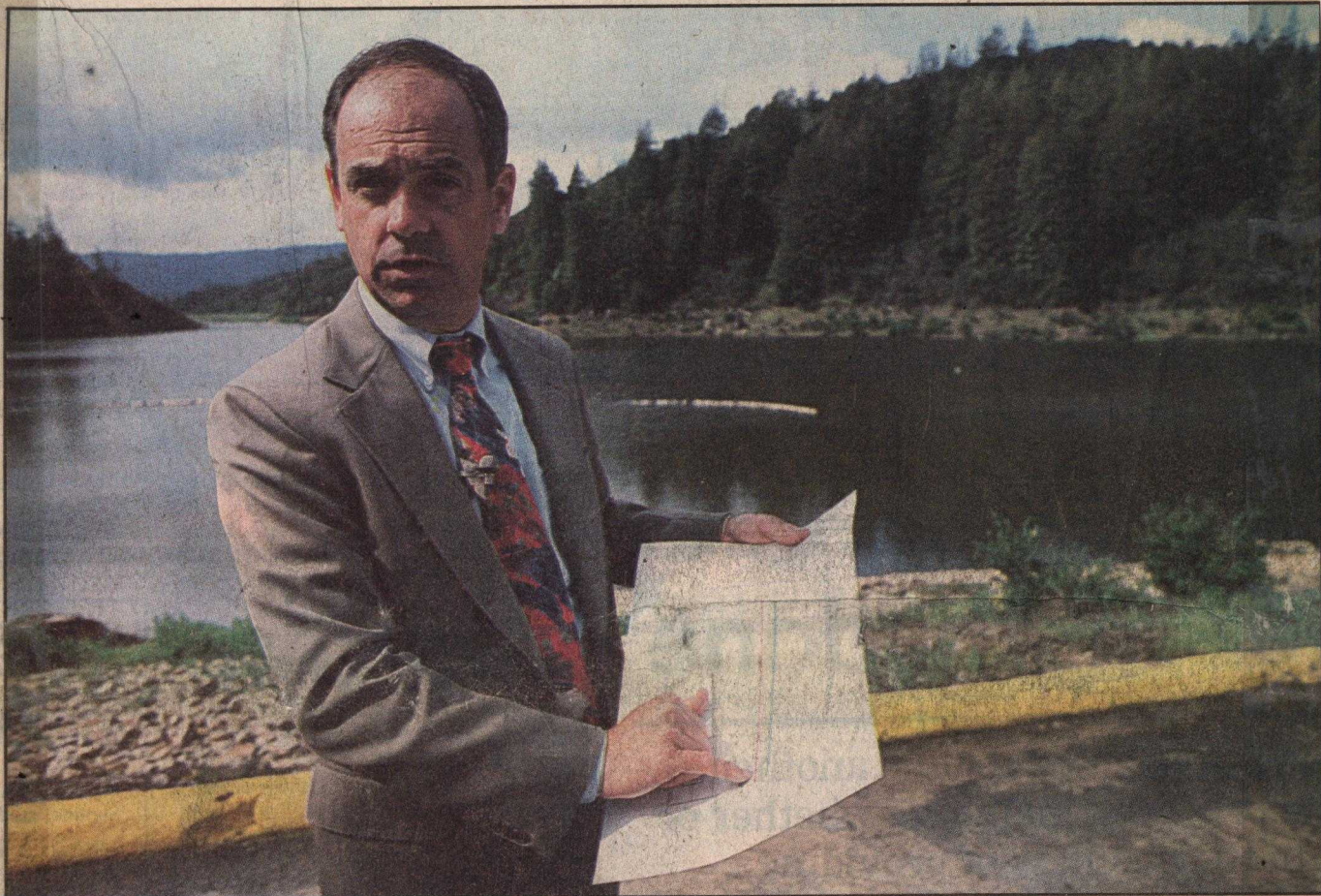


Opening day announced



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

'This feels great, I love it,' said Water Department Director Bill Kocher of the April 8 opening.

City will unlock Loch Lomond

Gates were last open in 1987

By MARTHA SNYDER
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Loch Lomond Reservoir, the popular fishing and boating area shut for the past four years, will open April 8, thanks to a wet winter that boosted water levels, Water Department Director Bill Kocher announced Tuesday.

The park gates closed at the end of the 1987 season, and have not reopened since, Kocher said. The park had drawn an estimated 45,000 visitors annually.

Kocher said he doubts he will be able to keep the reservoir open through its typical closing day of Sept. 15, but he is glad just to be able to get boats back on the water.

"This feels great, I love it," Kocher said. "It rained on our baseball games, but that's a small price to pay."

Chief Ranger Walt Cacace agreed, saying that the past few summer seasons have been lonely at Loch Lomond.

"We miss the interaction with

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Head Ranger Walt Cacace inspects boats.

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the fishermen," Cacace said, gazing over the quiet lake on Tuesday. "A lot of them come out every day and they're almost like family."

Loch Lomond, a man-made lake that opened in 1959, has not been officially full — 577 feet above sea level — since February 1986. It dropped to 530 feet in October 1988, and currently stands at about 557 feet. Kocher says he hopes to increase the level by another foot by opening day.

The reservoir is fed by runoff from the surrounding hillsides, as well as about seven million

gallons of water, which is pumped into it daily from the San Lorenzo River.

Santa Cruz water consumers use about 25 million gallons of water per month out of the reservoir between June and October.

Kocher said that if residents use water conservatively or "if nature helps us out," the reservoir may be able to stay open longer than the anticipated mid-July closing day.

"It really does depend on whether people are watering their lawns," Kocher said.

Loch Lomond is stocked with rainbow trout by the state De-

partment of Fish and Game, and bass, bluegill, sunfish and catfish can also be found in the lake. Fishing licenses are required and will be available at concession stands, along with row boats, electric motor boats, bait, tackle, food and drinks.

Fees to enter the area remain at the 1987 levels of \$2.50 per car, and boat rental fees will be set soon.

Kocher said it takes about 15 part-time rangers as well as the four regular staff members to run the lake, which usually breaks even financially by the end of the season.

REFERENCE

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
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