Big Bear
Municipal Water District
*Lake Management*

# NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING

**DATE**: October 22, 2025

**LEAD AGENCY**: Big Bear Municipal Water District

**SUBJECT**: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report

**PROJECT**: Big Bear Lake Maintenance and Improvement Program

**REVIEW PERIOD**: October 23, 2025 to November 22, 2025

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify responsible and trustee agencies, interested organizations, and interested parties that the Big Bear Municipal Water District (District) as the Lead Agency is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Big Bear Lake Maintenance and Improvement Program (program). The program includes the implementation of projects to support public use of Big Bear Lake over an approximately 20-year period. The District routinely implements projects at Big Bear Lake to improve water quality, boating /navigation, and landowner/public access; to maintain existing recreation facilities; develop permitted marinas; and mitigate unsafe conditions. The District implements these projects as the need is identified or as requested by landowners. Due to the reoccurring nature of these projects, the District has developed this program to streamline implementation of future projects with similar characteristics at Big Bear Lake. Additional information about the program, specific projects, and a discussion of potential environmental impacts are included in **Attachment A** to this NOP. An Initial Study was not prepared.

**PROGRAM LOCATION**: Big Bear Lake is situated in the southwestern portion of San Bernardino County, approximately 100 miles northeast of the greater Los Angeles area and approximately 40 miles northeast of the City of San Bernardino (**Figure 1** in Attachment A). The program area consists of Big Bear Lake including the shoreline and tributaries where they discharge into Big Bear Lake, locations where construction activities would occur, and offsite sediment reuse locations (**Figure 2** in Attachment A).

Specific project sites within the program area have been identified while others would be determined in the future as needs are identified. The District has initially identified 12 project sites where activities would be implemented (Figure 2). As the need for additional activities are identified over the lifetime of the program, additional project sites would be identified within the program area or activities could be located again at one of the 12 project sites initially identified.

**PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS**: The District is soliciting comments from responsible and trustee agencies as well as interested parties as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. In accordance with CEQA, agencies are requested to review the program description provided in this NOP and provide comments on environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of the agency. The EIR will be used by the District when considering approval of the program as well as any related discretionary approvals. All comments to the NOP are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on **November 22, 2025**. Please send your comments to the mailing address or email address shown below. Include a return address or email address and a contact name for your agency or party with your comments.

Big Bear
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**CONTACT INFORMATION**:

Big Bear Municipal Water District
P.O. Box 2863
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315
Attn: Jared Cheek, General Manager
jcheek@bbmwd.net

**DOCUMENT AVAIALBILITY**: Copies of the NOP are available at the District Headquarters, and online at locations below.

- District Headquarters - 40524 Lakeview Drive, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315
- District Website - https://www.bbmwd.com/rfps

A printed or virtual copy of the NOP can be reviewed on any District business day between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Please contact Jared Cheek at (909) 866-5796 to arrange a date and time for review.

**SCOPING MEETING**: The District will hold a public scoping meeting to receive comments and suggestions about the issues to be included in the EIR. The scoping meeting will include a brief presentation, providing an overview of the program. After the presentation, public comments will be accepted either orally or in writing at the scoping meeting. Comment cards will be supplied for those who wish to submit comments in writing at the scoping meeting; written comments may also be submitted anytime during the 30-day NOP review period. The scoping meeting will be held as follows:

**Thursday, November 6, 2025, 5:00 P.M.**
Big Bear Municipal Water District
Board Room
40524 Lakeview Drive
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

# ATTACHMENT A

## Introduction

The Big Bear Municipal Water District (BBMWD or the District) is proposing the Big Bear Lake Maintenance and Improvement Program (program or proposed program) to cover implementation of projects to support public use of Big Bear Lake (or Lake) over an approximately 20-year period. The District has developed this program to streamline implementation of future projects with similar characteristics at the Lake.

## Program Location and Setting

Big Bear Lake is situated in the southwestern portion of San Bernardino County, approximately 100 miles northeast of the greater Los Angeles area and approximately 40 miles northeast of the City of San Bernardino, as shown in **Figure 1**. Big Bear Lake and offsite locations in the program area are described further below. This document refers to the following geographic areas.

