

Final East Park Reservoir Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

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or where such development would encourage unauthorized use of sensitive areas. Development for public use could be constrained by any of the following features:

- Presence of streams, wetlands, or riparian habitat;
- Sensitive plant populations or wildlife habitat;
- 100-year floodplains;
- Steep slopes, 10 percent grade or greater; or
- Areas with poor soil composition.

1.9.4 Carrying Capacity

Although carrying capacity for East Park has not been firmly established, it can be defined as the ability of the resources to accommodate all compatible users with a minimum of negative impact on the resources. Some indicators such as overflowing garbage receptacles at peak times, shoreline erosion, and degradation of campsites suggest that carrying capacity has been reached for some elements. The goal of management actions proposed by Reclamation is not necessarily to increase visitor usage of East Park, but instead to create the opportunity for a higher quality experience for the average user, while preserving or improving the conditions of natural resources.

Constraints posed by carrying capacity fall into the categories of social, physical, and environmental factors. Based on capacity campgrounds at other Reclamation facilities, it is estimated that the carrying capacity at East Park be limited to 70 people per camping acre. Of the approximately 1,630 land acres available for visitor use, only about 44 acres are suitable for camping or day use, which allows for approximately 3,100 visitors (Reclamation 2003). To determine optimum visitor levels, Reclamation has performed a carrying capacity survey, which is summarized in Section 2.3.5 and which will be field tested and revised, if necessary, in the 2004 season.

1.9.5 Environmental Restrictions

Facility expansions or development at East Park may be limited by a number of factors. Because of regional and geographical variations, each Reclamation study area offers a unique set of opportunities and constraints for resource enhancement and protection. In certain areas, a particular resource found on Reclamation land may invite the participation of a particular agency or group as a managing partner or a partner in research or stewardship. In other areas, proximity to a certain user group or institution may provide the impetus for the involvement of that group.

East Park's lack of proximity to large population centers is one of its greatest constraints and also one of its greatest opportunities. The nearest large population center, Sacramento, is almost two hours away, which minimizes opportunities to develop a stewardship team or to attract volunteers. Furthermore, East Park is used strictly on a seasonal basis, which makes it very difficult for any businesses