



Protect America's Climbing

October 8, 2013

CA Department of Water Resources  
c/o Tom Barnes, Environmental Science Associates  
626 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1100  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Email: [tbarnes@esassoc.com](mailto:tbarnes@esassoc.com)

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

We write to express concerns about the conservation of rock climbing resources during the Perris Dam Seismic Remediation Project.

**The Access Fund**

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 in all forms of climbing: rock, ice, mountaineering, and bouldering. 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).

**Climbing at Big Rock**

Big Rock is located in southern part of Lake Perris State Recreation Area. While other small developed slabs surround Big Rock, most of the routes are found on the main wall, containing about thirty routes. 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. There is some bouldering around the base of the rock, with more still on the surrounding hillsides. Many legends of the sport have climbed at Big Rock.

**Lake Perris Dam Project**

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is currently working to remediate (seismically retrofit) the Lake Perris Dam facilities. DWR planners should ensure that the access to rock climbing at Big Rock is being carefully considered for the impact of the Lake Perris Dam remediation project to be "less than significant." Rock climbing 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.



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The principle concern the climbing community has is access to Big Rock itself during the construction; the proposed 2 year shut down of climbing seems totally unnecessary during the project as the project does not actually effect the main cliff itself. There also is concern about the possibility of an access road being blasted through the old hiking trail, which would destroy dozens of existing bouldering and sport climbing routes. Obviously this would be unacceptable and we urge you to address these issues appropriately in any environmental analysis.

\* \* \*

Please let me know if you have any questions or request any further information from the Access Fund regarding how we may assist DWR in protecting and enhancing climbing opportunities at Big Rock.

Thanks for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Keith".

Jason Keith  
Senior Policy Advisor  
The Access Fund

Cc: Southern California Mountaineers Association