future.

The Bureau's environmental report was released last week and offers four scenarios on how the lake would be affected if new resort facilities were built. "The main thing is that what you're building is in demand," said Cleve Dufer, the concessions manager at Lake Berryessa. "The bottom line is that it has to be financially feasible or we can't do it."

Currently, the seven resorts on federal land around Lake Berryessa, which lodge more than 1,300 trailers and mobile homes occupied on a seasonal basis, have 50-year leases that are set to expire in 2008 and 2009. The Bureau of Reclamation plans to redevelop the recreational areas around the lake to better suit the interests of the public. Dufer has said that the public's recreational preferences have changed over the years and that public access to Lake Berryessa could be improved.

But trailer owners are campaigning vigorously against the Bureau's proposal to remove the trailers because they say it will spoil the lake's role as a revenue generator. Napa County officials have said that the occupancy tax revenues generated by the trailers do not necessarily pay for the costs of maintaining roads and other infrastructure around the lake.

The fight against the plan to redevelop the recreation areas on the Lake Berryessa shoreline is only just heating up. A group of trailer owners, calling themselves Task Force 7, traveled to Washington, D.C., in September and presented the Bureau with 10,000 signatures of people who support keeping trailers at the lake. Task Force 7 has also been meeting with congressmen around the state, telling them that they oppose the Bureau's "visitor service plan" to redevelop the recreation areas, according to Peter Kilkus, one of Task Force 7's assistant directors.

The trailers renting space around the lake present "an economic model that makes sense," said Kilkus, a trailer owner who resides in San Anselmo. "Take a look at the situation, fix it where you need to", he said.

But Napa County officials say that even with the occupancy tax revenues that the trailers generate, there is no economic return for the county under the current situation. Another hit against the trailers is the Bureau's national policy that bans the type of "exclusive use" of public property that is enjoyed by the private trailer owners at Lake Berryessa, according to Dufer. He also said that the trailers have not been kept up properly, and at various times have been in violation of health and safety codes.

The economic study of Lake Berryessa's current recreation areas notes that six of the seven resorts "are in generally poor condition and in violation of various safety codes," including "excessive congestion in long-term trailer" areas. The bureau's preferred option would clear the lakeshore of trailers. The lake's new recreation areas would then be developed and managed by one private owner as one resort. The contract to manage the lake would extend for 20 years.

Another scenario would also eliminate the trailers, but would shift some of the management of the recreation areas from a single private commercial vendor to the Bureau of Reclamation. It also expands the amount of area on the lake available exclusively to non-motorized watercraft.

Two of the Bureau's four Lake Berryessa scenarios would allow for trailers. One would allow the recreation areas to remain in their current state. Another would call for all the current trailers to be removed, but then allow some trailers, if adequately spaced apart, in areas away from the shoreline. Dufer said that these two alternatives are the least preferred scenarios because they conflict with policies already set by the Bureau. The other two scenarios do not conflict with any policies, he said.

Carol Kunze, chair of the local Sierra Club and founder of the Association of Napa Communities for Lake Berryessa, has argued that if the trailers are removed from the shoreline, a trail system around the lake could be developed. Kunze said current recreational opportunities around the lake are dominated by those individuals who can afford to purchase a trailer or know someone who owns one. She has criticized the Bureau for not leaving open enough space on the lake for activities such as hiking or kayaking.

Trailer owners offer own blueprint for the future: December 11, 2003

Gabe Friedman

A group of trailer owners at Lake Berryessa are firing back at federal regulators, drafting and promoting their own plan to re-develop the seven resorts on federal lands around the shoreline. The residents wrote the plan in response to the Bureau of Reclamation's four recently revealed

plans for the area, three of which favor removing at least some of an estimated 1,300 trailers from the shoreline.

The Lake Berryessa Visitors Service Planning Taskforce, as the group calls itself, expects to publish a draft of the plan this week, director Peter Kilkus said. The group's plan allows the resorts to remain as they are, expands access to day hikers and overnight campers, and makes some improvements to the infrastructure. The plan clashes with the bureau's policy barring trailers from occupying public land. For this reason, the group is hoping to remove the bureau from the planning process.

"We want to create a plan that doesn't assume that the bureau will be in control," said Kilkus, who said his group is exploring various other options to push its agenda. The name of the plan, 'Alternative A +' is a play on one of the bureau's four proposed plans released in a draft environmental impact statement in November. The bureau's 'Alternative A,' the least disruptive plan for the mobile home users, allows the trailer parks to stay. But the other bureau proposals call for removal of most or all of the trailers.

The Lake Berryessa Visitor Services Planning Taskforce's plan allows the trailers to remain, but Kilkus said that undeveloped federal lands could be cleared for new campsites, trails and other recreational amenities under his group's plan. Once the trailer owners' re-development plan is completed, it will be presented to the Napa County Board of Supervisors. The supervisors could re-zone Lake Berryessa as a recreation district and remove control of the process to re-develop the shoreline from the bureau, Kilkus said.

Kilkus acknowledges the idea may seem extreme. "Why don't they (supervisors) just take it over? I think a society knows how to run that type of thing," he said. "The other thing is why not make it a city? I'm talking of radical ideas here."

A group of Napa County residents led by Carol Kunze, executive director of the Sierra Club, is opposed to "Alternative A-plus" because it doesn't provide for the creation of enough hiking trails and recreation around the lake. Kunze's group, the Association of Napa Communities for Lake Berryessa, supports opening a trail around the entire lake, removing trailers and barring motorized watercraft from some parts of the lake. The group plans to forward its own plan to the bureau. Kilkus calls the rival group's ideas "ridiculous." "This is a boating lake. It's not a picnic lake," said Kilkus. "On a boat, there's miles of shoreline you can use. I think it's overstated that there's this demand."

His group has already traveled to Washington, D.C., to inform top-level officials at the Bureau of Reclamation that there is strong support for the trailer parks around the Berryessa shoreline. As evidence, he says he has more than 11,000 signatures... The taskforce also held meetings with members of Congress to try and persuade a lawmaker to help save the trailers. In 1989, Congress approved a measure giving the trailer park resorts the option of two 10-year extensions on leases, which will expire in 2008 and 2009. Kilkus said he hopes new lease extensions will be issued to the trailer park resorts.

The report will also be submitted to the bureau, which is accepting comments about how the lake should be developed. In the period since trailers were moved onto the shoreline, the bureau has adopted a policy prohibiting long-term exclusive use of federal recreational land. Local bureau officials said there are many reasons why the trailers must be removed. The current resorts, dominated by trailer parks, have failing infrastructure, a shortage of opportunities for overnight

and day hikers, poor access in case of emergency situations, fire hazard risks, sewer spill concerns, and a lack of access for the handicapped.

Kilkus said his plan addresses many of these concerns. Even under the bureau's 'Alternative A,' the trailers would still have to be removed and then replaced so that infrastructure at the resorts could be improved and brought up to code, according to Cleve Dufer, who manages the resorts for the bureau. The logical time to do this is when the leases expire in 2008 and 2009, he said.

Kilkus accuses the bureau of being "intellectually dishonest" with the public about plans to remove trailers from the Berryessa shoreline. The bureau failed to meet the spirit of the National Environmental Protection Act by limiting public involvement, he said.

Steve Rodgers, the bureau's park manager at Lake Berryessa, pointed out that all of his agency's public outreach is detailed in the draft environmental impact statement. It began in March 2001, with a public information session at the Solano County Fairgrounds that was attended by 500 people. Public involvement continued with a newsletter to trailer owners and also included a comment log posted on the Internet, he said.

"I just think that people don't understand that the bureau's plan is a radical plan to destroy everything and start from scratch," said Kilkus. "I'm not a conspiracy theorist ... (but) this whole process with the Bureau of Reclamation has been an obsession almost to remove the trailers."

Just as Kilkus questions the bureau's motives, his group has ruffled feathers at the bureau. On the Bureau of Reclamation Web site, the Lake Berryessa Visitors Services Plan Taskforce has been called "deceptive" for claiming it is a CRMP - a coordinated resource management and planning organization — the technical term for a group that represents the consensus of all stakeholders. The bureau says the taskforce is actually "a proposal created by a special interest group of long-term trailer permittees." "We are a CRMP," said Kilkus "No, we haven't met all the requirements of a CRMP, but legally we are a CRMP."

The bureau, however, continues to work with the group. They are also making efforts to reach Napa County residents by holding another public meeting at the Napa Expo Center on Jan. 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Crowd tells feds not to move Berryessa trailers: January 22, 2004

Gabe Friedman

A public hearing on the plan to redevelop the Lake Berryessa's shoreline drew about 150 people to the Solano County Fairgrounds Wednesday afternoon, most voicing opposition to the Bureau of Reclamation's proposal to remove trailers from the shoreline. Currently in draft form, the Bureau's plan recommends removing the 1,300 trailers currently clustered along the lakeshore when resort leases expire at the end of the decade.

