

**RUTH LAKE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT**  
**Policy Handbook**

**POLICY TITLE:   Recreational Lease Site Standards**

**POLICY NUMBER: 6000**

**6000.00 Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to guide development and use on recreational sublease sites within the buffer strip around Ruth Lake. It also provides some direction on identifying and correcting deficiencies on existing structures and sites.

**6000.01 Need:** These standards provide a framework for the district administration to guide development around the lake. As the lake becomes more popular, the actions of individual leaseholders increasingly impact the sites and users around them. Environmental concerns of development are receiving more attention and regulation. State and County health, building, planning, and fire safe codes and laws are becoming ever stricter and are being increasingly aggressively enforced. The subleases, although the sub-leaseholder's individual responsibility, are collectively and ultimately RLCSO's responsibility.

**6000.02 Philosophy:** Use of the buffer strip is recreational in nature.

A. Development will be controlled to the extent that it will encourage recreational, part-time use, and not allow full-time residential use.

B. Development will be designed to minimize impact on the "view shed" from the lake and the road.

C. Development will also be guided by the philosophy exemplified by the statement that one well-designed small garage is preferable to several small storage sheds.

D. Some sites will not support even this much development, and all development will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

E. It is acknowledged that these guidelines will permit some types of development on some lease sites and prohibit the same type and extent of development on other sites. What was allowed in the past is not necessarily acceptable practice today.

F. All development shall be as non-invasive as possible, blending in with the natural surroundings as much as possible.

G. All projects are considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval at one site does not imply approval at another site.

**6000.03 Existing development:** Structures which have been previously approved by RLCSO, HBMWD and Trinity County (as appropriate), which may otherwise appear to violate this policy, shall be allowed to remain unless they present safety or other hazard, or are being maintained so poorly they become unsightly.

A. If a leaseholder wishes to construct a new structure, he may be required to remove an existing structure of similar use even if previously approved, as is consistent with paragraph 6000.02C above.

**6000.04 Use:** Ruth Lake is an artificial impoundment of water created primarily for municipal and industrial purposes and any recreational use of the water is subordinate to such uses.

A. Recreational sub-lease sites shall not be used for residential purposes or become the domicile of the lessee. Policy 6010 addresses this topic.

**6000.05** The standards for **boat access only leases** are further guided by policy 6400.

**6000.10 Maintenance:** The sublease contract requires that the lease site be maintained in good condition and kept in a clean and sightly condition and in as good of condition as when possession was delivered to sublessee.

**6000.11 Trash and garbage:** The lease site will be free of visible garbage at all times. Trash and garbage will be stored in rigid containers, with tight fitting lids, not plastic garbage bags, and all trash and garbage will be removed when the site is unoccupied. The Ruth Lake area is home to many wild and feral animals which will be happy to make a mess for you. Disposing of trash or garbage on the buffer strip either in trash cans (other than their own), dumpsters, or outright dumping is prohibited, and may result in prosecution and loss of the lease.

**6000.12 Building materials:** Building materials may only be stored on the site if a project has been approved and is under construction. Any lease holder found to be dumping construction debris in campground, marina, day use areas, including dumpsters, or any undeveloped portion of the buffer strip will be subject to prosecution, and may lose their lease.

**6000.13 Structures:** Structures of all types shall be maintained in good condition. Broken windows, railings, stairs, structures that pose a safety hazard, do not meet current standards because of age or wear must be repaired or removed within the time limit set by the administrator.

**6000.14 Trees and Brush:** All trees and brush remain the property of HBMWD under the provisions of the master lease and the sublease contract. Cutting of trees is prohibited without prior written permission of RLCSO and HBMWD (see policy #6350). Trimming of limbs and brush for fire safety, and around roads and structures is permitted as maintenance. Debris must be disposed of as soon as possible by burning. Burn permits are required and enforced.

