

# Silverwood Lake

## State Recreation Area



### Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(760) 389-2281**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

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**P.O. Box 942896**

**Sacramento, CA 94296-0001**

For information call: (800) 777-0369

(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.

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#### **Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area**

**14651 Cedar Circle**

**Hesperia, CA 92345**

**(760) 389-2281**

**[www.parks.ca.gov/silverwoodlake](http://www.parks.ca.gov/silverwoodlake)**

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*Rain and snowmelt  
from the Feather River  
Basin collects in Lake  
Oroville, then traverses  
the Sacramento-  
San Joaquin Delta,  
joins the 444-mile  
State Water Project,  
and ends in the snow-  
capped reflections of  
Silverwood Lake.*



## **H**igh in the heart of the San Bernardino National Forest, Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area captures the eye and the imagination with vistas of snow-capped mountain peaks reflected on the lake.

The lake was formed by the 249-foot Cedar Springs Dam, which holds back the waters of the west fork of the Mojave River as it passes through the San Bernardino Mountains.

Warm, dry breezes prevail during summer—with high temperatures averaging between 90 and 100 degrees from June to September. From December through March, rainy winter temperatures vary from the low 30s to the low 60s.

**NATIVE PEOPLE**  
For more than 2,500 years, the Serrano (Spanish for “mountain people”) Indians occupied the San Bernardino Mountains and extended into the desert far to the northeast, north, and northwest as far as the Southern Sierra Mountains, Barstow region, and Twentynine Palms.

### **NATIVE PEOPLE**

Alongside rivers and streams, the Serrano lived in settlements of 10 to 20 dwellings. Their circular-shaped homes were usually made of willow frames covered in brush or tule reeds and tied with various fibers or rawhide. Several Serrano settlements, including Yucaipa and Cucamonga, have modern towns that bear their names.

The Serrano used ritual, including songs and storytelling, to pass along knowledge necessary to maintain the Earth’s natural

order. Skilled artisans, the Serrano were known for their beautiful woven baskets.

The Serrano traded with the Mojave tribe to the east and Tongva (Gabrieliño) to the west for goods they could not produce themselves.

The stable lives and traditions of the Serrano changed drastically around 1790, when they were drawn into the San Gabriel Mission. Hard labor and European diseases took their toll. By the early 20th century, the area’s estimated 1,500 Serrano people had dwindled to 119. Today some Serrano descendants live on or near the San Manuel and Morongo Indian Reservations.

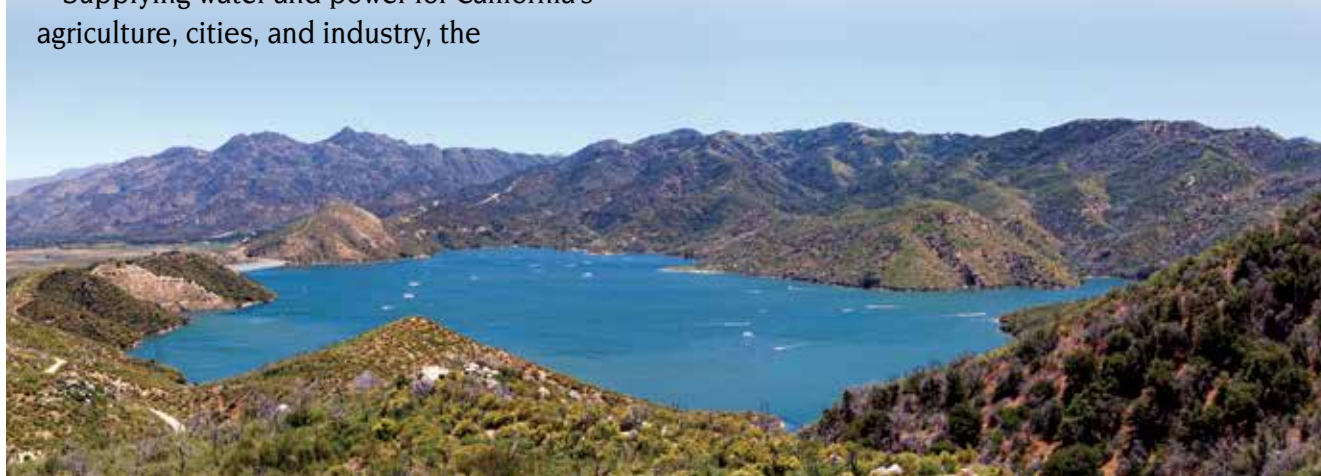
### **THE STATE WATER PROJECT**

Silverwood Lake was named for W. E. “Ted” Silverwood, a Riverside County resident. Silverwood’s support for the State Water Project—and his unceasing work for water and soil conservation—helped to bring water to Southern California.

Supplying water and power for California’s agriculture, cities, and industry, the

Water Project also provides flood control, recreation, and protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife. The lake waters begin in California’s upper Feather River Basin as rain or snowmelt. From the water storage facility at Lake Oroville, the water is released in regulated amounts, flowing down the Feather and Sacramento Rivers to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and into the 444-mile California Aqueduct.

The water moves south to the foot of the Tehachapi Mountains. It enters Southern California on the south side of the Tehachapis, then splits into the west branch serving the Los Angeles Basin and Ventura County’s coastal areas, and the east branch, which serves the Antelope Valley and San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and San Diego Counties. In the Antelope Valley, the water level is pumped to a height of 3,480 feet above sea level, then downhill, under the Mojave River and Highway 173, and finally, it reaches Silverwood Lake.