In protest, many trailer and mobile home owners urged the Bureau to support their own proposal, called "Alternative A+." A+ supporters dominated the 50-plus speakers at the afternoon hearing, though at least two people voiced support for the removal of mobile homes. Another three-hour session was scheduled to take place last night.

The Lake Berryessa Visitors Service Planning Task Force, one of the groups backing the mobile home owners, printed hand-held signs emblazoned "A+." Audience members raised the signs every few minutes to support their speakers. "What you're doing is unfair," mobile home owner Gail Henneberry told Bureau officials. "You sit at a desk and design our lives away without any remorse...because of you, I will lose my investment."

The Bureau's plan to redevelop the lake's shoreline and remove the trailers emerged from recent federal policy changes that prohibit long-term exclusive use of federal lands. Officials also say the resort facilities are in poor condition and that public recreation needs have changed since the resorts were developed in the early 1960s. Napa County officials have also indicated that providing services such as infrastructure improvements and law enforcement is a burden on the county coffers.

However, mobile home owners told Bureau officials that they had formed many fond memories over the years at the lake. They said their childhood experiences around the lake had taught them to appreciate and take care of the area, while short-term users did not have the same experience.

Many speakers also questioned whether a shoreline without mobile homes would be economically feasible in the slow winter months, when camping would not be a popular draw. Other speakers criticized the Bureau's analysis of the impacts that would ensue if all 1,300 trailers were removed from the shoreline.

Mark Randazzo, a mobile home owner from San Jose, said that he took vacation time to attend the hearing. Randazzo said that his main reason for attending was to try and express to Bureau officials that some type of compromise could be reached so that mobile homes could remain on the shoreline.

Bureau officials recorded all comments and will respond when the final version of the plan to redevelop the lake is released in early fall. The Bureau's Cleve Dufer said that for the most part, the meeting went as Bureau officials expected, and "those that have the vested interest are the ones that seem to be here."

Residents debate Berryessa's future: January 11, 2004
Carlos Villatoro

On a typical kayaking trip at Lake Berryessa, Napa resident John Kent takes his share of spills. Jet Skis and other personal water crafts often stand in Kent's way of enjoying this aquatic activity. "It's really wonderful, but not when a 10-inch wave is headed for you" Kent said about being in the water. "I'd feel better out in the (San Francisco) Bay." Now, Kent and other local residents may get a chance to change the way things are done at the lake.

The Bureau of Reclamation hosted an informational seminar Saturday at the Napa Valley Expo Center to show local residents how they can put in their two cents' worth about the way the shoreline will be redeveloped after contracts involving the lake's seven resorts and 1,300 mobile homes expire in 2008-09.

Four courses of action were outlined at the seminar.

Alternative A — the No Action Alternative — would do nothing to address the expiring contracts.

Alternative B is heavily favored by the bureau, said Jeffrey McCracken, public affairs director for the Bureau of Reclamation. It would permanently remove all private exclusive-use trailer sites and provide increased short-term use opportunities, including camp sites; RV sites; cabins and other overnight accommodations; food and beverage outlets; retail stores; expansions of water speed zones and development of an intricate trail system around the lake.

Alternative C is the same as B, but would reintroduce a minimal number of long-term exclusive sites and remove all existing trailers and infrastructure. Hefty health, safety and environmental standards would be applied by the bureau.

Alternative D is also similar to B, with the exception that the bureau would manage more of the services for the public and the number of traditional commercial services would be reduced.

Kent said that the lake is big enough for everyone to enjoy. He is confident that one of the bureau's alternatives would work, yet still has to review which one of the plans he likes, he said. Other people don't like any of the bureau's proposals.

A group made up of existing Berryessa mobile home owners, dubbing themselves the Lake Berryessa Visitor Service Planning Task Force, or Task Force 7, were at the seminar in full force, touting their own plan Alternative A+.

"The mobile homes can co-exist with the camping," said Ron Rusher, a Newark resident who owns a mobile home at the lake. "If they force the homes out, the mobile homes will be put in Dumpsters." His wife Diane Rusher agreed and added that the bureau can clean up the lake without having to kick them out of their home.

"You don't have to uproot 1,300 people to do this. It's ridiculous," she said. "If they were doing their job, the conditions wouldn't exist," Ron Rusher said. "The bureau has allowed the concessionaires to (let) the park go downhill."

The task force's proposal, in short, is much like the bureau's Alternative B plan, except that it lets all the mobile homes stay where they are. McCracken said that the ultimate decision on what plan gets enacted will fall on a regional director at the bureau. All plans will be considered, he said.

Lake Berryessa trailer owners hire lobbyists: July 26, 2004
Gabe Friedman

For months, Peter Kilkus has led a group of Lake Berryessa trailer owners arguing that it would be an economic mistake to remove the 1,300 trailers from Lake Berryessa's seven lakeside resorts, something the federal government may try to do in the coming years. Now the trailer owners, in the forms of Kilkus' Task Force Seven, and a new group that represents owners of six of the seven resorts called the Citizens to Protect Lake Berryessa, have hired two lobbyists to fight for their cause in Washington.

Marc Kelley, an Oregon-based lobbyist who has registered with the federal government to lobby on issues including federal forestry laws and the California tiger salamander, and Santa Rosa-based Carolyn Wasem will represent the trailer owners as they try to convince the Bureau of Reclamation to reconsider tentative plans for the lake.

The Bureau is considering a range of scenarios for the lake when current resort leases come up in 2008 and 2009, from leaving the lake as it is to removing all trailers and building a hotel and overnight cabins. Nothing will be finalized until after November, but the proposal to remove the trailers has produced a vigorous response from the current users. The economic argument about the lake's future centers on the Dornbusch report, a study done for the Bureau in October that found clearing the trailers and offering other alternatives for lake users would be economically sound.

But Kelley said he believes the report miscalculated how many people would visit the lake if there weren't any trailers there. "We're going to take the Dornbusch report and have it peer reviewed" by a Ph.D. economist, said Kelley. "It looks to me like they made some fairly radical assumptions ... (about) what the demand will be." Kelley said he wants to make sure that the Bureau's redevelopment plan is feasible for prospective developers, and that the federal government does end up subsidizing a company to redevelop the lake.

Kilkus said the message to the Bureau is, "Let's look at (Alternative) A+," Task Force Seven's proposal to allow trailer owners to continue renting space for their vacation homes at the federal resorts. "A step prior to that is to convince people that (the Bureau's) plan is so flawed, it doesn't make any economic sense," he said.

The Bureau stands by the report, though. Jeff McCracken, a spokesman for the Bureau, said taking the risk of having the government subsidize private developers is "not how we operate. If we sign a contract with a concessionaire, it would be up to them to invest money." McCracken added that several major companies that operate recreation areas at dams around the western U.S. have contacted the Bureau without being solicited, expressing interest in the operating resorts at Lake Berryessa under a new redevelopment plan. "Legally ... there is nothing that requires us to have a cost-benefit analysis," said McCracken, "but we did it and it came out feasible."

Under the current setup at the lake, there are seven resorts on federal land that rent out space where privately-owned trailers can be parked. Private operators run the resorts, which have 50-year leases to the land. But with the exception of one resort, these leases expire in 2008 and 2009. With expiration nearing, the Bureau is studying ways to redevelop the lake that will draw new visitors. The Bureau has made it clear that the purpose of the redevelopment is to open up access to the lake's shoreline and its surrounding area. Bureau officials say the nearly 1,300 private trailers clustered on the shoreline are inappropriate for public land.

When a decision is reached by the Bureau on how to redevelop Lake Berryessa, it will be put out to bid to interested parties. At that time, the seven current resort operators can also bid for a lease, but they will not be given preferential treatment, according to the Bureau.

Kelley said he also plans to challenge the Napa County Board of Supervisors' assertion that Lake Berryessa represents a \$1 million drain on county resources each year. "They're going to have to show us to the penny what they're spending it on," said Kelley. But the answers may already be out there. Michael Stoltz, a principal management analyst for Napa County, said that in the current budget year, Lake Berryessa represents an \$836,000 hole in the local budget.

He said he would provide information to Kelley showing that the total revenues collected by the county from Lake Berryessa amount to \$390,000, including \$270,000 in grants from the state. But the lake costs the county \$1.26 million, primarily due to the cost of the sheriff's office services,

and for fire protection and ambulance service. Supervisor Mark Luce, chair of the board, said that making public the accounting information Kelley wants to see, "is not only possible ... it's already been done."

Kelley said he would be fighting the Bureau on an issue related to infrastructure at the site. Although, the resorts lease the land from the Bureau, the resort owners have built bathrooms and other structures on the sites, which are considered their property. The Bureau argues that the resort owners are responsible for removing this property at the end of the leases. Many of the bathrooms and sewage systems are in poor condition and need too much work to be desirable, according to the Bureau.