**6000.15 Gardens:** Gardens are specifically prohibited on leases using water from the lake by the lake water lease addendum. It is the philosophy of both the HBMWD and RLCSO Board of Directors that the areas around the lake remain as natural as possible.

**6000.151** Areas away from the lake, such as the Rodeo grounds and Holly Creek, have developed differently, and shall be allowed to have small flower gardens. Vegetable gardens are prohibited as they are more residential in nature.

**6000.16 Vehicles:** Excessive numbers of cars, boats, trailers, recreational and other types of vehicles shall not be stored on the lease. All such vehicles shall be in working order, well maintained and be neat in appearance. See para. 6000.27 regarding recreational vehicles.

**6000.17 Propane:** Propane and other fuel tanks must be secured to a solid post or structure if not designed to be free standing.

**6000.18 Firearms:** The shooting of firearms is prohibited on lease sites except when legally taking waterfowl during waterfowl season.

**6000.19 Fireworks:** Fireworks shall not be used on the buffer strip.

**6000.20 Development and improvement:**

**6000.21** The Buffer strip was developed to provide recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors to the area.

**6000.22 Extent:** Development will generally be limited to one dwelling, one bath facility if not provided for in dwelling (i.e.: primary dwelling is an RV which is intended to be moved regularly), one storage building, one water storage or pumping structure if necessary, and one temporary RV for a guest (see para. 6000.27 below and para. 6000.02C, above).

**6000.23 Placement:** No structure shall be placed at an elevation less than 2675 ft. (spillway level plus 21 ft.). The horizontal setback (from the 2675 ft level) must be 20 feet. Side and back lot line spacing shall not be less than 30 feet. Lease lots wishing improvements but not able to meet all of these requirements must be considered and approved on an individual basis by both the RLCSD and the HBMWD Board of Directors.

**6000.24 Permission:** The recreational sublease (Para 17), requires that the sublease holder gain the written consent of both RLCSD and HBMWD before any alteration, addition, or improvement be made to the lease site. According to the Master Lease, HBMWD has up to 45 days to consider the project, plan accordingly.

**6000.25 Approval:** Approval of a project by RLCSD and HBMWD means only that the improvement appears not to interfere with RLCSD or HBMWD activities on the buffer strip. It does not imply that the project design and engineering is proper or safe. It does not imply that the project is acceptable to Trinity County or other agencies. All projects are considered on a site-specific basis, what is suitable on one site may not be allowed on another.

**6000.26 Insurance:** Since all structures must be insured against fire hazard, now is a good time to ensure your insurance policy will cover the proposed improvement. The district will ensure a current, valid, and acceptable certificate of insurance, which includes the appropriate amount of fire and liability insurance as stated in the sublease contract, is on file in the district office before approving any project. In the event of a fire, you are responsible for any debris removal from your lease site.

**6000.27 Recreational vehicles:** Recreational vehicles are defined as vehicles designed or capable of being dwelt in.

- a. Are limited to one per lease site,
- b. Must remain capable of being moved,
- c. If intended or allowed to remain longer than fourteen days, must have the written permission of RLCSD.
- d. Any RV on a lease site is considered at least one extra bedroom, and the septic tank must be sized to accept the additional load. This must be considered by the District when considering this kind of request.
- e. Under special circumstances, more than one unit will be allowed on a temporary basis, again with written permission in advance obtained from RLCSD.

## **6000.28 Process for obtaining approval for improvements:**

**A.** The sublease holder submits the project to RLCSD for approval. The application must include:

1. A written description of the project, including type of construction, dimensions, materials, and colors proposed.
2. A site map indicating where on the site the project will be located
3. Timetable to start and finish project
4. Who will be doing the project.

