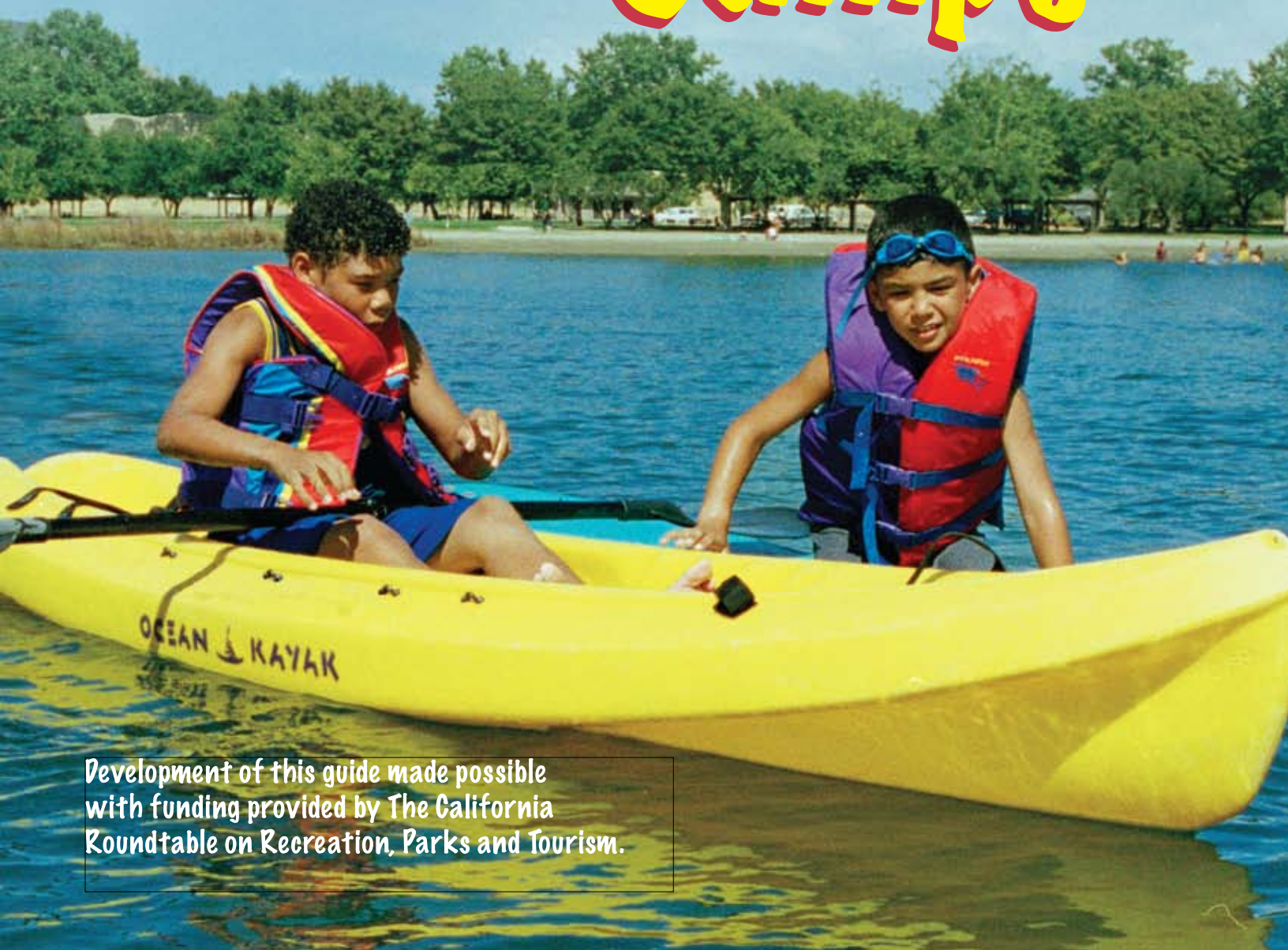


YOUR SIX STEP GUIDE FOR ORGANIZING

Aquatic Adventure Camps



Development of this guide made possible with funding provided by The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism.

