



June 22, 2026

Jim Moak  
c/o Summit Ranger District  
#1 Pinecrest Lake Road  
Pinecrest, California 95364  
209-732-8119

Re: Pinecrest Campground Improvements Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (Project #292861)

Dear Jim Moak:

Pinecrest Lake Resort appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Pinecrest Campground Improvements Environmental Assessment (EA) and Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Pinecrest Lake Resort generally supports the rehabilitation and modernization of Pinecrest and Meadowview Campgrounds. It recognizes the need to address aging infrastructure, accessibility deficiencies, utility replacement, circulation improvements, and resource protection concerns.

**Construction Phasing and Visitor Access**

Pinecrest Lake Resort appreciates the Forest Service's recognition that construction activities may temporarily reduce recreation opportunities, affect visitor access, and create economic impacts within the Pinecrest Basin. Because Pinecrest is one of the most heavily visited recreation destinations in the Stanislaus National Forest, careful construction planning will be essential to minimizing disruptions to visitors and recreation-dependent businesses.

The Environmental Assessment generally assumes that construction activities will proceed according to the anticipated schedule and that temporary impacts will be limited in duration. While that may ultimately occur, experience shows that large-scale infrastructure projects are often subject to unforeseen delays due to weather conditions, contractor availability, utility conflicts, environmental constraints, permitting requirements, material shortages, or other factors beyond project managers' control.

For this reason, Pinecrest Lake Resort encourages the Forest Service to develop not only a primary construction phasing strategy but also contingency plans that address how recreation

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opportunities, visitor access, parking availability, and campground operations will be managed if construction extends beyond anticipated timeframes.

Particular consideration should be given to scenarios in which work cannot be completed within a single construction season. The Pinecrest Basin experiences a relatively short peak period of recreational use each year, and unanticipated project delays could have disproportionate impacts on visitors, concession operations, and local businesses if substantial portions of the campgrounds remain unavailable across successive recreation seasons.

To minimize these risks, the Forest Service should consider establishing project milestones, phased reopening objectives, and contingency measures that prioritize returning portions of the campgrounds and associated recreation facilities to public use as soon as practicable, even if not all project components have been completed. Maintaining flexibility to reopen completed loops, facilities, or recreation areas incrementally would help reduce disruption to visitors while still allowing construction activities to proceed efficiently.

Pinecrest Lake Resort further recommends that the final Decision Notice include a commitment that construction phasing and scheduling will be designed not only to maximize campground availability and visitor access under anticipated conditions, but also to provide contingency strategies that minimize impacts in the event of project delays, extended construction seasons, or unforeseen implementation challenges.

The long-term benefits of the project are widely recognized; however, those benefits should not come at the expense of multiple recreation seasons if avoidable alternatives and contingency measures are available. A clearly defined implementation and contingency strategy will provide greater certainty for visitors, concession operators, recreation residences, local businesses, and the Forest Service while helping ensure that recreation opportunities remain available throughout the construction period to the greatest extent practicable.

#### **Preservation of Rustic Campground Character**

Pinecrest Lake Resort strongly encourages the Forest Service to preserve the traditional rustic character of Pinecrest and Meadowview Campgrounds throughout project implementation. While modernization of utilities, accessibility improvements, road rehabilitation, and resource protection measures are appropriate and necessary, care should be taken to avoid overdevelopment or excessive site hardening that could diminish the qualities visitors have historically valued. The Environmental Assessment proposes installing tent pads throughout both campgrounds. While tent pads may be appropriate where

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necessary to satisfy accessibility requirements, resource protection objectives, drainage concerns, or erosion control needs, Pinecrest Lake Resort does not believe that widespread installation of tent pads constitutes a meaningful enhancement to the recreation experience.

### **Campsite Reduction and Parking Improvements**

Pinecrest Lake Resort recognizes that a limited reduction in campsite numbers may be appropriate where necessary to protect sensitive resources, improve accessibility, address drainage concerns, improve circulation, or accommodate modern campground design standards. Similarly, removing a reasonable number of campsites to create additional parking capacity within the campground footprint can be a practical and beneficial management solution. Providing adequate parking for campers within designated campground boundaries may help reduce conflicts, improve circulation, decrease unauthorized parking, and better accommodate the realities of modern recreation use.

The removal or relocation of individual campsites for these purposes represents a thoughtful redesign of existing facilities rather than a reduction in recreational opportunity as a management objective. Pinecrest Lake Resort supports efforts to improve the overall functionality, safety, and visitor experience of the campgrounds, even when those improvements require eliminating a limited number of campsites.

However, Pinecrest Lake Resort does not believe that reducing public access or campsite capacity should be considered a primary management tool to address recreation challenges on National Forest System lands. The mission of the Forest Service includes providing recreational opportunities for the public, and effective recreation management should focus first on visitor education, responsible concessionaire operations, active management, and appropriate enforcement of existing regulations rather than reducing opportunities for public use.

Many of the concerns identified within the Environmental Assessment—including campsite occupancy issues, excess vehicles, parking conflicts, resource impacts, and visitor behavior—can often be more effectively addressed through improved visitor education programs, clear communication of campground rules and expectations, responsible concessionaire management of campsite capacities and occupancy limits, and a visible Forest Service presence during periods of peak use. Effective law enforcement and recreation management personnel play a critical role in ensuring compliance with existing regulations and maintaining the quality of the visitor experience across federally managed lands.



National Forest visitors should be encouraged and expected to recreate responsibly. When supported by effective management, enforcement, and public education, high-quality recreation experiences can often be maintained without materially reducing public access or recreational opportunities. Pinecrest Lake Resort therefore supports retaining the greatest practical number of campsites consistent with resource protection, accessibility requirements, visitor safety objectives, and the parking needs necessary to serve campground visitors effectively.

#### **Restroom Improvements and Shower Facilities**

Pinecrest Lake Resort supports modernizing restroom facilities while maintaining the project's current approach of excluding public shower facilities. Public shower facilities are not necessary to achieve the project's purpose and need and would introduce maintenance requirements, operational costs, and infrastructure demands, and conflict with a service already provided by Pinecrest Lake Resort.

#### **Opposition to Proposed Parking Lot Rezoning**

Pinecrest Lake Resort does not support the proposed Forest Plan amendment that would reclassify Lots 1, 2, 8, and 14 to Day Use zoning.

The existing Administrative/Utilities Infrastructure and Commercial Use zoning classifications already encompass the historic and ongoing uses of these parking facilities and provide an appropriate management framework for recreation-related parking demands. Overnight parking within Pinecrest is not solely a campground issue. Pinecrest functions as a mixed-use recreation destination that serves campground visitors, marina patrons, lodging guests, restaurant customers, recreation residence visitors, concession operations, employees, trail users, special events, and other legitimate recreational activities.

Accordingly, Pinecrest Lake Resort recommends that Lots 1, 2, 8, and 14 retain their existing zoning classifications and that the proposed Forest Plan amendment related to parking lot rezoning be removed from the final decision.

#### **Conclusion**

Pinecrest Lake Resort supports the long-term rehabilitation of Pinecrest and Meadowview Campgrounds. We encourage the Forest Service to prioritize construction phasing that minimizes impacts on visitors and local businesses, preserves the rustic character of the

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campgrounds, maintains the exclusion of shower facilities, avoids unnecessary site hardening, and retains the existing parking lot zoning framework, while effectively managing public land use.

Sincerely,

Laurie Cashman

General Manager

Pinecrest Lake Resort