Mobile home people challenge feds re economy: December 9, 2004

Gabe Friedman

A new report commissioned by residents and mobile home park owners at Lake Berryessa faults the federal Bureau of Reclamation for suggesting that the economy around the lake could function without long-term trailer sites. Peter Kilkus, co-director of Task Force Seven, which represents trailer owners, and web master for Citizens to Protect Lake Berryessa, which represents owners of the long-term trailer resorts and other lake-area businesses, said the study proves that "long term (trailer) sites are a very important part of any business model for Lake Berryessa going forward."

By next year, Kirk Rodgers, regional manager for the bureau, is expected begin a review of alternatives regarding shoreline redevelopment. He will then select one from among the several Bureau of Reclamation plans put forward. The Bureau has already announced its preference for a scenario that develops the shoreline with a hotel, cabins, RV sites, a marina and tent sites, but not long-term vacation trailers.

At least three other local groups have taken an interest in the Bureau's redevelopment plans. Carol Kunze, director of Berryessa Trails and Conservation, criticized the report sponsored by CPLB and TF7. "This economic report is a self-serving document," she said. "The entrenched status quo interests who oppose redevelopment paid for these economists to write a report supporting their point of view."

The trailer owners and lakeshore business interests selected Adam and Michael Summers to do the economic study. Adam Summers holds an masters in economics, and is currently a visiting policy analyst at the Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank. Michael Summers, who holds a Ph.D. in management science, is a business professor at Pepperdine University. They did not respond to requests for an interview.

The 45-page report states that there is uncertainty about what recreational demand for the lake will be like without long term trailers on the shoreline. Trailers have been there since the lake was formed roughly 50 years ago. It concludes that the presence of 1,300 trailers on the shoreline "can only enhance the future economic health of the lake ... (and) is absolutely crucial."

The report did not examine the expenses taxpayers incur from the lake currently. Napa County government officials released a study earlier this year showing that local taxpayers incur at least \$700,000 in net cost annually to support services on and around the lake, including police and fire.

The new report also raises the issue of who will pay to remove the unwanted structures resort owners built on the shoreline. Bureau officials say that resort owners are legally responsible. Kelley has threatened to challenge the bureau in court and make it pay for the full cost of removing any unwanted structures when the resorts' leases expire. Many of the structures do not meet current codes, and the bureau has said some will likely need to be removed.

The report also includes a reference to an executive order made by President George W. Bush. The order calls for "cooperative conservation" regarding use of Bureau of Reclamation land. The report suggests this means that "greater consideration" must be given to the "interests of concessionaires (resort owners) and/or trailer owners." McCracken said that the Bureau would review and respond to the report. "We're trying to meet their needs," he said.

Berryessa trailer owners score a victory: February 20, 2005
Gabe Friedman

An aggressive lobbying effort by trailer owners at Lake Berryessa paid off this week with a victory in the battle over the future of the lake's shoreline. On Wednesday, the Bureau of Reclamation announced it is reopening the public comment period on its draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Lake Berryessa Visitors Service Plan — a study of plans to redevelop the shoreline in 2008 and 2009. The move means a delay in the final decision on the lake, and indicates that people who oppose removing the trailers from the shoreline entirely are gaining an ear in Washington. The comment period has been extended until Mar. 1.

"We're the ones who wanted this to happen," said Peter Kilkus, co-director of Task Force Seven, a group representing trailer owners at Lake Berryessa. Kilkus said he will organize businesses in the Lake Berryessa area to submit comments in favor of keeping the trailers on the shoreline. "We're going to see how many comments we can get in," he said.

The final Environmental Impact Statement originally was due out this month and the original deadline to submit comments passed about 10 months ago. Before it can release the report, the Bureau had to write responses to the 2,400 people who submitted comments. When the comment period closed last April, after two extensions, the Bureau said that it had received more than 2,400 comments. It also said that the comments — which guide the Bureau in its decision on how to develop the shoreline — came mostly from people who wanted the vacation home trailers removed or else some type of change to the current setup.

Kilkus and Task Force Seven immediately challenged the Bureau's assessment of the letters. Kilkus pledged to fight the Bureau to reopen the comment period, and the Bureau conceded this week.

"What's happened most recently is we've had a series of ongoing meetings with people representing the trailer owners," said Mike Finnegan, a Folsom-based area manager for the Bureau. "The bottom line is the dialogue had developed to an extent that we thought it was more appropriate to have it in the public dialogue rather than offline."

Last July, Kilkus hired two lobbyists to meet with Bureau officials in Washington D.C., Sacramento and elsewhere around the country. In October, Kilkus' group commissioned Adam and Michael Summers, a father-and-son team with degrees in economics-related fields to analyze a 2003

Bureau financial study, known as the Dornbusch Report. The Summers' analysis challenged a 2003 Bureau study, which had found that a lakeshore without trailers would be profitable. The Summers Report said the Bureau's study used a flawed economic analysis, and that trailers are a vital part of a resort's revenue stream.

The Dornbusch Report was an incomplete analysis, Adam Summers said, and it contradicted earlier Bureau reports. Also, removing trailers would require shutting down the lake for two years, which would sacrifice a lot of revenue for the government, Summers said. About a month ago, the Bureau responded that it is the Summers Report that used a flawed economic analysis, according to Kilkus. The Bureau said it could not release its response to the public yet.

The lake, which costs taxpayers more than \$4 million annually, is highly subsidized. Napa County government officials estimate that it costs the county more than \$700,000 annually for support services such as fire, police and road maintenance. The Bureau said it costs \$3.8 million to \$4 million to oversee Lake Berryessa, though the resorts only generated \$375,000 for the federal treasury in 2003.

Summers said he hadn't studied the Bureau's Berryessa budget, but he believes, based on observations in other places, that user fees at the lake could supply its budget. When the contracts expire in 2008 and 2009, there may be a way for the federal government to obtain "partial reimbursement" for their costs from the resort owners, he said. Napa County may be able to get more appropriations from the federal government to pay for its costs, he said.

As of last week, Kilkus said Task Force Seven and its two lobbyists had been pushing Bureau officials to reopen the comment period so that the Summers Report could be included as a comment. Despite meeting with Bureau officials in various offices around the country, their efforts had not been fruitful, he said. Task Force Seven had scheduled a meeting with Folsom Bureau officials for last week, but it was canceled, Kilkus said. The Folsom officials instead traveled to the main office of the Bureau of Reclamation in Washington, D.C. where they decided to re-open the comment period, according to Kilkus. "From what I understand, it's highly unusual for them to reopen it, so there must have been something in (our report) that made them go 'hmm,' and re-open it," said Adam Summers.

Mike Finnegan, the Bureau's Area Manager in Folsom, said that it was a "corporate decision," adding that the Bureau wanted to err on the side of giving a comment period of sufficient length. Said Finnegan, "Part of the value of re-opening the comment period is not only that we see the (Summers) Report, but that the general public have a chance to see what we're receiving."

Trailers ousted from lake: June 7, 2006

Julissa Mckinnon

After five years of public hearings and intense debate, the Bureau of Reclamation announced Tuesday, June 6, 2006 that 1,300 privately owned trailers at Lake Berryessa have to go. The federal agency's record of decision aims to reshape 12 miles of the lake's most prime shoreline by ousting the trailers that have dominated seven lakeside recreational resorts for decades. The new "Lake Berryessa Visitor Services Plan" sets new standards for lakeside vacation lodging, barring trailers but allowing RV and tent-camping, cabins, motels and hotels, among other permanent structures.

Reciting the bureau's long-held position, spokesman Jeff McCracken said the lake plan's goal is to "open the reservoir to the broader general public for more short-term use." Areas closest to the water's edge will be reserved for day-use, and those higher up divided into zones for overnight and long-term use. Although the government has established parameters for future lake use, what Berryessa looks like in 10 years "will be up to private enterprise," McCracken said. The federal agency is determining the future management of the seven lakeshore resorts through a public bidding process that will begin as soon a request for business proposals is completed, McCracken said.

Meanwhile, trailer owners must remove their vacation mobile homes by 2008 and 2009, when contracts with six of the resorts expire. While many trailer owners say they were anticipating the bureau's ouster, news of the decision was a heartbreaker for families who have long known Lake Berryessa as their summer getaway. "We didn't just buy a mobile home, we bought the dream of someplace to bring your children, grandchildren, and children after that," said Sidney Silberberg who works as a fishing guide at the lake when he's not helping out at his son's video store.

"It's a devastation to our family and our family relations. This is the place that family becomes family because everyone is under one roof and you make the ties of a lifetime more comfortably for that day, that weekend, or that three-day weekend," said Silberberg as he recalled jet-skiing and fishing with his wife, son, daughter-in-law, daughter and friends.