A Partnership for Life...

Aquatic Adventure Camps help teach water safety to all children and youths – especially ethnic minorities and those children who would most benefit from positive youth development – who live near State Water Project (SWP) reservoirs and its 444-mile aqueduct.

Drowning is the second biggest killer of children and young teenagers. Ethnic minority children between 5 and 19 years old drown at a rate two and a half times that of non-minorities.



Lake Oroville

The Department of Water Resources (DWR), which runs the State Water Project, wants to ensure all its reservoirs and aqueduct are safe for children. DWR can't do it alone. Partnering with the California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, and working proactively with local parks, state agencies and organizations throughout California, we are saving lives. You can be a part of that effort.

Two local park agencies in Oroville and Chico were the first to organize successful

Aquatic Adventure Camps with support from the Department of Water Resources. Based on this award-winning model, four other Aquatic Camps were organized near the State Water Project at San Luis Reservoir, Lake Del Valle, Lake Perris and Lake Castaic.

This guide shows other local agencies and private organizations step-by-step how to organize a two-week Aquatic Adventure Camp in areas near the State Water Project reservoirs and aqueduct. As you review this guide, you'll discover that the first eight days of camp are held in your local area with the last two days conducted at a nearby State Water Project recreation site.

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Lake Del Valle

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Step 1: Develop a plan

Before your organization can do anything, it must have a plan. But remember what President Eisenhower said about planning: “Plans are nothing, planning is everything.” He meant, of course, that your organization’s thinking and discussions about what has to be done is much more important than a polished planning document you finally end up with.

Make sure you spend time examining why your organization wants an aquatic camp. Discuss the benefits of the camp, as well as problems that may arise as your aquatic camp becomes a reality and continues through the years.



Lake Oroville

An effective way to organize these thoughts is to develop a plan intent, then create a set of goals and objectives to support your plan. Goals and objectives were created for both the program and a business plan at the aquatic camps organized for Chico and Oroville.

Planning is continuous. Don't stop planning. For example, you should prepare a checklist or timeline. (The Microsoft Project program has software to prepare a helpful detailed project plan.) In the appendix, you'll find a full sized "Task-Target-Completed" form that was essential in developing the Chico/Oroville camp. Organizers used it to keep track of the progress of preparing for camp. Many tasks must be completed in a timely manner to establish and maintain a smooth running program. It is important to keep track of what and when something must be done.

TASK	TARGET COMPLETION	COMPLETED
Select and confirm camp dates	6-8 months before camp	
Recruit partners	6-8 months before camp	
Outline camp program weekly and daily schedules	4-6 months before camp	
Recruit participants	4-6 months before camp	
Outline camp program weekly and daily schedules	4-6 months before camp	
Reserve facilities (campground, pool)	8-12 weeks before camp	
Reserve equipment (boats, lifejackets)	8-12 weeks before camp	
Find funding	12 weeks before camp	
Hire staff	4 months before camp	
Recruit volunteers	2-3 weeks before camp	
Market/promote program (news releases, PSA's)	2 weeks before camp	
Recruit participants	1-2 days before camp	
Find sponsors/partners	1 week before camp	
Photo and participant role	1 week before camp	
Buy food and supplies	1 week before camp	
Buy supplies (ice, coolers, cooking items)	1 week before camp	
Obtain camera for photos	Final day of camp	
Print certificates	Final day of camp	
Print thank-you letters	1 week after camp	
Camp wrap-up/debriefing	1 week after camp	
Camp evaluations		
Set goals for next year		



Lake Oroville

An additional example from the Chico/Oroville program, found in the Appendix, is the Curriculum Outline. The curriculum outline, too, is a plan. A successful camp could not be established without one. The curriculum will provide valuable advice on the specifics of an aquatic camp.