- **Program Area:** The program area consists of Big Bear Lake including the shoreline and tributaries where they discharge into the Lake, locations where construction activities would occur, and offsite sediment reuse locations (**Figure 2**).
- **Project Site**: Refers generally to the area where project activities are implemented on an individual basis within the program area. Some specific project sites have been identified while others would be determined in the future as needs are identified. The District has initially identified 12 project sites where activities would be implemented, as shown on **Figure 2**. As the need for additional activities are identified over the lifetime of the program, additional project sites would be identified within the program area or activities could be located again at one of the 12 project sites initially identified.

### *Project Site Locations*

Project sites for the program have been identified at the following 12 locations at Big Bear Lake.

- **Grout Creek and Bay**. Along Grout Creek, just southeast of the community of Fawnskin and northwest of Captain John's Fawn Harbor & Marina.
- **Captain John's Fawn Harbor Marina**. South of the community of Fawnskin within Grout Bay.
- **Moon Camp**. Southeast of Grout Bay, just west of the Moon Camp Residential Area.
- **Lighthouse Marina**. East of the Solar Observatory.
- **Big Bear Shores**. East of the Lighthouse Marina and west of the Big Bear Shores Marina.
- **East Ramp**. Immediately south of the East Public Launch Ramp, extending west into the Lake.
- **West Ramp**. Existing parking area and Lake around the West Public Launch Ramp area.
- **East Eagle Point**. Within the Lake, just east of Eagle Point.
- **Mallard Lagoon**. Within Mallard Lagoon, surrounded by residences.
- **Holloway's Marina to Pleasure Point**. At Metcalf Bay, in between Holloway's Marina and Pleasure Point Marina.
- **Boulder Bay**. Both sides of the large boulder mass within Boulder Bay, just west of the community of Boulder Bay.
- **Swim Beach**. Immediately north of Meadow Park and west of Eagle Point.

### *Offsite Sediment Reuse Locations*

Five sediment reuse location options have been identified beyond the Big Bear Lake shoreline at offsite locations (Figure 2).

- **Bear Mountain**. 2.5 miles southwest of the Lake.
- **Snow Summit**. 1.25 miles south of the Lake.
- **Marina Point Development Area.** East of Fawnskin.
- **Headquarters-Adjacent Lot.** Parking lot located directly west of the BBMWD Headquarters.
- **Off-Season Lot.** 0.3 miles south of the Lake, along Rathbun Creek.

Additional sediment reuse locations may also be identified for future projects. Three additional locations, located further away from the program vicinity, would be used for spoils, trash, and debris disposal: the Big Bear Transfer Station located 4 miles to the northeast; the Heaps Peak Disposal Site, located 10 miles to the west; and the Lucerne Valley Transfer Station, located 18 miles north of the immediate program area. It is assumed additional locations for sediment reuse and materials disposal would be within 50 miles of Big Bear Lake.

## Program Background

BBMWD manages all activities on Big Bear Lake, which is approximately 7 miles long and an average of 1.5 miles wide. The Lake serves outdoor recreation activities, including fishing, boating, and water skiing as well as serving as habitat for various wildlife. Activities conducted by the District at the Lake include: operating and maintaining public boat launches; regulating the type, number, and layout of structures around the Lakeshore and within the water; issuing and enforcing conditions placed on Shorezone Alternation Permits; conducting annual harvesting and treatment operations of aquatic plants; conducting dredging to maintain navigation channels; improving water quality through sediment removal and operation of aerator; issuing and enforcing conditions placed on commercial Marina and Lake-Use Permits; removing invasive species through boat inspection processes; and setting (and enforcing) vessel sizing, designated swimming and fishing areas, and maritime navigation rules.

## Program Objectives

The overall purpose of the program is to implement projects at the Lake to facilitate continued and safe use of the Lake by the public, and maintain environmental resources supported by the Lake. Specifically, the program would improve water quality, navigation, landowner and public access, recreation, and mitigate unsafe conditions at the Lake.

# Program Description

## *Project Types*

Due to the similarity in activities across projects, project type categories are defined to generally describe activities that are planned to or could occur at multiple locations. The category descriptions below do not contain site-specific information. Projects would be implemented in different locations around the Lake and scheduled based off need and priority.