The bureau's decision translates not only into an emotional but also a significant financial loss for Silberberg. He said 10 years ago the \$25,000 trailer by the lake was the only summer home his family could afford. After pouring in about \$75,000 to re-carpet, re-roof and "re-everything" over the years, Silberberg said he wished he'd accepted a \$175,000 offer someone made him for the trailer four years ago. Now with the trailer's fate sealed, Silberberg doubted anyone would pay more than \$2,000 for it.

According to the record of decision, "recreation was not a purpose of the project as originally authorized; nonetheless public visitation began almost immediately" after the lake came into being with the completion of Monticello Dam in 1957. The Bureau of Reclamation, in conjunction with Napa County, awarded seven concession contracts in 1958 and 1959 to manage recreation at the lake for the next 30 years. Resort contracts have been renewed and slightly altered in subsequent years.

Carol Kunze, an environmental advocate who heads Berryessa Trails and Conservation and has pushed for more trails and "passive" uses of the lake, expressed satisfaction with the decision. "The most rewarding part is today — finally getting a decision that will allow the public to have access to the lake's entire shoreline," Kunze said. "The most difficult part was just the whole controversy. It seems like such a plain and simple issue: It's public land and the public should have access, but the status quo interests wanted to keep their sites."

Trailer owners weren't the only people dismayed by the bureau's break away from the status quo. Sharyn Simmons, owner of Cucina Italiana restaurant, moved from Napa to the Berryessa Highlands subdivision five years ago. She said during the two-plus years she's run her lakeside business, trailer owners have formed the majority of her returning customers.

"It's the weekend people, the one-shot wonders, who come up here on the weekends and trash the place because it's not their own," Simmons said. "Why in the world would you ask the people who have been the stewards up here, living here year-round, and visiting every month or two

months, to leave? We're talking second and third generations by now." Simmons said she hopes the fight is not over. "My only hope is they keep it litigated for the next 10 years."

Year-round use of the trailers is a widespread practice, despite being prohibited under existing concession contracts. The record of decision acknowledges this and will try to accommodate full-time dwellers who experience hardship relocating. "Some retired, elderly individuals have occupied trailers continuously for several years. ... Reclamation will seek to identify and accommodate legitimate hardship cases expeditiously," the record of decision states.

Resorts begin to close, owners angry, future grim: June 10, 2008

by Jennifer Huffman

Normally by this time of year, Rancho Monticello Resort at Lake Berryessa would be gearing up for months of family fun. Instead, owner Bob White is packing up and preparing to close shop. His contract to run the facility expires June 15. White is one of four lake concessionaires given deadlines from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to end operations and move out over the next three months. Lake Berryessa, which hosts an estimated 1.5 million visitors each year for boating, water skiing, camping and more, is in for a very different kind of summer. "The whole lake is in limbo," said White.

The closures stem from a June 2006 decision by the Bureau ordering the removal of approximately 1,300 privately owned trailers from the seven lakeside resorts. All of the contracts to run the resorts, 50-year deals between the federal government and the concessionaires that expire over the next several months, were put up for bid. In April, federal authorities awarded Arizona-based Pensus Group the contracts to operate five concessions at the lakeshore. But as of this week, Pensus hasn't signed any contracts, leaving many resort owners wondering when, or if, new facilities will open.

Bureau of Reclamation officials are confident the deal with Pensus will be struck soon, and the lake will begin to take on new life with updated facilities and operations. "We're working very hard with Pensus to get a contract signed as soon as possible," said Pete Lucero, acting public affairs officer for the Bureau of Reclamation in the mid-Pacific region. But Lucero was not optimistic about completing one by June 15.

"The next (deadline) is July 13," he said. "We are hoping to hit that date to have a contract in place. We are trying to make this as smooth a transition as possible, but there are a lot of issues to deal with in a contract like this."

Lucero said the Bureau sees a "bright future" for the lake, with a wider range of overnight amenities, access to the lakeshore and recreational opportunities. Jeremy Crofts, vice president with the Pensus Group in Arizona, said, "We are currently in negotiations with the Reclamation on that project and as a result are unable to comment on anything. We're hoping to have a contract settled as soon as possible."

Without new contracts, visitors are unable to make reservations beyond the end dates of the present contracts for four out of the seven area resorts: Putah Creek, Rancho Monticello, Spanish Flat and the Berryessa Marina. "There may be some reduced level of overnight camping and RV sites because of the potential closure of the four west side resorts," said Lucero.

“However, Reclamation is working on a plan to provide some expanded amenities at their own managed facilities at Oak Shores and Camp Berryessa as well as working with the three existing contractors (with) contracts that don’t expire this summer — Steele Park Resort, Markley Cove Resort and Pleasure Cove Resort — to provide additional overnight recreational opportunities,” he said. “We’re really working to try and minimize the disruption by trying to provide additional services at other locations.”

At Rancho Monticello, by this time of the year White would have normally booked 12,000 visitor days — or two-thirds of his summer season. But with his June 15 closure date, “We were only able to book a couple hundred,” said White. White’s afraid the new Pensus concessions will take years to develop. In the meantime, his resort is empty, “And it looks like a war zone,” he said. Forced to remove the longstanding trailers and other improvements, only concrete pads, posts, stairs and patios leading to nowhere remain. “There are a lot of unanswered questions” about the handover, said White.

He’d like to know who will pay for security for the property to prevent vandalism of his employee housing and other improvements after he moves out. Pensus was awarded the bid, he said, “but until they sign a contract with the Bureau they have no obligations.”

Lucero responded, “We are working on a strategy to provide some level of security for the property. It could include patrols, working with the existing concessionaires to provide their own security, or providing a security service. We need to determine what will fit best.”

White also expressed concern about his workers. “In the record of decision the Bureau promised preferences for current employees to be hired by the new (operators). But I have to remove all the employee housing,” said White. “Which means the employees will go away.” His biggest question is “When is (Pensus) going to sign?” White is also concerned that Pensus may delay signing a contract due to a lawsuit filed in federal court on behalf of four current concessionaires. “We would like a smooth transition and are not getting one,” said White. Lucero said unsigned contracts have “nothing to do” with the current resort owners’ lawsuit in Washington, D.C.

Rich Delaney, partner at Spanish Flat Resort, must shut down operations by July 13 and remove all his permanent facilities. “That is a monumental job,” he said, referring to buildings, roads, parking lots and a sewer treatment plant. “We’re scrambling around trying to answer the request,” he said. Delaney was also wishing for a smoother handover. “I’ve never seen anything quite as unorganized,” he said. “I would like to find our employees a job but at this point we don’t even know there will be a new operator.”

“People were not prepared. Maybe they didn’t really think it would come to this,” said Delaney. “It’s a fiasco,” said Spanish Flat Resort partner Jim Kenney. “The deal with the new concession owner should have been resolved a year ago. These negotiations should have been done prior to the fact, not after the termination date of the lease,” he said.

A summer closure “screwed us,” he said. With a number of new cabins — now 23 total — and 24 fishing tournaments planned, “This year would have been our best year,” said Kenney. Instead, “We are down to 30 trailers, from 200 and a waiting list.” If he hadn’t faced closure, Kenney estimated \$2.2 million in gross revenue for the year.

Instead, the resort has cut off reservations as of July 13. After that, “We don’t know what’s going to go on. Where else have you got a lake where you can go fishing, boating and camping, that’s within 90 minutes of the Bay Area?” asked Kenney. “A lot of this is just an absolute waste.” Lucero

said the bureau is working to handle all the concerns of the departing concessionaires, while also setting the stage for a revitalized lakeshore. Things will come into focus, he said, when the contract with the new operator is signed.

“Contractor-designees are coming in to make some major capital improvements and provide an expanded level of service and an unprecedented level of access to the general public,” said Lucero. “That development will take place over the course of the next few years with development beginning almost as soon as we have contracts signed.”

Season of uncertainty: April 19, 2009
by Kerana Todorov

Linda Frazier stands outside the Markley Cove store with her general manager Tom Wayman. Frazier has owned the resort with her husband John for about 22 years. Frazier is hopeful that she will be able to continue operating the resort, which is one of the few that remains open. Markley Cove Resort on the eastern side of Lake Berryessa attracts many boaters and fishermen. The resort operators are installing in small cabins which will be rented, allowing for overnight stays, this summer.

Putah Creek Park at Lake Berryessa is one of the more dilapidated resorts with many abandoned trailers on the site. The future of the resorts at Lake Berryessa is up in the air, with three resorts open at this time. On Thursday, under bright blue skies, fishermen’s boats headed in and out of Markley Cove Resort at Lake Berryessa. Motorcyclists and others stopped by the convenience store along Highway 128.