Step 2: Prepare a budget

Your budget is an important part of the plan. There are essential elements to evaluate and include such as staffing, mileage, food, administrative costs, equipment rental and purchase, and other expenses. By developing sponsorships and local partnerships with businesses, groups, clubs, agencies, and individuals, the camps can be adequately financed. A detailed, realistic financial plan will be a powerful tool when you invite donations of goods, services and money.

The ability to budget effectively is a very important part of a successful program. Also, a budget can be useful in defining standards of performance, motivating board and staff members, and providing a tool to measure results. Fulfilling the program's mission is the main goal, and budgeting makes it possible. (See sample budget on page 7.)



San Luis Reservoir

Account No	Category			Amount
100	Staff			6,427
200	Mileage/gas			488
300	Equipment rental			1,116
400	Equipment purchase			1,153
500	Food			542
600	Miscellaneous			80

TOTAL \$6,427

Account 100 Staff

ITEM NO.	ITEM NAME	QUANTITY	COST PER UNIT	TOTAL
101	Coordinator	1	60hrs x \$34/hr	2,040
102	Supervisor	1	68 hrs x \$20.72/hr	1,409
103	Lifeguards	2	52 hrs x \$9.63/hr	1,002
104	Chico lifeguards	2	26.5 hrs x \$12/hr	1,272
105	Sailing instructor	1	8 hrs x \$22/hr	176
106	Lake Oroville staff	2	12 hrs x \$22/hr	526

TOTAL \$488

Account 200 Mileage/Gas

201	Butte Creek	12 miles	2 vehicles	9
202	Forebay	50 miles	4 vehicles	72
203	Lake Oroville	86 miles	5 vehicles	155
204	Oroville staff	240 miles	3 vehicles	78
205	WaveRunner gas			61
206	Patio boat gas			92
207	WaveRunner oil			21

TOTAL \$488

Account 300 Equipment Rental

301	Kayak/canoe		(with instructors)	300
302	Vans	2		151
303	Lifejackets			20
304	WaveRunners	3		450
305	Fam Camp items	1		45
306	Seado rental	1		150

TOTAL \$1,116

Account 400 Equipment Purchase

401	Innertubes			76
402	Rafts			27
403	Sailboats	3	350 ea	1,050

TOTAL \$1,153

Account 500 Food

501	Campout food			314
502	Daily lunch			149
503	Ice			20
504	Snacks			40
505	Miscellaneous grocery			19

TOTAL \$542

Account 600 Miscellaneous

601	Certificates			45
602	Postage			35

TOTAL 80

Step 3: Find the money

You have a plan and a budget. Now you need money. The Department of Water Resources, a sponsor of Aquatic Adventure Camps, has limited seed money and may be able to help your program. For more information, contact [Dorothy Benjamin at \(916\) 653-6032](#).



Lake Del Valle

Following is a list of possible sources of grants. Local partners can also help to fund your program (see ‘partners’ Step 4).

The MBNA Foundation is a charitable organization that provides scholarships and grants to improve the quality and availability of education, human services, and the arts in communities. In the past it has provided funding for a Life Jacket Loaner Program through Boating US for ethnic minorities and those children who would most benefit from positive youth development.



The MBNA Foundation Web site is:
<http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation>

The California Department of Boating and Waterways makes grants available for non-profit organizations, colleges, universities, and local agencies in California that offer on-the-water training to enhance basic boating safety education.



The California Department of Boating and Waterways Web site:
<http://www.dbw.ca.gov/funding/>

Since their founding, the California Department of Parks and Recreation has provided more than \$110 million for projects and educational programs while building a statewide network of park supporters. These initiatives have helped the parks acquire more land, create more trails, restore wildlife habitat, build visitor centers, construct interpretive displays, and support family camping.



The California Department of Parks and Recreation contact is:
<http://www.parks.ca.gov>

U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Grants provides financial support for grants to assist participating states with funding for their Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) programs. To participate in the state Recreational Boating Safety grant program, a state recreational boating safety program must have:

- A vessel numbering system;
- A cooperative boating safety assistance program with the Coast Guard;
- Sufficient patrol and other activity to ensure adequate enforcement of applicable state boating safety laws and regulations;
- A state boating safety education program that includes the dissemination of information concerning the hazards of operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and
- A marine casualty reporting system.



