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Bass Lake operation to change slightly

By Michael Raffety | Editor | March 11, 2009 11:55



A gate off of Bass Lake Road marks utility access to Bass Lake. Democrat photos by Megan Jeremica

The El Dorado Irrigation District will make a small change in the way it operates Bass Lake. The change, announced March 9, will save some water and save some expense.

On Feb. 23 former EID director Dick Akin criticized the board for wasting potable water to fill Bass Lake and allowing it to spill over.

In response Director of Operations Tom McKinney reviewed Bass Lake operations and prepared a report requested by the board. The lake, originally built 140 ago to sell water from the Crawford Ditch, is now used to supplement landscaping water customers when there is not enough recycled

water to serve them.

McKinney said instead of tapping into the Gold Hill Intertie to pour treated water into the lake this spring the district would tap into the intertie just a little farther down and send the treated water directly into the Bass Lake booster pump. This would bypass the lake, thus saving the expense of adding a chemical to remove the chlorine before it is put into the lake and eliminate evaporation loss.

The average depth of Bass Lake is 7 feet, which means 97 acres of surface area has a high evaporation rate - "up to 800,000 gallons on a hot day," McKinney said.

Further operational standards will be developed by the engineering staff.

"Procedures regarding supplementation of potable water into Bass Lake have not been defined and are implemented based on operational strategies," McKinney wrote. "Primary considerations include:

"1. Supplement Bass Lake only when Jenkinson Lake is spilling (Jenkinson Lake last spilled Jan. 4, 2006, and stopped at 8 a.m. June 20, 2006.)

"2. Supplement Bass Lake early in the season only if Jenkinson Lake is predicted to spill

"3. Supplement Bass Lake as long as the Gold Hill Intertie has sufficient capacity

"4. Supplement Bass Lake on predicted recycled water supply shortages and water operational needs."

Last year 555 acre-feet of water was added to the 745 acre-foot lake and 128 acre-feet delivered from Bass Lake. The figures for prior years were 256 in and 172 out in 2007, 296 acre-feet in and 244 out in 2006, 216 in and 358 out in 2005, 918 in and 310 out in 2004.

The recycled water system using treated water from the El Dorado Hills sewer plant serves 3,751 mostly residential customers, including 164 commercial and public space accounts such as the Serrano Country Club. The water is delivered through a separate system and is only used on landscaping.

McKinney said Serrano has worked with EID to install 125 evapotranspiration controllers that have saved 20-40 percent of the recycled water. Furthermore, capacity improvements are under way at the El Dorado Hills Wastewater Treatment Plant that will provide more recycled water and thus reduce the need for supplementing supplies with potable water.

Recycled water saves 3,500 acre-feet of drinking water annually, the equivalent of five Bass lakes, McKinney said.

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