



Scientist Says Lake Water Not Polluted

NAPA — "Lake Berryessa is entirely satisfactory for water-contact sports and . . . with reasonable care, and updating systems, the Lake will continue to be a pure body of water, and one that nobody . . . need be ashamed of."

So much for charges that the big reservoir is polluted, says a report made to the County Board of Supervisors by Dr. William J. Oswald of the University of California, one of the state's foremost sanitation authorities.

In fact, said the doctor: he thinks Lake Berryessa, with its local government-private enterprise partnership, "can be made a model for systems of its sort throughout the nation."

Dr. Oswald was retained by the County to investigate reports by the Nader task force, some federal agencies, and a San Francisco newspaper that the Lake had become polluted by lakeshore resorts. He asserted the sanitary systems at the seven resorts are now adequate or being redesigned to bring them up to strict standards.

The scientist ("my degree is in sanitary engineering") said the present sewage settling ponds are the proper way to provide "dependable fail-safe and relatively low-cost waste disposal in (this) area," the right way to go when public use is high at only one period in the year.

He suggested a consolidated maintenance district for the resorts would be economical and efficient.

Dr. Oswald reported the results of five tests show "low nitrogen count" in lake water, phosphates mostly from natural causes — surrounding soil; and chlorophyll — principal algae producer — "almost undetectable."

Compared to Clear Lake, where he also has conducted studies, the doctor said, Lake Berryessa's algae potential is three to four times less, due mostly to far greater depths.

"It's gratifying to hear Lake Berryessa is not a polluted sump," declared County Administrator Albert Habeger.

MOBILEHOME PHASEOUT SOUGHT BY U.S. PARKMEN

NAPA COUNTY BACKS RESORT STAND

NAPA — Napa County Supervisors on November 2 recommended unanimously against a National Park Service plan to shift management of Lake Berryessa to the Park Service.

Instead, the local board in a 4-0 vote asked the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation that the study "be amended to provide for a management alternative that includes the County."

Through its own park commission, Napa County has managed the 22-mile-long Lake for a decade under an agreement with the Bureau, which created the reservoir, now used by 2 million boaters and fishermen annually.

NPS in a recent draft report had recommended the Lake be placed under its jurisdiction, and urged a phase-out of activities like mobile-home rentals.

The County asked the Bureau's Sacramento regional office to proceed with deletion of a 90-day unilateral cancellation clause from leases of seven concessionaires at the Lake. The Supervisors pointed out that the leaseholders cannot obtain adequate private financing due to this clause.

At the session in the local Courthouse, a report on sanitary conditions at Lake Berryessa also was presented by Dr. William J. Oswald of the University of California, who has been retained by the County to investigate alleged pollution from lakeside resorts.

The sanitarian declared that only minor deficiencies exist at any of the seven resort areas, that nitrogen, phosphate and chlorophyll counts are relatively low, and: "... that the Lake is entirely satisfactory for water contact sports and . . . that with reasonable care, and updating systems, the Lake will continue to be a pure body of water, and one that nobody in Napa County need be ashamed of."

(Continued on page 2)

Resort Operators Warn Public Will Lose If N.P.S. Takeover O.K.'d

LAKE BERRYESSA — Resort operators, mobilehome owners and recreationists girded today for a battle to prevent the National Park Service from replacing private enterprise and county management of Lake Berryessa, second most popular freshwater sports facility in California.

Letters began pouring into legislators' offices this week, opposing the recommendations made public by the National Park Service in October that:

1. Mobilehomes be phased-out at the Lake,
2. The Lake become a National or state Recreation Area, subject to federal or state management.
3. Future plans be based on the assumption that the area will be called upon to support 8.7 million visitor-days a year, compared to less than 2 million now.

So critical was the NPS report that it brought a quick reaction from California's junior U.S. Senator, John V. Tunney. Sen. Tunney, who conceded he has not visited Lake Berryessa, told newsmen he will introduce a bill calling for a federal takeover of the lake to make it a National Recreation Area "to provide the greatest possible public access," and "prevent Lake Berryessa from becoming a country club for the chosen few."

