

Anglers awaiting lake's reopening

Catches of lunker bass, trout expected

■ LAKE

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The reservoir still is well below capacity, however. There are about 1.7 billion gallons of water in Loch Lomond now. It holds 2.8 billion gallons.

There are 40 boats for rent, half of them rowboats, half with electric motors. Because the lake provides drinking water, gasoline engines are not allowed.

Chief Ranger Walt Cacace said the lake probably will be full enough to remain open to boats through July 4.

Loch Lomond is in the middle of a 3,200-acre wilderness. It has 100 picnic sites along its banks, and 12 miles of hiking trails.

Loch Lomond will open every day at 6 a.m.

By most accounts, opening day will be mobbed. Before the drought, 800 anglers a day used the lake. For opening day, rangers are expecting as many as 1,500.

When the 172 parking spaces fill up, the gates will be closed. And like a crowded bar, one car will be allowed to enter every time one leaves.

Camping outside the gates is a bad idea. Not only will that infuriate local residents, but rangers say they will write citations if too

many violators crowd the narrow road to the lake the night before.

Like the deer, bobcats, mountain lions and golden eagles that will have to adjust to the renewed presence of humans at Loch Lomond, residents in the tiny community of Lompico are hardly excited.

"This is going to be really crazy, especially right here in front of my house," said Dan Marler, 34.

Because of concerns about fire danger, traffic and noise on West Drive, the steep, narrow road leading to Loch Lomond, Santa Cruz County Supervisor Fred Keeley on Tuesday ordered public works officials to measure traffic on the road and study options for widening it.

Asked about the prospect of a long line of cars outside his rural house at 3 a.m., Marler said he would try to make the best of it.

"I'm trying to think of something to sell," he said. "What do you think — coffee and doughnuts? Night crawlers?"

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

Admission to Loch Lomond is \$2.50 per car or 65 cents per pedestrian. Launching fees are \$2. Gates open at 6 a.m. and close at dusk.