The U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Grants Web site is:
<http://www.uscgboating.org/grants/>



Lake Oroville

The Boat U.S. Foundation awards local volunteer organizations up to \$4,000 for the promotion of boating safety education. Over the past 15 years, the Foundation has awarded over \$575,000 to local community organizations, yacht clubs, flotillas and squadrons. The Foundation is looking for creative and innovative projects that promote safe boating on your local waterway. Topics can range from literature on the affects of boating under the influence, to signs at boat ramps telling users about free vessel safety checks.



The Boat U.S. Foundation Web site is:
<http://www.boatus.com/foundation/Grants/>

Step 4: Find partners

A successful camp needs partners. To find partners begin by taking inventory of the relationships your agency now uses. Ask staff members about any relationships they may have with businesses, friends with appropriate skills for teaching at camp, and others who can help make a camp successful.

Develop a list of potential partners and contact them. In the Chico/Oroville Aquatic Adventure Camp experience, organizers developed partners by asking businesses if they knew of people interested in donating time or equipment “to a valuable service for teens.”

The Appendix lists agencies involved in the Chico/Oroville camp. It may be helpful for generating ideas for your camp. To help with your brainstorming, there is also a list of items that partners might donate.



San Luis Reservoir

When the camp is over, don't forget to send a thank-you letter to your partners.

Step 5: Recruit participants

Now that you've got a program, you'll need kids to participate. Agencies that deal directly with ethnic minorities and those children who would most benefit from positive youth development and families are good resources. You can also ask lifeguards and after-school leaders to help select children to attend camp.



Lake Oroville

Chico recruited children from local agencies and used scholarships. Scholarships were given to a local recreation center, the Boys and Girls Club of Chico, and the Chico office of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Northern California. Each agency received letters and promotional

information regarding the camp and how many scholarships their agency could provide. All participants were chosen by their agencies. When a child accepted a scholarship, they were informed if they began camp, they couldn't quit. Dropping out was not an option.

Oroville concentrated on schools for recruiting. Letters and flyers were sent to principals. On request, a recreation supervisor was available to provide more detail. The principals provided names of children they thought would benefit from camp. Children also wrote a short essay about why they were interested in camp and what they felt they would get out of the experience. Schools designed for children who have run into trouble turned out to be a good resource for finding appropriate participants.

Once Chico and Oroville received the names of participants, they sent letters and information to the parents telling them about the requirements of camp. The Appendix includes two letters sent to parents by the Chico and Oroville recreation departments; one is an initial "welcome" letter and the other is a letter reminding parents that the camp was about to begin (see Appendix page 18).

Step 6: Evaluate...then make it even better!

Even though the camp's complete, your job isn't done. You think the camp went fine. There were no significant injuries, and for the most part, everyone seemed to smile a lot. That might indicate a successful camp, but you have to do more to evaluate the camp's success.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The camp met my expectations.	6	21	1	
The instructors were well qualified.	16	10		
The instructors were informative.	12	15	2	
The instructors were enthusiastic.	13	13		
I enjoyed the camp.	9	18		
The facilities were suitable for the camp.	9	11		
The facilities were safe.	16	10		
The activities were fun.	17	15		
The activities were beneficial.	12			
Would you consider returning to camp next year?			Yes	No
Would you recommend the camp to a friend?			23	4
			24	3

Survey Analysis

Overall the feedback from participants of camp was very positive. A total of 27 responses were possible in nine categories. The category 'The instructor was well qualified' received one Disagree response with 26 Agree and Strongly Agree responses. The category 'The instructor was enthusiastic' received two Disagree responses with 25 Agree and Strongly Agree responses. Answers to the question 'Would you consider returning to camp next year?' included 23 Yes responses and four No responses. Answers to the question 'Would you recommend this camp to a friend or colleague?' included 24 Yes responses and three No responses. It is also not possible to determine which instructors the Disagree responses were referring to. It is recommended that future evaluations list which city the participants are from.

