

The Lake Berryessa News Special Edition

Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program Update

June 4, 2025

Napa County Supervisors Meeting, June 3, 2025

Camp Margaritaville Resorts Planning Status

Lake Berryessa Statistics (6/4/25)

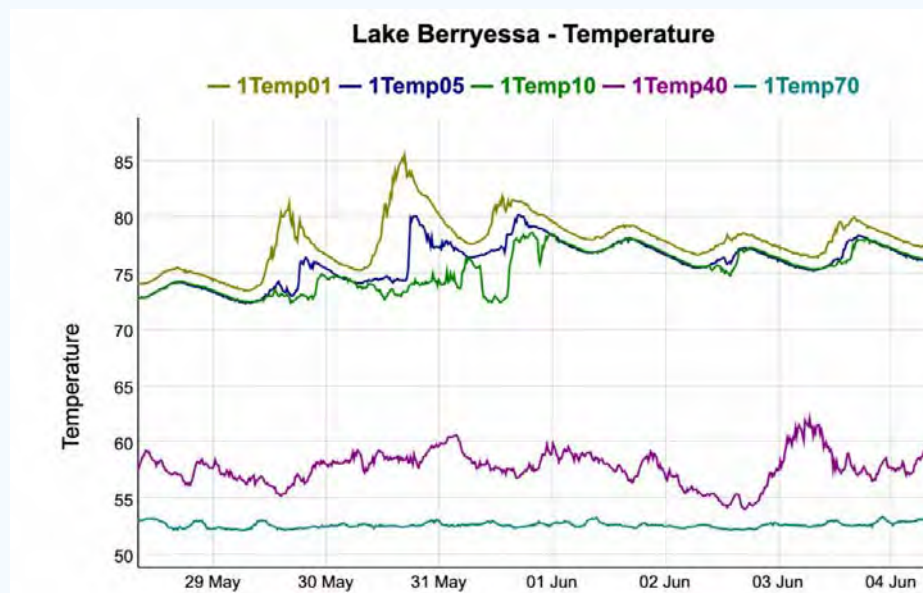
The Lake Berryessa water level is at 438.2 feet, 1.8 feet below Glory Hole.

Rainfall total is 22.97 inches at Monticello Dam.

The new rain season begins on July 1, 2025.

Lake capacity is at 97.8%

Lake surface temperature is 77 degrees from the surface to 10 feet down.





It was gratifying to see so many friends and neighbors attend the supervisors' meeting describe below with several speaking positively about the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program's prospects at Steele Canyon Recreation Area. The 4 hour supervisors' video at the end of this section is very educational - even if you just skim it. It illustrates what a large range of issues they must deal with regularly.

Also thank you to those who wrote emails of support to the supervisors. Those contacts are important. The supervisors were unanimously supportive of, even enthusiastic about, the Lake Berryessa project.

But the Lake Berryessa status section of the meeting video is only 30 minutes long, and it is very interesting to watch the whole video on YouTube at:

<https://youtu.be/U8sgX7rmzeM?si=W4hgHOv5WCfn3Nie>

Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program Update

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Napa County Supervisors Meeting, June 3, 2025

Camp Margaritaville Resorts Planning Status

In 1957, the Federal Bureau of Recreation (BOR) completed the Monticello Dam. The BOR shortly thereafter signed 50 year contracts with several operators to develop resorts around the Lake. Those contracts expired, and the BOR required that all infrastructure related to the then existing resorts be completely removed. The BOR then made several attempts to contract with new operators, but ultimately were not successful. Without the resorts operating, this area's economy suffered dramatically.

To help revitalize the local economy, Napa County volunteered to take over the process of finding concessionaires to redevelop and operate some of the resort areas. Napa County

signed a 55-year Managing Partnership Agreement (MPA) with the BOR in 2020, allowing the County to proceed to find concessionaires to develop and operate the sites. The MPA covered a total of 7 sites, 4 of which came under Napa County's control immediately. The remaining sites could come under the County's control later. The status of each site is provided below.

Steele Canyon and Proposed Amendment

Napa County is under an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with a local developer (Tim Wilkens) who submitted a comprehensive response to the County's original RFP in collaboration with Camp Margaritaville. The development team is in the design/environmental phase. Projected groundbreaking is scheduled for 2027. During its investigation of the site, the developer discovered that the site boundaries identified by the BOR in the MPA were incorrect (the site is larger than previously indicated based on the boundaries established when the original resort was developed in the late 1950's). This caused a 5-month delay while the developer confirmed the correct boundaries with the BOR and adjusted their plans to consider the correct boundaries.

The proposed Amendment No. 1 to the ENA will extend the schedule in the ENA by 5 months. In the meantime, the site remains open. It is operated by a local business owner under an interim contract with Napa County. The site focuses on camping, RV camping and boat launching.

Berryessa Point

Suntex failed to move forward in a timely manner and withdrew from its ENA as of January 26, 2025. This site is currently being considered by a private company for a new marina facility that would include over 300 slips, a fuel station, restaurant and marina office. Projected groundbreaking once an ENA is reached would be projected as 2027. An ENA for Berryessa Point would be presented to the Board for consideration.

Monticello Shores

This site is currently being considered by a joint venture (one international and one national company) that would develop a full-service resort. Projected groundbreaking once an ENA is reached would be projected as 2028-2029. An ENA for Monticello Shores would be presented to the Board for consideration.

Spanish Flat

This site remains open and operating. It is operated by a local business owner under an interim contract with Napa County. The site focuses on dirt camping, RV camping and boat launching. There has been no significant interest in developing the site beyond the current use.

The following are Federal BOR sites that Napa County will have the option to take over management in the future:

Markley Cove: This site is solely a marina with permanent slips for boat docking and facilities for boat launching. Napa County has an option to take over and operate the site in 2031.

Pleasure Cove: This site contains a marina as well as cabins to rent. Napa County has an option to take over and operate the site in 2040.

Putah Canyon: This site focuses on dirt camping and day launching. Napa County has an option to take over and operate the site in 2031.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The activities contemplated by the Agreement are either not a project subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15060(c)(3) and 15378, or consist of information gathering and investigations categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15306.

The full 4 hour meeting is on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/IQ2zzVduAT4?si=faeuKgGoezMIW6kc>

Barry Eberling's Napa Register article copied below is a good summary of the meeting.

Napa County's Lake Berryessa resort renovation push continues

Barry Eberling, Napa Register, 6/4/24

Napa County's quest to redevelop several Lake Berryessa resorts remains in the negotiations phase, with a possible Camp Margaritaville at Steele Canyon intended to cover twice the footprint originally envisioned.

The county agreed in November 2023 to negotiate exclusively with a local developer working with Camp Margaritaville Resorts. Steele Canyon could be reborn with a resort named after the late Jimmy Buffett's 1977 hit song "Margaritaville."

Since then, the developer discovered Steele Canyon on the federally owned shoreline is 352 acres, rather than the 137 acres previously stated. That caused a five-month delay while the developer worked on the issue with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, according to county officials.

Leigh Sears, the county's Lake Berryessa concessions manager, said the mapping mishap was due to an error by the Bureau of Reclamation. She pointed to a historic map of the resort that shows a bigger footprint.

