



June 26, 2014

California Department of Water Resources  
c/o Chris Erickson  
3374 East Shields Ave.  
Fresno, California 93726

Email: Christine.Erickson@water.ca.gov

**RE: Perris Dam Seismic Remediation Project and Impacts to Recreational Climbing – Follow Up**

Dear Chris,

Thank you very much for joining Michael McKay, Southern California Mountaineering Association (SCMA) representative Steven Sauter and Access Fund regional coordinator Jim Pinter-Lucke for a site visit on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to the Lake Perris Dam and the Big Rock recreational climbing resource. You had mentioned during our phone call on June 4, 2014 that you plan to respond to our concerns, regarding access to Big Rock for recreational climbing during the Perris Dam remediation project, after you completed the site visit with stakeholders and representatives of the climbing community. We would appreciate your written response to the aforementioned comment letter as well as the recommendations, concerns and requests brought forth by climbing representatives during the site visit.

**Big Rock Climbing Resources**

The Big Rock climbing area has a long history as a unique climbing resource for the southern California area since the late 1950's. It has been used for training and teaching rock climbing skills by the Sierra Club, SCMA, REI, Scout groups, the Riverside Rescue Team and many others for the last 50+ years. The rock quality is very good, and with the routes facing northwest it gets lots of afternoon sun, offers wintertime climbing and is a great place for beginners and novices.

Specifically, we request a confirmation that Big Rock climbing resources (cliff, boulders and staging area) will not be damaged by the construction project and that the proposed haul truck / drill rig road will be shifted to the north (see attached figure) in order to prevent impacts to the historic climbing resource and to allow for access during the Perris Dam project. In addition, we request that DWR considers an alternate temporary access road on the west side of the blasting area hill (see figure). This alternative would allow the drill rig to get to the top of the blasting area hill (for core drilling) without impacting the Big Rock climbing resource.

**Safety**

Your concern about safety issues resonates with the Access Fund and the climbing community. Historically, climbers have been compliant with access restrictions to the quarry at Lake Perris State Recreation Area and are highly attentive to safety concerns given the activity we participate in. We believe that the climbing community and DWR can collaborate to find a way to allow recreational climbing access to Big Rock while maintaining the safest possible work site for the Perris Dam project.

The attached figure displays a safe way for climbers to access Big Rock without interacting with construction activities. It also displays where safety barriers could be used to keep construction activities contained (to limit environmental damage) and keep climbers out of areas with safety concerns. Barriers, coupled with well-developed signage, have proven to be effective methods for communicating restrictions to the climbing community. Just as the boating community will be trusted to comply with posted signage on Lake Perris, climbers too should be allowed to recreate as long as safety concerns are properly addressed.

### **The Access Fund and Southern California Mountaineering Association**

The Access Fund is the national advocacy organization that keeps U.S. climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. Founded in 1991, the Access Fund supports and represents over 2.3 million climbers nationwide. Six core programs support the mission on national and local levels: Climbing Management Policy, Local Support & Mobilization, Stewardship & Conservation, Land Acquisition & Protection, Risk Management & Landowner Support, and Education. California is our largest member state. The Access Fund has a long history of participation in California State management initiatives, and we welcome this additional opportunity to participate in the development of the Perris Dam Seismic Remediation Project. To learn more, visit [www.accessfund.org](http://www.accessfund.org).

The SCMA unites skilled climbers throughout the region to provide safe climbing partners and organized trips year round. The SCMA currently has 230 members and was founded in 1986, evolving from the rock climbing section of the Sierra Club since 1930's – making it one of the oldest climbing clubs in the nation. To learn more, visit [www.rockclimbing.org](http://www.rockclimbing.org).

\*

\*

\*

Rock climbing at Big Rock has had a very long history in the state recreation area and many local and regional climbers have a strong interest in the protection of climbing opportunities at Big Rock. We believe that DWR can 1) protect the climbing resources from any damage associated with the construction project, and 2) allow for recreational climbing access to Big Rock.

