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Boaters protest on Strip

Possible ramp closures at lake prompt parade

By **Marvin Clemons**

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A parade of boats headed north on the Strip as boating enthusiasts protested the possible closure of boating ramps at Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Trucks pulling trailers and pleasure boats formed up west of the Strip on Dean Martin Drive about 3:30 p.m. Friday and traveled east on Tropicana Avenue before turning north on the Strip.

"Just of the people I know, we will have 25 to 30 trailers with boats in one lane on the Strip starting close to 4 p.m.," organizer Vance Randall said. "There could be more. We will stay in one lane and drive north on the Strip from Tropicana as far as boat owners want to go."

The goal was to raise awareness of the National Park Service's recent effort to evaluate and possibly close boat ramps at Lake Mead, Randall said.

A public hearing was held at Boulder City on Dec. 7 to answer questions about the effort to study the boat ramp situation at the nation's largest reservoir. One of three options the park service listed is to not maintain and eventually close and remove boat ramps.

"It really is such a small budget issue," Randall said. "Back in 2019, the park service agreed to a five-year plan to maintain the ramps, and here it's not five years and they are talking about closing them."



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A parade of boats takes place Friday on the Strip as enthusiasts protest the possible closure of boating ramps at Lake Mead National Recreation Area.



A coalition of businesses has been formed to raise awareness of the issue.

"The park service and the Bureau of Reclamation are taking public comment online about boating on Lake Mead, and people need to speak up and give their opinions," said Bruce Nelson, owner of Lake Mead Marina. "Several business-

es are forming a coalition to help combat" the possible ramp closures.

The Bureau of Reclamation is taking comments until Dec. 20, and the park service is taking them until Dec. 23, Nelson said.

Shortly before the boat parade began, the deputy secretary of the Department of Interior called the 23-year megadrought one of the biggest crisis facing the United States and Mexico as he spoke on the concluding day of the Colorado River Water Users Association meeting in Las Vegas.

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