- **Sediment Removal.** Sediment removal covers removal of sediment (also referred to as dredging) from the Lake bottom, navigation channels, and shoreline in support of water quality objectives and maintaining navigation for public and private vessels to travel from boat slips at the marinas, launch ramps, and private docks.
- **Sediment Basin Construction**. Sediment basins are depressions constructed to collect sediment/small rock from the larger watershed before it enters Big Bear Lake, thereby preventing degradation of water quality and filling of the Lake bottom.
- **Marina Construction and Operations**. New marinas would be constructed to allow additional boats to dock and use the Lake. New marinas would include boat slips for access and use on the Lake, and may also include boat ramp construction or expansion, depending on if ramps are being implemented as part of the design. Marinas would also typically contain public restrooms, small offices, and commercial concessions such as food offerings, fishing, and/or boating supplies. For the purposes of this program, it is assumed that new marinas would include these amenities and spaces and would need to be connected to existing utilities serving the area.
- **Parking Area Construction or Expansion**. Parking areas would be constructed or expanded to support landowner and recreationalist use of the Lake. If parking areas are located near boat ramps or other public spaces, it is likely these areas would be closed to the public during construction.
- **Seawall Construction or Expansion**. Seawalls would be constructed or expanded to support protection of the shoreline and reduce sediment runoff into the Lake. If seawall construction is located near current lake access points, it is likely these areas would be closed to the public during construction.