At least four of the seven privately-run resorts will be closed this summer as the transition from old operators to new has hit several bumps. The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation, which runs the lakeshore, had hoped to start a new era at the lake this year with the removal of more than 1,000 mobile homes from the lakeshore and the refurbishing of the resorts. But the bureau’s deals with new resort operators fell apart last month, when the bureau acknowledged it had mistakenly included improper clauses in the contracts. It will have to go out to bid again on all seven resorts. Bureau officials acknowledge that they have a lot of work to do to get Berryessa in full swing by 2010.

Complicating matters more, two of the old resort operators — at Berryessa Marina and Putah Creek — are in bankruptcy, and the facilities are visibly deteriorating. But other resorts are ship-shape and ready for summer. With the summer fast approaching, some would-be visitors are checking in to see what’s going on around the lake. Spanish Flat, Rancho Monticello Resort, Lake Berryessa Marina and Putah Creek Resort are not expected to open this year. The Bureau of Reclamation wants to open three other resorts — Markley Cove, Pleasure Cove and Steele Park — along with the more bare-bones, government-run beaches and sites.

The bureau’s contract error has fueled criticism from Berryessa-area residents and business owners. They are concerned about the viability of the lake economy with the transition going so slowly and unpredictably. The contract snafu surprised Linda and John Frazier, who have run Markley Cove for two decades. The couple bid successfully last year to continue to operate the resort near Monticello Dam. Frazier said she is moving forward with summer plans to remain. Staff have been hired, dozens of new boat slips have been built, the store has been re-stocked and she is waiting for the bureau to approve the overnight rates for her new cabins. “All we can do is continue to operate as though we’re going to be open,” Frazier said last week.

Napa County officials are making summer preparations, as well. They have set aside more than \$1 million to provide fire, police and ambulance service at the lake this year. Napa County Sheriff's Capt. John Robertson said patrols will work on land and on the lake, as in years past. The Pope Creek Bridge waterway will be closed on Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day weekends to prevent accidents and incidents that often result in arrests.

To help deal with the expected demand, Finnegan said the bureau plans to open as many as 100 campsites at Oak Shores Park, a public area, this year. Robertson said sheriff's deputies will patrol the campgrounds once they're open. Finnegan on Friday said the Bureau has made "good progress" on the revised negotiations with concessionaires. A prospectus for the concessions could be released by May 11; then bidders will have 90 days to send in proposals. Contracts could be signed by December, Finnegan said.

Meanwhile, the bureau is gearing up to sue the former concessionaires to force them to remove the evidence of their presence there, whether trash or building structures, that they've since left behind. When the new contracts are signed, he said, the operators will need a clean slate in order to build the businesses the way they want to. But Bob White, former concessionaire of Rancho Monticello Resort, said Saturday he will fight for what he brought to Rancho Monticello. He and his family are only protecting the investment they made, he said. "We're still there," he said. "We'll be happy to defend ourselves in court."

Bureau names top bidder for Berryessa resorts: January 14, 2010
by Kerana Todorov

Pensus Group won the bureau's nod for all six of the resorts where concession contracts are up for bid — Markley Cove, Putah Creek, Lake Berryessa Marina, Spanish Flat, Steele Canyon and Rancho Monticello. The bureau already has a separate deal in place with another firm for operation of the seventh resort along the lake, Pleasure Cove. Most of the resorts were closed last summer in what was an economically disastrous year at the lake. The transition from the old resorts, in which more than 1,500 mobile homes occupied shoreline sites, to one where the trailers are gone and a wider range of amenities will be open to the public, has been bogged down in litigation and contracting errors.

This week, bureau officials were optimistic that the identification of a leading bidder will lead to preparation for more resorts and facilities to be open later this year. "Our objective is to provide enhanced recreational services this summer," Mike Finnegan, area manager for the Bureau of Reclamation, said, declining to be more specific. Finnegan emphasized that the identification of the top bidder is not the same as the signing of the contract. He said the bureau's goal is to get the contract signed by the end of March so the winning bidder can get to work preparing facilities for summer. However, he said, "Nothing is final until we sign the contract."

Finnegan gave a general overview of Pensus' bid. The six resorts will offer a range of facilities, including hotel rooms, cabins, camping and RV sites. Several resorts will have marinas and all will feature boat launches, he said. The bureau also requires that the next operator of Steele Park Resort will pay into the financially-strapped water and sanitation district for residents of Berryessa Highlands, the Napa Berryessa Residential Improvement District.

The bureau began the revamping of the Berryessa lakeshore almost four years ago, as deals up to 50 years old to run marinas and resorts on federal land began to expire. After public hearings,

the agency decided to remove 1,500 trailers from the lakeshore and seek new long-term concession contracts. The decision drew bitter protests from mobile home owners and resort operators, and led to lawsuits in state and federal courts, all of which were decided in favor of the Bureau of Reclamation. Subsequently, the bureau went through, and then withdrew, a bidding process for the resorts because it made a mistake in the bid language. Most resorts were closed last year. The number of visitors to the lake dropped last summer, as did business in the region, creating tension between bureau officials and locals.

In 2009, the bureau re-launched the bidding process, and secured \$4.3 million in federal stimulus dollars to clean up abandoned property and detritus at the resorts. Finnegan said the bureau is removing abandoned trailers and more as the agency requires that all the old infrastructure at the resorts be hauled away. The new concessionaire is required to put in all its own equipment. "Buildings are coming down, concrete pads are being scraped up, picked up. Styrofoam docking — which has been breaking up all over the lake — is being dismantled and pulled up," he said. "There is a lot to do." The bureau has hired 25 area residents to work on clean-up crews, which have not yet reached all the resorts.

All in all, Finnegan said a new day is dawning at the lake. "After a very extensive process and unprecedented public input, we are on the verge of being able to restore access to the lake by the general public," he said. "That has not been the case over the past 50 years."

Peter Kilkus, a member of the Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce board, has been critical of the bureau. But in an e-mail Thursday, he said he was "very pleased that a decision has been made. "I believe the renewal of the Lake Berryessa resorts will be of great benefit to both the local community and to the large number of Lake Berryessa visitors who have been waiting for the chance to come back to the recreational jewel of Napa County," he wrote.

Property owners at Berryessa Highlands, a subdivision of 300 homes, saw their water and sewer increase by 83 percent in recent years, in part because the Steele Park Resort no longer paid into the district. That promises to change when a concessionaire signs on to take over the resort. Stu Williams, a homeowner, said, "Hopefully, our water and sewer rates are going to go back down."

One of the resorts — Rancho Monticello — remains in limbo. While the bureau has secured the legal right to clear out infrastructure and clean up abandoned property at most resorts, it remains in a dispute with the owners of Rancho Monticello. Finnegan said the federal Department of Justice is seeking to secure the right for the bureau to get into Rancho Monticello. Rancho Monticello operator Bob White said Thursday he plans to sue the bureau for the alleged unconstitutional taking of his property. When Pensus or another new concessionaire signs on to take over the resort, White said he will also sue that company for illegal conversion of his property. He said he received a letter from the Justice department last week. "They offered us a choice," he said. "We abandon the property or they declare us in trespass." However, White said, "We are still the owner of the facilities and cannot be in trespass."

White did not submit a bid to retain control of the resort. He said the bureau's insistence that all old infrastructure be replaced made it impractical. "Why would I bid to destroy \$27 million worth of assets and then put it back in?" The rules, White said, "were clearly designed to keep us disqualified and keep us from winning a bid."

Bureau officials have said the old boat ramps and structures at the lakeside resorts were unsafe and unusable. White also said the bureau had treated the operators of the Markley Cove resort

unfairly. John and Linda Frazier won a two-year bid to run Markley Cove last year, with options for two more years if they and the bureau both agreed.

White said he believed the bureau re-set the bidding process in part to replace the Markley Cove concessionaires. "I think they planned this whole thing just so they could take the award away from Markley Cove and give it to Pensus," White said. The bureau's Finnegan said Pensus made the best bid on all six resorts, and that the bureau would honor the two-year Markley Cove contract with the Fraziers.

Deal signed for six Berryessa resorts: April 29, 2010

by Bill Kisliuk

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced Thursday it had signed a 30-year contract with Pensus Lake Berryessa Properties to operate six resorts around Lake Berryessa. The move means the economy of the lake could pick up as services for visitors improve after a few rough years. Federal authorities and a private contractor have agreed on a new 30-year deal for operation of six resorts at Lake Berryessa, with the likelihood that limited services for boaters and campers will be in place this summer.

On Thursday, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced it had signed a 30-year contract with Pensus Lake Berryessa Properties, with a mutual option to extend the contract for an additional 10 years. Pensus, part of Arizona-based marina operator and commercial developer Pensus Group, will run the Markley Cove, Putah Creek, Lake Berryessa Marina, Spanish Flat, Steele Canyon and Rancho Monticello resorts.

