

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

Engineering and Operations Committee

April 15, 2026



Consideration to Temporarily Suspend Fees at the Sweetwater Reservoir Fishing Program Through the End of 2026 and Direct Staff to Provide Cashless Fee Collection System Options

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Governing Board temporarily suspend fees at the Sweetwater Reservoir fishing program through the end of 2026 and direct staff to provide cashless fee collection system options for consideration at a future meeting.

OVERVIEW

The Sweetwater Reservoir Fishing Program has historically operated as a fee-based recreation program, with revenues collected through an on-site Iron Ranger fee box. On March 14, 2026, staff discovered that the Iron Ranger fee collection box had been forcibly breached. The unit was rendered unusable and requires full replacement to reestablish secure fee collection. Staff obtained the following cost estimate for an in-kind replacement compatible with the existing pedestal:

Materials: \$400

In-house labor: \$929.40

Total Estimated Cost: \$1,329.40

Staff recommends evaluating cashless fee-collection methods for the fishing program and will return to the Board at a future meeting with options for its consideration and direction. It is also recommended for the Board to waive fishing fees through the end of Calendar Year 2026. Currently, the Authority charges \$5 per day on Fridays and Mondays with the program being free on Saturdays and Sundays. This review will include potential approaches such as offering monthly and annual passes (available both in person at the administration office and electronically through the Authority's website) and implementing credit-card payment capability at the fishing location through a QR-code system.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recent Fishing Program fee proceeds collected are as follows:

Fiscal Year	Proceeds
2025-26 year-to-date	\$11,865.50
2024-25	\$17,077.61

NEXT STEPS

1. Temporarily suspend fees at the Sweetwater Reservoir fishing program through the end of 2026 and direct staff to provide cashless fee collection system options for consideration at a future meeting.

2. Direct staff to replace the vandalized Iron Ranger collection box and resume fee collection upon installation.
3. Other direction as determined by the Governing Board.

Staff Contact:

Carlos Quintero, General Manager

Xochitl Aranda, Director of Engineering and Operations

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Attachment

Staff Presentation

Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Goal No. 4 Customer Service, Citizen Engagement and Community Relations (CS) - Provide high-quality customer service based on customer feedback and serve the community through education, outreach, and partnerships.

- Objective CS7: Support limited recreational activities around Sweetwater Authority reservoir such as fishing and trails, that are compatible with Authority operations, protect water quality, and minimize cost impacts to ratepayers, and in compliance with Authority and regulatory policies.

Past Board Actions

June 17, 2024	The Governing Board adopted Addendum No. 2 to the Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Sweetwater Reservoir Recreation Master Plan SCH No. 1985101602, approving the Shared Maintenance Road and Trail Project.
June 23, 2021	The Governing Board adopted Addendum No. 1 to the Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Sweetwater Reservoir Recreation Master Plan SCH No. 1985101602, approving an extra day of operations for the Fishing Program.
May 13, 1987	The Governing Board certified and adopted the Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Sweetwater Reservoir Recreation Master Plan SCH No. 1985101602.