**B.** The Administrator has authority to approve any project he feels complies with the lease site standards, county, state, and federal laws, and other guidance provided by the Board of Directors. If the Administrator feels that the project is not consistent with the guidance provided, the Administrator is directed to make the objections known to the leaseholder, and work with them to achieve the goal of the project if at all possible. If the sublease-holder feels the project does meet the guidelines, or that compelling reasons exist for the project to be completed as requested, he may ask the Board of Directors to approve the project.

**C.** Things for the Administrator to consider when reviewing a project.

1. Does the project fit into the guidelines outlined.
2. Is the project appropriate to the specific lease site and the area
3. Effect the project will have on the immediate neighbors
4. Effect project has on the view shed from the lake and road.
5. Effect project will have on the operations of HBMWD and RLCSD uses and projects at the lake.
6. Effect project will have on other recreational lake users.
7. Amount and type of insurance coverage required.

**D.** If approved, the project documents are forwarded by RLCSD to HBMWD for their review and approval. Copies of RLCSD and HBMWD approvals will be forwarded to the leaseholder by RLCSD when obtained. Because environmental and building conditions can change quickly, the project must be begun within one year and substantial progress made or the permission of RLCSD and HBMWD for the project will expire.

**E.** The applicant may then apply to the appropriate Trinity County department for permits. Trinity County will not issue a permit until it has RLCSD and HBMWD permission on file. Copies of the Trinity County permits shall be forwarded to RLCSD prior to beginning work on the project, and copies of the completed permits must be filed with RLCSD when the project is complete.

**F. Building Permits:** Building permits are required by Trinity County for any structure larger than 120 square feet, including eaves; any structure with plumbing or electricity, and any structure intended for human habitation regardless of size. Decks may need a permit as well. It is the leaseholders' responsibility to determine the need. RLCSD will assume a building permit is required for all projects unless otherwise notified. No project may begin until a copy of the permit is on file with RLCSD.

**6000.29 Utilities:** Both electrical and telephone connections require a utility easement between the utility provider and Humboldt Bay MWD before installation. HBMWD charges a fee of one hundred dollars (\$100) to cover their costs in establishing the easement. Please contact RLCSD prior to contacting the utility company. Policy 6300 applies.

**6000.30 Water:**

**6000.31 Lake Water:** HBMWD and RLCSD prohibit water diversion from Ruth Lake Reservoir without proper permits. Lake water is defined as any surface water gathered within the flood level of Ruth Lake, determined to be below elevation 2674, 20 feet above the current spillway elevation, and between the Matthews Dam and the Ruth-Zenia Bridge. Policy 8100 and 8110 refer.

**6000.32 Well water:** Wells must be located at least 100 feet from the high-water mark of the Ruth Lake reservoir. Previous permission of RLCSD, HBMWD and a permit and inspection from the Trinity County Health Department are required. A copy of the well-drillers report must be forwarded to RLCSD.

**6000.33 Surface water:** taken from rivers, creeks or springs located above the flood level within the buffer strip are not regulated, however both RLCSD and HBMWD strongly recommend filtration and disinfection before any type of use. This water may contain contaminants which are harmful to humans.

**6000.40 Sewage disposal systems:** No lease site shall be used until an approved sewage disposal system is in place and approved by Trinity County. This prohibition includes self-contained RV's and tent camping. Policies 6220 and 6225 provide guidance on this topic.

**6000.50 Roads:** Roads are becoming a controversial topic nationwide and within Trinity County. Roads must be maintained to the standard they were originally built and may be required to be upgraded as use increases, drainage patterns emerge or change, or for other reasons. Expect to have to upgrade your road as a condition of your Trinity County building permit. Encroachment permits are required wherever a private driveway intersects with a county road. California Fire Safe requirements have a great impact on road design and may well influence where you can place a dwelling or make significant improvements to it. Erosion control must be maintained.

Roads and drainage must be well maintained. See the "Ruth Lake Buffer Strip Road and Lease Site Standards for further information."

**6000.501 Road names:** Any driveway serving more than one dwelling must have a signpost if it intersects a county road. All road names must be approved by Trinity County.