Napa County is negotiating with WhiTim Napa LLC on the Steele Canyon renovation. WhiTim is managed by Tim Wilkens, who is working with Camp Margaritaville Resorts. Wilkens gave an update to the Napa County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday. He said Camp Margaritaville was redesigned in light of the bigger footprint and would have such features as a water park, zip line, market, lakeside trails, a Napa County Sheriff's Office substation, restaurants and 100 employee housing units.

"This resort is not going to be an Auberge or a high-end resort," Wilkens said. "It's a family-orientated resort."

Groundbreaking could take place in 2027. Meanwhile, the resort remains open under another operator for camping, RV camping and boat launching, a county report said.

Some speakers at a previous Board of Supervisors meeting said Camp Margaritaville would be too big, too much a theme park and out of place with a nature-based Lake Berryessa. But all four speakers at Tuesday's meeting praised the project.

Peter Kilkus lives near Steele Canyon and publishes the Lake Berryessa News. He has taken a keen interest in the Lake Berryessa resort renovation push that has endured several false starts over the past 15 years. In a telephone interview Monday, Kilkus speculated whether Camp Margaritaville will add Lake Berryessa to a resort location list that includes Lake Tahoe and the Caribbean.

"This is such a big project," Kilkus said. "Who knows what will end up happening? Put me down as cautiously optimistic."

Among the other Lake Berryessa resort redevelopment possibilities, as updated in a county report:

Berryessa Point – Suntex in January withdrew from negotiations to redevelop Berryessa Point. Another company is looking at building a marina with 300 slips and a fuel station, with groundbreaking possible in 2027.

Monticello Shores – An international and national company are looking at a redevelopment project for a full-service resort, with groundbreaking possible in 2028 or 2029.

Spanish Flat – No one has shown significant interest in redeveloping the resort. It remains open for camping, RV camping and boat launching under a local operator.

Putah Canyon - Open with camping and day launching.

Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove - Open with marinas - not being redeveloped.

Lake Berryessa in eastern Napa County is 26 miles long and 3 miles wide, with a snaking, 165-mile-long shoreline. The federal reservoir has seven resorts, of which five were razed by the Bureau of Reclamation more than 15 years ago for redevelopment.

In 2020, Napa County reached an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to manage the stalled redevelopment effort. The county is working on Steele Canyon, Berryessa Point, Monticello Shores and Spanish Flat, with an option to manage Putah Canyon.

"We're on the right track," Supervisor Belia Ramos said during Tuesday's presentation.

Bureau of Reclamation Summer Advisory

Jennifer Onufer, Park Manager, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Lake Berryessa

As the warm season returns and visitors gather at Lake Berryessa to boat, swim and camp, the Bureau of Reclamation urges everyone to take water safety seriously. With its stunning views and popular recreational areas, Lake Berryessa is a treasured destination,

but it is also a body of water that demands respect.

Preventable drownings claim lives at Lake Berryessa each year. Since the construction of the reservoir in 1957, there have been 350 fatalities, of which 315 are attributed to drownings. Many of these tragedies involve strong swimmers who overestimate their abilities, underestimate the lake's depth and temperature, or simply fail to wear life jackets. We cannot emphasize this enough: wearing a life jacket can save your life. In over 90% of drowning cases at Lake Berryessa, the victim was not wearing a life jacket.

As part of our commitment to prevent these tragedies, the Bureau of Reclamation, in partnership with local law enforcement and safety organizations, has increased outreach efforts to educate the public about safe water practices. We offer free life jacket loaner stations and continue to enforce safety regulations on the water. But safety starts with you. Whether you are kayaking near the shore or swimming off a boat, wearing a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket is your best defense against an unexpected fall, cramp or current. Alcohol, fatigue and heat can all impair judgment and physical ability, making even familiar waters dangerous.

Nation-wide, drowning is a leading cause of death among children 1 to 4 years of age and the second leading cause of death among 5 to 14-year-olds, according to the CDC. Parents and guardians should keep children within arm's reach, even in shallow water. Never rely on water toys or inflatables as substitutes for life jackets, and never swim alone. At Berryessa, most of our fatalities occur among those between the ages of 15 and 30 — and there is a noticeable spike in fatalities among young men.

Even the best prepared visitors can encounter trouble, so it is important to know what to see and hear from someone who is drowning. One of the early signs is the swimmer who is failing to make forward progress. They are staring intently toward the shore but don't seem to be moving towards it. After more time passes, the victim may eventually assume a vertical position where they arch their head back so just their lips remain above water. Both these indicators are silent.

You cannot recognize a drowning person by listening, you have to look at them to see the signs. Once you've identified that a member of your group is in trouble, reach, throw, row, don't go.

It's hard for family members to resist diving-in after a loved one. The key is to not offer up your own body as a flotation device to a panicking victim. Twelve of Lake Berryessa's drownings started as attempted rescues. If you are a by-stander to such an event, throw a life jacket, a life ring or even an empty cooler, call for help, and be prepared to give a description of the victim and their location to first responders.

Lake Berryessa is currently 98% full, and we are expecting a busy recreation season at the Lake. Now is the perfect time to speak to your family about their preparedness for a safe summer. Remember to wear a life jacket; watch out for each other; and choose safety. We look forward to seeing you alive and well at Lake Berryessa this summer.

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Build Your Dream Lake House

Summary of Lots Available

<https://lakeberryessaland.com/>



Steele Canyon Campground Inc.
1605 Steele Canyon Rd, Napa, CA 94558
Office: (707) 966-9410
Camp, Boat, Picnic, Hike or Bike...
Enjoy the great outdoors and beauty of Lake Berryessa.
<https://campsteelecanyon.com/>



Lake Berryessa Boat & Jet Ski Rentals

Take advantage of our low off-season rates through May 17th

Wakeboard/Ski Boats, Pontoon Boats

Jet Skis, Fishing Boats, Kayaks & Paddleboards

We include the gas in all our rentals. Which will save you \$\$!

All boats are launched from Spanish Flat.