Tunney's statement coincided with a two-part critical series of articles in the San Francisco "Chronicle", and with a "Chronicle" editorial calling for a federal takeover.

Resort operators vowed they would not take the NPS report lying-down. They formed a committee under the leadership of Richard Hansen of Berryessa Marina, and replied to the criticism and NPS recommendations in a statement to the Berryessa Park Commission and the Napa County

(Continued on page 4)



EXTRACTS from NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REPORT

Following are pertinent excerpts from a 109-page document released in early October by the National Park Service, entitled "Review Draft of the Plan for Recreation Development (of) Lake Berryessa, California." It was prepared at the request of the Sacramento regional office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which like NPS, is an agency of the Department of the Interior.

* * *

"Lake Berryessa is public property, and an unusually attractive regional resource. The public use is paramount. Land allocation for private usage should be secondary . . . Facilities should be primarily oriented toward public use water oriented opportunities. Secondary consideration should include land based facilities not necessarily dependent on water, such as trails and primitive camps. Tertiary considerations may be given to private and/or quasi-private uses, provided lands designated for these do not pre-empt higher order uses."

* * *

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES: The following alternatives assume that:

1. The Federal Government would purchase all existing utilities, roads, launching ramps, and undesirable structures from the present concessionaires at depreciated values.
2. The concessionaires would retain ownership of the remaining buildings — offices, stores, shops, restaurants, motels (etc.)
3. The concessionaires would provide services to the public in much the same manner as they do presently.
4. New fee arrangements, rental rates, etc., would have to be negotiated between the Federal Government and the concessionaires.

Two alternatives are considered feasible:

(A) NATIONAL RECREATION AREA:

(Providing the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation recommends it.) "Presumed advantages" include "expertise of recreation area management", "greater direct public accountability", "more direct control of the use of private capital in provision of necessary facilities," and "greater funding possibilities from Congress".

(B) STATE RECREATION AREA:

(The Federal Government would purchase the facilities and turn them over to the state to operate, as in "A". Both State Legislature and Congress would have to approve first).

The NPS report recommends Alternative A, a National Recreation Area, as "the most desirable, in view of the regional significance and the opportunities inherent

at Lake Berryessa."

County management "is not considered acceptable for the following reasons:"

1. It fails to recognize the regional importance of the area, "evidenced by the fact that 95% of the use is from outside."
2. "Historically the county has not demonstrated the ability to provide the public with the quality and variety of recreational opportunities expected in a Federally owned recreation area."
3. "The amounts of land the county seems to consider necessary to be allocated to private interests are too great to allow maximum recreational opportunities and facilities necessary to responsibly meet the needs of the public uses."

* * *

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT:

Though over \$7 million in private capital has been invested in the concession areas, "when analyzed in the perspective . . . of public use (as opposed to permanent or quasi-permanent individual use, (it is) minimal." A public use area north of Park Head-

quarters has not been developed at all.

"The development within the franchise areas has centered (almost exclusively) around the mobile home . . . (these encroach) on the shoreline, thus denying public access. (There has been) excess cutting into hillsides . . . lack of enforced maintenance . . . overcrowding, unsightliness and disrepair in places."

Also criticized are "docks which line the shoreline in many places, impeding public access . . .", lack of "safe, guarded swimming areas," too few campgrounds and "water oriented play spaces."

* * *

CAPACITY

"The estimated optimum capacity of Lake Berryessa is 8.7 million visitor days" (compared to 2 million now). This assumes construction of new highways, sewage treatment plants, and development of Federal lands surrounding the Lake for recreation. This would be handled in phases. An additional 4300 acres should quickly be purchased "to protect the immediate lake environs."