**6000.502 Shared roads:** Shared roads are a shared responsibility of the leaseholders who access it. Culverts and side drains must be cleaned throughout the year. RLCSD does not maintain any roads but may require work to be done.

**6000.51 Gates:** Requests for gates will be considered on an individual basis. All gates must be approved by RLCSD and HBMWD prior to installation. Chain and cable gates are not acceptable or permissible.

**6000.52 Locks:** All gates if locked must have a lock keyed to the RLCSD master. Master keys are provided to fire, medical, law enforcement agencies, and utility companies that serve the area. If the administrator or any of the above cannot open a gate because of an unapproved or non-functioning lock, they have permission to cut the lock, and the leaseholder must replace it at their expense. Providing a copy of an individual lock key to the RLCSD office does not meet this requirement.

**6000.53 Fences:** Are not allowed except for guarding against an unsafe condition, and only with prior approval.

**6000.54 Signs:**

**6000.541 Street signs:** Each road or driveway serving more than two dwellings must have a street sign if it intersects with a county road. All road names must be approved by Trinity County.

**6000.542 Address signs:** Each dwelling must have its lease number, or an address assigned by Trinity County posted on it, or at the driveway entrance that serves that individual dwelling if it will be more visible to emergency vehicles.

**6000.543 No Trespassing/Private Lease Signs:** No trespassing signs are allowed on all recreational sub lease sites. However, only signs purchased from RLCSD may be used. No other signs may be placed along the boundary of the sub lease sites for the purposes of indicating that the property is private. RLCSD supplies two versions of the typical “No Trespassing” sign. One version is for use on docks. One version is for any other type of entry, i.e. road, path, or drive. RLCSD recommends placing “No Trespassing” signs at the following locations (if applicable) with a maximum number of three signs per lease allowed:

1. One sign on your dock
2. One sign at your road access entry point or walking path
3. Any other place bordered by the lake or non-private lands, i.e. road, parking lot, or public lands

Sign placement must be approved by the RLCSD prior to installation by the sub lease holder. “No Trespassing” signs are recommended by the RLCSD to be placed along the boundary of sub lease sites because they will stop the public from having any claimed right to park at, go across, dock at, fish from, sleep on, or otherwise use your sub lease site when placed correctly. If you have questions concerning the boundary of your sub lease site or would like help determining where the appropriate place is to install “No Trespassing” signs, please speak with RLCSD staff. (*Civil Code § 830 and § 1008*)

**6000.60 Erosion Control:** All lease sites, roads and trails will be constructed and maintained to minimize erosion into the lake, river, and other water courses. RLCSD or HBMWD may require modifications to proposed projects, maintenance or repair work to be done as necessary to ensure

erosion control. The Trinity County Building and Planning Departments have final approval on all projects and may require additional mitigations, engineering documentation, and permits.

**6000.70 Boat or swimming docks:** Boat or swimming docks may be placed only with the advance written permission of RLCSD and HBMWD, policies number 6100, 6110, and 6120 apply.

**6000.80 Inspections:** The Administrator or designee may conduct a formal inspection of a lease site when:

1. A proposed assignment is received.
2. The Sublease contract is to be renewed within one year of renewal.
3. A major improvement project is requested.
4. A violation is noticed or reported.

A formal inspection will be documented in the lease file and a copy of the inspection report sent to the leaseholder.

The Administrator may make an informal (or walk through) inspection at any time. This may be followed up with no action, a telephone call, a letter, or a formal inspection.

**Approved by the RLCSD Board of Directors: 7/24/2003**

**Revisions to 6000.23; approved by the Board of Directors: 8/10/2006**

**Revisions to 6000.543; approved by the Board of Directors: 12/10/2024**

**Revisions to 6000.27(f); approved by the Board of Directors: 3/11/2025**

**Revisions to 6000.26; approved by the Board of Directors: 4/8/2025**