

LAKE MORENA BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY **PROJECT SCOPE AND BUDGET SUMMARY**

The Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) proposes to fund up to \$450,000 from the Waterway Connection Initiative (WCI) funding to San Diego County (County) to engineer, design, acquire permits, and construct boating access improvements at the Geezer Cove and Horseshoe Cove locations of Lake Morena.

PROPOSED PROJECT SCOPE

Engineering, permitting, construction, and inspection of the following items:

- Install a portable ramp, boarding float, and gangway system that allows park staff to move the portable ramp and boarding floats as necessary to accommodate access as lake levels fluctuate.
- Construct one accessible vehicle-trailer parking stalls at both Geezer Cove and Horseshoe Cove
- Construct an accessible path of travel from the accessible parking to the top of the designated launch ramp at both Geezer Cove and Horseshoe Cove
- Install a project credit sign and signage for the top of the boat ramp

Background:

Lake Morena Reservoir sits at 3,000 feet above sea level and primarily collects and rainfall for drinking water for the City of San Diego. Water released from Morena Dam flows several miles down Cottonwood Creek to Barrett Lake, where it is diverted into the 14-mile Dulzura Conduit and delivered to Lower Otay. At Otay Reservoir, a filtration plant treats the water to make it safe for consumption.

The reservoir lies within Lake Morena County Park on the remote eastern slope of the Laguna Mountains, about 42 miles east of San Diego.

Access to the facility from the City of San Diego: Head east on CA-94 for 1.2 miles; continue onto CA-125 N for 2 miles; take exit 18B to merge onto I-8 E for 36.5 miles; take exit 51 for Buckman Springs Road; continue on Buckman Springs Road for 8.5 miles and arrive at Lake Morena, 2550 Lake Morena Drive, Campo, CA 92123.

The reservoir is owned by the City of San Diego. San Diego County, Department of Parks and Recreation has managed recreation there since 1970. In 1991, the County entered into a lease agreement with the City through 2090 to continue providing public recreational access. No amendments to this lease are required for facility improvements.

Park visitors enjoy picnicking, birdwatching, biking, and hiking trails such as the Pacific Crest Trail, and camping. On the reservoir, motorized boating and fishing—especially

for rainbow trout and largemouth bass—are permitted as well as boating with certain non-motorized vessels such as kayaks, canoes, and row boats. However, as Morena is the uppermost of three reservoirs supplying San Diego’s drinking water, State Water Resources Control Board permits prohibit direct water body contact.

The County charges \$3 for parking and \$8 for boat launching. The launch facility is open from sunrise until 30 minutes before sunset. A locked swing gate prohibits vehicle access outside of operating hours.

Waterway Connections Initiative

In FY 2021-22, the Department of Parks and Recreation was allocated approximately \$154 million in a direct appropriation in the state’s Budget Act, SB-170. This funding was intended to expand waterway-related outdoor access to under-resourced, underserved, or park-poor urban communities with a population of at least 2,500 that lack connection to waterways. Of this appropriation, DBW was allocated \$10 million for local assistance boat launching facility projects that fit this funding criteria.

The City of Campo and Morena Village are rural communities with a combined population of over 3,300. These communities are very remote and have very limited recreational opportunities. The region is dependent on Lake Morena for much of its outdoor recreation. The proposed project will allow the County to continue to provide safe and convenient accessible water-related recreational opportunities at Lake Morena for its nearby rural communities.

Existing Conditions:

The existing permanent boat launch ramp was constructed around 1987. At that time, the reservoir’s water level elevation was over 3,695 feet. Since 2014, however, Lake Morena has repeatedly reached near-empty levels due to prolonged drought and water usage by the City of San Diego.

Over the past decade, water levels have followed a consistent pattern of decline during droughts and partial recovery after periods of significant rainfall. The reservoir reached a low of only 4% capacity in early 2014, dropped to 2.1% in January 2024, and peaked again in July 2023 before declining once more. Despite rainfall fluctuations, long-term depletion from drought and water transfers has kept levels far below historic averages.