4420 Knoxville Rd. (.9 mile north of Spanish Flat Campground)

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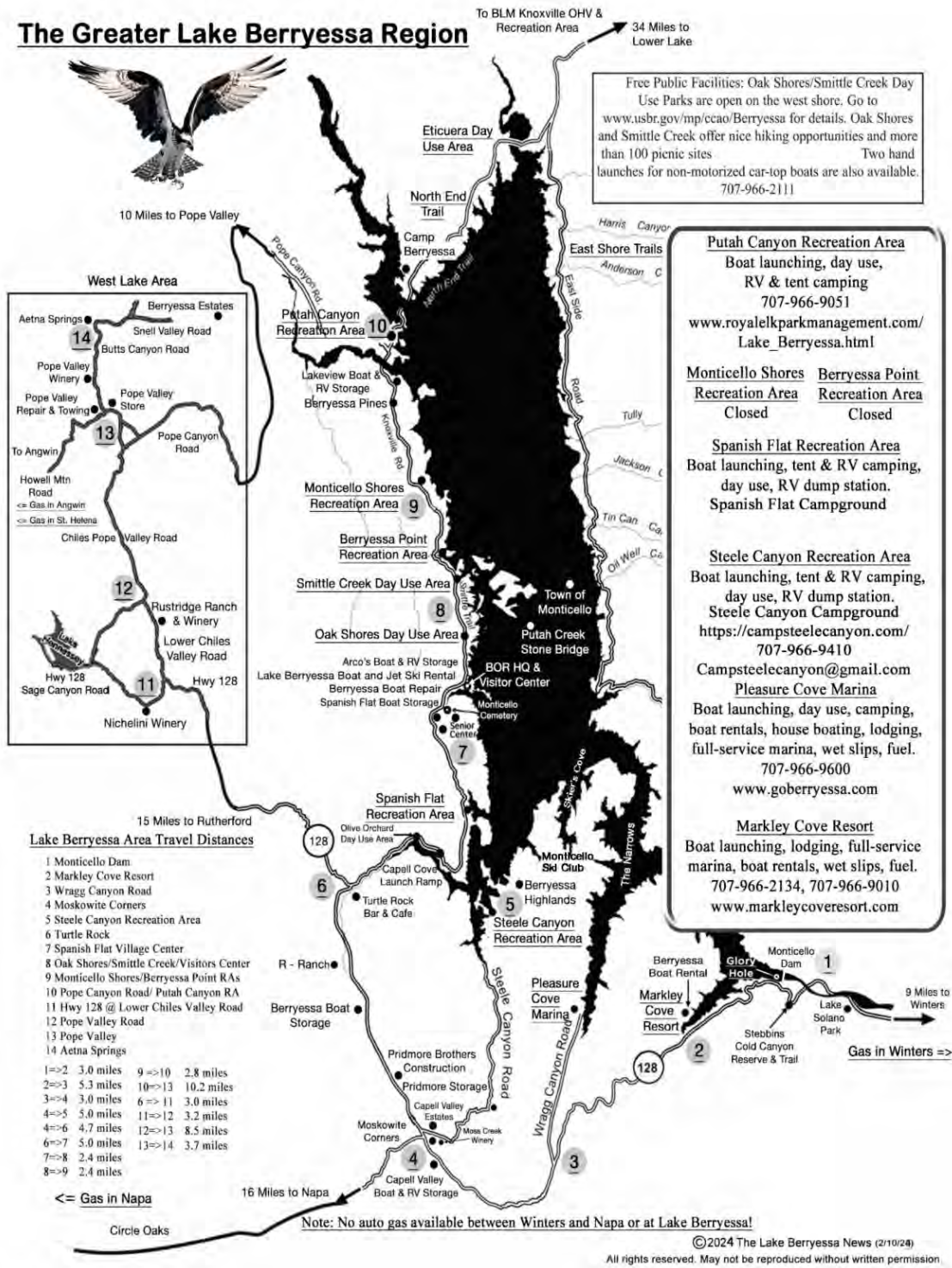


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Updated Lake Berryessa Map (1/28/24)

The Greater Lake Berryessa Region



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pkilkus@gmail.com | <https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/>



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The Lake Berryessa News Special Edition

Father's Day

June 15, 2025

Original Father's Day Monument on the way to Lake Berryessa



Lake Berryessa Statistics (6/15/25)

The Lake Berryessa water level is at 437.4 feet, 2.6 feet below Glory Hole.

Rainfall total is 22.97 inches at Monticello Dam.

The new rain season begins on July 1, 2025.

Lake capacity is at 96.9%

Lake surface temperature is 77 degrees from the surface to 10 feet down.

Mother's Day vs. Father's Day



In my research for an upcoming article on "Morning Glory Spillways Around the World" I found this interesting story.

A sure sign of winter: Closing up the Morning Glory spillway

<https://www.denverwater.org/tap/sure-sign-winter-closing-morning-glory-spillway>

Dillon Reservoir - Denver's largest reservoir was Completed in 1963, Dillon Reservoir has an earth-fill dam, 5,888 feet long by 231 feet above the Blue River streambed. **The entire town of Dillon and a hydroelectric plant were relocated to build the dam,** which diverts water from the Blue River Basin through the Harold D. Roberts Tunnel under the Continental Divide into the South Platte River Basin.

Capping the summer maintenance season at Dillon Reservoir takes expert work crews, planning — and a really big plug. How do you keep debris and cold temperatures from damaging a giant spillway that measures 15 feet in diameter and features a more than 200-foot drop?

Get a really big plug!





Every fall, Denver Water crews place a 6-ton steel plug into the Morning Glory spillway

at Dillon Reservoir. The annual activity marks the end of summer and signals the start of winter maintenance season, when Dillon Dam's caretakers focus on maintenance of the structure's interior facilities.

The plug serves a primary and secondary function — first, it prevents cold air from entering the spillway, which could damage the outlet works and take hours of manual labor to melt the ice that builds up. It also helps prevent chunks of ice and snow from falling into the spillway and crashing more than 200 feet below.

Exact timing of the operation varies from year to year, though the rule of thumb is to do it when the reservoir's water level is at least 4 feet below the crest of the spillway.



“That way, we have time to get back in here and remove the plug should we get sudden, unexpected inflows,” said Rick Geise, caretaker at Dillon Reservoir.

Come early spring, the crane and crew will be back again to pull the plug, signaling the start of the summer maintenance season, where the dam's crews will focus on larger capital improvement projects to keep the facility in tip-top condition.

The Morning Glory spillway is one of four ways water leaves Dillon Reservoir. Those ways include evaporation, absorption, the Roberts Tunnel, and the outlet works to the Blue River, which includes the Morning Glory spillway.

Photo: Dillon Reservoir near Denver, Colorado.



Lake Berryessa is six times bigger than Dillon Reservoir and
needs a special Glory Hole plug!

Lake Berryessa

Capacity: 1,551,292 acre feet

Surface Area: 20,000 acres

Shoreline: 165 miles

Dillon Reservoir

Capacity: 257,304 acre-feet

Surface Area: 3,233 acres

Shoreline: 26.8 miles of shoreline



20th Anniversary of the Last Jet Ski Races at Lake Berryessa! (June 14, 2025)

by Peter Kilkus

Twenty years is a long time to some, but to others, like me, it seems like yesterday. Super seniors say that a lot. In my case yesterday, it was a fact. Putah Canyon Campground hosted the first jet ski race at Lake Berryessa since April 21, 2005 (original story below). That race was put on by Pacific Coast Entertainment's owner/promoter Evan Kilkus. I was the Vice-President of "going places and picking stuff up".

The 2005 race at Steele Park resort was exciting and well attended. The owners of the mobile homes around the main cove, which you can see in the 2005 photos below, loved it so much they offered to pay us to come back. But four years later their homes were demolished leaving only the dirt pads you can see now.

[Destruction of Steele Park Resort 2009 You Tube](#)

Putah Canyon Campground, managed by Royal Elk Park Management, has been doing an excellent job in providing a well run recreation facility with great views of the lake and access to some of the nicest boating waters on Lake Berryessa. It is the only resort at the north end of the lake.

<https://royalelcparkmanagement.com/putah-canyon>

They also have a boat decontamination facility which cleaned almost 100 jet skis on Saturday morning. Putah Creek staff worked hard to get that done. Putah Canyon Campground's management contract extends until 2030 at which time Napa County has the option to take over the concession.





PutahCreek Campground
6/14/25



PutahCreek Campground
6/14/25



Putah Creek Campground
6/14/25

PWC Races Bring Excitement to the Waters of Lake Berryessa (April 21, 2005)

by Peter Kilkus

Summer came early to Lake Berryessa thanks to some intense Personal Watercraft (PWC) racing hosted at Steele Park Resort early this month with Pacific Coast Entertainment's Round 1 of the Pacific Watercross NorCal Racing & Riding Tour.

