



El Dorado Irrigation District

For immediate release
July 18, 2008

Caples Lake drawdown begins

Public warned to expect high, cold water in Caples Creek and the Silver Fork American River

Placerville, CA . . . El Dorado Irrigation District (District) will begin drawing down Caples Lake this weekend, to prepare for the replacement of deteriorated outlet works at the Caples Lake main dam on Highway 88. The District emphasizes that the dam structure itself is safe. However, the outlet works were recently found to be in unsound condition and must be replaced.

The drawdown will cause higher-than-usual water flows for this time of year in Caples Creek and the Silver Fork American River, located on Eldorado National Forest between Highway 50 and Highway 88 near Caples Lake and Silver Lake. The flows are expected to remain unusually high through mid-September. During this time, the District warns that it is hazardous to be in or near the two streams and advises the following for visitors to the area.

- Camp on high ground away from the stream edge.
- To avoid hypothermia or drowning, do not enter or cross the stream.
- Exercise extreme caution.

The District is coordinating with the U.S. Forest Service to post signs at trailheads, in parking areas, and at campgrounds to alert visitors to the higher water flows. Information will also be posted on the web sites of the two agencies, with updates posted throughout the time of the drawdown and project repair.

On July 1, the District's Board of Directors declared an emergency after an underwater investigation at Caples Lake revealed problems with two slide gates, located in a well-like shaft within the dam. Of particular concern is the lower gate that is about 64 feet under water when the lake is full. Late last week, District staff located a manufacturer who can furnish the replacement parts. The lake must be drawn down for the replacement work to proceed.

Caples Lake is part of Project 184, the hydroelectric power generation system that the District acquired from Pacific Gas and Electric Company in 1999.

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For project information, contact Deanne Kloepfer, Strategic Management and Communications, EID, at 530-622-4513. Or, visit the EID web site at www.eid.org. For information on Eldorado National Forest, contact Kristi Schroeder, Public Affairs, at 530-295-5610.