



# San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

## San Luis Reservoir SRA Algal bloom information:

San Luis Reservoir remains under a caution advisory. O'Neill Forebay remains under a warning advisory.

For more information, please visit: <https://water.ca.gov/What-We-Do/Recreation/Algal-Blooms>

*Update (December 7, 2020):* California has issued a [Regional Stay at Home Order](#) to stop the surge of COVID-19 cases and prevent a strain on the health care system. This action will help protect critical care for patients. While the order includes the closure of campground sites in impacted regions, the state also recognizes that mental health is physical health. As such, day use outdoor areas of park units currently open to the public will remain open. Members of the same household are encouraged to stay local and recreate responsibly in the outdoors. Please take the time to read the information contained on this webpage to find out what is open and closed, and the COVID-19 guidelines for this park unit.

## What is open now?

- Day-use areas and parking.
- Boat launches.

### **What is currently closed at this park and throughout the State Park System?**

Closed at this park:

- Campgrounds.
- Special events and public gatherings.

Statewide:

- Many campgrounds across the state remain temporarily closed until further notice or will be temporarily closed in accordance with the new Regional Stay at Home Order. More information [here](#).
- High public-use indoor facilities, including museums and visitor centers.
- Special events and tours continue to be canceled until further notice.

### **Are there any new visitor guidelines?**

Yes, State Parks has implemented the following guidelines to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the outdoors:

- **Stay Local** – Stay close to home to slow the spread of COVID-19. Do not travel if you or someone in your household is sick.
- **Plan Ahead** – The COVID-19 pandemic response continues to be dynamic and fluid. As such, information on this webpage may change. Prior to visiting us, please check this webpage again right before you visit the park to find out if new guidelines are in place.
- **Stay Safer at 6 feet** – No matter the recreational activity, maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more. Your guests should only include those within your immediate household. This means no guests or friends, and no gatherings, picnics or parties. Visitors are being asked to leave if there are too many people to allow for the required physical distance.
  - *Boating*: Do not raft up to other boaters or pull up onto a beach next to other recreators.
  - *Off-highway Vehicle Recreation*: Do not ride next to others or pull up next to someone else as it could put you in close proximity to others. Stage 10 feet or more from each other during unloading and loading.
- **Keep Clean** – Be prepared. Not all restrooms are open to the public. In some cases, restrooms will be temporarily closed to keep up with cleaning schedules. Bring soap/hand sanitizer. Please pack out all trash. Park units are experiencing heavy use and you can help alleviate the impact on park facilities.
- **Stay Covered** – The state requires you wear a face covering when you cannot maintain physical distancing of six feet or more. Individuals must have a face covering with them at all times.

Statewide, California State Parks continues to work with locals on a phased and regionally driven approach to increase access to state park units where compliance with state and local public health ordinances can be achieved. However, the situation remains fluid and park operations can change at any time. The need for Californians to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the outdoors remains critical.

For information on statewide current closures and available services, please visit [parks.ca.gov/FlattenTheCurve](https://parks.ca.gov/FlattenTheCurve).

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**Phone Number**

(209) 826-1197

**Max. Trailer Lengths**

Trailer: 30 Feet

Camper/Motorhome: 30 Feet

**Park Hours**

November-February 6am-6pm

October and March 6am-7pm

April-September 6am-10pm

Vessel Use All Year 6am-Sunset

**Dogs Allowed?**

**Yes**

Dogs allowed only in campground.

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Nestled in the grassy hills of the western San Joaquin Valley near historic Pacheco Pass, San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area is noted for boating, board sailing, camping, and picnicking. But it's anglers who find the unit's three lakes most inviting.

The area around San Luis Reservoir and O'Neill Forebay is often very windy, and winds can come up quite suddenly. Watch the wind warning lights at the Basalt entrance station, Quien Sabe Point, and Romero Visitor Center. On the forebay, wind warning lights are located at the Medeiros boat ramp and above the South Beach picnic area at San Luis Creek.

Climate/recommended clothing: Summer temperatures here average in the mid-90s and occasionally exceed 100°; but evenings are usually cool and pleasant. Rainfall averages eight to nine inches a year, mostly between November and April. In winter, temperatures seldom go below freezing, and tule fogs are frequent. In the spring, the golden-brown hills are coated with a fleeting green, highlighted by bursts of wildflowers colors.

