DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

News for Immediate Release

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San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay Remain Open for Recreation Despite Public Closure of Sisk and O'Neill Dams

SAN LUIS RESERVOIR, Merced County -- Fishing, boating and pedestrian access will continue at San Luis Reservoir and the O'Neill Forebay despite the scheduled public closure of Sisk and O'Neill Dams. An interest in improved security necessitated closure of the dams slated for Oct. 10, 2011. State water officials announced today that the closure will have little or no impact on the reservoir and forebay, both popular recreation destinations in the San Joaquin Valley.

Both dams are part of the San Luis Complex -- joint water use and storage facilities designed and built by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and operated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). Costs and facilities are shared (55 percent state and 45 percent federal). San Luis Reservoir, with a water storage capacity of slightly more than 2 million acre-feet, is the largest off-stream reservoir in the United States. It was completed in 1967. The reservoir serves both California's State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project.

The dam closures were prompted by a review of dam access by DWR and the USBR, in consultation with other agencies, including the state Department of Parks and Recreation, California Highway Patrol and state Department of Fish and Game.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

Contact the DWR Public Affairs Office for more information about DWR's water activities.