

Lake Elsinore & San Jacinto Watersheds Authority



City of Lake Elsinore • City of Canyon Lake • County of Riverside
Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District • Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

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Nutrient Revision to Total Maximum Daily Loads Underway by LESJWA

Lake Elsinore, CA – Recent modeling and testing results demonstrate that the work performed by the Lake Elsinore & Canyon Lake Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Task Force and LESJWA has helped further identify the sources of nutrients, which harm water quality at Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake, and also support ongoing efforts to reduce nutrient loading as reflected by lake improvements implemented since 2000. A landmark TMDL Revision and Update reflecting these updates is currently going through final review by the Regional Board.

“The revised and more scientifically defensible TMDLs are evidence that the efforts of LESJWA have made, and continue to make, reflect a positive impact to the watershed,” shared Mark Norton, LESJWA administrator. “We achieved what we set out to accomplish but know that there is more work to follow to adapt to continued drought cycle challenges. LESJWA and the TMDL Task Force have had to seek creative solutions to a complex situation.”

The Lake Elsinore & San Jacinto Watersheds Authority (LESJWA) was first formed in the year 2000 to improve water quality in the surrounding watersheds. Due to the area having a history in agriculture and farming, properties surrounding the lake and the upper watershed often create run-off that is nutrient rich. These nutrients flow into downstream lakes and pose challenges with water quality. As a requirement under EPA, LESWA formed a multi-agency task force to help meet the requirements of a water quality regulation called a TMDL back in 2004. The TMDL establishes a limit on the amount of nutrients that flow downstream and negatively impact lakes in the lower watershed. The goal is to reduce runoff and nutrient-rich sediment that can often have negative impacts to our lakes.

Complying with all the requirements of the TMDL is not an easy feat. Back in 2004, following watershed modeling, the collection of hundreds of water samples and analyzing of data, a TMDL was determined. Along with the TMDL, suggested methods and strategies to reduce the high nutrient loads were made. Over the past 19 years, LESJWA along with over 20 agencies, have implemented strategies to better refine nutrient loading and implement measures to improve water quality at both Canyon Lake and Lake Elsinore. These projects include the installation of an aeration system in Lake Elsinore, alum applications in Canyon Lake, a pipeline to transport recycled water into Lake Elsinore, fish removal and sediment removal.

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LESJWA is a joint powers authority entrusted with state and local funds to improve water quality and wildlife habitats in Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake and the surrounding San Jacinto watershed. For more information about LESJWA, please visit www.mywatersheds.com.