#### Location/Directions

On Highway 152, 7 miles West of I-5, or 33 miles East of Highway 101 from Gilroy.

#### Address for Park Headquarters

31426 Gonzaga Road  
Gustine, CA 95322

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm. Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays.

## Camping

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area has four campgrounds: Basalt, San Luis Creek, Medeiros, and Los Banos Creek. All campgrounds are open year round.

### **Basalt Campground**

The only campground located near San Luis Reservoir, Basalt has 79 developed family campsites in a shaded, wind-protected valley. Some sites will accommodate trailers and motor homes up to about 30 feet. Each site has a fire ring and table with water faucets nearby. New restroom facilities offer hot pay showers and flushable toilets. A dump station is available to registered campers. Reservations can be made year round.

### **San Luis Creek Campground**

One of two campgrounds on the O'Neill Forebay, San Luis Creek has 53 sites that offer water and electric hook-ups. Some of the sites border the shoreline. The campground has very little shade and is in an open area susceptible to wind. No flush toilets or showers are available. Each site has a level pad, fire ring, and a table. Some sites will accommodate trailers and motor homes up to about 30 feet. A new 5 mile accessible walking trail follows the O'Neill Forebay shoreline and connects the campground to the North Beach day-use area. A dump station is available for registered campers. All boats must be removed from the water by sunset. Reservations can be made year round.

### **Medeiros Campground**

The Medeiros primitive campsites are located along the southern shoreline of O'Neill Forebay. A limited number of fire rings, shade ramadas, and tables are available. Drinking water is available in 3 locations. There are no flush toilets or showers, however chemical toilets are available. All boats must be removed from the water by sunset. Medeiros campground is available on a first - come first - serve basis.

### **Los Banos Creek Campground**

Twenty primitive camping/day-use sites are located along the shore of Los Banos Creek Reservoir. Each site has a shade ramada, fire ring, and table. Drinking water and chemical toilets are available. Most sites cannot accommodate trailers or motor homes because of limited turn around space. Limited parking exists and the park may close once the sites are occupied. Boaters are allowed to beach their boat. Boating is prohibited after sunset. Los Banos Creek campground is available on a first-come first - serve basis. Los Banos Creek is subject to winter and/or road closures because of water release from the reservoir.

### **Group Camping**

Two group campgrounds are available at the San Luis Creek Area along the shoreline of O'Neill Forebay. Both sites offer shade ramadas, tables, fire rings, flushable toilets, and hot pay showers. Group Camp A can accommodate 60 people and 15 vehicles. Group Camp B can accommodate 30 people and 10 vehicles. Boats must be removed from the water by sunset. These group campsites are available only by reservation.

## **About the Park**

San Luis Reservoir was constructed as a storage reservoir for the federal Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project. It stores runoff water from the Delta that would otherwise flow into the ocean. The water arrives through the California Aqueduct and the Delta-Mendota Canal, and is pumped from the O'Neill Forebay into the

main reservoir during the winter and spring. The Los Banos Creek Reservoir was built to prevent storm runoff from flooding the canals.

A [visitor center](#) at the Romero Overlook provides full information on the reservoirs and water projects through audio-visual and printed materials. Telescopes are also available for viewing the area. The Romero Visitor Center is administered by the CA Dept. of Water Resources.

Long before the dams and canals were built, this land was the home of the Northern Valley Yokuts, native Americans who harvested seeds, acorns, and the roots of the tules that grew in the marshes of the sluggish San Joaquin River. There were also fish, geese, and ducks for food, as well as huge herds of pronghorn antelope and tule elk on the plains. With the coming of the Spanish, though, this way of life disappeared. Many of the valley people were taken to missions around 1805, and an epidemic, possibly of malaria, decimated the human population of this area in 1833. In the 1850s, the survivors were killed or driven off by Euroamerican settlers.

Pacheco pass was named for Francisco Perez Pacheco, who settled here in the 1840s. The pass was used by Native Americans, Spanish soldiers and missionaries, Mexican ranchers, and gold miners, as well as more recent travelers. In 1856, Andrew Firebaugh improved the pass and made it a toll road, with a toll house two miles west of the summit. He had hardly finished when the Butterfield-Overland stages began using the road as part of their route from San Francisco to Missouri.