The Tour's goal is to combine the thrill of PWC racing with the family fun of PWC riding at some of the most interesting lakes in Northern California. The race event was the first in a five stop tour presented by locally-owned Pacific Coast Entertainment, L.L.C. Participants ranging from Pro to Beginner came from as far away as Lake Havasu City and Oregon to participate in the first sanctioned PWC (also known as "jet ski") Race on Lake Berryessa in more than 10 years.

Racers competed in Closed Course and Endurance Races plus the crowd pleasing Freestyle Competition. More than 50 racers entered the various "Sit-Down" and "Stand-Up" classes riding Sea-Doos, Kawasakis, Hondas, and other models. Participants were competing for individual event trophies and for points that will earn them a place at the World finals at Lake Havasu in October plus prizes including Fly Racing riding gear, Hydro-Turf watercraft accessories, and Slippery wetsuits.

The series brings PWC racers and recreational riders on a tour of Northern Californian lakes and waterways, including Lake Berryessa, Rollins Lake, Camp Far West, Clear Lake and finishing in Benicia on the Carquinez Strait.

The NorCal R2R American Watercraft Association Charter Club, whose members are PWC racers and their families and friends, also held a PWC Poker Run. With good weather and the lake looking breathtakingly beautiful as usual the event promoter, Evan Kilkus, considered the race a huge success. The racers also enjoyed Lake Berryessa and Steele Park. Honda rider Robert Stellhorn, #811, enthusiastically stated "It was an absolutely awesome race... the layout was great, and the lake was beautiful."

Spectators came out to enjoy the sun, watch the races, and mingle with the riders. A group of local kids competed to get the most autographs from the racers after each moto. "I didn't realize how big and professional this event was going to be," stated one mother of three enjoying the action from the shade with her baby. The Bureau of Reclamation, which facilitated the permit process, was present to distribute recreation and safety information.

Evan Kilkus Races



Evan Kilkus Announcing



Steele Park Resort
4/21/2005







Why was Dad staring at the orange juice at Father's Day brunch? Because it said "concentrate."

Why did the dad bring a pencil to his Father's Day dinner? Because he wanted to draw some attention.

Why did Dad put his money in the blender?
He wanted to make some liquid assets.

Why don't they have Father's Day sales?
Because fathers are priceless.

What do you call a person who is not a dad who makes dad jokes?
A Faux Pa.

When does a joke become a dad joke?
When the punchline is apparent

Why did the dad sit on the clock on Father's Day?
He wanted to be on time.

What's a groundbreaking Father's Day gift to give to your dad?
A shovel.

Why did the dad bring a ladder to the bar on Father's Day?
Because he heard the drinks were on the house!

What did the grape say to his dad on Father's Day?
Thanks for raisin me right!

Why did Dad high-five himself on Father's Day?

Because no one appreciates his jokes quite like he does!

Why did the rude cow eat all the food on Father's Day?
Because he was being a beef jerky.

Why didn't the dad want to swim with the sharks on Father's Day?
It would cost him an arm and a leg.

How much did the son charge his dad for fixing his roof on Father's Day?
Nothing, it was on the house!

Quote to Ponder

Kleptopia, a Symptom of Predatory Capitalism

You would be wise to listen to what I have to say, Allon. The old order is crumbling. A new order is rising in its place. We at corporate headquarters refer to it as Kleptopia. There are no laws in Kleptopia, at least not for those with unlimited resources, and no one cares about the needs of that great mass of humanity who are less fortunate. Power and money are all that matters. Those without it want to acquire it. And those who have it want to hang on to it at all costs. From "A Death in Cornwall" by Daniel Silva

Stunning 60+ Acre Lot in Lakeview Estates at Lake Berryessa!

A Dream Location Near Lake Berryessa! Discover the perfect blend of privacy and breathtaking beauty on this expansive 60+ acre lot in Lakeview Estates, nestled in the serene Eastern Hills of Napa. Situated at the end of the development, this prime property offers stunning views of Lake Berryessa and the surrounding mountains. Bring your contractor, house plans, and dreams to create your ideal home in this picturesque setting. With power available at the nearby electric pole, you have a head start on making your vision a reality. Please note, a well and septic system are not yet in place. Don't miss this opportunity to own a piece of Napa's natural splendor and build the home you've always imagined!

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Picturesque lake view. Single-family home with 3 bdrms, 2 bath

. property sits on a generous lot of about 7,405 square feet.

The third bedroom is used as an office or den, providing flexibility.

New dual-pane windows, new HVAC system, Access to a spacious deck

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Ideal for relaxation and entertaining.



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<https://www.1104steelecanyonrd.com/>

<https://youtu.be/dmVbvT32vN8?si=HvrsbkFprhydTluE>



Adorable 4 bedroom, 2 bath chalet-style home with breathtaking lake views nestled in a lush, garden paradise in Lake Berryessa's Berryessa Highlands combines natural beauty with modern comfort. Enjoy a landscaped oasis with vibrant greenery and a variety of mature fruit trees. Perfect for outdoor enthusiasts and entertainers, this gated property offers proximity to Lake Berryessa's water activities at nearby Steele Canyon Recreation Area. It can be your peaceful retreat or an entertainer's dream overlooking Lake Berryessa.



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<https://1300steelecanyonrd.com/>



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Discover your Private Lakeview Retreat on 10+ Acres

1081 Steele Canyon Road

<https://1081steelecanyonrd.com/>

\$895,000



Escape to your very own private oasis where comfort & breathtaking lake views await. This custom 2 story home offers an unparalleled living experience within the exclusive, gated community of Oakridge Estates. The expansive 10-acre property features a natural spring and well-appointed outdoor entertainment area, creating the ideal backdrop for hosting gatherings or simply soaking in the stunning surroundings. Gourmet kitchen, complete with a Viking stove and a center island. Living room with a woodstove adds warmth and ambiance, family room offers versatility with its own woodstove, bar area, and direct access to a backyard perfect for entertaining or unwinding. Steele Canyon Recreation Area is only a few minutes away. Nature lovers will delight in the easy access to Lake Berryessa's recreational activities.



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www.amberpayne.net

Redevelopment Opportunity | Spanish Flat – Lake Berryessa

<https://spanishflatctr.com/>

Unlock the visionary potential of Spanish Flat—an exciting and strategic redevelopment opportunity in Napa County's scenic Lake Berryessa corridor. This rare offering spans approximately 18.38 acres across two adjacent parcels with a County zoning overlay to allow for commercial and housing uses, including an affordable aspect. Whether you're a developer, investor, or planner with a creative vision, this property is primed for transformation.

\$995,000



1011 Steele canyon

<https://1011steelecanyonrd.com/>

4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 10 acres

\$1,195,000

Exceptional Lake Berryessa Estate - Premier Peninsula Location. Discover unmatched privacy with the shoreline just steps from your door. As the only residence on this secluded stretch, it truly feels like your private lakeside retreat. The property attracts diverse wildlife, with visits from bald eagles, ospreys, deer, and foxes. The home features an open floor plan with high ceilings and expansive windows creating a bright atmosphere. Interior finishes include tile, laminate, and carpet flooring with a cozy fireplace. Minutes from the Steele Canyon Recreation Area.