For the next three years, Markley Cove will be run by current operator John C. Frazier III. The bureau already has a separate deal with Arizona-based Forever Resorts to run Pleasure Cove Marina. The announcement marks a milestone in a years-long effort to remake the lakeshore, which attracts an estimated 1.5 million people a year.

Federal officials decided several years ago, as previous long-term concessions to run Berryessa's resorts wound down, to remove more than 1,000 mobile homes from the seven resorts. Officials determined the mobile homes impeded broad public access to the lake and, in some cases, posed hazards and environmental problems.

The bureau's decision and related actions were challenged in court several times, with the bureau winning disputes with mobile home owners and former resort operators. The lawsuits delayed changes at the lake, as did abandonment of trailers and other property at the lake and a mistake the bureau made last year in putting together the bidding process for new resort operators.

The bureau withdrew the original bid request, sent the resort concessions up for bid again last year, notified the public that Pensus had won earlier this year and now has a signed contract in hand. Federal stimulus funds are helping to pay for removal of abandoned property. Pensus officials did not return calls and e-mails seeking comment Thursday. But bureau officials said they expect to work with Pensus to open limited public services at some of the resorts for the summer of 2010.

Pete Lucero, public affairs officer for the Bureau of Reclamation, said the bureau expects limited boat launching, camping and service facilities to be open this summer. Lucero said it is uncertain

which resorts will open, but that Pensus is likely to base its decisions on which ones have been restored and cleaned up most fully. Lucero said Spanish Flat and Putah Creek may fit that category.

The resort furthest from reopening, he said, is Rancho Monticello, where former concessionaire Bob White and the bureau have been locked in a legal dispute. In an e-mail, Lucero said, "At Rancho Monticello there is no pending litigation, and we are continuing to conduct cleanup activities on-site as we are at Putah, Lake Berryessa Marina, Spanish Flat and Steele Park."

Lucero said it is unlikely that Pensus will be able to install boat slips or offer fuel for power boats this summer, but will provide "some boating support system" at the lake. According to Lucero, the focus for now is to gear up to provide some services this summer, and that afterward the bureau and Pensus will outline detailed plans for the lake, which will include new boat launches, lodging and other services. "Once they get on board and start preparing for 2010 recreational season, then we'll get together with Pensus start looking at long-term scheme." Lucero said.

In a prepared statement, Pensus CEO David Maule-Ffinch said, "Pensus Group would like to thank Reclamation for the effort and commitment necessary to bring this complex transaction to fruition. The signing of this contract will now allow work to start on the improvement and expansion of services at Lake Berryessa. We anticipate a very successful public-private partnership in the best interests of the visiting public."

Berryessa Highlands residents and county officials have been concerned about whether Pensus, as operator of the Steele Park resort, will pay into an assessment to upgrade water and sewer facilities in the highlands. Lucero said the contract calls for Pensus to pay any required assessments to the county or the state. In addition to the seven privately-run resorts at Berryessa, the Bureau of Reclamation manages a government-run visitor and water education center at Berryessa, a boat launch ramp at Capell Cove, a hand-launch ramp at Eticuera Day Use Area, and picnicking, fishing, and swimming at the Oak Shores and Smittle Creek day-use areas. Limited camping will be available at Oak Shores this summer.

Feds terminate Pensus resort contract: December 7, 2012

by Peter Jensen

After months of speculation, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced that it has decided to terminate the contract of the company in charge of five of the seven resorts at Lake Berryessa. The federal agency announced the decision Friday afternoon, saying in a statement that Arizona-based Pensus Group will be ousted less than three years into its long-term contracts to redevelop the resorts, the backbone of the lake's recreation-based economy. Pensus was set to take over a sixth resort in 2013.

Following a mediation period between Pensus and the bureau over the summer, Don Glaser, the bureau's director for the mid-Pacific region, made the decision to terminate the company. He will explain his decision in a series of public meetings at the lake, in Napa, and in Winters next week. The bureau moved to terminate the contract earlier this year, alleging Pensus failed to perform to its terms and redevelop the resorts. Pensus signed the contract in April 2010.

"My decision was the result of a careful, deliberate process," Glaser said in a news release issued Friday. "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.”

At the meeting, Reclamation hopes to get feedback on how to develop plans for the 2013 recreation season and over the long term, said Louis Moore, a Reclamation spokesman. Moore said Pensus was notified Thursday of the decision. In a statement posted to its website Wednesday, Pensus wrote that it had not received any word from the bureau regarding the status of its contract, but stated that it wanted to continue to develop the resorts and perform on the contract.

Moore said Glaser will be leaving his Sacramento-based job soon to become an assistant to Reclamation Commissioner Michael Connor in Denver; he will be replaced by Deputy Commissioner David Murillo in January. Moore said the process for finding a permanent replacement for former Area Manager Mike Finnegan, who retired earlier this year after overseeing recreation at Lake Berryessa for several years, continues. Deputy Area Manager Drew Lessard is holding that job on an interim basis, Moore said.

Latest Berryessa resort rejuvenation effort fails: February 19, 2016

by Barry Eberling

Reclamation announced Friday that the latest effort to recruit new resort operators at Lake Berryessa had failed. Three bids were deemed inadequate. Once again, the quest to find companies to rebuild and operate five of the seven Lake Berryessa resorts on federal land has come up short. The Bureau of Reclamation announced Friday that it received three bids from California companies. But the agency deemed each bid failed to comply with at least one of the bid requirements concerning price, quality and other topics.

Each of the three bids was for one resort only – Berryessa Point, Monticello Shores and Steele Canyon recreation areas. No one bid on Spanish Flat and Putah Canyon recreation areas. Stakes are high for the eastern Napa County reservoir with a 165-mile shoreline. The resorts attract people to the lake and boost the local economy. In recent years, two of the five resorts have operated at full strength with marinas, three have operated in stripped-down versions and two have been closed.

Lake Berryessa resident Craig Morton is uncertain when the Bureau of Reclamation’s vision of five redeveloped resorts will come true. “It’s getting harder and harder to tell,” he said on Friday. “I think they need to listen to the local people more, rather than their people back East.” He noted that several years ago, the Bureau of Reclamation removed some of the boat launch ramps and other infrastructure at the resorts in preparation for redevelopment. “They’ve got to put more money in the game,” Morton said. “That means replacing the ramps they destroyed.”

Lake Berryessa resident Peter Kilkus has observed the resort redevelopment drama over the years. He didn’t find the latest turn of events encouraging. “A total, utter disaster,” Kilkus said. The Bureau of Reclamation could reissue its call for bids for all five resorts. Other options are to issue the prospectus for only certain resorts, change the required scope and duration for future contracts in the next prospectus or take another approach, an agency press release said.

The community will have a voice. The Bureau of Reclamation will hold a meeting on the Lake Berryessa resort situation at 5 p.m. March 2 at the Lake Berryessa Senior Center, 4380 Spanish Flat Loop Road. One thing the agency isn't considering is revising its 2006 master plan to redevelop the lake resorts. To do so would cause further delays, the press release said.

The Bureau of Reclamation began publicly talking about Lake Berryessa resort renovations about 15 years ago. In 2006, Bureau officials adopted a plan with the stated goal of making the lake's public land more accessible to short-term visitors.

Berryessa resorts at the time had about 1,300 trailers and mobile homes where people stayed for part of the year, as well as marinas and other uses. The Bureau of Reclamation's plan called for removing the trailers and emphasizing cabins, camp sites, lodges and RV sites. Most of the long-time resort concessionaire contracts expired in 2009. The Bureau that year began wiping clean several of the resort sites using \$4.4 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus money so the renovation effort could begin virtually from scratch.

In 2010, the Bureau of Reclamation chose Arizona-based Pensus to renovate and operate six resorts. But in 2012, it announced it had terminated the Pensus contract before the company had built the planned marinas, lodges cottages and restaurants. That led to a new search for resort operators that was supposed to culminate with awarding contracts in either late 2015 or early 2016. The timetable will now be extended.

Annual visitation to Lake Berryessa has dropped amid the long transition. The Bureau of Reclamation estimated about 1.5 million people visited when all seven resorts were at full strength, compared to 408,000 in 2014. But there will still be places for visitors to go in 2016. The Bureau of Reclamation operates Oak Shores, Smittle Creek and Eticuera day use areas and Capell Cove boat launch.

Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove resorts will offer marinas, boat launching, boat rentals and other services. Putah Canyon and Spanish Flat recreation areas under interim contracts will offer camping and other uses. Morton noted the massive lake is still over half full, despite California's drought. Other California lakes such as New Melones east of Stockton have much lower water levels.

