

## Hodges Dam Maintenance Project

### **What is the current maintenance project scheduled for Hodges Dam?**

As part of ongoing efforts to maintain and invest in City of San Diego infrastructure, repair work began in May 2022 on Hodges Dam. During an inspection in early 2022, the City identified areas in the upstream face of the dam wall that required immediate repair and needed to be sealed to maintain the safety of the dam. In addition, the City's contractor determined that repairs to the upstream face of the dam cannot be made underwater. To access these areas and complete the repairs, the water level of the reservoir needed to be lowered by approximately 18 feet to an elevation of 275 feet. Water levels in the reservoir may fluctuate as the repairs continue. The City and its partner water agencies, the Santa Fe Irrigation District, the San Dieguito Water District and the San Diego County Water Authority, took every effort to recover and use any water that needed to be removed from the reservoir.

The City continues to work closely on the repair project with the state's Division of Safety of Dams and local water agencies that use the reservoir. Public safety is the top priority for the City and its partner agencies on the repair project.



*Hodges Reservoir is closed to boating and fishing during the repair project. The San Dieguito River Park trails and facilities around Hodges Reservoir will not be impacted during the water drawdown or construction work on the dam.*

*Contractors for the City of San Diego are working on repairs to Hodges Dam. The project began in May 2022 and is expected to continue into spring 2023.*



**How long is the project expected to take?**

The critical repair project is expected to continue through late spring of 2023. The City is working with its contractor to perform the repairs as quickly as possible.

**Why are the repairs being done now?**

The City's inspection of the dam revealed the need to make immediate repairs that should not wait.

**Is Hodges Dam safe?**

Yes. Based on current condition assessments and in consultation with the California Division of Safety of Dams, Hodges Dam remains safe with the water level below its maximum water level. This has a significant effect by relieving the water pressure on the dam and reducing the total volume within the reservoir. In coordination with state officials, the City is adjusting water levels for safety and continuing to evaluate the safety of the dam.

**How does work on the dam affect recreational activities at Hodges Reservoir?**

As a result of the lower water level, Hodges Reservoir is closed for recreation while the repair project is underway. Recreation activities at the Hodges Reservoir need to be closed because once the water level is lowered, the boat ramp will no longer be accessible, and the exposed shoreline will be deep, slippery mud, making it unsafe for public access. City staff recognizes the closure of recreational activities is disappointing and an inconvenience to many. Hodges Reservoir is normally closed to the public from November through January; opening the first week of February. Because the repair work will likely continue into spring 2023, possible limited access may be necessary and will be determined early next year. Visitors are encouraged to explore other City reservoirs and enjoy the many recreational options available. For details, visit [sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes](https://sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes). The San Dieguito River Park trails and facilities around Hodges Reservoir will not be impacted during the water drawdown or construction work on the dam.

**What other local boating and fishing options are there?**

During the temporary closure of recreation activities at Hodges Reservoir, those interested in fishing, boating, kayaking and other lake recreation activities are encouraged to visit other City reservoirs. The City maintains and operates eight other reservoirs that continue to be open during regular operational hours for boating, fishing and other activities. These reservoirs include Barrett, El Capitan, Lower and Upper Otay, Miramar, Murray, San Vicente and Sutherland. For details, visit [sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes](https://sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes).

**What is being done to maintain Hodges Dam?**

The City continues to work closely with the California Division of Safety of Dams to monitor the dam's condition and perform maintenance as needed. Over the next five years, the City will complete assessments of the dam, perform planned maintenance, ensure adequate funding, and implement a work plan to address the long-term needs of the dam, which may include the replacement of the dam.

**What has been done to address environmental, business, shareholder or public impacts?**

City staff is working closely with state officials, as well as partner water agencies, to educate residents and visitors about this crucial repair project for Hodges Dam. Information has been shared publicly through local news media, posted signage at the reservoir and through social media platforms. Due to the immediacy of the project, the City has accelerated maintenance work so that more severe impacts do not occur.

**Are economic impacts to concessions operators being addressed during the project work?**

Yes. During this shutdown period the concessionaire will support other City reservoir concessions. This change is allowed under the Concession Lease Agreement, Section 3 Rent, 3.5 Closures.

**What impact will this work have on the reservoir's environment, including birds and fish?**

Impacts associated with the work are being assessed by City staff for compliance with local, state and federal laws including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The work is exempt under Section 15269 of the CEQA Guidelines ("Emergency Projects") which includes provisions for repairs to publicly owned facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety or welfare. Emergency repairs include those that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency. The City's contractor hired a qualified biologist to assist with preparing a scope of work that avoids and minimizes environmental impacts, especially those to biological resources such as birds and fish. City biologists and the San Diego County Water Authority are working closely to monitor grebes (aquatic diving birds) as reservoir levels change during typical reservoir operations. During construction, the contractor will also conduct biological monitoring in accordance with the City's Western and Clark's Grebe Survey Protocol. City staff will be monitoring water oxygen levels, as well as several other water quality parameters weekly to minimize adverse impacts to the reservoir environment and fish habitat.

**Will this work have any impact on nearby community wells?**

Private wells are not maintained or monitored by the City. The primary function of Hodges Reservoir is to impound water for drinking water purposes, serving the City of San Diego, as well as the San Dieguito Water District, Santa Fe Irrigation District and San Diego County Water Authority. The water level of Hodges fluctuates regularly throughout the year and is subject to change depending upon the season and other factors. Any impacts to wells during the five-month maintenance project will be temporary.

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For more information about the California Division of Safety of Dams, visit [water.ca.gov/damsafety/](http://water.ca.gov/damsafety/).

As more information become available, the City will provide updates online at: [sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes](http://sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes). Have more questions? Contact City Reservoirs and Recreation staff at 619-668-2050 or [lakes@sandiego.gov](mailto:lakes@sandiego.gov).

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