

# San Diego Windsurfing Site Guide



**Site Name:** Lake Hodges

**Location:** Escondido, northeast of San Diego, on the west side of Interstate 15

**Skill Level Rating:** Beginner and up

**Phone Information:**

Lake Hodges Aquatics Center: 760-735-8088  
WindTalker: 858-756-8221

**Typical Sailing Conditions:** The lake is typically open from April through October depending on wind and water levels.

*Wind:* 12-18 knots from the W or WNW, typically starting in the late morning and tapering off late afternoon.

*Water:* Fresh water, high 70s in summer, high 60s in winter. Water quality is generally quite good.

*Boards:* Giant slalom, 120-140l volume, 9'0" to 9'10" length.

*Sails:* 5.5 to 9.5+

**Water Conditions:** There are also some not so great things about this site too (as with all of them). The best windsurfing on the lake during the normal north-westerly winds is on the west side of the lake near the dam. The reach across the lake in that area is relatively narrow (300-400 meters), making it a great place to practice your jibes, but don't count on hooking in with your harness for miles and miles. This also makes for some congested sailing on the warm, windy summer weekends. Be prepared to use your rules of the road.

This is a 5mph boating area, so there isn't much interference by powerboats.

**Wind Notes:** Normally driven by the temperature gradient between the beach area and the inland deserts. If you watch this single variable, you can invariably predict the wind strength at this lake. Exceptions include Santa Anas and southerlies. Santa Anas crank from the east and can be fun sailing, but Lake Hodges doesn't typically have a good

exposure to these winds. Southerlies are a waste of time since they are blocked by a large hill by the lake.

**Rigging and Launching Notes:** The rigging area is flat (if you can get a space by your vehicle) but many people use tarps since there are lots of little sticks and pointy objects waiting to poke a hole through your new sail. Also, booties are highly recommended due to the many sharp rocks near the water's edge.

**Other Notes:** Lake Hodges is one of the best flat-water sailing sites in the San Diego area. It's also a beautiful, uncrowded area so if the wind's not cooperating, excellent mountainbiking, kayaking and hiking are readily available. Don't forget to grab some good Mexican eats at Hernandez Hideaway on your way out!

**Parking and Fees:** Lake usage fee is \$5 per user per day. It's very cheap when you realize how much work they've put into making it accessible to all vehicles, maintain a decent rigging area and provide on-the-water Ranger help when you need it.

Parking is free, and generally available. The best spots close to the lake go early on nice weekends, but you can almost always find a spot within a short distance of the rigging area.

**Directions to Site:** The road in is not paved but you don't need a 4-wheel drive vehicle to get in. Pedestrians and cyclists regularly use this narrow road with blind corners, so please obey the 15mph speed limit.

From the West: (Encinitas area): Take Interstate 5 to the Via de la Valle exit and go east until you get to the Del Dios Highway. Take a right and continue until you pass the Lake Hodges dam. From the Del Dios Highway, go right on Rancho Rd and follow the signs on your right to the Lake Hodges Aquatics Center

From the East (Escondido area): Take Interstate 15 to the Via Rancho Parkway exit. Head west until you come to the Del Dios Highway. Turn left and continue down to Rancho Rd. Go left on Rancho Rd and look for the signs to Lake Hodges Aquatics Center on your right.