Earlier this month, Rep. Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena, reintroduced legislation in Congress to transfer management of Lake Berryessa recreation from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Bureau of Land Management. He called the Bureau of Land Management "the right agency" for the job. The Bureau of Reclamation press release said it will continue managing Lake Berryessa recreation

Bureau faces angry locals over Berryessa failures: March 3, 2016
by Barry Eberling

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation officials are trying to explain how the wheels fell off the latest Lake Berryessa resort redevelopment effort and how they might yet achieve elusive, long-sought success. They faced a packed room Wednesday evening in the Lake Berryessa Senior Center at Spanish Flat. But convincing dozens of skeptical people to keep the faith proved difficult. "The Bureau of Reclamation has destroyed a community and should pay to help rebuild it," Berryessa

resident Wesley Plunkett said. "Maybe you could get some (federal disaster) funds, because you made a disaster of it."

Bureau officials kept calm as they at times absorbed a verbal pummeling. They explained how they will continue searching for private concessionaires to redevelop and manage five of the lake's seven resorts, an effort that's been underway since 2008. For now, the lake's recreation scene remains in a long transition, with two resorts operating at full strength, three operating as stripped-down versions and two closed. The Bureau estimates annual visitation has dropped from 1.5 million to 408,000 during this process, though some lake residents say that latter figure is inflated.

"We want to make sure our next step is a good next step," agency Deputy Regional Director Pablo Arroyave told the crowd. "We understand the frustration." They got an earful of it. About seven years ago, the Bureau of Reclamation began leveling several of the resorts on federal land, removing the marinas and other features. But this start-from-scratch resort rebirth effort has stalled. The latest attempt ended with three companies each bidding to rebuild and run one resort, with two resorts receiving no bids. The Bureau deemed each bid as being "non-responsive" in at least one key area.

This marked the third time the agency sought bids since 2007. It selected three companies to run various resorts in 2008, but then aborted the effort over a contract language error. It awarded a contract to Pensus in 2010 to run six resorts, then canceled the contract in December 2012. "We've had three attempts," Berryessa resident Stu Williams said. "Each of them has been a failure. Because you did it enthusiastically, you want us to believe it's a success. I'm sorry, it's not a success." That last point ended up being something everyone could agree on.

"There is no success story here," Arroyave said. "What you hear is nothing more than a commitment from the Bureau of Reclamation to come back to this table as many times as needed to get it right." That didn't comfort Berryessa resident Carol Kunze. "You're sitting here saying, 'We're really committed.' Your commitment has done nothing for years," she said.

Emotions ran the gamut. "It's amazing how quiet and depressed it is here," Berryessa resident Evan Kilkus said at the beginning of the public comment session. "Everyone's just tired." The mood had grown livelier by the time Marcia Ritz, operator of the Spanish Flat Country Store & Deli, came to the microphone. Her business depends on tourists flocking to the lake. "First of all, you need to be angry," an emotional Ritz exhorted the crowd. "This has got to stop. Everything has failed. You need to be angry and let them know it. Otherwise, they won't do (anything.)"

Some people wanted the Bureau to turn Lake Berryessa recreation over to another agency, such as the National Park Service or Napa County. Napa County managed lake recreation in the 1960s as the resorts developed. Kunze pushed Bureau officials to explain why they deemed the three bids received this time around as non-responsive. But officials didn't reveal the identity of the bidders and stuck to generalities. Drew Lessard, agency Central California Area office manager, said he can't get into the specifics. That prompted a round of "Why not?" cries from the audience.

Wednesday's session also focused on options being considered by the Bureau of Reclamation. Agency officials will talk to the three bidders about why their bids were non-responsive. Then the Bureau could rebid the resort contracts quickly using the same prospectus that details bid requirements. "That is obviously the shortest amount of time to get a prospectus back out on the street," Lessard said. Or the Bureau could try something different, he said. For example, instead of seeking 30-year contracts calling for lots of improvements, it could seek 10-year contracts calling for fewer improvements.

California State Parks recently received no bids to operate a marina for 30 years at Folsom Lake, even though that is an opportunity to open right away with minimal improvements needed, Lessard said. The Bureau of Reclamation recently received no bids for a marina project at New Melones Lake in the Sierra Nevada foothills, he said. The Bureau asked for a lot of infrastructure requirements there and has rethought that approach. "These are things we need to consider as we move forward," Lessard said.

The Bureau talked to people in the recreation industry about Lake Berryessa. Some didn't like having seven resorts at the reservoir, he said. "Large investment and development may not be the latest trend," Lessard said. "We've got to look at that and see if we need to make any changes." The Bureau of Reclamation will ask local residents for advice, including Napa County. The Board of Supervisors wants Bureau officials to appear before it and explain what is going on.

"I think the public is really at a crossroads right now," Board Chairman Alfredo Pedroza said at Tuesday's Board of Supervisors meeting. Arroyave said Bureau officials spent part of Wednesday talking to Napa County officials. "Their input is extremely critical," Arroyave said. "We think Napa County's participation and our discussions with Napa County are going to be critical to us having the best chance of succeeding. We're talking about what those options are."

The Bureau of Reclamation will need a success story to convince the audience at the Berryessa Senior Center. Markley Cove Resort is one of two resorts still operating at full strength. But an interim concessionaire contract for that marina expires after this year, and Winters City Manager John Donlevy expressed concern that it, too, could be sucked into redevelopment limbo. "That would be the death of this lake," he told Bureau officials. "It would."

Talks continue on Berryessa resort redevelopment: August 24, 2018
by Barry Eberling

What role Napa County might play in a long-awaited Lake Berryessa resort renaissance – if any – could finally be known by year's end. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation launched the redevelopment effort on federal land a decade ago, only to see it stall. The agency tore down five of seven resorts, but could not finding companies to build and operate new ones.

In June 2016, agency turned to the county as a possible resort manager that could work more freely with the private sector. Sealing a deal has taken longer than originally predicted. In February, county officials said they expected to bring a managing partner agreement to the Board of Supervisors in spring. But while that didn't happened, county officials say negotiations are not dead. "I think it's in the interest of all parties to reach some decision by the end of the year," Deputy County Executive Officer Molly Rattigan said on Friday. Supervisor Alfredo Pedroza agreed. "I don't see this going beyond this year," Pedroza said. "We've been at it for quite some time. I'm interested in having this end in a very positive outcome."

Meanwhile, the wait for an agreement is making some people uneasy. The Lake Berryessa News asked readers to send letters to a number of federal elected and appointed officials expressing concern that the Bureau is ignoring the needs of the Berryessa community. "I would be a fool not to worry about it," said Peter Kilkus, editor of the paper and president of the Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce.

Rep. Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena, sent an Aug. 7 letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke urging that the Bureau of Reclamation reach a deal with Napa County. He wrote that the Bureau appeared “unwilling or unable” to bring concessions to the lake’s shore under Napa County management. “I’m sending this letter hoping that you’ll be able to exercise leadership on this pressing issue,” Thompson wrote.

On Friday, Thompson released a statement on the latest progress: “Like people across our community, I am frustrated at the long delays in this process and have been doing everything I can to support the county and bring the Bureau of Reclamation to the table for a fair discussion,” he said. “I recently spoke with the Bureau’s commissioner and I’m glad to see that discussions regarding the details of a long-term agreement will continue.”

When contacted by the Napa Valley Register, the Bureau of Reclamation released a statement by email. “While the process has taken longer than anticipated, Reclamation continues to engage with county officials and is fully committed in this process,” the statement said. “Details will be shared when available.”

A study released by the county in February by a real estate firm found nine potential bidders for resort redevelopment. They could bring hotels, restaurants, glamping, marinas and other amenities some or all of the resort sites. One request by the county is for the ability to offer potential resort redevelopers 55-year leases. The Bureau in its failed redevelopment attempts offered 30-year leases, with roads, water systems and other infrastructure then to revert to the federal government at the end of the lease.

Pedroza said the shorter leases don’t make financial sense for resort developers. He was asked if the 55-year lease is a make-or-break issue for Napa County. “It’s a make or break to have reasonable, sustainable development,” Pedroza said.

Napa moving closer to reviving Berryessa resorts: October 17, 2018

by Barry Eberling

Napa County is looking at a phasing approach to finally get the long-stalled Lake Berryessa resort redevelopment effort rolling, with planning for Steele Canyon and Monticello Shores possibly beginning next year. That’s if the county decides to manage the undertaking for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. After more than two years of exploring the matter, the Board of Supervisors has yet to finalize an agreement with the federal agency. Supervisors on Tuesday seemed optimistic that an agreement will be reached, possibly by early next year.

Five of the seven Lake Berryessa resorts on the federally owned shoreline are candidates to be redeveloped by bringing in private concessionaires. The goal is to see marinas, cabins, campsites, glamping sites, RV camping and other amenities there. An economic report by consultant Grant Sedgwick explored how much money the rejuvenated resorts could bring to the county annually from the hotel tax, sales tax, payments en lieu of property taxes and concession fees. He estimated the county might make \$2.5 million in five years, \$4.4 million in 10 years and \$7.1 million in 15 years.