These conditions have had major recreational impacts. The permanent boat launch ramp has been unusable for long stretches, at times sitting completely on dry land. Visitors in 2016 reported makeshift ramps being used as the shoreline receded. Boat ramp closures, limited fishing access, and even complete shutdowns of water activities have become recurring conditions.

The County has request funding to engineer, design, acquire permits, and purchase a portable boat ramp, boarding float, and gangway system that allows park staff to move them from various launch locations at the lake to accommodate access as water levels fluctuate.

Grant Award Includes:

Funding to reimburse for costs to design, permit, construct, and inspect the improvements identified in the above PROPOSED PROJECT SCOPE. The BUDGET below and PROPOSED PROJECT SCOPE identified above supersede the County application.

The County and DBW agreed to the proposed Lake Morena BLF Project Cost Estimate in Table 1 below on page 4, and the County-developed the concept design included on page 6 and 7 of this exhibit.

Project Funding Excludes:

Any costs associated with administration, owner's representation, project management, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and related studies, picnic tables, shade structures, bike racks, etc., landscaping (unless required by permits), and all other non-boating related campground amenities.

Per the County, the proposed project qualifies for a categorical exemption pursuant to the CEQA guidelines and anticipates the processing time to file the CEQA Notice of Exemption to be less than six months.

The County expects to apply for the following permits:

- CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
- ACOE Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit
- RWQCB Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification

Conditions:

San Diego County, at its expense, must complete CEQA requirements by July 1, 2026. No reimbursement will occur until CEQA is complete.

Table 1: Lake Morena BLF Project Cost Estimate	
CONSTRUCTION SCOPE	COST ESTIMATE
Mobilization/Demolition	\$ 70,000
Portable boat ramp system that allows park staff to move as necessary to accommodate recreational boating access as lake levels fluctuate	\$ 55,000
Cable-guided boarding float and gangplank	\$ 155,000
One accessible vehicle-trailer parking stall and striping at both Geezer Cove and Horseshoe Cove	\$ 30,000
Project credit, ADA parking, directional, and ramp signage	\$ 13,740
Construction Subtotal	\$ 323,740
NON-CONSTRUCTION COSTS	
Escalation 9%	\$ 29,137
Contingency 10%	\$ 32,374
Engineering 12%	\$ 38,850
Inspection 5%	\$ 16,187
Permits 3%	\$ 9,712
Non-Construction Subtotal	\$ 126,260
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST	\$ 450,000
Source = San Diego County Engineering Cost Estimate dated Sept. 23, 2025	
*Percentages are of the Construction Subtotal	
*3% per year for 3 years = 9% escalation	

PROJECT METRICS

Annual Launches

Current: The County estimates to have approximately 750 motorized and 50 non-motorized launches per year.

Future: The County and DBW estimate the annual number of public motorized and non-motorized boat launches at the improved facility to increase by a modest 10 percent to 825 motorized and 55 non-motorized launches per year.

Annual User Days

Current: The average number of users per motorized boats is generally 1.73 person per vessel and the average number per non-motorized boat is generally only one person per non-motorized vessel. Therefore, the current estimated annual number of user days at Lake Morena is 1,348 (annual motorized launches * users per boat + non-motorized launches).

Future: DBW projected estimated annual user days for the improved facility will increase be 1,483 annual user days.

Unit Day Value

The 2018 California Boating Needs Assessment Study established a unit day value in the Northern California. The unit day value is an established way to measure recreational benefits boaters gain from the experience of boating on a particular body of water. The unit day value, adjusted for the consumer price index (CPI), is \$59.52 DBW estimates that the unit day value for the proposed facility will increase after the facility is improved to \$88,268 annually (unit day value x projected annual user days).

