

LAKE PERRIS

Lake Perris, which is located in northwestern Riverside County and was completed in 1974, is a multipurpose facility providing water supply, recreation, and fish and wildlife enhancement. In addition to being the southernmost SWP facility, the lake is the terminal storage facility on the East Branch of the SWP's California Aqueduct. Water reaches Lake Perris from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta after flowing through the 444 miles of the California Aqueduct, the SWP's main artery.

The lake, which stores 126,841 acre-feet of water at maximum operating capacity, supplies the needs of homes, farms, and factories in a region stretching as far south as the Mexican border. (An acre-foot is enough to serve one to two average families for a year.)

Lake Perris also has become one of the most heavily used lakes in the State Park System, providing recreation opportunities for the burgeoning Riverside-San Bernardino area and all of Southern California.

LAKE AND DAM STATISTICS

LAKE PERRIS

Gross Capacity.....131,450 acre-feet
 Surface Area.....2,320 acres
 Shoreline.....10 miles
 Maximum depth.....110 feet

PERRIS DAM

Type.....zoned earth fill
 Height.....128 feet
 Crest Elevation.....1,600 feet
 Length.....11,600 feet
 Volume.....20,000,000 cubic yards



California Department of Water Resources' Mission...

To manage the water of California, in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the state's people and protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments.

LAKE PERRIS

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit DWR'S Web site at
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THE STATE WATER PROJECT

Planned, designed, constructed and operated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the State Water Project (SWP) is the largest state-built, multi-purpose, user-financed water project in the United States.

The SWP, spanning more than 600 miles from Northern California to Southern California, includes 34 storage facilities, 20 pumping plants, four pumping-generating plants, five hydroelectric power plants and approximately 700 miles of canals, tunnels, and pipelines.

The SWP's main purpose is to provide a water supply – that is, to divert and store water during wet periods and distribute it to areas of need in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast, and Southern California. Other project purposes include flood control, power generation, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement, and water quality improvements to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The \$1.75 billion bond issue of 1960 provided initial funding for the SWP and payments received from 29 contracting agencies are paying off the bonds. These 29 urban and agricultural water agencies have long-term contracts for the delivery of SWP water. Approximately 70 percent of SWP water goes to urban users and 30 percent to agricultural users. These SWP contracting agencies are repaying the cost, including interest, of financing, building, operating, and maintaining the SWP water storage and delivery system.

HISTORY

The valley that is now the site of Lake Perris was once the home of the Indian tribes of Cahuilla, Serrano, and Luiseno.

Carbon dating of fire pits in the area revealed that people temporarily stayed in the Valley as early as 300 B.C. But the population did not reach a peak until the year 1500 when Lake Cahuilla in the Coachella Valley dried up, driving people to Perris



in search of food. They roamed the area gathering acorns and hunting deer, mountain sheep, raccoons, rabbit, birds, and other animals.

There are few traces of the Indians today, although archaeologists from the University of California at Riverside have dug up shaped shells, arrow points, bits of pottery, clay pipes, and implements like pestles, choppers, knives, and hammerstones.

Ya'l Heki' (In Cahuilla, the name means "Home of the Wind") museum stands on a promontory with a sweeping view of the lake. The regional museum, operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation, presents a thorough interpretation of Native American history and culture of the desert regions of Southern California. The museum is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tours are by appointment only.

RECREATION

Visitors to the 8,200-acre Lake Perris State Recreation Area, operated by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, can swim, boat, fish, camp, picnic, and ride bicycles and horses. The lake's visitors can also water ski, scuba dive, climb rocks, and hunt.

Swimmers can enjoy two beach areas designated by buoys at Moreno and Perris beaches. These sites feature shade gazebos, tables, grills, and restrooms (wheelchair accessible). Playground areas are also available.

Group picnickers can choose any of four areas at the Bernasconi Pass area and the east end of the lake near lots 13 and 14. These sites can accommodate from 25 to 200 people and are equipped with shade gazebos, tables, grills, and restrooms (wheelchair accessible).

The Lake Perris Campground has 167 sites for tent camping (non-hookup sites) and 264 paved sites for recreational vehicles (hookup sites). Each site has a table, fire ring with a grill and access to water. For reservations please call 1-800-444-7275.

There are hiking, bicycling and horse riding trails with spectacular views. A rock climbing area called Big Rock near Bernasconi Pass offers climbers a practice zone with a variety of challenges.

FISHING AND WILDLIFE

Lake Perris has trophy Largemouth Bass along with bluegill, sunfish, catfish, crappie and trout. Trout are regularly stocked in the fall and winter months by the Department of Fish and Game. A California fishing license is required.

The Department of Fish and Game operates hunting areas for upland game in season at designated areas. The park abounds with valley quail, mourning dove, ducks, geese, rabbits, and other animals. Hunting information is available at the park kiosks.

Lake Perris State Recreation Area serves as sanctuary to observe wildlife. Ducks and geese winter at the lake and shore birds flock here most of the year. Birds of prey and upland birds inhabit the surrounding grasslands and mountains.

BOATING

The north side of the lake has three boat ramps with 15 launching lanes and ample parking for cars and trailers. A concessionaire operates a marina which offers boat rentals, dry storage, a gas dock, coffee shop, and boat repair. Bait and tackle are also sold here. The marina can be reached at 951-657-2179.

LOCATION

Ringed by rocky, barren hills, Lake Perris and Perris Dam lie about 11 miles southeast of Riverside and 60 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. The lake can be reached from the Ramona Expressway off Interstate 215 and south of Highway 60.

To obtain additional information on Lake Perris State Recreation Area, call the California Department of Parks and Recreation at 951-940-5600.

UPDATE ON PERRIS DAM

In 2005, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) identified potential seismic safety risks in a section of the Perris Dam foundation. There is no imminent threat to life or property. However, in the interest of ensuring the maximum public safety for those using and living downstream of the lake, DWR has taken precautions by lowering the lake's water level until repairs are made. The lake's water level is directly proportional to availability of facilities and water-oriented recreational activities. While the lake will remain open to boating, fishing, and swimming, the reduction in reservoir water levels needed to address seismic safety concerns at the dam will impact some existing facilities.

