



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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DROUGHT, LOW STORAGE LEVELS CAUSE METROPOLITAN TO SUSPEND PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCHES AT DIAMOND VALLEY LAKE APRIL 15 Southwestern Riverside County lake to remain open to fishing from shoreline, rental boats

The serious need for water conservation throughout Southern California due to the statewide drought was underscored today as the Metropolitan Water District announced plans to indefinitely suspend private boat launches at the region's largest reservoir at the close of business April 15 because of low lake levels.

Storage levels at Diamond Valley Lake near Hemet in southwest Riverside County are expected to begin receding in early April as water is drawn to meet the region's supply needs. Metropolitan projects water levels will reach the end of the boat ramp at the reservoir's East Marina by mid-April.

"This action speaks volumes about the seriousness of the water-supply situation Southern California faces now and next year. That's why continued conservation is so essential," said Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger.

"We understand the public recreation impacts this action will have at the lake, recognized as one of the premier fishing spots in Southern California," Kightlinger said. "While we all remain proud of Diamond Valley Lake and the recreation it provides, the reservoir's primary purpose is to help maintain water supply reliability for Metropolitan, our 26 member public agencies and nearly 19 million Southern Californians."

The pending action marks the second time Metropolitan will have temporarily suspended boat launches since the reservoir was opened to public recreation in October 2003. The district closed the lake's ramp from October 2008 to December 2009, again because of drought-driven low lake levels.

During the suspension, Diamond Valley Lake will remain open to the public, with 3 miles of the shoreline available for public fishing. Rental boats at the lake will remain available until it becomes impractical or unsafe to operate and maintain the rental fleet.

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Kayaks and canoes that meet guidelines will be allowed to launch as long as boarding docks are serviceable. In addition, Diamond Valley's Lake View Trail will remain open to the public for hiking and biking, as will the North Hills Trail for hiking and horseback riding.

Nearly doubling the region's surface water storage options when it was dedicated in 2000, Diamond Valley Lake has a storage capacity of 810,000 acre-feet of water, with a surface water elevation of 1,756 feet above sea level.

Today, storage in the lake stands at 390,000 acre-feet, 48 percent of capacity. Since January 2014 when the 4,500-surface-acre lake held 583,600 acre-feet, Metropolitan has withdrawn 193,000 acre-feet to meet member agency needs, dropping lake levels 44 feet. (An acre-foot of water is nearly 326,000 gallons, about the amount used by two typical Southland households in a year.)

Kightlinger said Metropolitan will continue to draw upon the lake but will protect the region's emergency supplies stored in the reservoir. He noted, however, that continued withdrawals could potentially leave the lake at its lowest level since Metropolitan began filling the reservoir in 1999.

Preserving supplies for what could be continued drought in 2016 and 2017 will be central to the board's April consideration of limiting deliveries to its member agencies through its allocation plan based on an update of weather and supply conditions, he said.

"Diamond Valley Lake's exposed shoreline and dry boat ramp serve as a stark reminder to Southland consumers about the importance of saving water during this drought," Kightlinger said.

Southern Californians can do their part to help local agencies build and maintain reserves for 2015 and beyond by significantly reducing water use, particularly outdoors, where up to 70 percent of residential use occurs, Kightlinger said. In addition to Metropolitan's actions, record dry conditions have caused many local water agencies to draw down reservoirs and groundwater supplies. Information about water-saving rebates and Metropolitan's conservation programs can be found at bewaterwise.com.

Metropolitan is working with Urban Park Concessionaires, the district's contracted marina operator, to notify annual pass holders and dry storage renters. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will contact the organizers of scheduled fishing tournaments that will be impacted by the boat ramp closure. In addition, Metropolitan will distribute fliers at the marina, DVL Visitor Center and local fishing shops.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a 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.