Benefit-Cost Ratio

A common method used in the analysis of investments is to establish net present value of the benefits and costs associated with a project. If the Benefit/Cost ratio exceeds “1” then the investment, weighed against available investment alternatives, is worthy of consideration from a financial perspective. The results of this analysis are as follows:

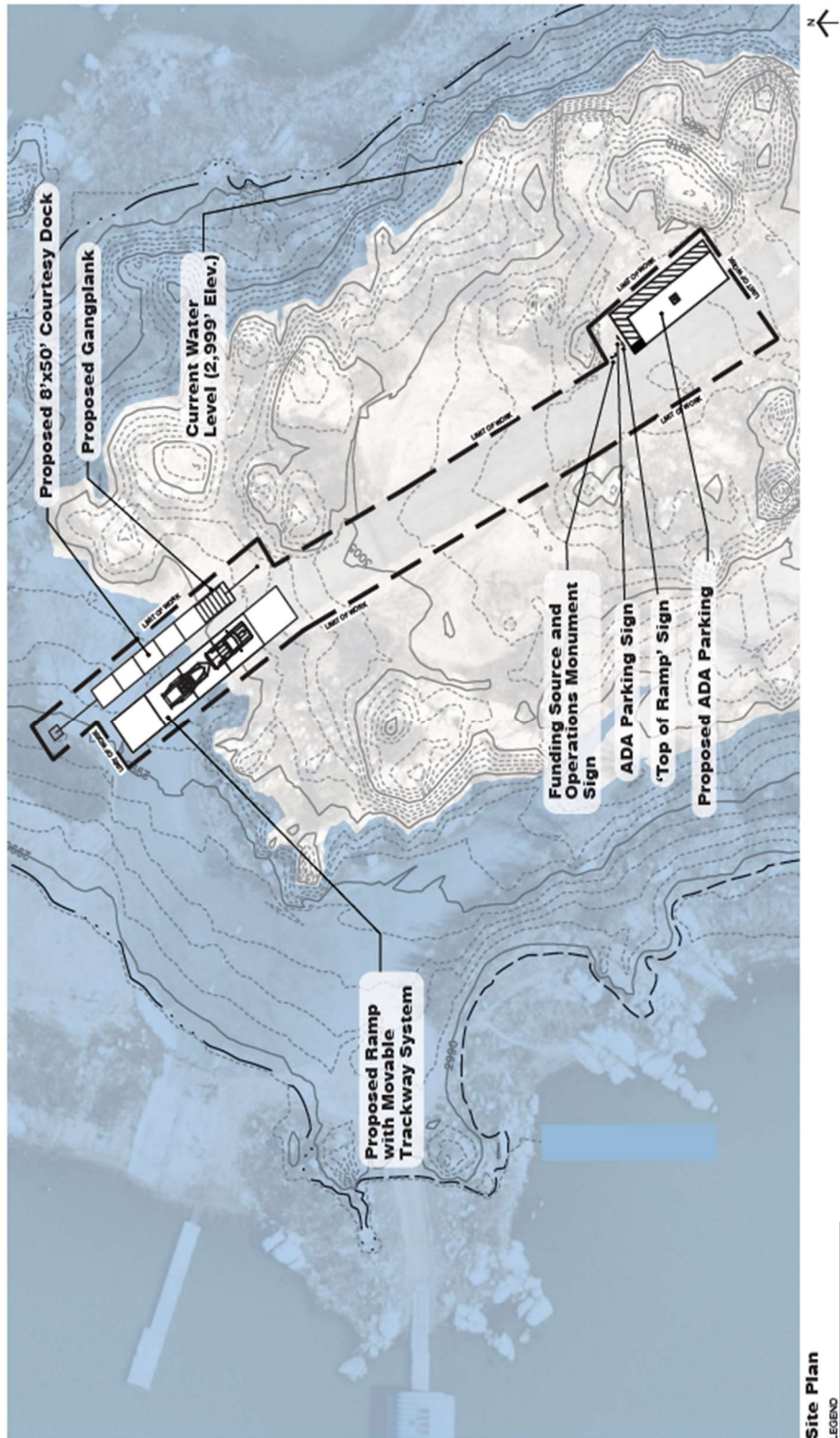
Benefit: The total benefits over the 20-year life of the project are estimated to be \$1,253,700.

Cost: Net costs over the 20-year grant period are estimated to be \$680,090.

Ratio: Assuming a total project cost of \$450,000 to complete designs, acquire permits, and complete construction, the Benefit-Cost Ratio is 1.84.