Chico/Oroville used two questionnaires to test the success of their camp. There was one survey for the parents and one for the children. We've included the questions – and results – of the Chico/Oroville program evaluation.



Lake Del Valle

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The program met my expectations.	8	14		
The instructors were well qualified.	10	11	1	
The instructors were informative.	12	9		
The instructors were enthusiastic.	12	9	2	
My child enjoyed the camp.	12	10		
The facilities were suitable for the camp.	12	10		
The facilities were safe.	11	11		
The activities were fun.	16	6		
The activities were beneficial.	12	10		
Would your child consider returning to camp next year?			Yes	No
Would you recommend the camp to a friend?			22	
			22	

Survey Analysis

Overall the feedback from parents of campers was very positive. A total of 22 responses were possible in nine categories. Two open-ended questions were also included at the end of the questionnaire. Out of the nine categories, six received only Agree and Strongly Agree responses. Three of the nine categories received one response in the Disagree category with 21 responses in Strongly Agree and Agree categories. The three categories that received the Disagree response were: the instructor was well qualified; the instructor was informative; and, the instructor was enthusiastic. It is not possible to determine whether the feedback came from an Oroville parent or a Chico parent. It is also not possible to determine which instructor the Disagree response was referring to. All 22 parents responded Yes to the questions: 'Would you or your child consider returning to camp next year?'; and, 'Would you recommend this camp to a friend or colleague?'



San Luis Reservoir

APPENDIX

GOAL 1: Teach children how to rescue themselves and/or rescue someone else from the various aquatic environments.

1. Instructors will teach swimming and water safety skills during pool instruction time at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
2. Instructors certified in life guarding and pool safety will introduce youth to rescue techniques, including spinal injury and back boarding during appropriate sessions at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
3. Guest speakers qualified to do so, will expand students' knowledge of aqueduct, levee, canal, lake, river and creek hazards during one session at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
4. Participants in Aquatic Adventure Camp will be certified in CPR and First Aid by the end of camp.
5. Teach boating safety skills.

GOAL 2: Provide skills and incentives so children may choose to participate in swim lessons, junior guard programs, aquatic related jobs or lifeguard classes in the future.

1. Instructors will teach swimming and water safety skills during pool instruction time at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
2. Instructors certified in life guarding and pool safety will introduce youth to rescue techniques, including spinal injury and back boarding during appropriate sessions at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
3. All campers will have one day of experience in canoeing, kayaking, and sailing by the end of Aquatic Adventure Camp.
4. Participants in Aquatic Adventure Camp will be certified in CPR and First Aid by the end of camp.
5. Instructors with appropriate experience and qualifications will teach boating safety skills during one day at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
6. A State Park naturalist will serve as guest speaker to introduce children to and interpret local flora and fauna during at least one day at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
7. Children will learn about other recreation resources available to them locally throughout Aquatic Adventure Camp.

GOAL 3: Provide a variety of boating experiences to children who have never been in a sailboat, kayak, canoe or powerboat.

1. All campers will have one day of experience in canoeing, kayaking, and sailing by the end of Aquatic Adventure Camp.
2. Instructors with appropriate experience and qualifications will teach boating safety skills during one day at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
3. Campers will experience an excursion aboard a patio boat tour of Lake Oroville.

GOAL 4: Promote water safety skills.

1. Instructors certified in life guarding and pool safety will introduce youth to rescue techniques.
2. Children will learn basic safety skills for snorkeling from an experienced and qualified instructor.
3. Qualified instructors will expand students' knowledge of aqueduct, levee, canal, lake, river and creek hazards during Aquatic Adventure Camp.

GOAL 5: Promote local community involvement

1. Guest speakers with appropriate qualifications, certifications and experience from sponsoring and community organizations will participate in the water safety education of the children.
2. A State Park naturalist will serve as guest speaker to introduce children to and interpret local flora and fauna during at least one day at Aquatic Adventure Camp.

GOAL 6: Introduce youth to natural environment and recreation at local, state and federal Parks.

