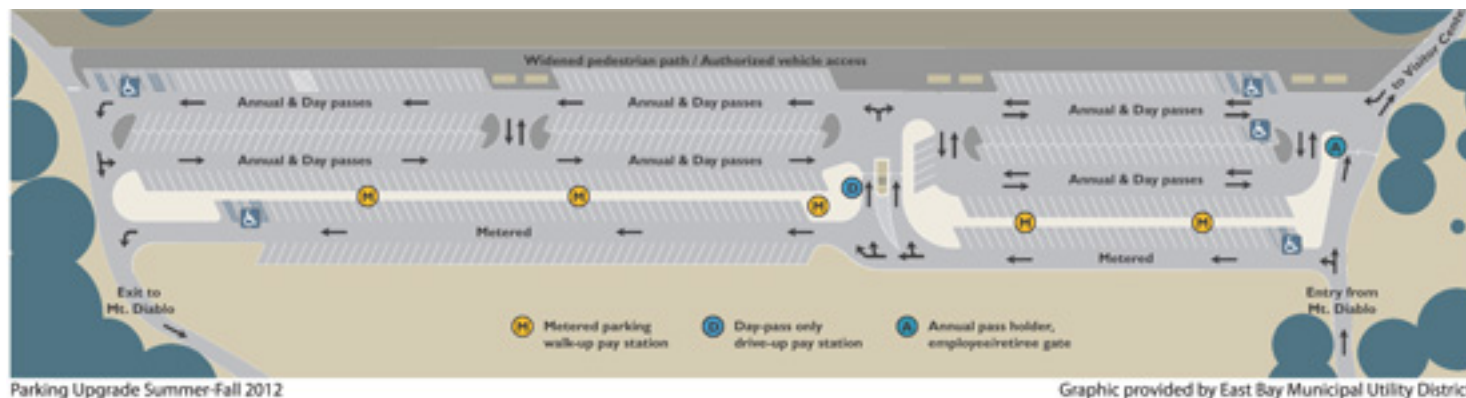


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More Metered Parking Coming to Lafayette Reservoir Lot

By Cathy Tyson



Frustrated "Rez" parkers will soon have more opportunities to plunk down some quarters, and plastic, in the upcoming upgraded East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) Reservoir parking area. Call it the parking lot shuffle: "Hourly (metered) spaces have been increased from 80 to 138, while 'standard' unmetered spaces have been reduced from 411 to 259. The number of handicapped accessible spaces remains the same at 16. New solar-powered, multi-space parking pay stations will take credit cards as well as coins," said EMBUD Community Affairs Representative Nora Harlow.

The current single row of metered parking will be expanded to accommodate almost twice as many cars - the new layout will include rows on the left and right sides of the road after the ranger booth. In addition, a second entrance gate and new parking layout will improve traffic flow and reduce congestion during busy periods.

"We hope the improvements will make it worth the temporary inconvenience to park users as this work gets underway. The contractor will be on site by the end of August, perhaps sooner. The work should be completed by Thanksgiving," said Harlow.

While re-surfacing and re-stripping update the parking area, fees will get an update as well. The EBMUD Board of Directors last increased parking meter fees in 2002, but starting on January 1, 2013, the 2012 fee of \$1 per hour will jump to \$1.50 per hour for metered spaces. An Annual Pass for unlimited use was \$100 and will increase to \$120 in the new year. Day use parking is now \$6, and will increase only slightly to \$7 for 2013.

Look for construction to be phased in later this month to allow for as many parking spaces as possible for visitors. In addition, the pedestrian path that is sandwiched between the reservoir and the parking lot will be expanded and benches will be added.

Muscling out Mussels

Call it a bivalve British Invasion - but in a really bad way. Quagga Mussels, also known as Zebra Mussels, are an invasive species that can harm fish and habitat. Although there aren't any yet in the Lafayette Reservoir, park personnel are playing it safe. If you plan to bring your own boat to the reservoir, be aware that there is a vessel inspection program. Park Rangers will take a history survey and make a physical inspection. Vessels coming from high risk areas - all of southern California and boats from outside of California - will not be allowed to launch.

If boaters come to launch a vessel and it has wet areas like standing water in live wells, bait wells, or bilge areas, the boater will also be turned away. The reason - hitchhiking mussels lay eggs that turn into larva, and hide in wet areas on a boat.

These pesky creatures first appeared in Great Britain in 1824 - but now can be found in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, even Italy. As of 1990 they had been found in the Great Lakes and have spread like wildfire, moving from New York to Louisiana to Colorado, with a recent sighting in Hollister, California. They have a profound effect on the ecosystems they invade, gobbling up phytoplankton, reducing the food supply of native species.

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