Lake Morena BLF Concept Design

Geezer Cove



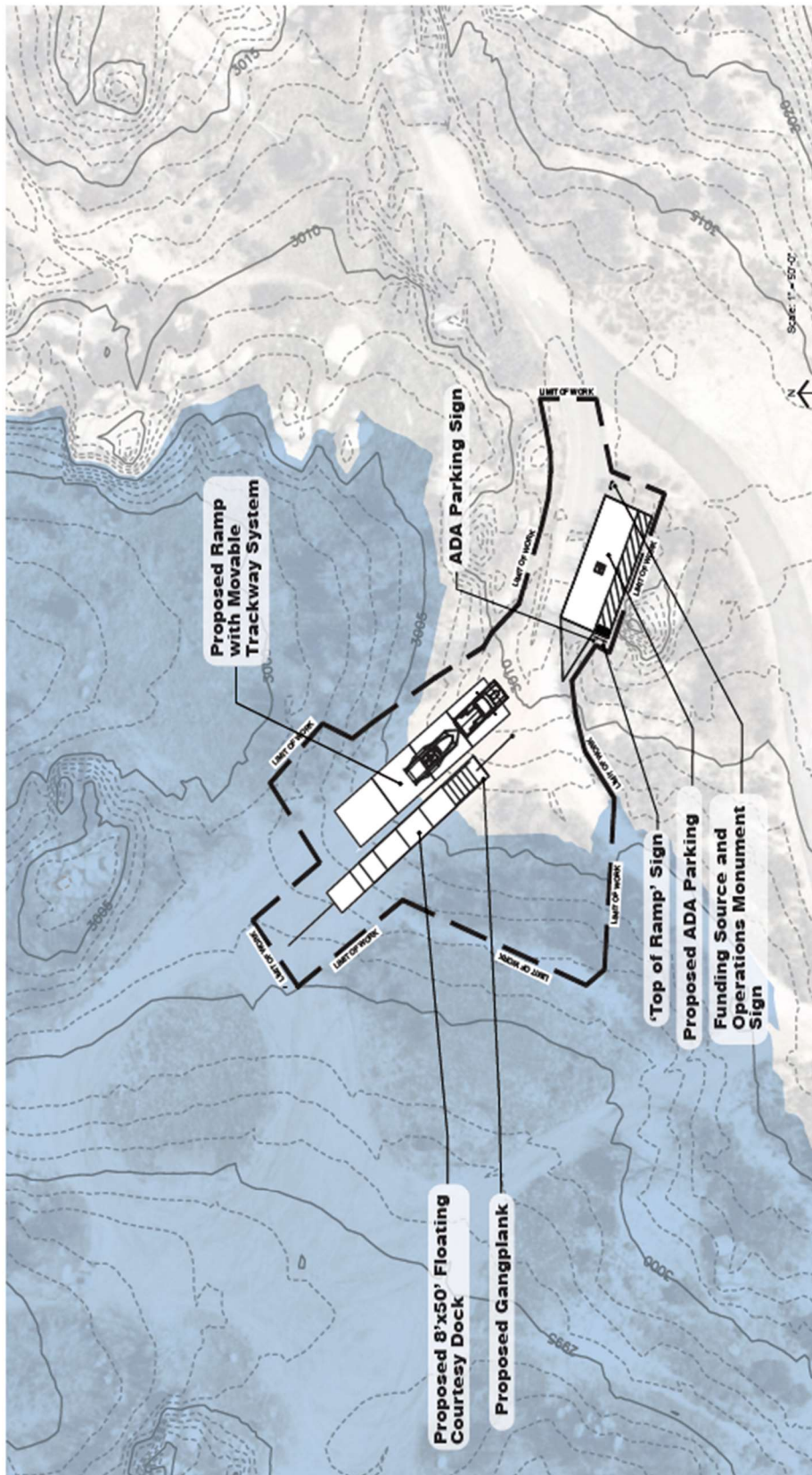
Boat Launch and ADA Improvements at Geezer Cove



October 1, 2025

Lake Morena Boat Launch and Ramp Renovation

Horseshoe Cove



Boat Launch and ADA Improvements at Horseshoe Cove

October 1, 2025

Lake Morena Boat Launch and Ramp Renovation

