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Lake won't be lowered for project

Folsom dam work will not restrict water level, agency official says.

By Walter Yost - wyost@sacbee.com

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The problem: Reader John Gladding e-mailed The Bee to ask about rumors circulating that Folsom Lake is going to be kept low while dam construction is under way.

"Can you confirm this?" he asked.

The answer: The rumors are false, according to Jeff McCracken, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation spokesman.

"There will be no restrictions on the water level at Folsom Lake due to this," McCracken said about construction of a flood-control spillway at Folsom Dam.

McCracken cited "contractual obligations" as a reason for not lowering the lake level.

He also said that work is well under way. Work began last month at Folsom Point, a popular boating and water-access point at Folsom Lake, to develop a "haul road."

The road will allow for dump trucks to move dirt from the spillway excavation site to the Mormon Island Auxiliary Dam, McCracken said.

Work on the haul road is expected to be completed by the end of March, in time to allow full public access to Folsom Point by the start of the 2008 recreation season.

In order to keep Folsom Point open during the spillway construction period, an underpass will be built beneath Folsom Point Road. This will allow construction vehicles to pass under the road, and the public will use the overpass.

The new spillway is part of a \$1.3 billion joint federal project that will double the current level of flood protection for the Sacramento area.

The project includes building the auxiliary spillway consisting of an approach channel from Folsom Lake, a control structure with six submerged gates, a 2,700-foot concrete-lined chute and a stilling basin.

Dam-safety work will address flood, earthquake and seepage risks and will include modifying the main dam, right and left wing dams, the Mormon Island Auxiliary Dam and dikes 4, 5, and 6.

A supplemental environmental impact study of the work under way recently was made available for public review and comment. The study looks at the local effects of spillway construction, including development of a trail detour, a new contractor access road and construction of a cofferdam to protect workers while they build the stilling basin.

Comments on the document are due by March 28 and may be e-mailed to FolsomJFP@mp.usbr.gov; mailed to Elizabeth Vasquez, Bureau of Reclamation, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630; or faxed to (916) 989-7208.

To request a compact disc or paper copy of the environmental assessment, call Vasquez at (916) 989-719.

To get your own help: If there is a problem or a question you'd like to bring to the attention of local government and get an answer, e-mail Bee Folsom Bureau Chief Bill Enfield at benfield@sacbee.com,

call him at (916) 608-7461 or mail your query to The Sacramento Bee, Attention: Bill Enfield, 1835
Prairie City Road, Suite 500, Folsom, CA 95360.

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