

# Ben Lomond Swimming Hole Closed For Lack Of Water

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In the good ol' summertime, the swimmin' hole is a place to go to beat the heat and have a fun time, but the continuing drought has hit this seasonal treat with the closing of the Ben Lomond pool this week.

On Tuesday, much to the dismay of bathers, County park personnel posted "Danger," "No Swimming" and "Dam Closed" signs at the Ben Lomond Park.

The San Lorenzo River, which feeds the swimming hole, wasn't bringing in enough water. Contributing to the water loss was leakage from the dam.

The Ben Lomond water hole is the first and only natural pool in the San Lorenzo Valley to close down due to the drought, Dave Quinton, supervising sanitarian in the County Environmental Health Department, reported. The seven other pools in the Valley all are apparently doing fine.

The County Parks, Opens Space and Cultural Services Commission reported that the water level at the pool had been

dropping through July and August, but fell sharply over the past weekend to a depth of about four feet. The pool normally is about seven to 9½ feet deep.

The shallowness of the pool caused a risk of an accident, POSCS Staffer Lynn Appley said, because swimmers tend to want to dive into the water from the beach.

Because of the low water level, the beach stood about three to four feet above the water, Appley said.

"It's not a nice, sandy bottom," she explained. "There are lots of big rocks and glass. We had a big sign that said no jumping and diving, but people would jump anyway. It's a three to four feet drop from the beach, and when diving into about five feet of water, offers a good chance to get cut from debris at the bottom."

A maintenance crew opened the dam gate Thursday to let the remaining water out of the pool. The dam originally was scheduled to be removed after Labor Day weekend.

The county was inhibited to do anything about the loss of water because the cracks in the beach retaining wall and dam abutments (which caused heavy leakage) could not be fixed while there was water in the pool. And, quite simply, Mother Nature was not providing enough water to keep the pool filled adequately.

Estimates for the cost of repairing the dam will be necessary in order for the county to determine whether it should continue to dam up the stream for swimming and fire protection next year.

Even though the Valley swimming holes are operating this summer with less water, the pools may be staying cleaner this year than in the past because of the drought, Quinton ventured.

He and his crew are responsible for checking the fecal coliform count in the pools every few weeks for the amount of pollution. The Environmental Health Department must follow strict state guidelines in making sure pools are pollution free.

## Sentinel

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There are many theories on what affects the fecal coliform count, Quinton said. It is believed septic system leakage, run-off from streets and gardening and animal use of the waterways may be responsible for pollution, Quinton said.

Because there is less water this year, septic systems may not be leaking as much and since there is less use of water,

there is not as much run-off into the creeks, Quinton added. This may be helping to keep those swimmin' holes clean.

The Boulder Creek pool is the only one in the Valley which was closed for a short time this summer because of a high fecal coliform count, he added. This is a problem that happens at the pool nearly every year and the source is unknown.

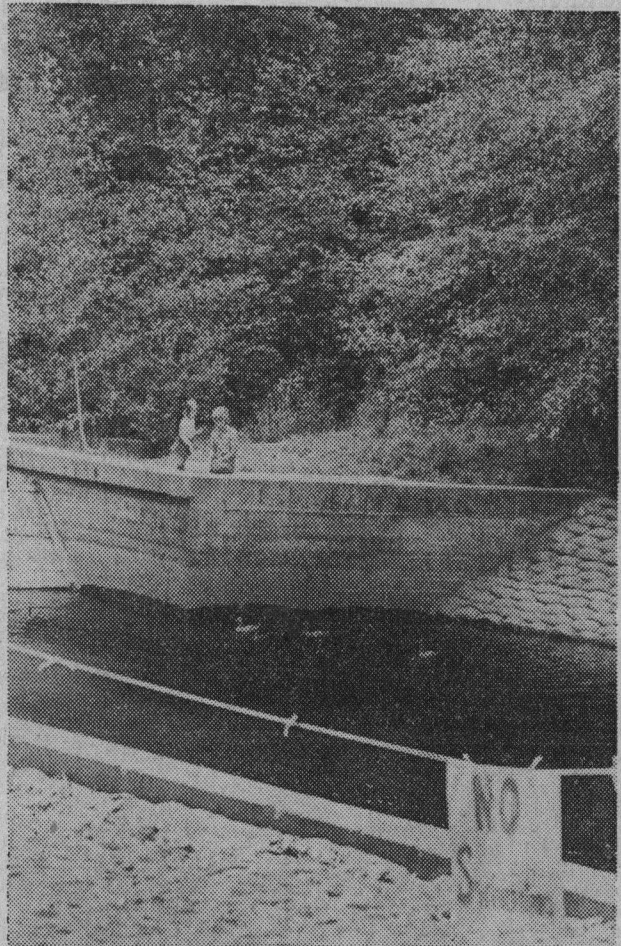
## PT&T Helps At Fire Battle

To aid firefighters battling the Marble Cone blaze at Big Sur, Pacific Telephone has installed more than 25,000 feet of cable and over 110 phone lines this week, the company announced.

Forty PT&T employees were involved in helping U.S. and California Divisions of Forestry, and early in the firefight, two mobile cars with dual phones were the sole source of communications for about two days.

## Navy Course

Navy Aviation Boatswain's Mate Airman Appren. Philip G. Otterbine, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Otterbine of Santa Cruz, has completed the Navy's aircraft launch and recovery equipment course.



The Ben Lomond swimming hole, a victim of the drought, is closed.