



## Lake Oroville Community Update

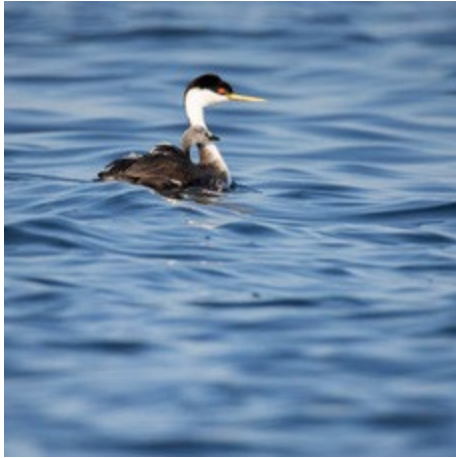
November 1, 2024

### Brad Freeman Trail Improvements

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is nearing completion on a project to improve a 1.5-mile section of the Brad Freeman Trail between Cherokee Road and the Highway 70 Garden Drive overpass. In recent weeks, DWR crews finished paving work on an 8-foot-wide asphalt path. This week, crews began installation of accessible box gates at trail entrance points, which restrict vehicles while still providing access for equestrians, bicyclists, and pedestrians.



Installation of a 4-foot-wide decomposed granite path for pedestrians is anticipated the week of Nov. 4, with the schedule subject to change based on weather, material, and crew availability. The Brad Freeman Trail between Cherokee Road and Garden Drive may be closed intermittently during work. This improvement project is supported by a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant through the National Park Service, with remaining funding for the \$700,000 project provided by DWR.



### **Annual Grebe Survey Complete**

During the summer months, a unique bird makes its home in the waters around the Oroville-Thermalito Complex, with a little help from DWR. The Western and Clark's grebes are aquatic birds with distinctive red eyes and pointed yellow beaks. During the summer, they arrive from the Pacific Ocean to nesting areas around the Thermalito Afterbay in Oroville. The grebes nest in shallow waters, attaching their floating nests to aquatic vegetation under the surface.

Every year since 2004, DWR has established a goal of keeping Thermalito Afterbay water levels more consistent during the birds' nesting season as part of our commitment to addressing wildlife needs. This year's annual grebe survey was conducted over several weeks with 437 adults and 82 young grebes estimated at the Afterbay.

### **Oroville Recreation Advisory Committee**

The Oroville Recreation Advisory Committee (ORAC) met Nov. 1 at the Southside Oroville Community Center. ORAC was established by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to review and provide recreation plan recommendations for Oroville Facilities owned by DWR. The 13-member committee is made up of representatives from state and local government, recreation groups, and business and community organizations. To obtain a summary of the meeting, send a request to [oroville@water.ca.gov](mailto:oroville@water.ca.gov).

### **Vegetation Management Activities**

Vegetation management activities are ongoing at Loafer Creek within the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area. CAL FIRE, the California Conservation Corps (CCC), the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), and Butte County Sheriff's Office recently conducted a 160-acre prescribed burn throughout Loafer Creek and along HWY 162 (Oro Quincy Highway). Fuel reduction activities such as thinning and chipping are expected to continue for several weeks. Work is part of an ongoing Vegetation



Management Plan (VMP) aimed at reducing hazardous fuels to protect local communities, infrastructure, and natural resources.

Vegetation management activities will require the intermittent closure of several trails within the Loafer Creek Recreation Area. Trail users should be cautious when entering work areas and obey all posted trail signage.

In 2023, DWR was awarded Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds totaling \$900,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to complete a 220-acre hazardous fuels reduction project in the Lake Oroville area. Fuel reduction locations include DWR property along Oro Dam Blvd. East, the Bidwell Canyon/Kelly Ridge area, and the Loafer Creek State Recreation Area. This multi-year project is reducing hazardous fuels and the risk of catastrophic wildfire by thinning vegetation using hand and mechanical methods, accompanied by chipping. By proactively reducing ground fuels, thinning overgrown vegetation, and removing dead and dying vegetation, firefighters have a better chance at suppressing a wildfire.

DWR's Fuel Load Management Plan works to reduce wildfire risk, increase public safety, and enhance forest health around the Lake Oroville area. Ongoing vegetation management of this critical area remains a high priority for DWR and its partners at CAL FIRE, Butte County Fire Department, Butte County Sheriff's Office, the CCC, State Parks, and the Butte County Fire Safe Council.



### **Oroville Recreation**

Staffed by knowledgeable guides, the Lake Oroville Visitor Center features interpretive displays on Oroville Dam, area geology, wildlife and habitat, hydroelectric power, and cultural and historical artifacts. View videos in the theater about the construction of Oroville Dam, walk or hike along nearby trails, and visit the 47-foot-tall observation tower that provides unsurpassed panoramic views of surrounding areas. Free guided tours for school and community groups are available by reservation.

Parking and admission to the Visitor Center are free.

DWR, State Parks, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) maintain over 92 miles of trails in the Oroville area. An interactive map of recreation facilities, including open trails and their permitted uses (hike, bike, horse, multi), is available on DWR's [Lake Oroville Recreation webpage](#). A paper trail map is available at various locations, including most entrance kiosks and the Lake Oroville Visitor Center.

Lake Oroville is one of the State Water Project's premier recreational destinations and one of California's best fishing spots. The lake provides both warm-water and cold-water fisheries. Below the Oroville Dam, the Thermalito Forebay, Thermalito Afterbay, and the Feather River offer additional excellent fishing opportunities for Chinook salmon and steelhead. Be sure to check CDFW fishing regulations before you go out fishing. The marinas at Bidwell Canyon and Lime Saddle are open daily and provide a variety of services including a convenience store, gas, boat rentals, and more.

Upstream migrating fish totals through the Feather River Fish Monitoring Station between Jan. 1 and Oct. 15 are:

- Spring-run Chinook salmon (March 1 through June 30): 7,152
- Fall-run Chinook salmon (July 1 through present): 22,120
- Steelhead: 1,224

### **Current Lake Operations**

Lake Oroville is at 764 feet elevation and storage is approximately 1.73 million acre-feet (MAF), which is 50 percent of its total capacity and 96 percent of the historical average.

Feather River flows are at 800 cubic feet per second (cfs) through the City of Oroville with 950 cfs being released from the Thermalito Afterbay River Outlet (Outlet) for a total Feather River release of 1,750 cfs downstream. DWR continues to assess Feather River releases daily.

The public can track precipitation, snow, reservoir levels and more at the [California Data Exchange Center](#). The Lake Oroville gage station is identified as "ORO."

*All data as of midnight 10/31/2024.*

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### **California Department of Water Resources**

715 P Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Call our general information line at 916-820-8142  
or email us at [oroville@water.ca.gov](mailto:oroville@water.ca.gov)

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