

## Task force awarded \$500K to treat lake

**BY MARK NORTON P.E.**

LESJWA AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR

The mission of the Lake Elsinore and San Jacinto Watersheds Authority (LESJWA) is to improve water quality and wildlife habitats in Canyon Lake, Lake Elsinore and the surrounding San Jacinto Watershed. It's a mission not only to benefit local residents, but to also meet strict federal and state regulations for water quality.

Part of the challenge in maintaining the water quality in Canyon Lake is the natural flow of storm-water runoff that carries high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus into the lake. These substances promote excessive algae growth in the lake, which can ultimately lead to fish kills and damage to wildlife.

In 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency set specific guidelines to monitor these nitrogen and phosphorus levels, establishing what are known as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). In this area, there is a TMDL Task Force of 20 agencies and organizations, including water districts, cities, and county departments, that is responsible for making sure that both Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake stay healthy and remain at safe levels.

In order to help Canyon Lake meet TMDL water quality goals, the TMDL Task Force has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources to begin treatment measures to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus in the Main Lake and the East Bay of Canyon Lake.

LESJWA will be the administrator of the treatment process, working in close partnership with Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD), the City of Canyon Lake, and all the other member agencies of the TMDL Task Force. A California Environmental Quality Act process is currently underway to evaluate and determine the environmental impact of alternative water treatment methods to meet TMDL goals in Canyon Lake.

Several options are being considered, including the application of aluminum sulfate to immediately reduce phospho-

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rous and nitrate levels, as well as several other lake treatment technologies.

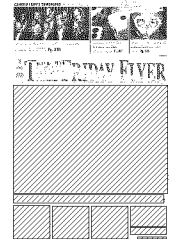
Upon completion of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis, a decision will be made on whether to proceed. We anticipate the CEQA to be complete by April 2013 and, if deemed appropriate, proceeding with the first alum lake application in September 2013.

All the options under consideration have a proven track record of success and have consistently proven to be safe to both human and wildlife. These methods will not have an effect on drinking water quality. Canyon Lake serves a wide array of uses, and LESJWA's goal in this process is to ensure that those uses are not impacted in any way.

Whichever option is ultimately selected, Canyon Lake will remain open throughout the treatment process. Recreational users will experience minimal disruption in enjoying activities like boating, swimming and fishing.

As the TMDL Task Force moves forward in completing the environmental review of the treatment process, members remain committed to maintaining an open dialogue with residents, the Canyon Lake Property Owners Association, EVMWD, and other stakeholders to ensure everyone is kept up to date about the process schedule and activities. There will be public meetings, workshops, and informational materials made available.

This water quality improvement strategy will provide the community with an opportunity to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus levels, and subsequent algae growth, to improve the quality of Canyon Lake. The TMDL Task Force is relying on proven science to provide a safe, cost-effective, solution to the environmental factors that have impacted our lake for decades.



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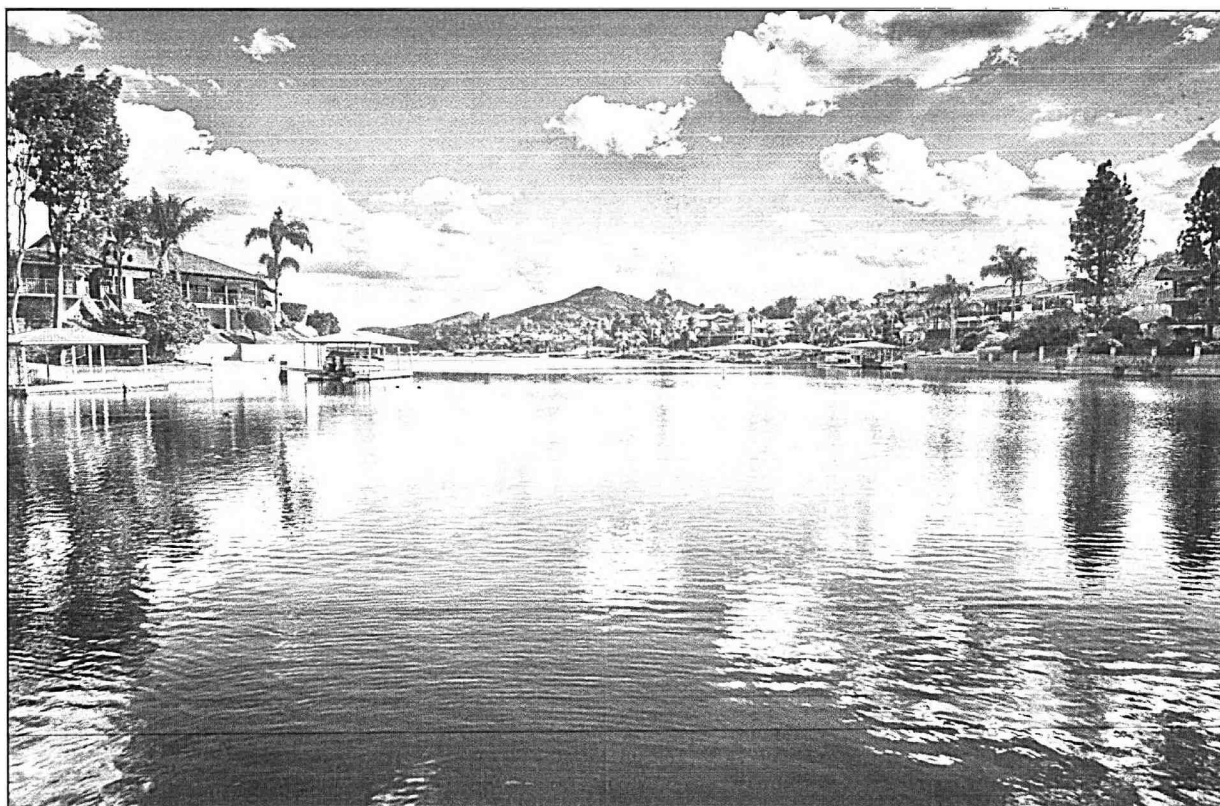


PHOTO BY DENNIS BICKERS

Canyon Lake always looks like paradise under the photographic expertise of volunteer photographer Dennis Bickers and his high dynamic range photography. But for those who live and play in or next to the water, it is evident there is much to be desired in the lake's water quality. In order to help Canyon Lake meet TMDL water quality goals, the TMDL Task Force has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources to begin treatment measures to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus in the lake.