1. Children will learn basic safety skills for snorkeling from an experienced and qualified instructor.
2. Instructors with appropriate experience and qualifications will teach boating safety skills during one day at Aquatic Adventure Camp.
3. When possible, children will experience first hand, an overnight camp out at a SWP recreation site.



Lake Perris

APPENDIX

Account No	Category			Amount
100	Staff			6,427
200	Mileage/gas			488
300	Equipment rental			1,116
400	Equipment purchase			1,153
500	Food			542
600	Miscellaneous			80

TOTAL \$6,427

Account 100 Staff

ITEM NO.	ITEM NAME	QUANTITY	COST PER UNIT	TOTAL
101	Coordinator	1	60hrs x \$34/hr	2,040
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105	Sailing instructor	1	8 hrs x \$22/hr	176
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TOTAL \$488

Account 200 Mileage/Gas

201	Butte Creek	12 miles	2 vehicles	9
202	Forebay	50 miles	4 vehicles	72
203	Lake Oroville	86 miles	5 vehicles	155
204	Oroville staff	240 miles	3 vehicles	78
205	WaveRunner gas			61
206	Patio boat gas			92
207	WaveRunner oil			21

TOTAL \$488

Account 300 Equipment Rental

301	Kayak/canoe		(with instructors)	300
302	Vans	2		151
303	Lifejackets			20
304	WaveRunners	3		450
305	Fam Camp items	1		45
306	Seado rental	1		150

TOTAL \$1,116

Account 400 Equipment Purchase

401	Innertubes			76
402	Rafts			27
403	Sailboats	3	350 ea	1,050

TOTAL \$1,153

Account 500 Food

501	Campout food			314
502	Daily lunch			149
503	Ice			20
504	Snacks			40
505	Miscellaneous grocery			19

TOTAL \$542

Account 600 Miscellaneous

601	Certificates			45
602	Postage			35

TOTAL 80

APPENDIX

TASK	TARGET COMPLETION	COMPLETED
Select and confirm camp dates	6-8 months before camp	
Recruit partners	6-8 months before camp	
Outline camp program weekly and daily schedules	4-6 months before camp	
Reserve facilities (campground, pool)	4-6 months before camp	
Reserve equipment (boats, lifejackets)	4-6 months before camp	
Find funding	4-6 months before camp	
Hire staff	8-12 weeks before camp	
Recruit volunteers	8-12 weeks before camp	
Market/promote program (news releases, PSAs)	8-12 weeks before camp	
Recruit participants	4-6 months before camp	
Find sponsors/partners	2-3 weeks before camp	
Photo and participant releases	2 weeks before camp	
Buy food and supplies	1-2 days before camp	
Buy supplies (ice, coolers, cooking items)	1 week before camp	
Obtain camera for photos	1 week before camp	
Print certificates	1 week before camp	
Print thank-you letters	1 week before camp	
Camp wrapup/debriefing	Final day of camp	
Camp evaluations	Final day of camp	
Set goals for next year	1 week after camp	



San Luis Reservoir

*Finding Partners...
a sample*

Partners in Chico/Oroville camp

- Chico Paddle Heads
- North Rim Adventure
- Butte Sailing Club
- Oroville Fire Department
- Lake Oroville State Recreation Area
- Bidwell Marina, Oroville
- H2O Rescue

Partners might help with ...

- Financial aid
- Guest speakers
- Bus transportation
- Fins, snorkels, masks
- Kayaks, canoes, patio boats
- T-shirts, sunscreen
- Bottled water
- Inner tubes
- Speed boats