*View of Silverwood Lake*



From the intake towers at the south end of Silverwood Lake, the water continues south, where it plunges 1,600 feet to spin the turbines that generate electricity. Some of the water goes to contracting agencies, while the rest flows on to Lake Perris, the southern terminus of the aqueduct.

### WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

California mule deer are often seen in early morning and sometimes in the evenings. Night predators such as gray foxes, coyotes, and (rarely) mountain lions use the darkness to hunt such small mammals as rabbits, jackrabbits, squirrels, ringtails, chipmunks, and wood rats.

Black bears, bobcats, and golden beavers may be seen along the Mojave River. In winter, bald eagles glide silently above the lake, fishing for their next meal. Water-oriented birds—great blue herons, snowy egrets, avocets, western grebes, loons, Canada geese, mergansers, and several varieties of ducks—are plentiful. Around Sawpit Canyon, birds of prey include red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, ospreys, and roadrunners. This area is also home to Clark's nutcrackers, Steller's and scrub jays, rock wrens, and mountain bluebirds.



*Great blue heron*

Silverwood Lake habitats include ponderosa pine, incense cedar, white fir, and black oak. Along the shore, chamise, live oak, manzanita, ceanothus, and mountain mahogany grow. Alders, willows, and sycamores are found along streams.

Visit [www.parks.ca.gov/silverwoodlake](http://www.parks.ca.gov/silverwoodlake) to check on current conditions and fire regulations before your visit.

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Camping**—The Mesa Campground has 136 family sites with tables, grills, and fire rings. Each campsite has an eight-person limit. Restrooms and showers are nearby. Seven walk-in sites are for bicyclists and hikers. Three group sites have barbecues, tables, and restrooms with showers. These sites each hold up to 120 people and 30 cars. Miller Canyon's three group sites (without showers) hold 40 people and 20 vehicles.

**Boating**—The northern part of the lake has a waterski area; a marina and launch ramps are at the south end. Boats are inspected.

**Reservations are needed** for boat launch and camping at Silverwood Lake. Call (800) 444-7275 or visit [www.parks.ca.gov/silverwoodlake](http://www.parks.ca.gov/silverwoodlake).



*Silverwood Lake offers 976 acres of water recreation.*

**Hiking/Bicycling**—The park has 13 miles of paved hiking and bicycling trails. Bicyclists under 18 years of age must wear safety helmets. Watch for trail debris, slow down around blind curves, and carry water.

**Waterskiing**—Only commercially designed water floats, aquaplanes, wakeboards or waterskis are permitted. Tow lines must not exceed 90 feet. Do not tow non-commercial inflatable equipment such as rubber rafts and inner tubes.

**Swimming**—Two swim beaches are located at the southern end of the lake. Lifeguards are on duty daily from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

**Fishing**—The best fishing conditions are in spring and fall, when lake and boating activity are minimal. From February through early June, trout fishing is good; the lake also has largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, catfish, and striped bass. In spring, boat and shore fishing are available. All anglers 16 years of age or older must carry a valid California fishing license.

**Bald Eagle Barge Tours**—From January through March, Saturday barge tours to view bald eagles are available. Reservations are recommended. Call (760) 389-2281 to reserve or to ask about winter bald-eagle-count days.

**Pacific Crest Trail**—Part of the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail—which originates in Mexico, traverses three western states, and terminates in Canada—passes through the park. This jewel in the crown of America's scenic trails crests along the San Bernardino Mountains with a lake view.

### ACCESSIBLE FEATURES &

**Camping**—Five accessible campsites have nearby restrooms with showers that may be usable. Some assistance may be needed.

**Trails**—The Cleghorn Hike and Bike Trail, with vistas of the foothills, is accessible for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. Trailhead, parking, and usable restrooms are available. The marina entrance has an accessible vista point, fishing access, and a picnic table.

For accessibility updates, visit the website at <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

### NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Lake Perris State Recreation Area  
17801 Lake Perris Drive  
Perris 92571 (951) 940-5600
- Saddleback Butte State Park  
43220 - 172nd Street  
East Lancaster 93534 (661) 727-9899
- Antelope Valley Indian Museum  
State Historic Park  
43779 - 15th Street West  
Lancaster 93534 (661) 946-3055

### BOATING RULES

- All vessels must be clean, drained, and dry to pass the zebra and quagga mussel inspection before launching.
- Direction of travel in the main body of the lake (waterski area) is counter-clockwise.
- All boats must be off the lake by sunset.
- Keep to the right in the channel. This is a no-ski zone.
- The marina is a no-wake zone.
- Speed limits are 5 mph in restricted areas and 35 mph in open zones.
- A properly fitting, Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device is required for every person on board and must be worn by children under 12 years of age.
- Boat operators must be at least 16 years old. Twelve- to fifteen-year-olds may operate with an adult 18 years or older.
- Freestyle, wake jumping, or trick riding are prohibited. Jumping or attempting to jump the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of the other vessel is prohibited by law.
- Do not ride on the bow, gunwale, or transom of any vessel.
- All vessels must carry a fire extinguisher (except outboard boats less than 26 feet without a permanently installed fuel tank).
- Fires, stoves, and barbecues are prohibited in coves and boat-in areas.
- Buoys are for navigation and warning. Do not use for slalom-style racing. No mooring or tying to buoys is allowed.
- Courtesy dock at the launch ramp is limited to 15 minutes loading and unloading only. No unattended vessels may be left at the courtesy dock.
- Only commercially manufactured inflatable floats can be towed behind a boat or a wave runner. Non-commercial devices such as rafts or inner tubes are not allowed. When passengers are on it, the float may be towed only in the waterski area; when no passengers are on the float, it may be towed to and from the area.