**Figure 1. Regional Location Map**

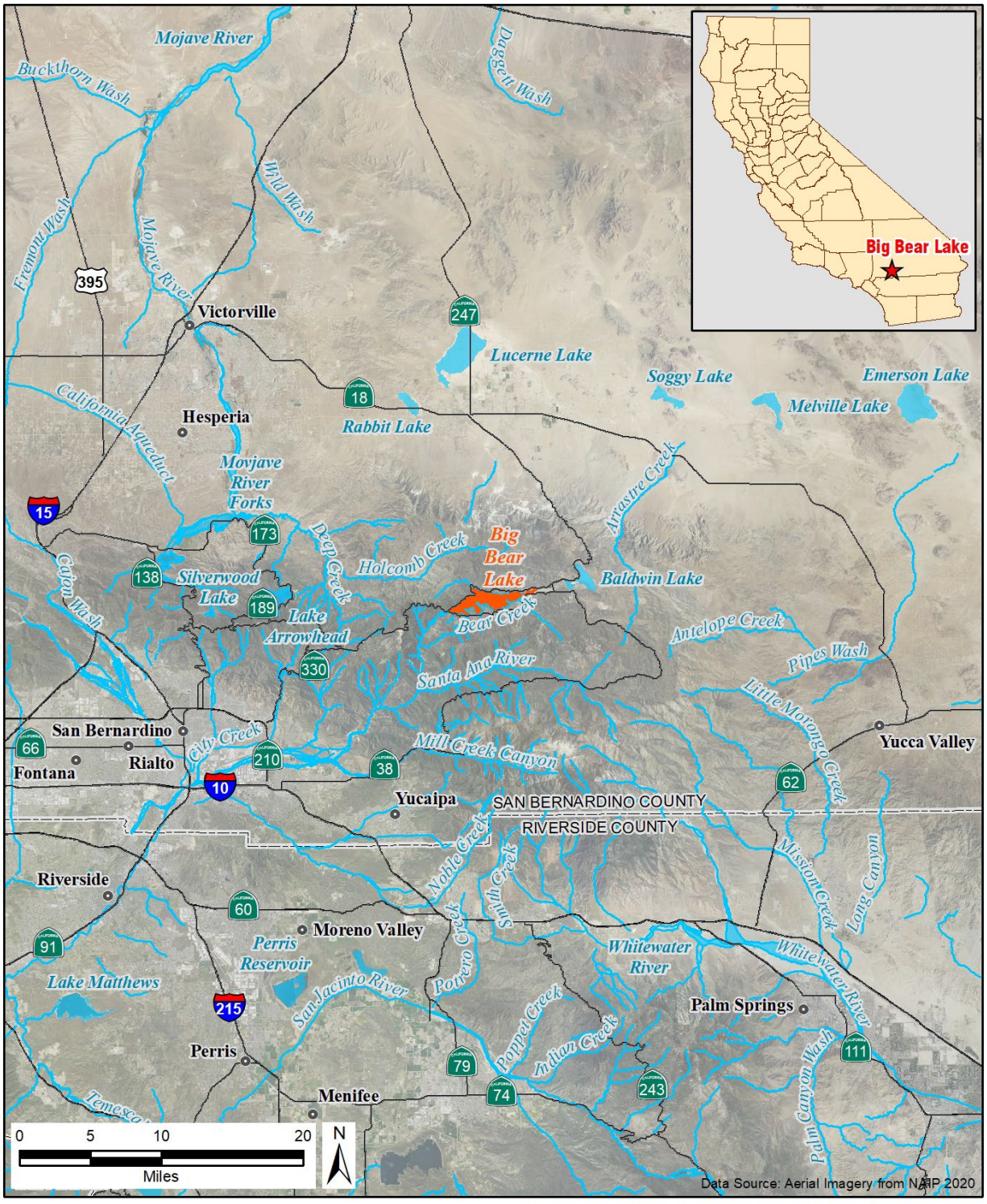


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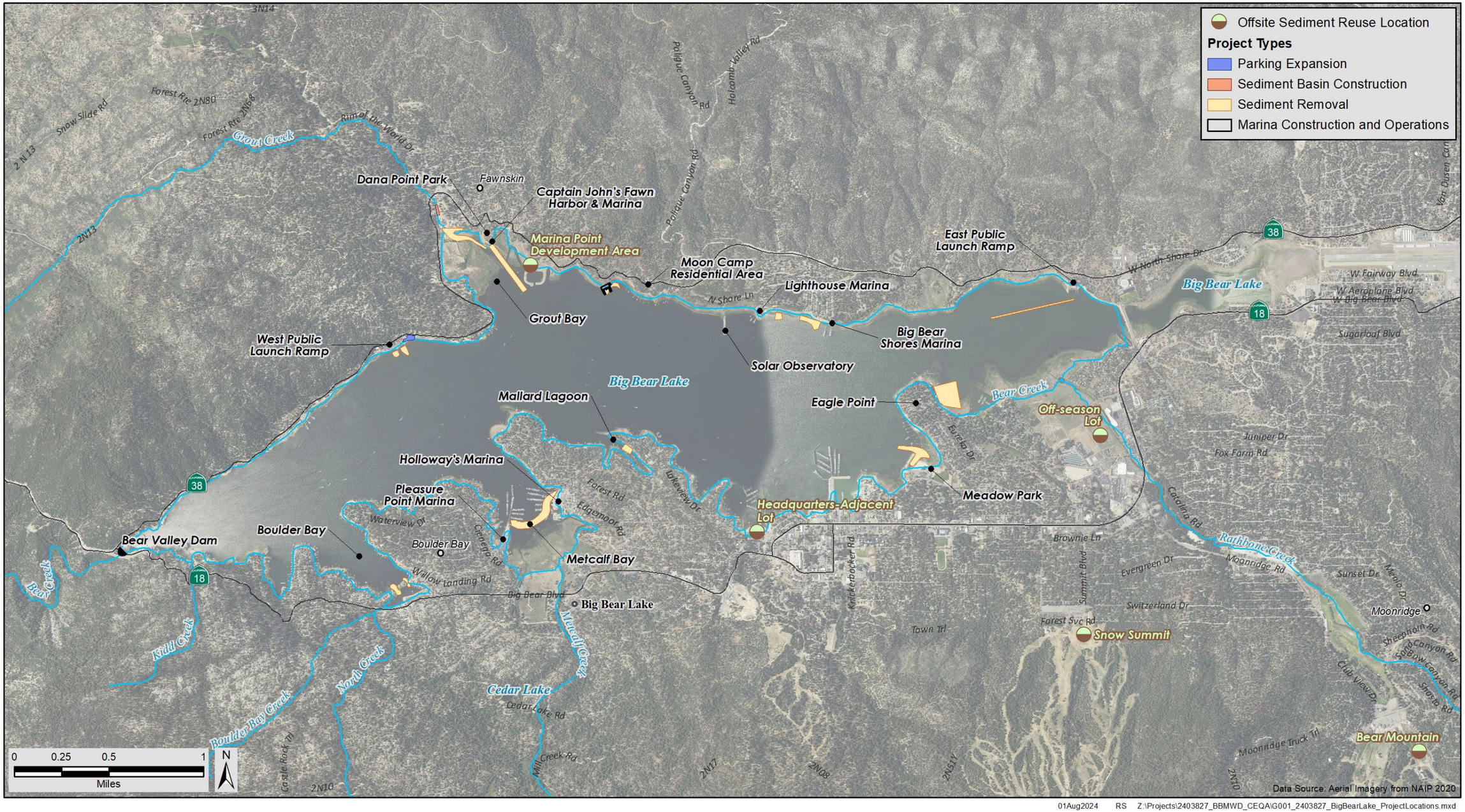
**Figure 2.** **Big Bear Lake and Project Locations**

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# Projects Currently Identified for the Project

The descriptions in **Table 1** focus on site-specific and project-level details for implementation of the associated project types described above at each of the 12 initial project site locations.

