

County of El Dorado

Board of Supervisors

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 22, 2011

TO: Board Members

FROM: Supervisor Knight and Supervisor Nutting

SUBJECT: Special Board Meeting on March 28, 2011
regarding El Dorado Trail

Special Board Meeting on March 28, 2011, 9:00 am.

El Dorado Trail Subcommittee Recommendations

March 22, 2011

Issue: The County of El Dorado controls a unique and special asset, the El Dorado Trail. Various uses have been proposed over the years with some of them competing for space, type of use and funding sources. It is the County's desire to maximize the total use of the trail for as many joint uses as possible and allow for the historical use of the rail system, encouraging excursion trains where practical and economical. At the December 7, 2010 Board of Supervisors meeting, District 1 and District 2 Supervisors were tasked to work with interested parties to create a map and plan for the El Dorado Trail corridor and report back to the Board of Supervisors on this date.

Recommendation: It is the recommendation of the ad hoc committee of Supervisors Knight and Nutting that the Board of Supervisors adopt the following:

1. Approve the attached map showing those segments of the trail that have been designated: 1) a priority use for hiking, biking and equestrian 2) a segment designated for joint use which will include railroad usage along with trail uses;
2. Instruct staff to prepare a request for proposal for the construction of a multiuse trail from the western El Dorado County line east to where the railroad tracks intersect South Shingle Road at approximately one mile south of US Highway 50 (Segment 1). The construction of the trail shall be at no cost to the County of El Dorado. The proposal shall include, but not be limited to, having the completed rail bed ready for the installation of a Class I Bike Path, proper insurance, complete cost breakdown and salvage value and approval by County of El Dorado County Counsel;
3. Prior to the removal of any track, there shall be a plan in place to maintain the entire trail free of all vegetation and trash. This plan shall include hours needed to keep the entire trail in useable condition and a financial plan to cover any and all costs.

Discussion:

Since acquiring the right of way in 1996, this section of the Old Sacramento-Placerville Railroad has had little use. Now is the time and desire to connect the El Dorado section

to the City of Folsom's trail system, American River Parkway, existing bike routes within El Dorado County, and sometime in the future connect with South Lake Tahoe.

The corridor will be in three segments:

1. Segment 1: This 16 + mile length from the county line through Latrobe to South Shingle Road will be set aside as a multi use trail for a Class I Bike Path and equestrian use.
2. Segment 2: This 8 ½ mile length from South Shingle Road through Shingle Springs and El Dorado, to Missouri Flat Road, will be set aside as a joint multiuse trail for all trail uses, historical railroad and an excursion train.
3. Segment 3: This final segment begins at Missouri Flat Road and continues through Placerville as a trail only. This segment will be over 6 miles of Class 1 Bike Path, bike lanes, and bike route.

Over the past ten (10) years there have been numerous proposals to develop the corridor and use the existing tracks for a tourist rail excursion service. The subcommittee believes the excursion idea has exciting potential by preserving the rail history and taking advantage of a spectacular rural vista, however, it may not be financially feasible. This conclusion is based upon the City of Folsom's own study and conversations with knowledgeable railroad enthusiasts.

Any excursion train or other train use beyond 8 miles in length may become uneconomical due to the cost to operate, total revenue per passenger and the cost to maintain the track. It also may become problematic for an extended route to rely on outside donations and volunteer support.

These three segments will preserve the rail corridor, preserve some of the rail history, and provide over 32 miles of trails for multiple uses of hiking, biking and equestrian.