



Lake McSwain Fall Fishing Derby delayed by drought

Fish plants to resume as trophy-size trout caught

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Warmer water temperatures, brought on by the drought, have forced Merced Irrigation District's Parks to postpone the annual Fall Fishing Derby at Lake McSwain until springtime. At the same time, MID has reported that it expects to resume regular trout planting in the near future and that a trophy-sized trout – nearly 30 inches – was caught within in the past few weeks.

"This drought has had widespread impacts, and unfortunately we aren't immune at Lake McSwain," explained Bret Theodozio, MID Director of Parks and Recreation.

"Plenty of fish are still being caught, but they have gone deep and out into the middle of the lake. They are there for the catching if you can reach them."

At the end of July, a 29-inch trout weighing more than 9.5 pounds was caught at McSwain by Mike Dickerson. The fish was caught on a "wedding ring" at a depth of about 16 feet.

Theodozio noted that many of those participating in regularly scheduled fishing derbies do so from the bank. Because the fish have gone to deeper, and into the middle of the lake, those without a boat would be at a significant disadvantage, Theodozio said.

Although a derby won't be held in October, the spring Derby is expected to be held on April 9 and 10 in 2016.

At the same time, fish plants from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will soon resume in Lake McSwain. Plants had ceased earlier this year after regular-provider Calaveras Trout farms was

forced to close its doors. Fish and Wildlife will resume its plants of the lake in the coming weeks as water temperatures begin to cool.

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