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Acres of Usable Land with Two Homes at Lake Berryessa

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<http://www.steele.canyonroad.com/>

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Main House: 4BR | 2.5BA *** Guest House: 2BR | 2BA**

Beautifully updated with an oversized 2-car garage

Detached 1,200 sq. ft. Shop with 3 roll-top doors – perfect for hobbies or projects

Additional Features: Separate Office space, fully fenced, water storage tank, goat barn/chicken coop, greenhouse, olive trees, and filtered lake views.

5 minutes from Steele Canyon Recreation Area



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259 Sugarloaf Drive

Lot 51 - APN#s 019-322-004 - 259 Sugarloaf Drive

Offered at \$68,900

Spanish Flat Woodlands

1013 Arroyo Lindo Court

APN# 019-441-004 - .224+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$69,999

Mostly flat then upslope.

1268 Steele Canyon Road

APN# 019- 432-001 - .21+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$47,000

Flat Space with a hill at the back of the lot

Live Oak Lane #21

APN# 019-331-008- .47+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$48,600

Extra Large Lot

814 Bahia Vista Court

APN# 019-452-004 .32+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$29,500

Mostly Flat Then Downslope

1053 Headlands Drive

APN# 019-482-011 .27+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$65,000

Mostly Flat Then Upslope

1121 Steele Canyon Road

APN# 019-442-004 - .31+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$15,000

Flat then downslope

611 Noah Court

APN# 019-422-012 - .33+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$49,500

Flat then downslope

#17 Rimrock Drive

APN# 019-590-017 - 60.69 +/- Acres

Offered at \$350,000

201 Mulford Drive

APN# 019-322-008-000 .52+- Acre Lot

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Flat Then Downslope Lot

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Upslope Lot

817 Bahia Vista Court

APN# 019-451-012 .28+- Acre Lot

Offered at \$29,500

Flat Then Downslope

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Offered at \$99,000

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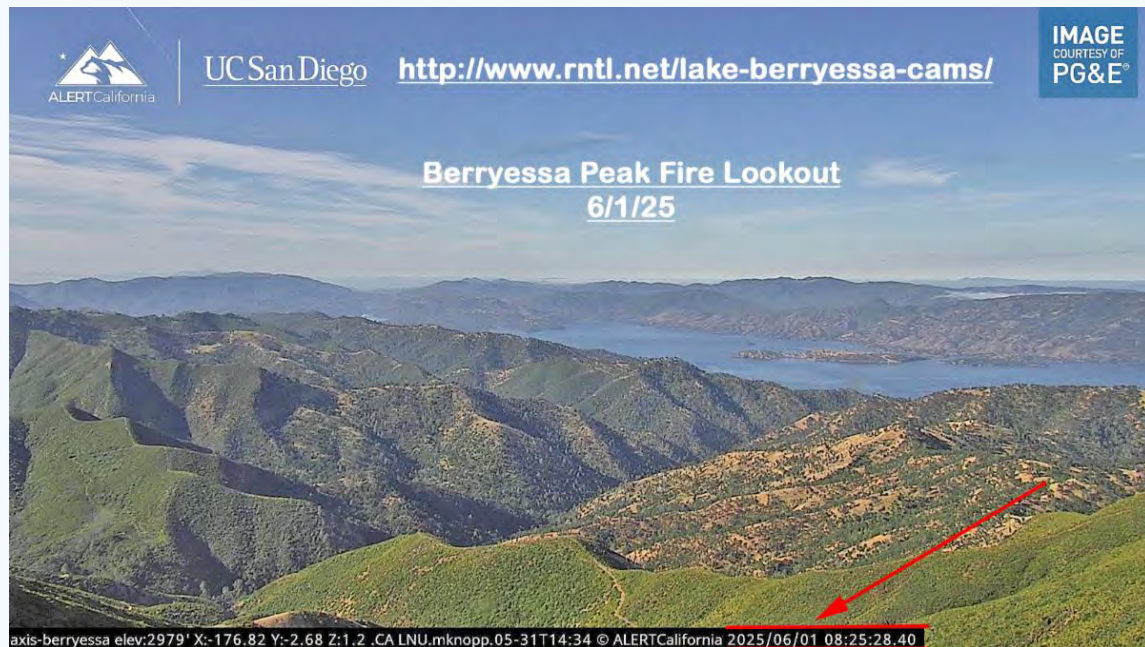
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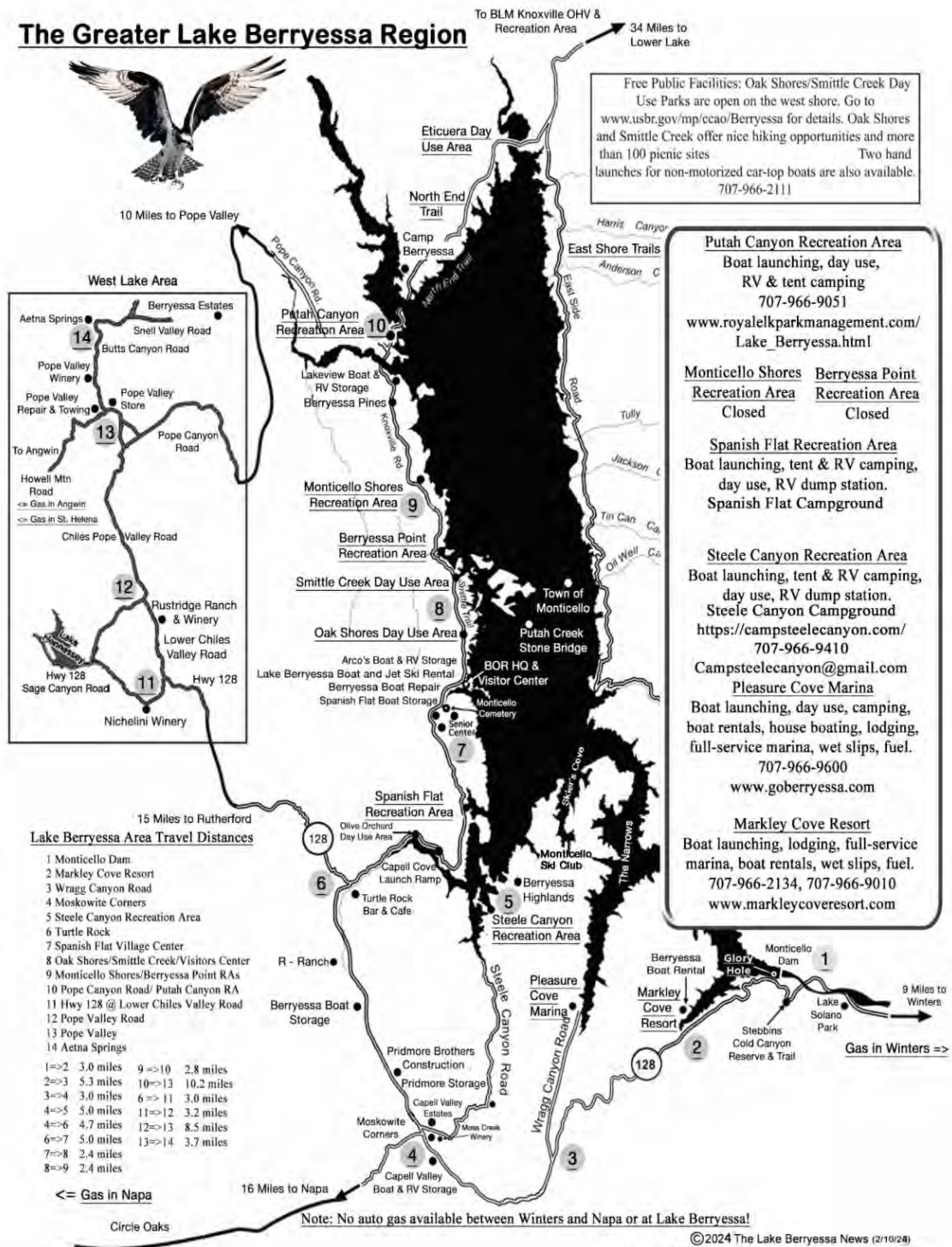
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The Lake Berryessa News Special Edition

Odd Glory Hole Photo

Monticello Dam Safety

Bigfoot AI Videos

June 29, 2025

Lake Berryessa Statistics (6/29/25)

The Lake Berryessa water level is at 436.3 feet, 3.7 feet below Glory Hole.