**Table 1. Projects Currently Identified for the Program**

| | Project Site | Project Type | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Grout Creek and Bay | Sediment Removal | Dredging from the outer west side to the outer east side of Grout Bay; sediment removal within Sediment Basin area |
| | | Sediment Basin Construction | Construct in-line earthen sediment basin to collect mainly decomposed granite from Grout Creek watershed |
| 2 | Captain John's Fawn Harbor Marina | Sediment Removal | Reestablish channel to Fawn Harbor marina to existing channels with dredging |
| 3 | Moon Camp | Marina Construction and Operations | Construction of a new marina and long-term operations |
| | | Sediment Removal | Dredging and contouring for marina construction |
| 4 | Lighthouse Marina | Sediment Removal | Mild dredging to manage accumulation of sedimentation near the shoreline |
| 5 | Big Bear Shores | Sediment Removal | Mild dredging to manage accumulation of sedimentation near the shoreline |
| 6 | East Ramp | Sediment Removal | Extensive hydraulic dredging to deepen the channel for boats heading out west from BBMWD's facility |
| 7 | West Ramp | Parking Construction or Expansion | Expansion of a parking lot along the shoreline to the east of existing ramp including installing fill |
| | | Sediment Removal | Dredging around the existing boat ramp |
| 8 | East Eagle Point | Sediment Removal | Dredging to deepen and contour area for landowner dock use |
| 9 | Mallard Lagoon | Sediment Removal | Excavation/dredging removal of dirt hump relic from previous dredging activities to prevent swallow pools from forming |
| 10 | Holloway's Marina to Pleasure Point | Sediment Removal | Dredging at marina to maintain use |
| 11 | Boulder Bay | Sediment Removal | Dredging to deepen channel around internal island structure to maintain navigation access |
| 12 | Swim Beach | Sediment Removal | Dredging to deepen beach to allow access under low Lake conditions |

# Potential Environmental Impacts

The EIR will assess and disclose the reasonably foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that could result from the construction and operation and maintenance (O&M) of the program. Potential impacts to resources listed in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines are summarized below. The EIR will identify mitigation measures if necessary to avoid, minimize, and offset potentially significant impacts of the program. The EIR will also evaluate alternatives to the program that would avoid, minimize, and offset significant impacts of the program while attempting to meet the objectives of the program.

## *Aesthetics*

The program is within the Mountain Region (region) of the County of San Bernardino (county), the City of Big Bear Lake (city), Bear Valley Community (community), and Village Specific Plan (specific plan area). Big Bear Lake and adjacent areas within the San Bernardino Mountains are considered scenic vistas and resources that contribute to the aesthetic value within the region. State Route 18 traverses through the program area along the Lake and is designated as a County Scenic Route and Eligible State Scenic Highway, and State Route 38, located approximately 3.2 miles west of the program area, is designated as a County Scneic Route and State Scenic Highway. Construction activities associated with various project types would alter views of the program area from surrounding public vantage points, including recreational uses within and around the Lake. O&M of the program is not expected to impact scenic vistas, resources, views along scenic highways. The EIR will identify the visible changes to scenic resources, scenic vistas, and visual character due to program implementation within the viewshed. Further, the potential impact to views along State Scenic Highways and potential increases in light and glare from program implementation will be evaluated.

## *Agriculture and Forestry Resources*

The program area is not mapped by the California Department of Conservation for important farmland and does not contain any current land uses or zoning for agricultural land and does not contain any active Williamson Act Contracts. The program area is within and adjacent to the Lake within the San Bernardino Mountains. Various Unities States Forest Service Lands are within the vicinity of the program area, and some identified offsite sediment reuse locations would be within areas zoned as Bear Valley/Resource Conservation, which contain forestry resources. The EIR will analyze the potential impacts of program implementation on forestry resources, as well as conflicts with zoning designations for such land uses.