The first water works in the area were constructed in 1871, when farmers built a canal from Mendota Dam to Los Banos Creek to irrigate their wheat crops. Many canals were added over the years, until they totaled 180 miles in length. Ground was broken in 1962 for the San Luis Project, which created the current reservoirs. Today, Los Banos area farmers cultivate alfalfa, grapes, tomatoes, melons, corn, cotton, beans, sugar beets, fruits, nuts, and raise dairy and beef cattle.

## Day - Use

### Group Picnic Sites

Five group picnic sites are scattered along the O'Neill Forebay shoreline throughout the North Beach and South Beach day-use areas at San Luis Creek. Both day-use areas have plenty of shade and grass. Each site has a large shade ramada, a large BBQ grill, and several cement tables. Group picnic sites 1 through 4 are located on North Beach. North Beach has a designated swim area. Dogs are prohibited on North Beach. Boats are not allowed to beach. Group picnic area 5 is located on South Beach, where boats can be beached. Dogs must remain on a leash and under immediate control of its owner at all times. Flushable toilets and drinking water are available on both beaches. Each site is available by reservation. Reservations and cost inquiries can be made by calling the park office at (209) 826-1197.

### San Luis Creek Day Use Area

North and South Beach day-use areas have about 200 picnic sites with shade ramadas, tables, and BBQ grills. Both day-use areas have plenty of shade and grass. North Beach is the only designated swim area within San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area. Lifeguards are not on duty.

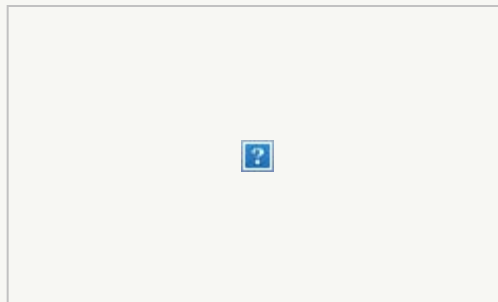
## Boating Safety

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area consists of three lakes: San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir. Each lake is susceptible to sudden changes in wind and weather conditions. Wind warning and lake closure lights are used on San Luis Reservoir and O'Neill Forebay to alert boaters of the current wind conditions. On San Luis Reservoir, watch for the 3 wind warning and lake closure lights near the Basalt entrance station, Quien Sabe Point, and Romero Visitor Center. On the O'Neill Forebay, wind warning lights are located near the old Medeiros boat ramp and above the South Beach area.

- Amber lights signify caution conditions for winds or other concerns.
- Red lights indicate the lake is closed to boating and all vessels are required to immediately vacate the lake when the red lake closure lights are on.

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Light Color</u>
Okay	All lights off
Use caution	Amber
Closed to boating	Red

Current wind conditions can be viewed at:



Boaters should also be aware of the lake hazards during water drawdown on O'Neill Forebay and San Luis Reservoir.

Boating hours are from 6am until sunset. All boats must be off the lake and out of the closed day-use areas by sunset.

All boating regulations and laws are fully enforced. Vessel inspections can occur at any time for compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and/or regulations (authority CCR 4662). If you would like a free vessel inspection to ensure you have the required safety equipment, please ask a State Park Ranger for an inspection before you launch.

Please visit the [Cal Boating](#) website for more information regarding California boating laws.

### **O'Neill Forebay**

The only boat ramp on the O'Neill Forebay is at the San Luis Creek area. All boat traffic on the O'Neill Forebay shall move in a counterclockwise direction around the special marker buoys in the center of the lake. Extreme shallow areas exist along the entire southern shoreline, the Catfish Flats area, and the Mud Flats area. Boats are prohibited at North Beach. Certain areas of O'Neill Forebay have speed restrictions.

### **San Luis Reservoir**

Boaters can launch at Dinosaur Point and the Basalt boat ramps. Extreme shallow areas and other hazards exist, especially during water drawdown. Certain areas of San Luis Reservoir have speed restrictions. All boats must remain at least 500 feet from the dam and intake structure.

### **Los Banos Creek Reservoir**

A 5 mph speed limit is in effect on the entire Los Banos Creek Reservoir year round. Boats can be beached overnight, although boating is prohibited after sunset. Boaters should be aware of shallow areas and other lake hazards. Boaters should also be aware of swimmers near the boat ramp and the campground areas. Los Banos Creek is subject to winter/road closures because of water release from the reservoir. \*Please see website link for closure information.

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