APPENDIX

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>9 a.m. -11 a.m. Meet at Shapiro Pool</p> <p>Introductions Swimming skills Basic crawl stroke Treading water Breaststroke, sidestroke Swimming underwater Diving skills Surface dives Introduction to rescue skills and equipment Rescue tube Entries – stride jump, compact jump Ring buoy Shepherds crook Reaching extensions Swimming extensions Passive drowning assist Active drowning assist Proper use of lifejackets Causes of drowning Active & passive victims – signs of each</p>	<p>9 a.m. -11 a.m. Meet at CARD Office</p> <p>CPR skills Infant, child, adult Rescue breathing Obstructed airway CPR Breathing barriers</p>	<p>9 a.m. -11 a.m. Meet at Butte Creek</p> <p>White water skills Fast moving waters Murky water Check water depth and obstacles Emergency situations Feet first vs. head first</p>	<p>9 a.m. -11 a.m. Meet at Shapiro Pool</p> <p>Swimming clothed - bring long pants, and long-sleeved shirt Disrobing Using clothes as a flotation device When to keep your clothes on Help/huddle position Helping in an emergency - what to do Call/throw/never go Water hazards Fast moving Murky Lightening Fog Extreme cold</p>	<p>8:15 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. Meet at CARD Office/ transportation & lunch will be provided</p> <p>North Forebay Meet with Oroville group Sailing, kayaking, canoeing and board/ water rescues Participants are placed in four different groups About 1.5 hrs the groups rotate through the activities</p> <p>At noon the groups break for a BBQ lunch After the groups are finished the boats are loaded</p> <p>There is about 1 hour of supervised free time in the water</p>

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Shapiro Pool</p> <p>Spinal Injury – Back boarding skills Causes of head/neck injury Signs and symptoms Head Split Head Chin Boarding Removal from water Review/Practice water skills Active and passive victims</p>	<p>Meet at CARD Office</p> <p>First Aid Training Bleeding Burns Bites and stings Seizures Poisons Shock Eye injury Nosebleeds Broken bones Heat/cold emergencies Prevent disease transmission Moving a victim – drag, assist</p>	<p>Meet at Shapiro Pool</p> <p>Submerged Victim skills Escapes – front/rear Rescue skills Removal from water</p>	<p>9 a.m. -11 a.m. Meet at CARD Office</p> <p>Lake Oroville Overnight campout at Loafer Creek Meet with Oroville children Jet Skis Inner tube ride behind jet skis Jet Ski ride at Bidwell Marina Boat Tour of Lake Break for lunch at noon Set up tents at Loafer Creek FAM Camp BBQ Dinner Guest speaker – Park Ranger, Ginger Chew Games/Ghost Stories Children should bring snacks and bottled water</p>	<p>9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lake Oroville Loafer Creek</p> <p>Break down camp and clean up Breakfast, awards and camp T-shirts Visitor Center – Education tour Depart for Chico Pick participants up at CARD Office 12:30 pm</p>

APPENDIX

RE: Aquatic Adventure Camp

Dear Parents:

Thank you for participating in the Chico Area Recreation and Park District's (CARD) first Aquatic Adventure Camp. The camp is sponsored by the following agencies; the Chico Area Recreation and Park District, the Feather River Recreation and Park District, the Department of Water Resources, and the California State Parks.

Attached you will find an itinerary. Each parent is responsible for dropping off and picking up their children at the local sites in Chico. CARD will transport your children to the North Forebay and to Lake Oroville. Children will need to bring plenty of water, sunscreen, towel, shoes, and for the camp out, dry clothes, flashlights, and personal items. Sleeping bags and tents will be provided.

To document the program, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) will be taking photos and making a video. CARD will be using the photos and video for future promotion and advertising.

Again, thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions please contact me at the CARD Office, 895-4711.

Sincerely,

Sample introduction letter to parents of participants following initial signups

RE: Aquatic Adventure Camp

Dear Parent:

The Chico Area Recreation District's (CARD) Aquatic Adventure Camp is scheduled to begin on Monday, July 7.

The first class will be held at the Shapiro Pool, located at Oleander & Memorial Way. The camp will start at 9:00 am. Participants will need to bring a swim suit, towel, etc.

During the period of this course, the Department of Water Resources will be taking photos and video taping. I have enclosed a photo release. Please sign and have your child bring to class on Monday.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions, please contact me at the CARD Office, 895-4711.

