

UPPER STONE CANYON RESERVOIR PROJECT



Q & A's

Q: What project is currently being proposed for Upper Stone Canyon Reservoir?

A: The project includes replacing Upper Stone Canyon Reservoir (pictured above) with three large buried tanks, which would hold a minimum of 81 million gallons of potable water to be used to provide drinking water to the Stone Canyon service area, which includes 450,000 people. The tanks would be covered with a layer of soil and locally indigenous native vegetation. The proposal also includes limited public access for passive recreation in the canyon in the form of hiking trails.

Q: Why not leave the Upper Stone Canyon Reservoir as it is?

A: Upper Stone Canyon Reservoir stores critical drinking water supplies for a large part of West Los Angeles. The project is being proposed to comply with updated federal water quality standards that apply to the protection of treated drinking water stored in uncovered reservoirs (the Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule and the Long Term 2 Enhance Surface Water Quality Rule).

Q: How is this project different than the Lower Stone Canyon Reservoir project? Why wasn't Lower Stone Reservoir covered?

A: Lower Stone Canyon (pictured below) was recently removed from service as a drinking water reservoir. Because it is too large and irregular in shape, it would not have been a candidate for covering. It will remain an open body of water, storing essentially non-potable water to be used in extreme emergency circumstances only. To regulate the level of the Lower Reservoir, which will receive storm run-off, a small filtration plant, designed to blend with the environment, was built at the south end of the reservoir.



Lower Stone Canyon Reservoir

Q: What are the options for Upper Stone reservoir?

A: Numerous options were examined over the past year and a half. They included a flexible rubber membrane floating cover (\$35 million), an aluminum cover (\$80 million), and the buried tanks (\$235 million). The costs are estimated.

Q: Has the final project been determined?

A: No. At the direction of the Board of Water and Power Commissioners, the buried tanks option with public access is being evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as the proposed project; however, the final project will be decided upon once the EIR is completed.

Q: Why is the buried tanks option being evaluated as the proposed project in the EIR, given that it is the most expensive?

A: The decision of the Board of Water and Power Commissioners was based on several factors: (1) buried tanks were supported by members of the Stone Canyon Subcommittee of the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs (CPOR), various local homeowners associations, the Neighborhood Council, Councilman Weiss, and the majority of people who attended a community meeting held on January 27, 2008; (2) covered tanks allow for replanting the area currently occupied by the reservoir with native vegetation; and (3) allowing public access to the site.

Q: What public access is being proposed?

A: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has an existing easement along the north rim of the canyon. There have been initial discussions with the Conservancy regarding adding a hiking trail along this easement and other parts of the canyon. The Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks has expressed an interest in a passive recreation area within the canyon including a trail system, parking, restrooms and a small maintenance facility and office. Recreation and Parks has stated that decision will only be made after consultation with the community.

Q: If no decision has been made regarding public access, why did the Notice of Preparation for the EIR include a discussion of park facilities?

A: The Board of Water and Power Commissioners will make a decision regarding the proposed project, including the implementation of water-quality related improvements and the provision, in concept, of public access and recreation use at the reservoir property. The determination of the nature of the recreation and open space functions to be provided at the reservoir property will require a separate planning process involving community, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, City Council office participation and LADWP.

Q: Was there any public input on this proposed project?

A: Members of the Stone Canyon Subcommittee of the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs have met monthly with DWP for the past two years to explore options for Upper Stone Reservoir. Presentations were made to neighborhood associations, and an open house was held for residents on March 9, 2008. In addition, the public was invited to speak at the two DWP Board of Commissioners meetings on this project. In addition, a public scoping meeting regarding the EIR was held on July 14, 2008, providing members of the public an opportunity to voice concerns related to the project.

Q: Will there be other opportunities for public input on this project?

A: Yes. . There will be opportunity to comment on the draft EIR (45-day public review period anticipated to begin in June 2009), a public meeting on the Draft EIR during the public review period, and a public DWP Board meeting when the Final EIR and the project are scheduled for consideration (anticipated for November 2009).

Q: Would this project increase the fire danger in the canyon?

A: Fire risk will be among the potential environmental impacts to be analyzed in detail in the EIR. Risks both during construction and operation, when public access would occur, will be objectively analyzed and presented in the document. Mitigation measures would be required to reduce any significant impacts.

Q: Won't putting buried tanks at Upper Stone hurt aerial fire fighting capabilities?

A: Lower Stone Reservoir, at over 3 billion gallons, would continue to be available for fire fighting, and the fire department has two heli-pads on the site, which would remain if the project is implemented.

Q: What about the possibility of terrorist attacks if the canyon is open to the public?

A: The Upper Stone tanks, which would supply the potable water, would be buried, and appropriate measures would be taken to ensure the security of the underground facilities. There would be security fencing around the chlorination station. Unlike today, if there is public access, Park Rangers or other security would patrol the site. Additionally, as part of the almost completed Lower Stone Canyon project, high-tech security cameras have been placed around the canyon.

Q: What is the status of the project?

A: The Draft EIR is being prepared. It is anticipated that it will be available for public review and comment in June 2009. The final decision on the project is anticipated in November 2009.

Q: What is CPOR, who are its members, and how do I get in touch with them?

A: The Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs was formed more than 16 years ago by residents who wanted to ensure that Elysian, Silverlake, Hollywood, and Stone Canyon reservoirs remained open bodies of water. The Stone Canyon Representatives are:

Brian Studwell, Bel-Air Association (310) 474-3527;

Shirley Cohen & Phyllis Gottlieb, Roscomare Valley Association (310) 476-0322;

Sandra Fiala & Janet Magdovitz, Glenridge Homeowners Association (310) 475-7812;

Pamela Cooke, Residents of Beverly Glen (board@beverlyglen.org).

Q: Where can I get more information on the proposed Upper Stone Canyon Reservoir Water Quality Improvement Project?

A: LADWP's environmental public notices website, www.ladwp.com/envnotices, includes a copy of the project's Initial Study and Notice of Preparation. The Initial Study contains a project description and a preliminary assessment of potential environmental impacts. When the Draft EIR is completed, it will also be posted on this website.

Q: Whom do I contact at DWP if I have questions about the project?

A: Call the project message center at: (213) 367-4466

Document prepared by: Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs and Department of Water and Power, Water Division. If you have any questions or would like additional copies of this document, please call Helene Smookler, Mediator for the Reservoir Projects at 310-475-5700. August 8, 2008