

Santa Felicia Project  
FERC License No. 2153-12

**Santa Felicia Whitewater Boating Access Plan Annual Report  
For 2012 and 2013**

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January 2014

**United Water Conservation District**  
106 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Santa Paula, California 93060

## **BACKGROUND**

November 2011, United Water Conservation District (United) prepared a Whitewater Boating Access Plan (Plan) in compliance with Santa Felicia Project FERC License No. 2153-012, Article 410. United filed a permanent plan for providing whitewater boating access downstream of Santa Felicia Dam and whitewater boating portage over the Santa Felicia Dam. The plan was filed after consultation with the United States Forest Service, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Sierra Club. February 21, 2012, FERC approved United's Santa Felicia Whitewater Boating Access Plan.

The District's FERC approved whitewater boating access plan includes a provision for documenting and reporting whitewater boating access activity annually. In addition to FERC, this annual report is provided to the United States Forest Service and California Department of Parks and Recreation as provided for in the approved whitewater boater access plan. The first annual report covers the years 2012 and 2013.

## **FERC PROJECT AREA**

The Project is located in eastern Ventura County approximately 5 miles north of Piru, California and is owned and operated by United. The Project area consists of all lands within the FERC Project boundary which generally follows the 1079.3-foot mean sea level contour line around Lake Piru (Exhibit A). However, the Project boundary varies from this contour line in some areas to include project facilities such as the Lower Oak and Oak Lane Campgrounds and the whitewater takeout at the north end of Lake Piru. In addition, it also varies from the 1078.3-foot contour line to exclude private lands. The existing FERC Project boundary encompasses approximately 1,552 acres of land of which 201 acres is situated within the Los Padres National Forest and is owned by the USDA-FS. Of the USDA-FS land, approximately 121 acres are inundated by Lake Piru at the maximum water surface elevation.

## **UNITED'S FALL WATER CONSERVATION RELEASE**

The main purpose of the Santa Felicia Dam and Lake Piru Reservoir is to store water which is then released in the fall for multiple purposes, including recharge of the various groundwater basins between Piru and the Oxnard Plain, with such basins serving the needs of United's municipal and agricultural customers; and as a surface water resource provided to customers in lieu of groundwater pumping. Each year, United determines how much water to release from the Santa Felicia Dam down Piru Creek based on the available groundwater storage capacity of the basins while maintaining a minimum pool of approximately 20,000 AF in Lake Piru Reservoir. Based on a set of objectives (i.e. groundwater recharge to basins, environmental needs, spill risk, etc.),

United prepares an estimated release schedule specifying the release dates and flow rates over the duration of the water release.

United's fall water conservation release typically begins in mid September of each year and ends in October/November. The release schedule, dates and flow rates vary annually depending on the amount of water stored in Lake Piru and groundwater basin conditions (supply and quality), among other important factors. Typical maximum flow is between 200 cfs to 400 cfs which is sustained for approximately five to seven weeks.

### **SUMMARY OF WHITEWATER BOATING ACCESS PLAN**

Access to the put-in site on lower Piru Creek is located downstream of the dam on United's property. Access to this site and access to a portage trail over the dam is provided to boaters on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) when water releases from the Santa Felicia Dam exceeds 200 cfs. This typically occurs during United's annual fall water conservation release, described above. Water releases in excess of 200 cfs can also occur during storm events on the rare occasion when the dam spills and water flows from the spillway. Information about planned releases is disseminated via United's website, press releases to the local county newspaper and electronic notification to American Whitewater.

Whitewater boaters wanting access to the put-in site on United's property must notify United 24 hours in advance to receive escorted access (the only type of access allowed). Whitewater boaters seeking portage around the dam from Lake Piru must also notify United 24 hours in advance to receive clearance to hike over the dam to the put-in site on Piru Creek. The 24-hour notification requirement allows United to ensure that appropriate security is maintained at the dam.

### **WHITEWATER BOAT ACTIVITY FOR 2012 AND 2013**

#### 2012:

- No whitewater boater requested or received access from United to the put-in site on lower Piru Creek below the Santa Felicia Dam.
- No whitewater boater requested portage over the Santa Felicia Dam.
- The fall water conservation began on September 5 and ended on October 22. The discharge exceeded 200 cfs between September 10 and October 13.

2013:

- No whitewater boaters requested or received access from United to the put-in site on lower Piru Creek below the Santa Felicia Dam.
- No whitewater boater requested portage over the Santa Felicia Dam.
- There was no fall water conservation release. The cfs remained well below 200 the entire year.