Sincerely,

Sample letter to parents reminding them of the first day of camp



How the Adventure Began... excerpted from *FALL 2004 DWR NEWS/People*

At a meeting in March 2001, the State Water Project Recreation Coordinating Committee (SWPRCC) expressed concern about the number of drownings along the State Water Project (SWP). In an effort to reduce drownings, Aquatic Adventure Camps were conducted at four SWP lakes this past summer – Lake Oroville in Butte County, Lake del Valle in the East Bay, San Luis Reservoir near Los Banos, and Lake Perris in Riverside County.



Lake Del Valle

Recreation Coordinating Committee members include the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) staff who deal with recreational issues and personnel of the Department of Parks and Recreation responsible for recreational activities at SWP lakes and reservoirs.

“After the committee concurred that education was the key to saving lives of at-risk youth, I was happy to take the lead to investigate ways to best address this problem. I’ve always been concerned about drowning fatalities at SWP facilities,” said Dorothy Benjamin, Chief of the Public Affairs Office’s Water Education and Administration Branch and DWR’s Community Outreach Manager. “Valuable assistance was provided by SWPRCC members, who include Chief of Central District Karl Winkler, DWR’s Recreation Coordinating Committee Chairman Bud Thrapp, and Public Affairs Office’s Special Events Coordinator Ann Marie Alexander.”

The program began after Dorothy met with a lifeguard working with the Sacramento Metropolitan Aquatic Rescue Training (SMART) program at Folsom Lake. Randy Trefrey, the SMART’s founder, agreed to participate in a DWR pilot program that would introduce his young people to a different water environment.

The success of this pilot program led to the beginning of the Aquatic Adventure Program, a partnership of private, local and state agencies that premiered in 2002. Bud Thrapp met with representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation, Chico

Area Recreation and Park District (CARD) and Feather River Recreation and Park District (FRRPD). Dorothy served as lead and liaison for the partnerships developed for the four Aquatic Adventure Camps. On the local level, the CARD and the FRRPD worked with other community organizations and businesses to gather qualified staff and resources for the two-week event. The State Departments of Water Resources and Parks and Recreation provided staff, guidance and location assistance.

The two-week camp curriculum, developed by Ruthie Heuton of CARD, also included eight days of instruction in swimming, rescue and water safety techniques, water hazards, first aid, and CPR at Chico and Oroville pools. During the last two days, the classes moved to Lake Oroville, where the participants practiced their skills. At the lake, they also gained experience with different water craft, camped out overnight, and toured the lake along with Lake Oroville Visitors Center.

On another level, The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks, and Tourism – a consortium of government and private industry – joined the effort as a source of guidance and funding. On April 26, 2003, the program was awarded “Best Innovative Programming” by the California Association of Recreation and Park District.

“In July and August of 2004, Chico Area Recreation and Park District and the Feather River Recreation and Park District held their third camp,” said Nik Reikalas, head of CARD’s program.

“We most definitely feel it’s making a difference. Because of our great instructors, the kids are increasing their swimming skills, and they’re more likely to participate in junior guard programs or lifeguard classes.”

“DWR jump-started the program and now provides coordination, but each community tailors its program to local needs and specific water hazards in their areas,” said Dorothy, who along with other DWR staff is coordinating the preparation of an Aquatic Adventure Camp how-to manual and new camps at other SWP facilities.

The success of these Aquatic Adventure camps depends on partnerships developed among community agencies, private businesses, and local/state government agencies. Community groups such as the Red Cross provide instructors, private businesses donate money and pay for camping equipment, and local government agencies offer pools, while state government assists with facilities, funding and guidance.

“Our ultimate goal is to have camps in cities located along the SWP and for these communities to eventually take over the camps, as is already happening in the Chico/Oroville area,” said Dorothy. “While it’s too early to evaluate whether the camps have saved lives, we know by the evaluations received that the youths, parents, staff and partners involved feel the experience and benefits derived will pay off in the future.”



Aquatic Adventure Camp created by:

**Chico Area Recreation and Park District
Feather River Recreation and Park District
California Department of Water Resources**

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