



Perris Press Release

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Improvements Coming to Lake Perris in 2014

Work to strengthen the earthen dam at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area is expected to begin in about a year.

The State of California has approved \$47 million in public funds to upgrade the dam to withstand a massive earthquake, should one ever strike the Perris Valley region. Fears of a major tremor prompted the state to reduce the level of Lake Perris by about 25 feet. When repairs are completed in about four years, the water will be returned to its former level, which will greatly enhance the boating, water-skiing and fishing activities enjoyed by many of the more than 1 million annual visitors. Total cost of the dam repairs is projected at \$141 million, with the remainder funds coming from water agencies that use the lake.

News that Lake Perris is being returned to its former depth delighted Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough.

He began a successful campaign to gin up support for the repairs from Riverside County communities, public-service agencies and state legislators. Yarbrough traveled 1,000-miles across the county, appearing at eight city council meetings urging elected officials to sign a resolution of support for the dam repairs. He flew to Sacramento to personally lobby Sen. Richard Roth and also spoke to members of Assemblyman Jose Medina's staff. Medina and Roth represent Perris in the state legislature.

Yarbrough also spoke to many visitors to the State Recreation Area, including campers, rock-climbers, equestrians, park rangers, fishing-derby contestants and boaters—all who supported efforts to repair the dam and raise the lake level. In addition to being a vital wildlife refuge and popular recreation draw, Yarbrough told Lake Perris visitors, local officials and state representatives that it serves as a major cog in the State Water Project.

The SWP includes a vast system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power-plants and pumping stations that stores and distributes water to 29 urban and agricultural water suppliers in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast, and Southern California.

Yarbrough said he believes the coming improvements to the Lake Perris dam represent a long-term solution to safety-related issues and ensures the future of the state recreation area for decades.

"It is truly a statewide resource that needs to be protected for all Californians," Yarbrough said. "I am pleased the state has committed resources to keep this beautiful resource alive and well for many years."

Yarbrough's campaign to lobby for support for the State Recreation Area took him from Perris to Riverside, Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Menifee and desert communities such as Desert Hot Springs and Indian Wells. He handed out copies of a slide-show that documented activities at the lake and distributed bumper stickers that urged people to help "Save Lake Perris."

Throughout his two months on the road, he met elected officials with fond memories of the lake and its environs. Sen. Roth, D-Riverside, said he considered Lake Perris a "treasure" and fully supported efforts to bring about needed repairs.

"I am 400 percent in your corner," Roth said. "Lake Perris is a critical resource to the entire region on a whole variety of levels. I am well acquainted with Lake Perris and well acquainted with the tremendous contributions it makes to the entire Riverside County region."

Local officials were equally laudatory about the State Recreation Area.

Riverside Mayor Rusty Bailey told Yarbrough that he went fishing with his dad when he was a youngster.

"Thanks for advocating for this important regional resource," Bailey said.

Riverside City Councilman Chris MacArthur said he was at Lake Perris the day it opened in 1973 and still has fond memories of visiting there.

"For a lot of us, it represents time to spend with your families," he said. "It's important for our community."

Yarbrough said such sentiments reinforced the belief shared by Perris officials: the lake matters to people. "It reinforced what we all thought and felt," he said. "This is an important resource."

State officials recently provided specifics about the future repairs at Lake Perris to members of the Perris City Council. David Samson, Perris Dam Remediation Manager, said a fear of liquefaction—that the loosely packed soil supporting the dam could essentially turned into a liquid in a major earthquake—prompted the decision in 2005 to reduce the lake level. The renovations call for excavating at the dam site, combining existing soil with cement in a process known a "deep-soil mixing" and construction a new, 60-foot-high berm in front of the existing dam to further stabilize it. When renovations are completed, Samson said the new Lake Perris dam will be "very robust" and able to withstand a major earthquake. Samson said final design and permitting on the upgrades is "moving full-steam ahead" and said that by mid-2014 "you should see a lot of dust and earth-movers moving lots of earth."

The news that Lake Perris will be refilled to its pre-2005 level brought made City officials happy.

"We're looking forward to the day," said Perris Mayor Daryl Busch.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem makes a presentation at a City Council meeting urging representatives to support renovations to the Lake Perris State Recreation Area. Yarbrough traveled more than 1,000 miles and addressed dozens of elected officials seeking their support.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough and State Sen. Richard Roth, D-Riverside, who said he supported efforts to strengthen the Lake Perris dam "400 percent."



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough addresses the Jurupa Valley City Council, which supported the resolution to improve the dam at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough talks with a rock-climbing enthusiast during a trip to the Lake Perris State Recreation Area.