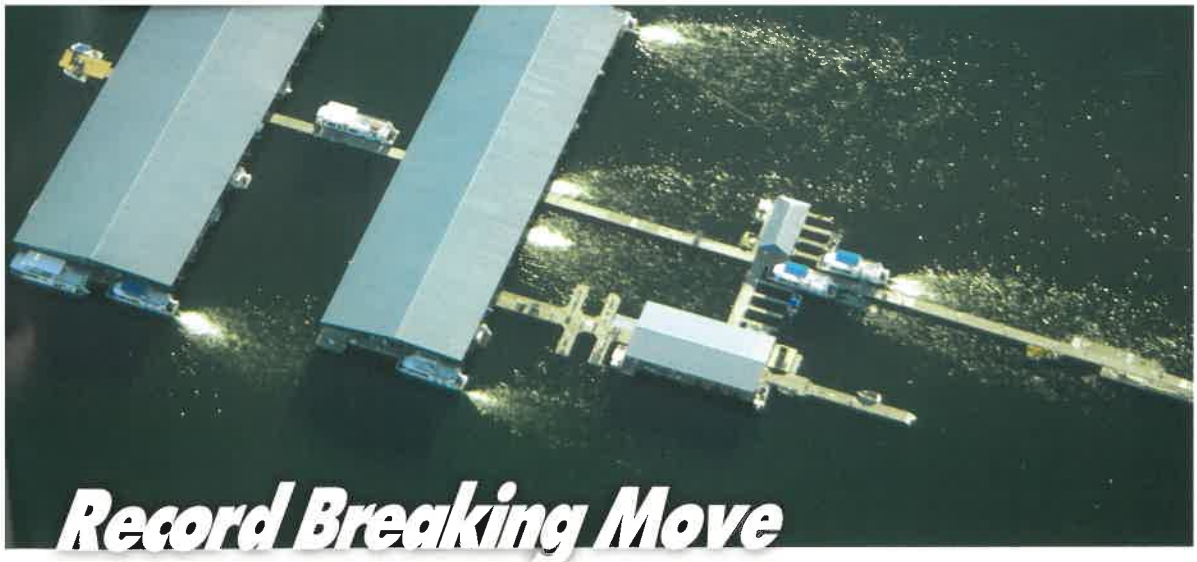

Record Breaking Move

Clean, fuel-efficient Evinrude E-TEC engines provide power to move nearly 3,000 tons of marina and boats across a pristine lake

What do you do if you're a marina owner and the lake level drops dangerously low? If you are Forever Resorts in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Nevada, you split the marina in two and move it to new locations. And you rely on clean, fuel-efficient Evinrude E-TEC engines to provide the dependability for a long, slow trek down the environmentally sensitive lake.

Staying put was not an option, according to spokesperson Darla Cook. Declining water levels put a stress on the understructure. "The marina had to be moved, or we would lose it," she says.

Among the many logistical factors to consider in this type of move is the effect boat engines have on the lake. Rising up behind the Hoover Dam, Lake Mead is an important source of water and hydroelectric power for Nevada, Arizona, and California. (So important, in fact, that the waterway is the subject of constant study and monitoring.)

It was this concern for protecting water quality that convinced Forever Resorts to choose Evinrude E-TEC engines for all its houseboats, says Bruce Rowe, Director of Marine Services. "They're the cleanest engines out there," he says.

Forever Resorts specializes in building and renting luxurious houseboats at its marine operations in national parks and other vacation destinations throughout the U.S. At the time, Forever Resorts had marinas at Overton Beach on the north end, Callville Bay in the southwest section, and Temple Bar in the southeast corner.

In a task unlike anything attempted before, the marina's two docks at Overton Beach found new homes in Callville Bay and Temple Bar. Twenty-two of their houseboats, each sporting twin 150 hp Evinrude E-TEC engines, were used to move the sections forward. Twelve smaller boats provided lateral motion and other support functions. In addition, 50 Forever Resorts crewmembers participated in the operation.

They planned to begin on January 31, but the National Weather Service, which worked closely with the resort during this process, advised them to wait. Winds were calm by Feb. 2, so at 4:00 p.m. the journey began.

The south structure, measuring 530 feet by 800 feet, pulled away first. It was followed moments later by the north structure, measuring 520 feet by 700 feet. The structures themselves weighed over 2.8 million pounds, Cook says. Factor in the 125 boats still in their slips, and the total weight being pulled was nearly 6 million pounds.

The move took two nights, non stop, at roughly one mile per hour. The trickiest time came for the dock heading toward Callville Bay. On a moonlit Saturday night aided by lights provided by the park rangers, the dock slipped through The Narrows. This aptly named passage provided a mere 18 inches of clearance from the canyon walls, Cook says. It took 7-1/2 hours to travel that two-mile section of Lake Mead.

The Callville Bay portion arrived at its destination, 30 miles away, around noon on Feb 4, Cook says. The second dock landed at Temple Bar around midnight on Feb 4 after traveling 41 miles.

"The engines ran flawlessly the entire move," Rowe says. Most ran at 2,000 to 3,000 rpm, some upwards of 4,000 rpm. Though the engines ran continuously, "there were absolutely no failures whatsoever," he says. "We used only one-half of the fuel we brought along."

Cook is equally pleased with the Evinrude E-TEC's fuel economy. "They're the most fuel-efficient and easiest for our clients to operate," she says.

Calling the move a "once in a lifetime kind of thing," Cook says she hopes they don't have to do that again. But if they do, they know they can count on Evinrude E-TEC engines.

FOREVER RESORTS