



Lake Mead National Recreation Area Current Launch Ramp Conditions

Please Scroll Down for Specific Launch Ramp Conditions

Lake Mead has more than 500 miles of shoreline, the current lake elevation is approximately 1,105 feet and the water temperature is about 80 degrees. Lake Mohave has 250 miles of shoreline, the water elevation is approximately 643 feet, and the water temperature is about 66 degrees. There are a wide range of recreational activities available to visitors on both lakes. Personal watercraft are allowed on 95 percent of Lakes Mead and Mohave.

Seven marinas in the park are open and have a variety of services to offer visitors. If you don't own a boat or don't wish to rent one, you can still enjoy getting out on the water by taking a boat tour or raft trip. Additional information on services such as boat rentals, boat tours, kayak and river rafting trips can be found on our website: www.nps.gov/lame and also on: www.funonthelake.com.

Drought - lowering water levels – impacts to launch ramps

The Colorado River system is experiencing what could be the worst drought on record. Lake Mead, even with lowering water levels, is still our nation's largest man-made reservoir. All the recreational activities enjoyed at a lake level of 1,180 feet, can be enjoyed at the current lake level. However, boaters need to be careful when launching and while operating their vessels, because varying water levels can create emerging reefs and other hazards. As the water drops the old asphalt sections of launch ramps are being removed and new concrete is being installed. This work has to be done when the ramp is out of the water. Impacts to boaters are being minimized by keeping half the ramp open while work is being done and requiring the contractor to only work during the week and not on busy weekends. While the lake levels are lowering at this rate, a 1-2 foot drop in elevation can mean 10-40 feet of ramp is exposed with each drop (depending on topography in the area). While the lake levels are dropping, this work will be ongoing. The National Park Service realizes this is an inconvenience to boaters, but the work can only take place on the ramp as the water drops. Concrete can't be poured or cured in the water. The National Park Service and the concessioners at Lake Mead National Recreation Area are doing everything we can to maintain public access in this time of extended drought and historic lowering water levels. Expect delays at the ramps and consider launching and retrieving at off hours.

Hazards and Navigational Aids

Most importantly, boaters need to educate themselves about navigational aids on the lake (buoys, reef markers, etc.); the National Park Service can't mark every hazard on the lake so boaters need to use caution. Boating education information and boater safety courses are available on www.ndow.org. Please note that when the lake level at Mead drops one foot per week the

newly exposed areas of the shoreline are muddy and vehicles and trailers can get stuck in this area.

Bureau of Reclamation Lake Level Forecast

The Bureau of Reclamation updates the 24-month river system reservoir forecast once a month. You can access their site directly at: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/lcrivops.html>. The site also contains daily elevations as well as historical elevation information.

Invasive Mussels

Quagga mussels, closely related to zebra mussels, have been found in Lakes Mead and Mohave. Mud, plants and animals that may be lurking on your watercraft, trailer or on your vehicle will cause the spread of invasive mussels. Invasive mussels cause millions of dollars of damage to boat and water systems by clogging pipes and engines. They also impact the native ecosystem and sport fisheries. It is important to **clean, drain, and dry** your vessel before leaving the area. Do not place your vessel or any of your equipment into another body of water for at least 5 days after it has been in Lakes Mead or Mohave. For more information about quagga mussels you can visit www.protectyourwaters.net and/or www.100thmeridian.org

Current Boat Launch Ramp Conditions at Lake Mead:

Overton Beach

The ramp is temporarily closed due to lowering water levels and increased silt deposition in the area.

Echo Bay

All lanes are open and are suitable for deep water launching. The headwalk to the marina has been moved from the south side to the north side.

Callville Bay

Improvements to the ramp have continued and the south side of the ramp remains open. Please limit your tie-down to the courtesy dock (15 minutes or less). The concessioner provides shuttle service on the weekend.

Government Wash

The ramp closed in 2001 due to lowering water levels on Lake Mead.

Las Vegas Bay

The ramp closed in 2003 due to lowering water levels on Lake Mead.

Boulder Harbor Launch Ramp

The ramp is suitable for deep-water launching. The improvement project, replacing old asphalt with 6,500-square-yards of concrete, has been completed. All lanes are open.

Hemenway Harbor

The ramp is fully functional for shallow launching. Larger vessels on low trailers have been successful launching at this ramp. Boats with Deep-V hulls should consider using the Boulder Harbor Launch Ramp.

Temple Bar

There is typically no waiting line for launching and there is abundant parking. The ramp is not recommended for larger vessels (over 35 feet) at this time. Due to lowering water levels, old sections of the ramp are exposed. Large sections of the old asphalt were removed last summer and replaced with 8,000-square-yards of concrete. Work to extend this ramp as the water drops will continue.

South Cove

The temporary pipe mat launch ramp is now located off the south edge of the concrete ramp. All boats and tow vehicles have been launching and retrieving with ease. Maintenance will continue as needed and another 50 feet of concrete launch ramp will be constructed when the water level drops during the month of July. (The Bureau of Reclamation updates the 24-month river system reservoir forecast once a month. You can access the site directly to see how much the lake is going to rise or fall each month at: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/lcrivops.html>. The site also contains daily elevations as well as historical elevation information.) During all construction periods as we “chase the water,” a portion of the launch ramp will remain open for use. The NPS plans to continue working in the area as lake levels drop to maintain public access at this ramp.

Pearce Ferry

The Pearce Ferry launch ramp closed in August 2001 because of lowering water levels.

Lake Mohave

The launch ramps and marinas on Lake Mohave, (Cottonwood Cove, Willow Beach, and Katherine Landing), are all open and fully operational.

Specific Willow Beach Update: Beginning June 2, a portion of the Willow Beach Launch Ramp will be closed to allow assembly and launching of the pier sections. The short-term closure of part of the ramp will only last about 2-3 hours. The remainder of the ramp will be available for launch and retrieval.