



April 11, 2015

Mr. Jeffery Parks  
SWRCB, Water Quality Certification Program  
via Email: jeff.parks@waterboards.ca.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Pinecrest Lake Level Modification Project, Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration dated March 2015.

Friends of Pinecrest, (FOP), has reviewed the document along with pertinent sections of the 2011 Pinecrest Lake Level Study. FOP submits these comments for the Water Board's consideration. We understand that exceptions to any decision set may need to be waived periodically on conditions due to drought and climate change factors. In that case, we ask the Water Board to provide information as early as possible in the year if an exception is to be considered.

For further information or clarification on any aspect of FOP's recommendations, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*/s/ electronic signature of Allen Green*  
Chair, Friends of Pinecrest

### **Recommendations**

Friends of Pinecrest recommends the State Water Board approve the following lake levels for Pinecrest Lake, as minimum levels on or before Labor Day:

- 5608 feet in wet water years;
- 5606 feet in normal-wet water years;
- 5605 feet in normal-dry years as the lowest minimum level;
- 5604 feet allowed as an exception to 5605 feet in dry and critically dry years.

### **Rationale for the recommendations:**

**Safety impacts** were not studied or considered as a part of the Environmental Impact Statement

for the Hydro Project FERC No. 2130, nor were safety factors evaluated in the Lake Level Study. Safety issues of concern to FOP include the following:

The Tuolumne County Fireboat, docked at Pinecrest Lake, is inaccessible below 5604 feet. Additionally, many of the docks along the shoreline become unusable at or around this level. North Shore and South Shore cabins are not accessible by auto and rely on the Fireboat and Association boat for servicing the needs of these dwellings. Therefore, 5604 feet should be maintained as the lowest approved level, as an exception to 5605 feet, prior to Labor Day. Below 5604 feet, serious safety and public health risks of the following natures have occurred in the past and are presumed to occur in the future:

- 1.a. Greater exposed shoreline and inability to access docks poses safety and health risks when emergency access is required for fire, search and rescue, accidents, and medical calls.
- 1.b. Greater exposed shoreline and inability to access docks presents service district difficulties for garbage collection and routine maintenance of things like water and sewer lines.
- 1.c. Access to the Forest Service courtesy dock that services the Sunrise Point picnic and restroom facilities will be compromised, posing the likelihood of reduced maintenance, cleaning, and official oversight and presence at this location.
2. Submerged rocks in various portions of the upper and lower lake as well as the shoreline create boating hazards below 5605 feet.
3. As the lake level recedes, surface availability is reduced and lake users are more concentrated, thereby increasing the potential for accidents.

**Other considerations:**

4. 5605 feet enables all Marina dock fingers and gas dock to remain at a depth that will allow safe draft clearance of watercraft.
5. According to the 2011 Lake Level Study and the Mitigated Negative Declaration, *“Usable beach is reduced at or below 5605 feet, and the beach area substrates become substantially impaired”*.

**Additional items:**

- A. Regardless of lake level, adjustable buoys should be installed in the public swimming area.
- B. TUD should work with PG&E to ensure that the maximum possible storage carryover is kept in Lyons Reservoir for as long as possible whenever fall to early winter conditions indicate the possibility of a dry water year.