## *Air Quality*

The program area is within the South Coast Air Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the South coast Air Quality Management District. Construction activities associated with the program would generate temporary emissions of air pollutants from construction equipment exhaust, earth movement and dredging, construction workers' commutes, and material hauling. O&M activities associated with the program could generate air pollutants from truck deliveries and maintenance workers' commutes. The EIR will evaluate the generation of air pollutants during construction and O&M activities associated with program implementation. Conflicts or obstructions with the implementation of the South Coast Air

Quality Management District Air Quality Plan will be discussed. Furthermore, the exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations or other emissions such as odors will be analyzed.

## *Biological Resources*

Sensitive biological resources within the program area could be significantly affected by construction and O&M activities associated with the program. The EIR will evaluate the potential for biological resources to be impacted by program implementation. The EIR will include an analysis of impacts on special-status species and their habitats, sensitive communities and aquatic resources, and fish and wildlife movement. In addition, program compliance with local plans and ordinances and adopted habitat conservation plans will be assessed. Such analysis will incorporate updated spatial data from the California Natural Diversity Database and various surveys conducted at the known project sites for rare plants, natural communities, and special-status species, and will address recent changes to the status of Federal- and State-listed species.

## *Cultural Resources*

Cultural resources within the program area could be significantly affected by construction and O&M activities associated with the program. The EIR will evaluate the potential for historical and archaeological resources to be impacted by program implementation. Additionally, the EIR will evaluate potential impacts to human remains within the project area. Such analysis will incorporate information from a records search conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center, a request of the Native American Heritage Commission for a search of their Sacred Lands File, archaeological and built environment pedestrian surveys at the known project sites, and a geoarchaeological desktop study of the program area.

## *Energy*

The program could require significant amounts of energy during construction and O&M of projects. The EIR will evaluate energy demand from construction equipment, haul trucks, vendor trucks, and construction workers, and also quantify the program's anticipated operational energy needs, including direct consumption of electricity to operate a new marina, and fuel needed for O&M.

## *Geology and Soils*

The program is located in a seismically active region. Active or potentially active faults that are within 10 miles of the program area include the North Frontal Thrust System located 6.5 miles to the north, the San Gorgonio Mountain Fault located 6.8 miles to the south, the Waterman Canyon Fault Zone located 8.8 miles to the southwest, and the Santa Ana Fault Zone located 9.5 miles to the south. Construction and O&M of the program could be subject to potential seismic hazards including surface fault rupture, strong seismic shaking, soil liquefaction, and geologic hazards such as subsidence, soil erosion, ground collapse, and expansive soil. The EIR will evaluate the potential seismic and geologic hazards that could affect the program area. Built structures and facilities such as the proposed marina would be designed to safely accommodate these potential hazards and the structures would meet and exceed the latest State and Federal safety standards.

## *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

In addition to air emissions, the program would result in the emissions of greenhouse gases from construction and O&M activities. Construction activities could generate temporary greenhouse gas emissions from equipment exhaust, construction workers' commutes, and material hauling. O&M could generate emissions from employee commuting, truck deliveries, and stationary equipment. The EIR will evaluate the contribution of construction and O&M greenhouse gas emissions to global climate change. The EIR will evaluate the program's consistency with State and local regulatory requirements and regulations.

## *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

A database search of hazardous materials sites using the online Department of Toxic Substances Control's EnviroStor and State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker databases showed that the known project sites and offsite sediment reuse areas are not located on a hazardous materials site, but there are various sites under evaluation or eligible for closing within the program vicinity. Construction activities associated with the program could result in the release of hazardous materials. Additionally, O&M activities could result in use, storage and/or transport of potentially hazardous materials to and from the project sites. The program would be designed to safely store potentially hazardous materials. The EIR will assess the potential for storing and transporting hazardous materials associated with the O&M of the program, and the upset/accident condition involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment, including the emission of hazards within 0.25-mile of a school. Further, the program may result in increased truck load intensities that could increase traffic and physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan within local roadways around the Lake. The EIR will also evaluate the potential for interference with an adopted emergency response plan to occur and wildland fire threats due to program implementation.

## *Hydrology and Water Quality*

Implementation of the program may change local drainage patterns at the project sites, which could impact water quality, surface runoff, and groundwater resources. The EIR will describe relevant Federal, State and local regulations and agencies, including provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act and the permitting and regulatory authority of the Regional Water Quality Control Board and State Water Resources Control Board. Additionally, the EIR will evaluate other potential impacts to water quality, including groundwater resources, due to program implementation. Furthermore, the EIR will identify seiche and dam inundation hazard zones in the program area, as well as stormwater quality protection measures required during construction and O&M activities.

