

✓ Loch Lomond won't be open — for now

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LOCH LOMOND — Thousands of catfish, trout and other finny friends are probably bubbling sighs of relief while tens of thousands of dedicated anglers are sure to be cursing under their breath at the news. Loch Lomond reservoir will not be open this year unless more rain suddenly falls from the sky.

"We might have a late season, on April 1 or April 15, but right now we'd have to get 10 feet of water just to have a season," park ranger Walt Cacace said, while announcing that the park would definitely have to postpone its traditional March 1 opening.

According to Cacace, about 45,000 people usually visit Loch Lomond during March and April, and "most of them are fishermen." But even picnickers are going to be frustrated.

"We'll be closed totally," Cacace said. "The banks are so steep we don't want anybody getting hurt, and the summer is going to be so dry we don't want any barbecue fires going on around here."

Cacace said the city of Santa Cruz usually begins drawing water from the reservoir in early May, but just because the reservoir is closed for fishing doesn't mean it's dry.

"What they need for drinking is a lot less than what we need for a fishing season," Cacace said.

The reservoir's fishing season was last canceled after the storm of 1982, because roads were damaged. The last time it was canceled due to drought conditions was in 1977.

Cacace said he hoped most of the frustrated fishermen find out about the closing before they arrive at the park gates with rods in hand.

"I don't want to have fishermen ready to lynch me at the gate when they find out it's not open," he said.