“This isn’t about doing it for net revenues,” Supervisor Diane Dillon said. “This is about doing it for net benefits for the greater community.”

Napa County could plan requests for proposals for Steele Canyon and Monticello Shores resort redevelopment next year. These are the resorts that county research showed are generating the most interest from the private sector. Next year, Steele Canyon would continue to offer activities such as camping with an interim concessionaire. Monticello Shores is closed. The next step would be to see if the two resorts — Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove - operating at full strength might pass from Bureau of Reclamation management to county management...

The Bureau of Reclamation more than a decade ago launched an effort to redevelop five of the seven resorts run by private concessionaires on federal land. It cleared the sites and began looking for private companies to build and run new resorts with camping, marinas, hotels, restaurants, lodges and other attractions. But the redevelopment effort stalled and the Bureau two years ago looked to Napa County for help. The idea is that the county is less burdened by various federal requirements and can be nimbler in its search for concessionaires.

A major sticking point is the length of the leases the county could offer. The federal government previously offered 30-year leases, at which point the roads, water systems and other infrastructure installed by developers would become federal property. County officials say 55-year leases would allow developers to recoup their investments. Napa County needs to win permission from the national Bureau of Reclamation office for the 55-year terms. Rattigan said the Bureau first wants to see what the managing partner agreement between the county and Bureau will look like.

“We’re pretty much down the aisle,” Supervisor Alfredo Pedroza said. “I hope the Bureau will commit to that.” He stressed that the 55-year leases are important. “Without the term, a lot of this does not make economic sense,” Pedroza said. Drew Lessard of the Bureau of Reclamation addressed the Board during public comments. He too expressed optimism that the agency and county will come to agreement. “The last thing we want is to enter into a managing partner agreement and not have success,” Lessard said.

County moves to revive Berryessa resorts: November 22, 2019

by Barry Eberling

Napa County is closing in on a 55-year agreement that would let it try to jumpstart the long-stalled Lake Berryessa resort revival starting next year. The county for three years has negotiated with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to manage resorts along the federal reservoir. On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors spoke favorably of a proposed 55-year deal that still needs work on the fine print. “We’re not going to celebrate until we sign on the dotted line, which is close,” Supervisor Alfredo Pedroza said.

If all goes as county officials hope—and County Executive Officer Minh Tran tried to tamp down any overly optimistic expectations—the Board of Supervisors could vote on an agreement with the Bureau in January or February. “We are well on our way, but we are not quite there yet. There are many more steps to go.” Tran said. “We are almost close to the finish line and we look to cross the finish line in January,” Bureau Deputy Area Manager Lee Mao said.

Lake Berryessa has seven resorts on federal land. The Bureau of Reclamation a decade ago razed five resorts and has unsuccessfully sought concessionaires to redevelop them. Napa County could try to succeed where the Bureau has failed. It would try to find concessionaires to build marinas, restaurants, stores and other amenities at three of those five resorts, with an option to take on the remaining two at a later date.

County officials have said that the county would face fewer restrictions than a federal agency in finding concessionaires. "I think every time we drive by the lake, we all get excited about the potential of what it could become," Pedroza said.

But there are risks. County officials have said they want terms that they believe offer a chance at redevelopment success and don't prove a drain on county coffers. If the deal goes forward, the county would take over management of Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat and Monticello Shores resorts in November 2020. It would do some advance work, however, possibly seeking requests for proposals from potential concessionaires next spring.

Napa County would have the option to manage Putah Canyon and Berryessa Point resorts, though Mao said the Bureau in the interim will seek to make improvements at Putah Canyon. A key point for the county is winning Bureau permission for a 55-year term. County officials say such a term is necessary to attract concessionaires that must build roads, sewers and other infrastructure. The proposed agreement would allow for this.

County officials have also wanted the Bureau to share in the losses in the initial years of an agreement, before resorts are built and begin generating revenue. County expenses would include such things as management staff and Sheriff's law enforcement at a busier lake. The Bureau proposes to make available \$1 million over five years. In the long run, redeveloped resorts would generate taxes and fees for the county. County costs could be \$2.5 million a year and the resorts could generate \$3.5 million a year, Grant Sedgwick of Ragatz Realty said.

"There is a prospect in fact that the costs will be more than offset by the revenues," said Sedgwick, whose firm is doing consulting work for the county. County officials have said that a Berryessa venture doesn't have to be a money-maker for the county, but needs to at least break even.

Lake Berryessa since the early 1960s has had seven resorts. The Bureau estimated visitation at the reservoir fell from 1.5 million annually in the heyday of the resorts to 408,000 by 2014 with five of the resorts razed. Today, Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove are operating at full strength under concessionaire agreements with the Bureau. The county would not try to redevelop these resorts. Of the five resorts that the county could oversee, Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat and Putah Canyon are operating in stripped-down fashion under interim contracts, with such things as camping. That would continue for summer 2020. Berryessa Point and Monticello Shores are closed.

Reaching an agreement with the Bureau has proven difficult, with supervisors in May expressing disappointment with the terms being offered. Pedroza and Supervisor Diane Dillon have met with Bureau staff to try to work things out. The news told to the Board of Supervisors by Deputy County Executive Officer Molly Rattigan on Tuesday might have been a breakthrough.

County reaches Lake Berryessa resort management deal: March 14, 2020

by Barry Eberling

Napa County for more than three years has sought a management agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Negotiations are finished and the Board of Supervisors is ready to vote on the 137-page result. County staff recommends approval. If that happens, the county will seek concessionaires to bring about a resort revival that the Bureau of Reclamation has been unable

to achieve over about a decade.

“This is it,” Board of Supervisors Chair Diane Dillon said in a phone interview on Friday. “It’s finally happening. We’re very excited.” The agreement allows the county as of November to manage Spanish Flat, Steele Canyon and Monticello Shores. The county at an unspecified future date might take over management of Berryessa Point and Putah Canyon. The Bureau of Reclamation razed all five resorts about 10 year ago to be rebuilt from scratch. This summer, Spanish Flat, Steele Canyon and Putah Canyon will continue to be operated in stripped-down fashion with such features as campgrounds under interim concessionaire contracts.

Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove were never razed and are operated by concessionaires under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation. The county might or might not take over management of those resorts in 2030, depending on various factors.

If the county cannot find concessionaires, it can opt out of the agreement, a county report said. Dillon sees reason why the county can find concessionaires to redevelop and run resorts on the federally owned shoreline, even though the Bureau of Reclamation couldn’t. The federal agency has structures and policies designed for dealing with 50 states, she said. “At a local level, dealing with a particular location, not a vast, unspecified location, we have the ability to be more nimble,” Dillon said. For example, the county asked for and received a 55-year agreement. Dillon called this a key. The Bureau of Reclamation when searching for concessionaires offered 30-year contracts. Critics said this didn’t provide enough time for concessionaires rebuilding resorts from scratch to recoup infrastructure investments.

Deputy County Executive Officer Molly Rattigan on Friday said the county wants to identify or be close to identifying concessionaires for Spanish Flat, Steele Canyon and Monticello Shores before the management agreement begins in November. Peter Kilkus, a Berryessa Highlands resident, Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce member and editor of the Lake Berryessa News, has long pushed for a resort revival. He said he believes the resort saga has reached a turning point. He’s ready for the next step of having the county release requests-for-proposal to find concessionaires. The only reason he is a little negative is he wants everything to happen faster, Kilkus said. “I believe there are people willing to bid,” Kilkus said on Friday.

In the long run, redeveloped resorts would generate taxes and fees for the county. County costs could be \$2.5 million a year and the resorts could generate \$3.5 million a year, Grant Sedgwick of Ragatz Realty said told the Board of Supervisors last year. If operations and maintenance costs exceed revenues in the early years, the Bureau of Reclamation proposes to pay up to 50 percent of the deficit. The cap would be \$1 million over five years, the proposed agreement said. Napa County managed Lake Berryessa resorts once before. That began soon after the federal government created the reservoir by building Monticello Dam in the late 1950s.

The county in 1958 approved a 50-year contract to manage lake recreation. It then oversaw the development of seven resorts that, to avoid using local taxpayers money, were run by private concessionaires. But the county allowed about 1,700 mobile homes at the resorts, along with the marinas and campsites. That drew criticism from the federal government. “The concessionaires generally have developed the resorts as mobile home parks, to the detriment of the public interest,” a 1972 U.S. General Accounting Office report said. Napa County officials responded that the long-term leases provided by the mobile home owners provided a needed, steady income for the resorts. By 1974, the county had enough of the resort controversies and canceled its management contract.

That was another era and another set of circumstances, with the mobile homes gone and no longer an issue. This time, the Bureau of Reclamation and county appear to be on the same page with the proposed, 137-page management agreement. "The Bureau gave us as much latitude as they could," Dillon said. "We are all optimistic that it will allow us to do what needs to be done up there."