## *Land Use and Planning*

The program area is managed by various land use plans and programs including the County General Plan, the Bear Valley Communities Action Guide, the City General Plan, the Bear Valley Community Plan Area, and the Village Specific Plan which all contain various land use designation and zones. The EIR will evaluate the program's potential to conflict with all applicable plan, policies, and regulations as well as restrictions imposed on project site access on land that is privately owned or managed by entities other than the District.

## *Mineral Resources*

The known project sites and offsite sediment reuse locations are not identified as known mineral resource areas or active mineral extraction uses, however, the EIR will include an evaluation of the program to result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource.

## *Noise*

Implementation of the program would require construction and O&M activities of projects that would generate noise and vibration. Construction activities could be a significant source of temporary noise and vibration from trucking operations and the use of heavy construction equipment. During the project's O&M activities, fixed sources of noise could be established. The EIR will describe the local noise policies and ordinances; and quantify potential noise and vibration levels associated with construction and O&M of the program for comparison to standards and thresholds established in local noise policies and ordinances.

## *Population and Housing*

The program does not include the construction of new housing. As such, the program would not directly induce population growth. The program would implement various projects such as sediment removal within the Lake to improve navigation, emergency, and recreational access. It is not anticipated that the program would result in construction of new housing or increase the local population; the workforce for construction of the program is anticipated to be derived from the existing labor pool in San Bernardino County, and O&M of the program is not expected to create new long-term employment opportunities. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the program to induce population growth directly or indirectly or require the need for housing in the area.

## *Public Services*

The program would implement various project types within and around the Lake that are unlikely to affect demand for other public services or to require other new or expanded public facilities. The EIR will assess the potential for the program to affect police and fire protection services, schools, and parks.

## *Recreation*

There are numerous recreational resources within the program area including the Lake, marinas, parks, campsites, hiking trails, and ski lifts. The EIR will analyze potential impacts to existing local recreational resources and evaluate potential recreational opportunities that may be compatible with the program and implemented as a component of the program.

## *Transportation*

Construction of the program could affect traffic on local roadways as a result of vehicle trips associated with hauling of material and equipment, increased demand for parking to serve construction workers, and increase in traffic hazards caused by construction activities. In addition, operation of the program could introduce vehicle trips to the program area for O&M activities. The EIR will evaluate the potential

impact to traffic and circulation due to construction-related vehicle trips and O&M vehicle trips on local and regional roadways.

## *Tribal Cultural Resources*

The District is conducting Assembly Bill 52 tribal consultation with Tribes who have requested to be informed of activities in the program area. There is a potential for the program to affect tribal cultural resources during ground disturbing activities associated with construction of the projects. The EIR will evaluate potential impacts to tribal cultural resources and incorporate the results of Assembly Bill 52 consultation(s) into the analysis.

## *Utilities and Service Systems*

The EIR will evaluate whether construction and O&M of the program could result in impacts to existing public utilities, such as water or sewage treatment, storm water drainage, and solid waste disposal. The program would not require additional utilities beyond those identified in the program description. The program could result in increases of impervious surfaces associated with new marinas or expanded parking lots, which could result in increases in storm water runoff, and the existing storm drains. Construction and O&M activities associated with the program could increase construction waste that could be required to be placed in a landfill, subject to solid waste regulations.

The EIR will evaluate whether construction and O&M of the program could result in impacts to existing public utilities, such as water or sewage treatment, storm water drainage, and solid waste disposal.

## *Wildfire*

The program area is located within both State/Federal Responsibility and Local Responsibility Areas, containing moderate, high, and very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The program area includes forested areas and slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains that surround the Lake and are susceptible to prevailing winds. During construction, equipment and on-site diesel fuel could pose a risk to wildfire with possible ignition sources such as internal combustion engines, gasoline-powered tools, and equipment that could produce a spark, fire, or flame. The use of spark-producing construction machinery within fire risk areas such as the program area could expose temporary project workers and contractors to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. Additional water available for firefighting would be available as a result of the proximity to the Lake. The EIR will evaluate potential impacts of wildfires due to implementation of program.