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

If our readers feel strongly about the current controversy at Lake Berryessa, we urge them to send letters expressing these feelings to:

Hon. Rogers C. B. Morton
Secretary of the Interior
Interior Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Senator John V. Tunney
New Senate Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senator Alan Cranston
New Senate Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20510

Repr. Donald H. Clausen
Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20515

Repr. Robert Leggett
Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20515

R. J. Pafford Jr., Regional Director
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, Ca 95825

(with copies to:

Napa County Board of Supervisors
Courthouse
Napa, Ca 94558)

BERRYESSA BULLETIN
5800 Knoxville Road
Napa Ca 94558

COUNTY BACKS

(Continued from page 1)

In fact, said Dr. Oswald, he thinks Lake Berryessa — with its local government-private enterprise partnership, "can be made a model for systems of its sort throughout the nation."

Supervisor Chairman Dewey K. Anderson asserted he thinks the concessionaire "have tried to hold up their end, under trying conditions," and said copies of the Supervisors' letter will go to California senators, congressmen, and NPS.

Ed Hale, chairman of the Park Commission, said that when the Lake was started in 1958, "we thought in terms of camper in tents", but that public tastes have changed, so that most visitors prefer trailer or mobilehomes. This, Hale charged, NPS does not recognize in its study.

County Administrator Albert Haberge said he will seek a joint meeting of the Supervisors, resort operators, plus Bureau of Reclamation and Department of the Interior officials soon, "and find out what role they want the County to play."

In their letter, the Supervisors made it clear that if the NPS takeover is approved at D-of-I level, the County should be notified immediately, and that the County's management should be terminated, because a "chaotic and unfortunate situation . . . would occur at Lake Berryessa" in the interim.

RESPONSE by LAKE RESORT OPERATORS

Response To Napa County Board of Supervisors and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation:

The resort owners have consistently held that resorts, operated by private enterprise, can provide the vast majority, if not all, of required facilities and services, at the lowest cost to taxpayers, and because of the competitive environment, will react more quickly to the public's changing requirements. They have been seriously handicapped in their efforts to develop to an ultimate standard due to funding limitations imposed by their contracts.

The resorts have been and still are, willing to develop to ultimate standards, provided: An appropriate practical recreation plan is adopted which is based on measured public need and economics. There is considerable question about whether the NPS plan qualifies in this regard; or - A practical contract is provided the resorts, spelling out in careful detail the implementation requirements, including standards, and providing for possessory interest sufficient to support long-term development capital commitments, and/or government subsidies.

The 1971 Berryessa Recreation Plan Review Draft, written by the U.S. National Park Service, contains some workable and worthy recommendations. The resort operators acknowledge them, and will support their implementation, provided the cost of implementation is not put upon the resorts.

We favor:

- a. Development of day-use area immediately north of present Park Headquarters, providing for swimming beach, sheltered picnic sites, drinking water, portable toilets and dressing rooms, later, landscaping, and more extensive refuse collection and disposal.
- b. More, and improved, public access to the reservoir shoreline outside the resort areas; with refuse containers and portable toilets.
- c. Improved and enlarged public parking near these day-use and access areas, additional public information center(s).
- d. Development of a plan, and implementation, for central potable water intake, treatment, and distribution systems, as well as central sewage collection and treatment facilities. Logical vehicle: a special district.
- e. Use of practical standards of land-use planning, architectural controls, environmental protection, access and circulation, customer service, employee selection and training, and boating safety.

The major items of the NPS Plan we seriously question are:

- a. **The apparent conclusion that Lake Berryessa should provide large tax-funded areas outside the resorts to cater to tent campers.** Lake Berryessa's hot summer temperatures inhibit tent camping, particularly in areas separated from the more sophisticated creature-comforts such as showers, flush toilets, fresh drinking water, and food and drink stations.
- b. **The Proposal that Family Camping activity should be allowed everywhere except in the developed resorts.** Most families would prefer to camp in comfortable, safe areas, replete with security patrols, first-aid, groceries, ice, movies, church services, playgrounds and rental equipment. Resorts can, and are willing to provide a pleasant range of camping facilities from the sophisticated "full hook-up" site, to the primitive low density, "back-woods experience" site.
- c. **The Proposal that all mobile homes be phased out:** The government must aid in developing innovative programs providing recreation services for a much broader spectrum of today's and tomorrow's user, considering requirements unique to any given geographic or sociologic region, than is nationally average and historical. Lake Berryessa must accommodate mobile homes on a planned, aesthetically acceptable, balanced distribution basis because:

More affluence is resulting in more people being able to afford mobile homes. Mobile homes are less expensive than second homes, and more available. Mobile homes are legally considered personal property (as opposed to real property) and, can be placed at a public reservoir without threat to control of land ownership.

