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## **Study shows promising solutions for water quality improvements in Lake Elsinore**

**LAKE ELSINORE, CA** – The Lake Elsinore & San Jacinto Watersheds Authority (LESJWA) recently wrapped up a one-year study that evaluated the Lake Elsinore fishery and identified potential solutions to improve the lake’s ecosystem and overall water quality in Lake Elsinore. The study was funded by the Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load Task Force, a committee of water agencies and organizations representing the San Jacinto River Watershed under LESJWA.

“Thanks to this study, we have a roadmap to improve water quality and stock the lake with certain fish species that will help balance the ecology of the lake,” said Mark Norton, LESJWA Administrator. “These improvements will keep the lake thriving for years to come and benefit the community and visitors of Lake Elsinore.”

The goals of this study included:

- Determining the need for additional removal of fish nuisance species impacting the lake’s water quality
- Identifying appropriate fish species for future fish stockings
- Developing recommendations to improve the fishery and habitat to support efforts to implement the revised nutrient Total Maximum Loads
- Determining if Lake Elsinore could be taken off the Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) impaired waters list for Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) and dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane (DDT).

The final fishery survey report provided the following recommendations for Lake Elsinore:

- Stocking of striped/white hybrids, black crappie and bluegill
- Discontinuation stocking of channel catfish, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, baitfish, silverside and mosquitofish.
- Continuation of on-going studies to ensure the stability of the fishery and ecology.
- When water quality has improved, other game fish species may be stocked, such as black crappie/bluegill and Largemouth Bass.

The City of Lake Elsinore has taken into consideration these recommendations and plans to continue stocking the lake with striped bass. The stocking of these fish will help create a balance in the ecology of the lake.

Survey findings also noted:

- Dominant fish species in the lake are silverside minnows and mosquitofish (more than 90 percent). This is a change from the 2002 survey, which noted common carp (34 percent), threadfin shad (23 percent), channel catfish (22 percent) and largemouth bass (10 percent) dominated the lake.
- Carp removal at the lake is not needed at this time. In the past the City and LESJWA have removed carp to ensure an effective fishery balance.
- DDT and PCB concentrations in fish are well below the lake's contaminant goals, which means Lake Elsinore should be removed from the EPA's impaired water list for these constituents.
- Algae studied, including blue-green algae, show most of the relatively abundant algae are not harmful.

"We are committed to maintaining Lake Elsinore through water quality and habitat improvements," said Phil Williams, LESJWA Chair. "We'll continue to communicate these efforts with the community."

Since 2005, LESJWA has been leading efforts to conduct on-going fishery management activities at Lake Elsinore. As Southern California's largest freshwater water lake, Lake Elsinore has historically suffered with water quality challenges. These challenges can be partially attributed to the lake being located at the end of the watershed.

The Lake Elsinore and San Jacinto Watersheds Authority and the Lake Elsinore Canyon Lake Task Force have made significant strides towards improving water quality in Lake Elsinore to benefit recreation and aquatic life, including the lake's fishery. As part of the fishery enhancement, sampling is conducted regularly.

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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](http://www.mywatersheds.com).*