

Silverwood Lake

State Recreation Area



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



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Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area

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Beginning as rain and snowmelt from the Feather River Basin, the water passes through Lake Oroville and traverses the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, joining the 444-mile State Water Project and ending in the snow-capped reflections of Silverwood Lake.



High in the heart of the San Bernardino National

Forest, Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area captures the eye and the imagination with vistas of snow-capped mountain peaks reflected on the lake. Thirty miles from San Bernardino, Silverwood Lake was formed by the 249-foot Cedar Springs Dam, which holds back the waters of the west fork of the Mojave River where it passes through the San Bernardino Mountains. Warm, dry breezes prevail during summer—with the highest temperatures averaging between 90 and 100 degrees from June to September. From December through March, rainy winter temperatures reach from the low 30s to the low 60s.

NATIVE PEOPLE

For some 2,500 years, the Serrano (Spanish for “mountain people”) Indians occupied *Yahaviat* (pine place) on the northern and southern faces of the San Bernardino Mountains, as far north as the flat desert bounded by the Tehachapi Mountains. In this land of plenty, the Serrano hunted large and small game with bows and arrows, throwing sticks, traps, nets and snares. They supplemented their diet with acorns, piñon nuts, various berries, roots, seeds and tubers. Alongside rivers and streams, the Serrano people lived in small settlements of 10 to 20 dwellings. Their circular-shaped homes were usually of willow frames covered in brush or tule reeds and tied with various fibers



The view of Silverwood Lake from Highway 138

or rawhide. Several of these settlements, including Yucaipa and Cucamonga, are recalled today by modern towns that bear their names. Trade with the Mojave people to the east and the Gabrielino to the west brought the Serrano goods and, later, horses.

The Serrano used ritual, including songs and storytelling, to pass on the knowledge necessary to maintain the earth’s natural order. Skilled artisans, the Serrano were known for their delicate, ornate pottery and woven baskets.

The stable lives and traditions of the Serrano changed drastically around 1790, when they were drawn into the San Gabriel Mission. Hard labor and European diseases took their toll. By the early 20th century, a group of approximately 1,500 Serrano people had dwindled to 119. Today some Serrano descendents live on or near the San Manuel and Morongo Reservations.

THE STATE WATER PROJECT

Silverwood Lake was named for W. E. “Ted” Silverwood, a Riverside County resident whose support for the State Water Project, and his unceasing work for water and soil conservation, helped to bring water to southern California.

Supplying water and power for California’s agriculture, cities and industry, the Water Project also provides flood control, recreation, and the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife. The lake waters begin in California’s upper Feather River Basin as rain or snowmelt. From the water storage facility at Lake Oroville the water is released in regulated amounts, flowing down the Feather and Sacramento Rivers to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and into the 444-mile California Aqueduct.

The water moves south to the foot of the Tehachapi Mountains. It enters southern California on the south side of the

Tehachapis, then splits into the west branch serving the Los Angeles Basin and Ventura County’s coastal areas, and the east branch, which serves the Antelope Valley and San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange and San Diego counties. In the Antelope Valley, the water level is pumped to a height of 3,480 feet above sea level, then downhill, under the Mojave River and Highway 173, and finally, it reaches Silverwood Lake.



State Park ranger with a park visitor and his catfish

From the intake towers at the south end of Silverwood Lake, the water continues south, where it plunges 1,600 feet to spin the turbines that generate electricity. Some of the water goes to contracting agencies, while the rest flows on to Lake Perris, the southern terminus of the aqueduct.

WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

California mule deer, gray foxes, coyotes, cottontail and brush rabbits, jackrabbits, western gray and ground squirrels, ring-tailed cats, skunks, chipmunks and wood rats thrive here. Mountain lions, black bears, bobcats and occasional golden beavers may be sighted along the Mojave River. In winter bald eagles are occasionally seen gliding silently above the lake, fishing for their next meal. Water-oriented birds include great blue herons, snowy egrets, avocets, western grebes, loons, Canada geese, mergansers and several varieties of ducks. Around Sawpit Canyon, birds of prey include red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, ospreys and roadrunners. This is also home to Clark's nutcrackers, Steller's and scrub jays, rock wrens and mountain bluebirds.

Silverwood Lake habitats include ponderosa pine, incense cedar, white fir and black oak. Along the shore chamise, live oak, manzanita, ceanothus and mountain mahogany grow. Alders, willows and sycamores are found along streams.



Heron are often seen on Silverwood Lake.

In October 2003 wildfires claimed approximately 1,000 acres of Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area. After the fires, winter rains brought flooding; some parts of the park may still be under repair and recovery. Many landscapes and other features of the 13-mile shoreline have changed dramatically, and once familiar features may be gone forever. Visitors are advised to take extra care to avoid debris when using the lake. Though nature has begun to repair itself, call ahead for information on fire bans or areas or features that may still be hazardous.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Camping—The Mesa Campground has 136 family sites, each with a table, barbecue grill and fire ring. Restrooms and showers are nearby. There are seven sites for bicyclists and hikers, and five accessible sites. The group campsites have barbecues, tables and restrooms with showers. Each will accommodate 120 persons and 30 cars.

