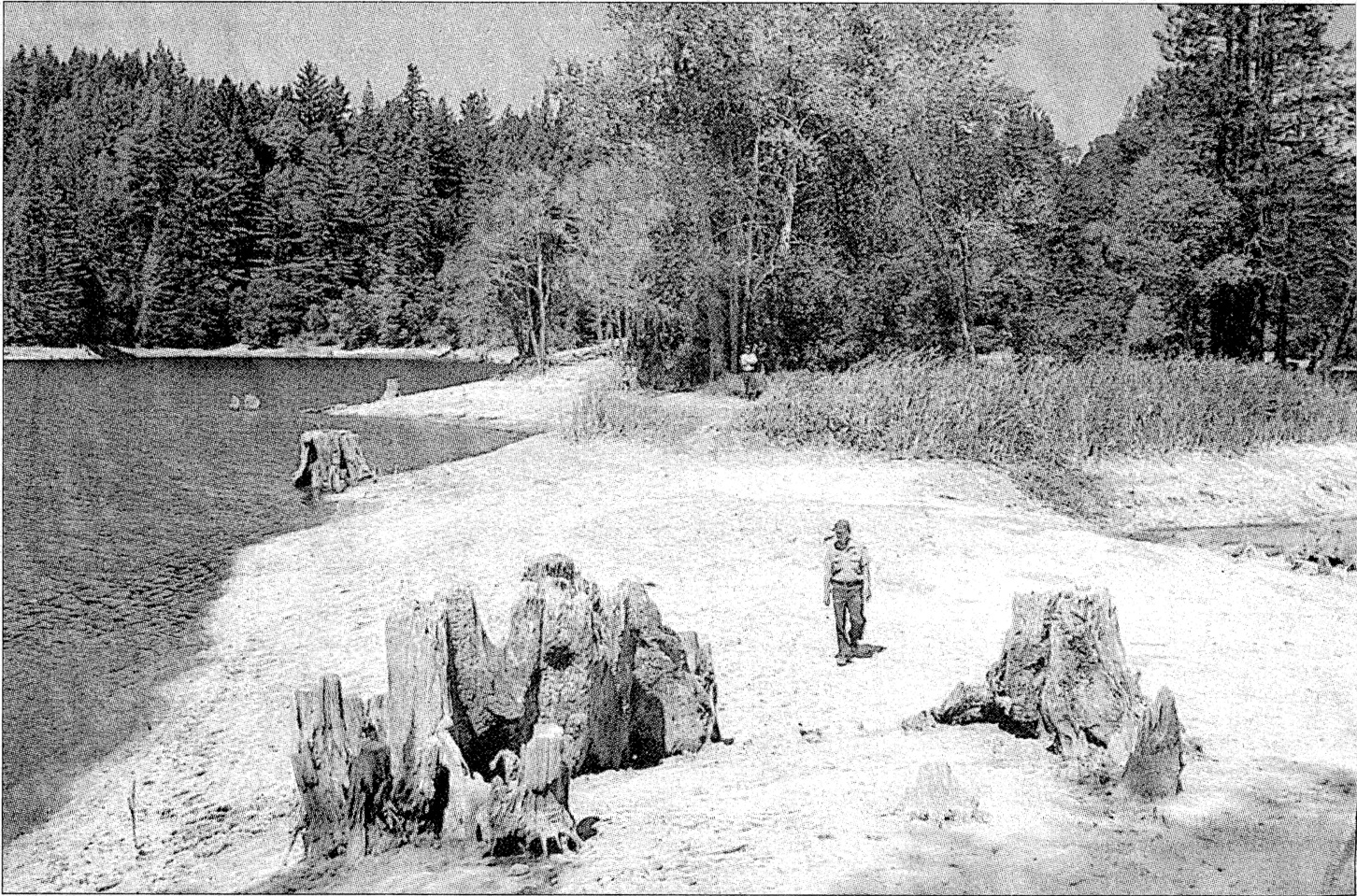


WATER PANEL URGES MANDATORY RATIONING



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

A Santa Cruz ranger walks along a sandy peninsula that is normally under water at Loch Lomond, the main reservoir for Santa Cruz. The city decided Tuesday to keep the Loch Lomond Recreational Area closed due to dry conditions past March 1, when the recreation area usually opens for boaters.

Loch Lomond

Santa Cruz keeps reservoir recreation closed due to critically dry conditions

By J.M. BROWN

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SANTA CRUZ — Facing conditions that mirror a record 1977 drought, the Santa Cruz City Council is expected Feb. 11 to consider an initial step toward approving water rationing.

"Getting a start on it right now makes absolute sense to me," Mayor Lynn Robinson said.

The city's Water Commission voted Monday to recommend increasing a Stage 1 Water Alert in effect for nine months to a Stage 3 Water Emergency

resulting in customer water limits and steep financial penalties for exceeding them. Conservation will increase from a voluntary 5 percent to mandated levels up to 25 percent, with landscape and golf course irrigation seeing the greater reduction in water delivery.

In past dry years, water officials have waited until a trio of supply outlooks were completed in April to seek cutbacks. Water Department officials asked the commission to endorse a Stage 2 Water Warning with a 15 per-

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DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

Normally submerged under water, tree stumps now are exposed at Loch Lomond Reservoir due to the dry conditions. Santa Cruz will now keep the reservoir's recreation area closed past the usual opening date of March 1.

'If the situation stabilizes and doesn't get any drier, we will have a 20-25 percent goal in place for a while.

If conditions get worse and we don't have any more rain, this is the beginning of further cuts.'

ROSEMARY MENARD, water director