Many people take the position that they are entitled to use the Lake in this way rather than to camp. Also mobile homes assure revenues which help to overcome operating losses in seasonally-oriented businesses such as those at Lake Berryessa. These revenues reduce costs which must be met by other users and taxpayers.

- d. **The conclusion that Lake Berryessa is destined for 8,700,000 annual visitor days.** The question is whether such a conclusion is inevitable and thus that we should accept it and struggle with its consequences, or whether we might want to settle for something less, because:

Lake Berryessa's access roads are a limiting factor, presently overcrowded on weekends, based on less than 2,000,000 annual visitor days; Improving of access roads will take many years and very large expenditures, due to competing, critical highway needs in the State, and the difficult topography involved along the western side of the lake.

"Something less" than 8,700,000 visitor days could reduce the need for bigger tax bills to pay for more roads, more land outside the "take-line" which is now producing tax revenues to support local government; more pollution-control devices and services, and more police, fire, sanitation, and emergency health services. Water, air, and land pollution is much less apt to occur, and the major aim of providing recreation free of over-crowding and turmoil is realized.

- e. **The conclusion that, in general, the "public" is not being adequately served at Lake Berryessa, and cannot be served under the present system of management.** Our objection is based on our experience in serving the public need since 1959. Our argument is that the "public" to be served in this case is unique because of the Lake's accessibility, temperatures, other environmental considerations; availability of other easily accessible bodies of water and outdoor recreation areas such as Clear Lake, Lake Tahoe, Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Ocean, and Delta, etc. Consequently, this uniqueness must be considered with individuality in planning and implementation. We believe that the National Park Service Plan does not do this, but instead assumes that the historical, average Park Service formula should apply. It appears that inadequate surveying of Lake Berryessa's market area is responsible.

We contend that, with adequate funding, and contractual support, Lake Berryessa would not have encountered its current difficulties. One thing appears certain: for the past 12 years, we have learned a lot about what to do and what not to do for the visitor, at no expense to the taxpayer. At the same time the Lake has continued to serve millions of people. The burden has been shouldered financially by private enterprise without benefit of a reasonable return on investment. Since 1959 we have served nearly 2 million visitors per year, charging rates that are established to compare with average rates charged in comparable State, Federal and County facilities.

(Continued on page 4)

Resort Operators' Response to NPS

(Continued from page 3)

Our basic gate charges have changed only once since 1959, and then only to a modest degree. This certainly cannot be said for most business!

The resorts, Napa County, and the Bureau of Reclamation have been subject to criticism, some critics claiming that this management partnership is incapable of carrying the project forward. The National Park Service Plan recommends removing recreation management control from the Bureau and Napa County to another Federal agency or to the State of California. The assumption apparently is that the former have failed and are ill-equipped to continue, whereas the latter are bigger, more skilled and have capability for obtaining (and spending) public funds.

1) The needs of the public, primarily regional, as well as the concessionaires', logically will be more quickly responded to by a local agency than a national agency whose operations nation-wide would tend to require an "averaging" attitude toward Lake Berryessa, and whose remoteness and size would slow down the decision-making process. The public would get a better break under direct management by the County.

2) It is logical, and the NPS Plan agrees, that the Lake Berryessa program cannot succeed unless adequate planning and control of private lands surrounding the reservoir is provided by Napa County, and unless such important services as road maintenance, fire, police, ambulance, hospital, and sanitation are adequately provided by local government. It would appear that this important co-ordination would be assured if the same agency is responsible for an entirely integrated program.