Though some campsites were scorched in the 2003 fire, many are well on their way to recovery and available for use. For the latest updates on camping at Silverwood Lake and to make reservations, call (800)444-7275 or visit www.ReserveAmerica.com.

Hiking/Bicycling—The park has 13 miles of paved hiking and bicycling trails. Bicyclists under 18 years of age must wear safety helmets.

Riders should watch for sand and debris on the trail, slow down around blind curves, and carry plenty of drinking water.

Boating—The northern part of the lake has an area for waterskiing, and a marina and launch ramps are located at the southern end.

Waterskiing—Only aquaplanes or waterskis are permitted. Tow lines must not exceed 90 feet. Inflatable equipment, such as rubber rafts and innertubes, must not be towed.

Swimming—Two swim beaches are located at the southern end of the lake. Lifeguards are on duty daily from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

Fishing—Spring and fall, when lake and waterskiing activity are minimal, provide the best fishing conditions. From February through early June, trout fishing is good, and the lake also has largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, catfish and striped bass. In spring boat and shore fishing are available.

Bald Eagle Barge Tours—From January through March, barge tours to view the bald eagles are available. Saturday/Sunday tours are popular attractions. Reservations are recommended; call (760) 389-2303.

The Pacific Crest Trail—Part of the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail—which originates in Mexico, traverses three western states and terminates in Canada—passes through the park. This jewel in the crown of America's scenic trails runs along the crest of the San Bernardino Mountains.



Kayaking is a popular activity on Silverwood Lake.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES &

Accessibility improvements are anticipated for this park. Current facilities designated accessible include:

Camping—Four campsites and accompanying restrooms with showers may be usable with some assistance.

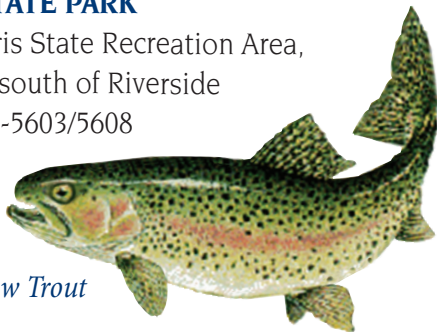
Trails—The Cleghorn Hike and Bike Trail, with vistas of the foothills, is accessible for 0.75 mile. Trailhead, parking and usable restrooms are at lots #4 and #5.

Exhibits/Programs—The visitor center has a usable ramped entry. Space is tight but most exhibits are generally accessible.

For current accessibility details, call the park or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

NEARBY STATE PARK

- Lake Perris State Recreation Area, 11 miles south of Riverside (909) 940-5603/5608



Rainbow Trout

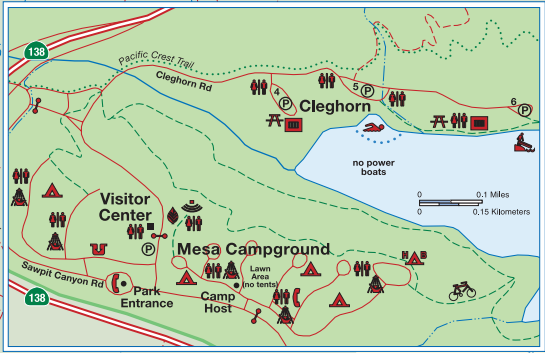
BOATING RULES

- Direction of travel in the main body of the lake (water-ski area) is counter-clockwise.
- All boats must be off the lake by sunset.
- Keep to the right in channel. This is a no-ski zone.
- Speed limits are 5 mph in restricted areas, 35 mph in open zones.
- A Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device is required for every person on board and must be worn by children under 12 years of age. The life jackets must fit.
- Boat operators must be at least 16 years of age. Twelve to 15-year-olds may operate with an adult 18 years of age or older.
- No riding is allowed on the bow, gunwale or transom of any vessel.
- Freestyle, wake jumping or trick riding are prohibited. Jumping or attempting to jump the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of the other vessel is prohibited by law.
- All vessels must carry a fire extinguisher (except outboard boats less than 26' without a permanently installed fuel tank).
- Fires, stoves and barbecues are prohibited in coves and boat-in areas.
- Buoys are for navigation and warning. Do not use for slalom style racing. No mooring or tying to buoys is allowed.
- Courtesy dock at launch ramp—15 minutes loading and unloading only. No unattended vessels may be left at the courtesy dock.
- Marina is a no wake zone.
- Only commercially-manufactured inflatable float tubes can be towed behind a boat or a wave runner. Non-commercial devices such as car or truck innertubes are not allowed. When passengers are on board, the float tube may be towed only in the waterski area; when no passengers are on board, it may be towed to and from the area.



Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area

Legend



NOTE: Forest roads (unpaved, red-dashed roads) are difficult to bike. Please ride with caution.

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact:
 Mojave River Natural History Association (MRNHA)
 • Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area • (760) 389-2303