Lake capacity is at 95.6%

Lake surface temperature is 80 degrees from the surface to 10 feet down.

Odd Glory Hole Photo Causes Local Confusion

by Peter Kilkus

Last week there was a bit of a kerfuffle (a commotion or fuss, especially one caused by conflicting views) on the Lake Berryessa Facebook group page over an odd post about Lake Berryessa's Glory Hole.

"A 72-foot-wide hole swallowing a lake isn't a disaster—it's a massive engineering feat. The "glory hole" at Lake Berryessa, California, reappeared for the first time since 2019, showcasing its functionality as water levels surge above 440 feet. This giant drain, resembling a flower, plunges overflow 200 feet into Putah Creek, creating a stunning visual as it appears to drain the lake directly into the Earth. This extraordinary design is a striking blend of practicality and spectacle, flaunting nature's power while effectively managing water control. Functionality has never looked so mesmerizing."

Although the story was simple and accurate, it was accompanied by a supposed photo of Glory Hole from the air. Having seen hundreds of Glory Hole photos over the years, I immediately recognized it as our Glory Hole, but something was wrong. The top photo was of Glory Hole in 2016 after the 11-year drought that began in 2006 and ended in 2017. The bottom was a photo of Glory Hole overflowing.



The photo even confused long-time residents who commented:

I live here and I am absolutely 100% sure that is not Lake Berryessa's glory hole. I don't know where else there is a glory hole, but that ain't it.

These photos are not photos of Glory Hole @ Lake Berryessa

I live here, but this is not Lake Berryessa nor is that the Gloryhole at Lake Berryessa.

Those 2 pictures are not of the same Glory Hole!! The bottom picture is the one at Lake Berryessa; I have no idea where the first photo is from.

You should be able to see the face of the dam, the glory hole is not that far from the face of the dam

Wrong lake!

Not even the same hole, look at road. I have lived here all of my life. I am 70 years old, so I have visited that Gloryhole many many, many, many times. This picture is not correct. Someone has Photoshopped something.

The last commenter was right about one thing, the picture was Photoshopped. For some reason the author of the original article used a mirror image of the original photo. When you look in the mirror and raise your right hand, what hand does your image raise? This isn't even AI. In these days of real AI, no one can trust their eyes. I corrected the original photo using Photoshop's "Image>Free Transform" function.

Two Lake Berryessa News readers posted some relevant information.

Stephen Simoneau: "Content Creators (bot farms) will reverse photos to try to avoid copyright violations. If you look closer in photos and videos on social media, you'll see a lot of mirror-image words."

Michael Doyle: "I sometimes do the same thing, reverse the image of something to make it look totally different. My best was of a fighter jet landing on an aircraft carrier, really confused many sailors and officers."



Monticello Dam - Could It Fail?

The summer boating season is in full swing at Lake Berryessa. One thing I like to do when out on a boat with friends, especially those who may be unfamiliar with Lake Berryessa, is to stop our boat at the buoy line by the dam and ask them a simple question. "If the dam collapsed now, would we be able to drive our boat fast enough back up through the Narrows to avoid being pulled down into Putah Creek?" Most people say "No!". As a physicist, I'd say "Yes, maybe".

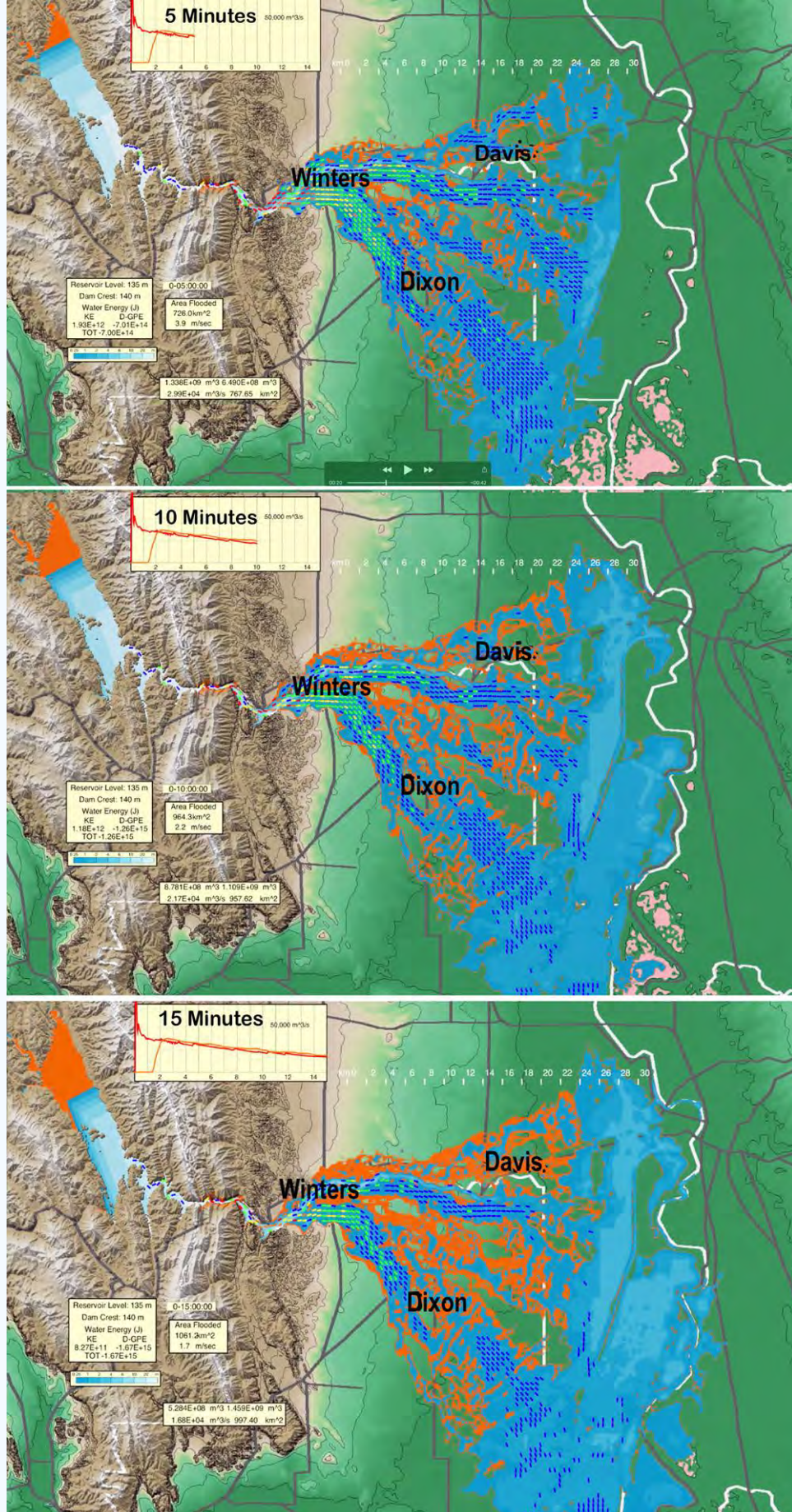
Water weighs 8 pounds per gallon, so a 5-gallon water bottle weighs in at 40 pounds. That's a lot of mass and momentum. But if you remember your science classes, gravity wins. Everything falls at the same rate in a vacuum, whether it's light or heavy - 32 feet per second per second. So, if a hole were blown in the top of the dam, it would take some time for the lake water to start flowing towards the dam, although once it got through the hole it would fall very fast down into Putah Creek.