3) A well-organized, experienced, and funded regional recreation agency might well take the place of one layer of management, or supplement the present management arrangement, since it is generally agreed that Lake Berryessa serves a regional, not national, need. No such agency now exists; therefore the County level of government appears most logical.

BERRYESSA BULLETIN
5800 Knoxville Rd.
Napa Ca. 94558

HISTORY EXPLAINS LAKE DILEMMA

Like a troublesome orphan nobody wanted, Lake Berryessa's current woes are rooted in its origins as a vast federal project.

Napa County's Administrator made this plain recently in a letter to U.S. Senator John V. Tunney. The senator has announced he wants the Lake returned to the same federal authority that once rejected it.

"The Bureau of Reclamation constructed (the lake) over opposition of a majority of the public in Napa County," County Administrator Albert Habberger reminded. As the waters started rising behind the dam in the late 1950's "recreationists began to camp along the shoreline and launch boats in great numbers (with) no control over the health and safety of these individuals."

"The Bureau of Reclamation (reported) that there would be no recreational value from the Lake . . . due to water level fluctuation and steep grades. The National Park Service was not interested in the recreational components. The State of California had no interest.

"The County, out of desperation, agreed to take over management . . . in order that some agency would be responsible." Said Habberger, County Supervisors promised that the new lake would not be a burden on local taxpayers, and "that they would make every effort to provide recreation through concessionaires and private enterprise." And the County advanced an initial \$100,000, of which \$80,000 has not been repaid.

Seven concession areas were leased to private individuals or partnerships, Habberger went on. These concerns constructed the roads, sanitary facilities, marinas, etc. From them the County collects about \$110,000 per year to run Park Headquarters, police the Lake, collect refuse, etc.

Habberger pointed out to the Senator that under the agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, concessionaires were granted 20-year leases which contained provision for 90-day cancellations at government option. This made the resorts a poor financial risk for lenders, and to this day makes improvements exceedingly costly, or even impossible.

"Mainstay" of concessionaire revenues came to be "rental of trailer sites on a continuing basis," the report declares, thereby enabling the concessionaire to provide overnight camping, picnic and day-use areas which generally are (money-losers.)"

It is the scarcity of the latter facilities that has prompted much of the criticism from federal sources.

Mobilehome Phaseout

(Continued from page 1)

Board of Supervisors, who are responsible for management of the Lake under a long-standing agreement with its builder, the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

The public stands to lose if resort operations are shifted to federal management, the resort men warned. They pointed out that more than a decade's experience has taught them that the general public wants boating, fishing and something more comfortable than tent-camping (as NPS insisted), and that only mobilehome rentals can bear the financial burden for the resorts.

The operators also argued that they have been unable to finance needed improvements because the Bureau of Reclamation, which leases the reservoir to Napa county, has not amended its management agreement to remove a 90-day unilateral cancellation clause.

Without this amendment, declared the Operators, they must continue to rely heavily on mobilehome rents, despite their desire to provide more "balanced" facilities. If mobilehomes are forced out, the resort men said, they "will have as final recourse a government buy-out of improvements which includes consideration for anticipated earnings."

The Association challenged NPS assumptions that Lake Berryessa "is destined for 8.7 million visitor days" per year. Access roads are a severe limiting factor now and in the foreseeable future, the operators pointed out; and if the Lake will plan and build toward "something less than 8.7 million", enormous expenditures and big tax bills can be avoided.

The reply urged retention of the present resort-county-Bureau of Reclamation-partnership as "most responsive to the demands of the real public" . . .

It warned that the NPS report makes no provision for safeguards for recreationists or resort operators during any changeover to the proposed federal management system, and that unless this is done "deterioration of facilities, investment, service to the public and investor confidence inevitably will occur."

The operators also charged that the NPS study team utterly failed to seek their counsel or experience, and that the proposal therefore the Plan is necessarily incomplete and lacking in full validity.

Hansen and his committee urged public recreationists and Lake users to write immediately to their Senators and Congressmen expressing individual views on the NPS Plan. Many reported they have done so.