As per your commitment, we really appreciate your response to this important matter to the community. Please let me know if you have any questions or request further information from the Access Fund regarding signage, risk management or other ways we may assist DWR in protecting Big Rock climbing resources and access.

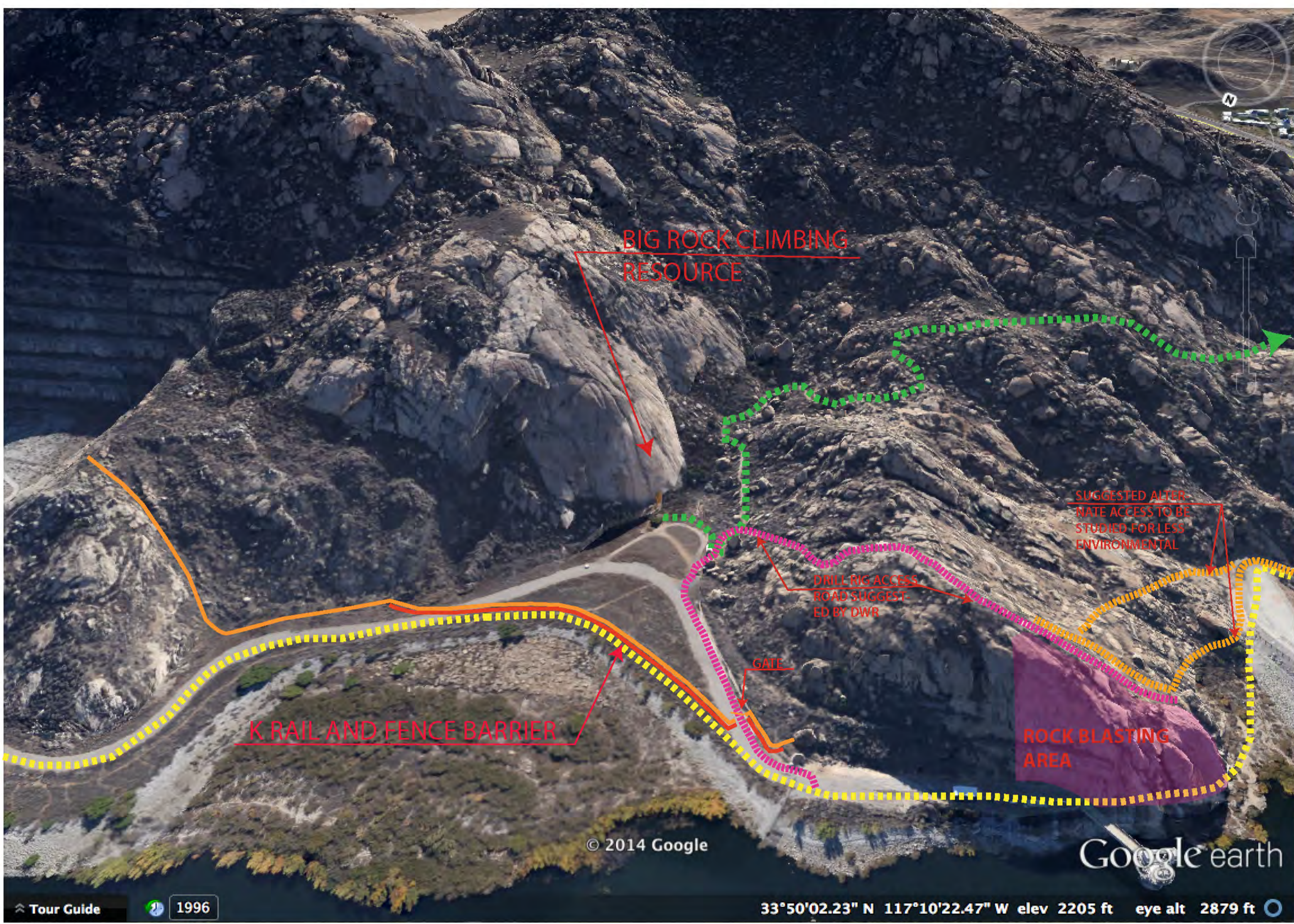
Sincerely,



Erik Murdock  
Policy Director  
The Access Fund

Cc: Steven Sauter, Southern California Mountaineers Association  
Jim Pinter-Lucke, Access Fund regional coordinator  
Michael Mckay