There is a very interesting simulation of a hypothetical failure of Monticello dam created by Steven Ward, a research geophysicist at the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary

Physics at UC Santa Cruz. He has created a computer simulation of the first 16 hours of flooding that might be expected from the failure of Monticello Dam from a possible earthquake. This worst-case scenario envisions a nearly instantaneous breakdown of the structure, and a reservoir filled to capacity. This is unlikely but informative. It will cause concern for the folks who live in Winters. View it on YouTube at:

["Lake Berryessa's Monticello Dam Failure Simulation"](https://youtu.be/HEJEHnKrueo?si=oLFC2VtBgdCjfcPh)

<https://youtu.be/HEJEHnKrueo?si=oLFC2VtBgdCjfcPh>



Every now and then the subject of earthquakes and Monticello Dam comes up, again of most concern for the folks who live in Winters. I was unaware of any real tests done on the dam to study the effect of an earthquake until a local Lake Berryessa News reader, Steve O'Neill, sent me this note:

"That dam is studied in engineering schools. It's one of the 7 best in the world. Inside the dam is a plumb line that runs inside a tube from the top to the access at the bottom. Its monitored position shows the dam expanding and contracting daily as the sun hits it.

I was also there one day in the mid-1980s, when a team of engineers had built two big eccentric shaker machines and cemented them to the top of the dam about 1/3 and 2/3 of the way across. Their intent was to shake it about 7 Hz, roughly earthquake speed, and see how the dam responded. They had placed sensors all over the dam.

They started the motors, and four weights started rotating, gradually speeding up. The dam slowly started shaking, all per the design of the test. Standing on top as the dam started to shake was pretty scary. It was moving about **3 inches** front to back - the whole dam! Eventually the motors started to shake loose from the dam top, so they called off the test. They shakers never got to full speed, but they got some data from that."

His note spurred me to do some research, and I found the actual engineering study from 1987.

Report No. UCB/EERC-87/21 Earthquake Engineering Research Center
College of Engineering University of California Berkeley, California
December 1987

This study of arch dam-reservoir interaction is an outgrowth of a 4-year U. S. - China cooperative research project on "Interaction Effects in the Seismic Response of Arch Dams." Inconsistent comparisons were obtained in that project between measured and calculated dynamic reservoir pressures induced by shaking tests of arch dams, hence this study was planned to obtain improved understanding of the dynamic interaction mechanism. Monticello Dam, an arch dam in California designed by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, was chosen as the test system, and the research involved comparison of hydrodynamic pressures measured during vibration tests with results predicted analytically.

This study did not draw any conclusions about the ultimate safety of Monticello Dam during an earthquake. It was a test, a verification/validation of software programs and modelling of a dam structure.

Dam safety and earthquakes

In order to prevent the uncontrolled rapid release of water from the reservoir of a storage dam during a strong earthquake, the dam must be able to withstand the strong ground shaking from even an extreme earthquake, which is referred to as the Safety Evaluation Earthquake (SEE) or the Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE). Large storage dams are generally considered safe if they can survive an event with a return period of 10,000 years, i.e. having a one percent chance of being exceeded in 100 years. It is very difficult to predict what can happen during such a rare event as very few earthquakes of this size have actually affected dams.

There is a basic difference between the load bearing behavior of buildings and bridges on the one side, and dams. Under normal conditions buildings and bridges have to carry mainly vertical loads due to the dead load of the structures and some secondary live loads. In the case of dams, the main load is the water load, which in the case of concrete dams

with a vertical upstream face acts in the horizontal direction.

Earthquake Engineering for Concrete Dams

The hazard posed by large dams has long been known. Although no concrete dam has failed as a result of earthquake activity, there have been instances of significant damage. Knowledge of dam performance during large earthquakes is informed by historical events in other parts of the world and by computer simulations of even more significant ground shaking. In general, dams historically have performed exceptionally well during seismic events. Only one concrete dam in modern history has ever failed as the result of a seismic event—Shih-Kang Dam in Taiwan. In this instance, dam failure was largely due to the fault that ran directly beneath the dam. Generally, concrete dams have sustained only minor damage in large earthquakes.

How Safe is Monticello Dam?

The Bureau of Reclamation has long been the best damn dam builders in the world. There are two things the don't do.

1. They don't build dams that break.

Monticello Dam is a constant-center arch concrete dam with a structural height of 304 feet, and a crest length of 1,023 feet. Exactly 325,890 cubic yards of concrete were placed in its construction.





2. They don't build dams that overflow.

Before building a dam, the Bureau of Reclamation does extensive historical studies of the rainfall and flow of waters in the watershed. The frequency floods derived for Lake Berryessa were developed using USGS stream gage records at Putah Creek near Winters for water years 1931 through 1956, and Bureau of Reclamation computed inflows to Lake Berryessa for water years 1957 through 1986. The Putah Creek flows near Winters were assumed to be representative of the flows at Monticello dam site for water years 1931 through 1956.

Monticello Dam was overtopped only once. During the construction phase, Lake Berryessa did rise high enough in 1955 to spill over the top of the dam when it was at about half its finished height, causing damage and delays.



The Bureau of Reclamation has a systematic four-step program that continuously monitors the status of its dams. There is a review and inspection every four years, which involves looking at seismic, hydrologic and static parameters. BOR headquarters in Denver and the local area office take turns overseeing these inspections, which are exhaustive. It is visual, looking for anomalies like seepage in the internal galleries that house some of the sensing equipment relied on for data. But they also evaluate how much loading the horizontal joints are bearing, review other structural parameters, and evaluate seismic data.

For a lot more detail on these issues see:

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/Tech-Manual-Chapters/-Monticello-Dam-Failure-Analysis.pdf>

Free downloadable, searchable chapters of my book are available at:

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/styled-3/styled-5/>

The book is available on Amazon at:

[Lake Berryessa Technical Manual: The Science, Engineering, History, and Humor of a Major Unnatural Resource.](#)

AI Videos Update

The story about the odd Glory Hole photo above, which was not even done with AI, reminded me of the latest AI video fads on YouTube and Facebook. Have you seen the explosion of Bigfoot videos yet? Some are very funny, and very realistic. There are also some humorous political satire videos too. Apparently the software is available for only about \$250 per month. Below are screen shots from the videos.

