

October 25, 2012

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

EL DORADO COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EL DORADO COUNTY

2012 OCT 25 PM 12:55

RE: Agenda Item 12-1326, Trail Safety and Courtesy Guidelines from the Parks and Recreation Commission

Honorable Board of Supervisors:

I am writing this letter to provide another perspective to the proposed guideline requiring pedestrians to keep to the left along the El Dorado Trail similar to the rule for pedestrians walking along a narrow road in order to face the danger.

As an avid walker on the trail from Mosquito to Jacquier, I have observed for many years that, without question, the majority of trail users are on foot in some capacity. Most are regular users like myself who enjoy the trail several times a week; these include walkers, runners, dog walkers, parents pushing their baby carriages, and seniors enjoying a morning or evening stroll. Everyone seems to follow the standard rule of keeping to your right except to pass. Bicyclists also seem to appreciate this consistency and are quite polite, announcing their presence before passing by saying "on-your-left".

The supporters of this new rule state that pedestrians should stay single file on the left in order to "face the danger", as if they were on a narrow road without shoulders to see and be seen by on-coming traffic. This line of reasoning makes a certain amount of sense, but only if based on the following erroneous assumptions:

- *The bicyclists themselves are the danger in the same way that motor vehicles pose a danger to pedestrians on a narrow road with no shoulder and no sidewalks;*

Response: The "face the danger" comparison to a narrow road does not take into account that pedestrians are equal users of the path itself. Bicyclists, by and large, are polite and do not pose a danger unless they are going too fast. If they see a pedestrian, they know to slow down, announce themselves, pass, and move on.

- *Bicyclists are the primary user of the trail and should be given a clear, unimpeded right of way.*

Response: These trails are multi-use trails, not strictly for bicyclists. Pedestrians easily make up the majority of users and should be treated as equal users.

- *Pedestrians are confused as to which side of the path to walk on.*

Response: For the rare person who doesn't know which side to walk on, a sign could easily clarify something that most people already know – keep right except to pass. It's a lot easier to train a few instead of re-training the majority.

- *Many pedestrians have ear phones on and can't hear a bicycle coming.*

Response: Educational signage could add that the use of ear phones for all users (including bicyclists) should be done with the awareness that everyone should be able to hear those around them at all times.

I would not be writing this letter if I didn't sincerely feel that this rule change would cause more confusion and pose more danger than it intends to prevent. People simply know that keeping to the right in airports, door entrances, and sidewalks, is a standard practice that helps foot traffic flow in a more orderly fashion.

As an aside, I would also like to point out that the giant, white bare feet painted on the left side of the trail at Mosquito Road are generally ignored. I have even heard people wonder aloud why they put the feet on the wrong side of the trail. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Sincerely,



Janet Postlewait
Placerville Resident