**DETAILED VIEW SUMMARY-PROTECTION AND ACCESS FOR BIG ROCK CLIMBING RESOURCE -6/20/2014**



**LAKE PERRIS STATE RECREATION AREA  
PERRIS, RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
BIG ROCK CLIMBING AREA**

**SUMMARY**  
THE BIG ROCK CLIMBING AREA HAS A LONG HISTORY AS A UNIQUE CLIMBING RESOURCE FOR THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA SINCE THE LATE 1950'S. IT HAS BEEN USED FOR TRAINING AND TEACHING ROCK CLIMBING SKILLS BY THE SIERRA CLUB, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION, REI, SCOUT GROUPS, FAMILIES AND THE RIVERSIDE RESCUE TEAM AND MANY OTHERS FOR THE LAST 50+ YEARS.

**MANY OF TODAY'S CLIMBERS WHO HAVE GONE ON TO CLIMBING IN YOSEMITE, PATAGONIA, GRAND TETONS, AND FAR REACHES OF THE WORLD, STARTED THEIR CLIMBING CAREERS RIGHT HERE AT BIG ROCK. WEEKENDS WILL FIND CLIMBERS RANGING IN AGE FROM 80 TO 6, WHO HAVE CLIMBED HERE FOR YEARS, OR ARE JUST DISCOVERING CLIMBING FOR THEIR FIRST TIME.**

**IT IS A UNIQUE CLIMBING RESOURCE FOR THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CLIMBING COMMUNITY, VERY ACCESSIBLE FROM ALL PARTS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, AND FEATURING OVER 30 DISTINCT CLIMBING ROUTES FROM 50 FEET TO 200.**

**OUR PROPOSAL AS STAKEHOLDERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CLIMBING COMMUNITY IS TO :**

1. WORK TOGETHER WITH DWR AND THE STATE PARKS TO ENSURE PROTECTION OF THE AREA OF BIG ROCK FROM DAMAGE AND DEGRADATION DURING CONSTRUCTION.
2. TO WORK TOGETHER FOR A SOLUTION FOR A SAFE AND REASONABLE METHOD OF ACCESS FOR CLIMBERS DURING THE DURATION OF THE DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

LEGEND SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION
	PROPOSED ALTERNATE HAUL ROAD RE-ALIGNMENT-PROVIDES INCREASED SETBACK FOR CLIMBING AREA FROM HAUL ROAD NOISE AND DUST
	PROPOSED TEMPORARY ROCK CLIMBERS ACCESS PATH-PROVIDES AN ACCESS ON TEMPORARY PATHS FROM RAMONA EXPRESSWAY TO CLIMBING AREA
	PROPOSED CONCRETE K RAIL BARRIER AT HAUL ROAD-PROVIDES PHYSICAL SEPARATION OF CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES FROM CLIMBING AREA
	PROPOSED 8'-0" CHAINLINK FENCE WITH DUST MITIGATION SCREEN-DEFINES LIMITS AND SEPARATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES FROM BIG ROCK AREA
	DWR PROPOSED GRADED ROAD ACCESS FOR DRILLING RIG TO TOP OF HILL FOR BLASTING ACTIVITIES
	PROPOSED ALTERNATE GRADED ROAD ACCESS FOR DRILLING RIG TO MINIMIZE VISUAL AND PHYSICAL IMPACT TO BIG ROCK AREA
	DWR BLASTING AREA TO ACCOMODATE CONSTRUCTION OF HAUL ROAD FROM QUARRY