Bigfoot AI Videos

<https://youtu.be/NCW-esQZmZk?si=uQL7UtiV5pvsO8y0>

<https://youtu.be/t43ISdwZNt4?si=03GkQ086VBollqp7>





PROJECT 2025, The Series :AI Trump, Boebert, Musk, & Bernie Sanders

<https://youtu.be/pY-K8CwSSio?si=bxawDNJDgFXKYI6J>



If I could afford \$250 a month just for fun, I'd probably make some Allie, the Lake Berryessa Alligator, aka the family-friendly megagator, videos. Lake Berryessa's attractions could then be our Glory Hole and Allie. Here's a rare photo captured of them both at the same time.



Last issue we did a story about jet ski racing at Putah Canyon Campground which is on the site of the old Putah Creek Resort. Someone posted a photo of a postcard from the "good ole days" before the Bureau of Reclamation demolished the resort facilities.



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<https://www.1104steelecanyonrd.com/>

<https://youtu.be/dmVbvT32vN8?si=HvrsbkFcrhydTIuE>



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\$995,000



1011 Steele canyon

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611 Noah Court

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Flat then downslope

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APN# 019-590-017 - 60.69 +/- Acres
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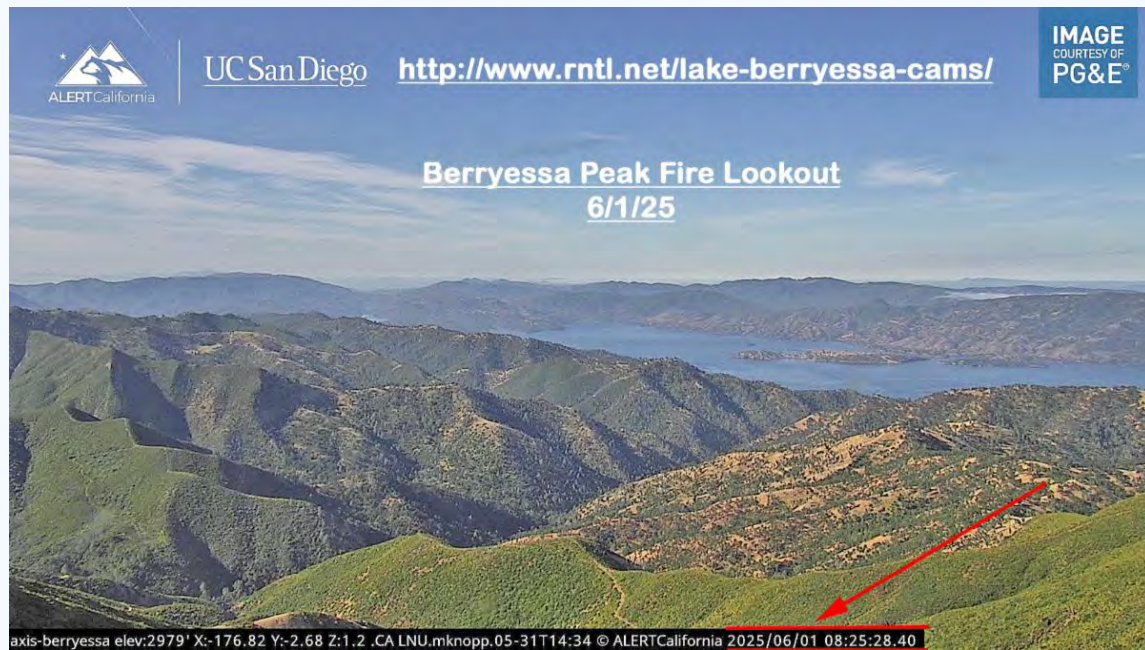


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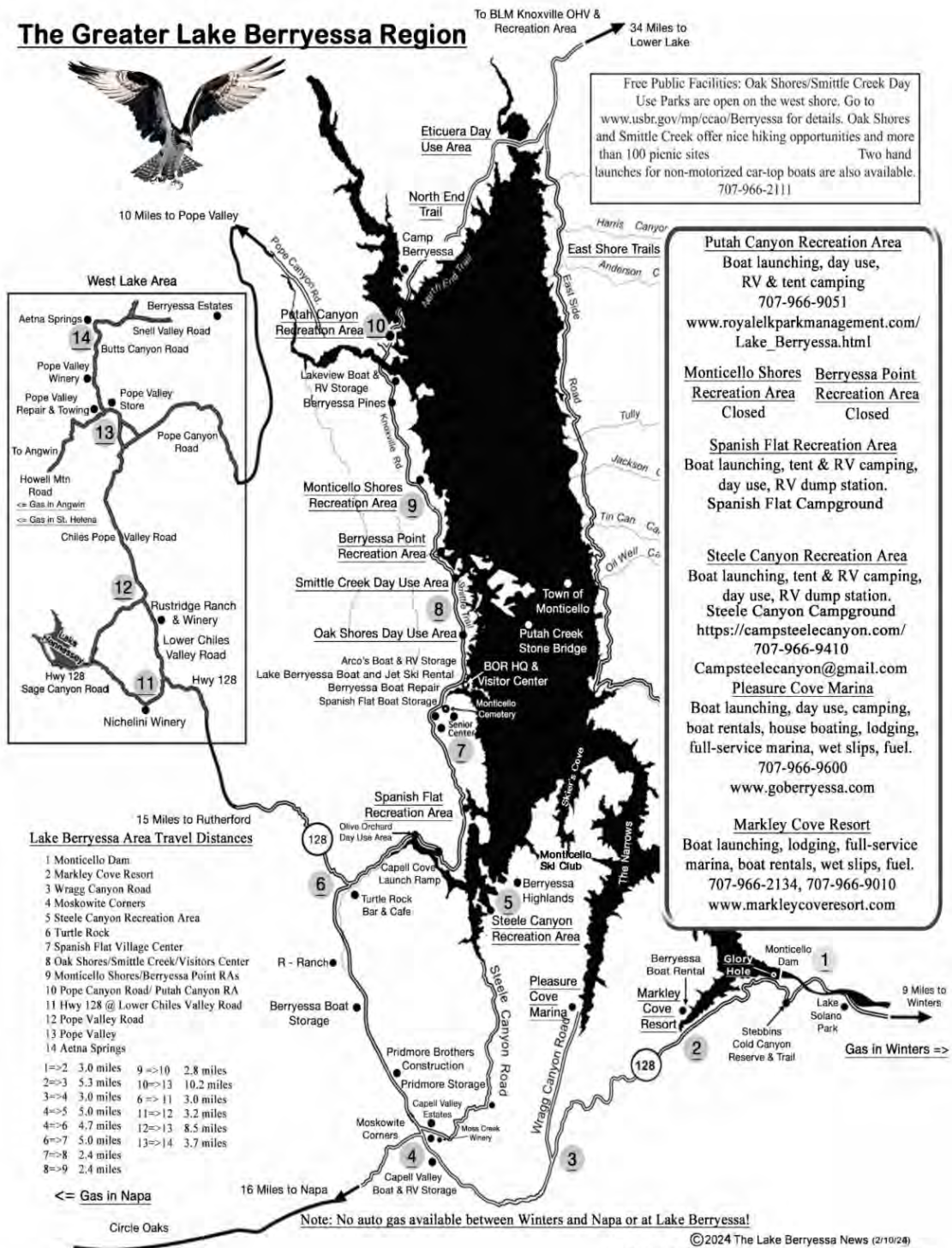
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