



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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**WILDFLOWERS BLOOM AT METROPOLITAN'S
DIAMOND VALLEY LAKE AFTER YEARS OF DROUGHT
Winter rains to bring colorful vistas to DVL's
seasonal wildflower trail, which opens today (Friday, Feb. 24)**

HEMET, Calif.—After five years of drought, the green hills surrounding Diamond Valley Lake will once again come alive with the bright oranges, blues, purples and reds of the region's native wildflowers.

The display of colors will be easily accessible to visitors of the lake's seasonal wildflower trail, which opens to the public today (Feb. 24), and will remain open Wednesday through Sunday until the blooms fade in late spring.

"This winter's impressive rainfall has not only brought some much-needed relief to the state's record drought, it has brought life back to the hills surrounding Diamond Valley Lake," said Jeff Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District, which owns and operates the 4,500-surface-acre lake near Hemet in southwest Riverside County.

"It has been too long since we have been treated to the natural brilliance of these hillsides ablaze with color," Kightlinger added.

The wildflower bloom has already started and is expected to peak in mid- to late-March, when the hillsides will be a carpet of color, said wildlife biologist Bill Wagner.

"We've had a limited bloom the past few years scattered around the lake. This year is going to be spectacular, with broad fields of flowers covering the hillsides," he said. "Because the hillsides are so saturated due to the rain this year, I think the bloom could go well into late spring."

In addition to fields of orange California poppies—the state flower—visitors can expect to see blue royal lupines, purple canterbury bells, yellow ranchers fiddleneck, white popcorn flowers, and pink red maids, among other wildflowers. The best time to see poppies in blooms is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., as they need full sun.

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The wildflower trail—part of the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve—is a 1.3-mile loop extending from the Lakeview Trail. The trail is rated as an easy-to-moderate hike with some rugged terrain and will be open from sunrise to sunset.

“Visitors who hike to the top of the trail peak will also get another beautiful sight—tons of butterflies,” Wagner said.

The trailhead is accessible via the lake’s East Marina, entered at Domenigoni and Searl parkways in Hemet. Parking is \$9 and there is a \$2-per-person Lakeview Trail fee that includes a map of the wildflower trail and a wildflower guide.

Two other trails are open to the public year-round and also afford good views of the blooming flowers—the 21.8-mile Lakeview hiking and bicycling trail that circles the 4.5-mile-long lake and the 5.9-mile North Hills trail for equestrians and hikers.

Another viewing option is to rent one of the lake’s bass or pontoon boats, bring fishing poles and lunch, and enjoy the 360-degree views from the lake itself. Boat rental and fishing information is at dvlake.com.

In addition, Diamond Valley Lake features a Visitor Center and the Western Science Center, both on Searl Parkway near the Domenigoni Parkway entrance.

Information on California Friendly™ native plants and water-saving tips are at bewaterwise.com. For more information about the seasonal wildflower trail, call 1-800-590-LAKE or 961-926-7201.

Pets are not allowed on the trails or in the marina.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving nearly 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.