

Memo

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EL DORADO COUNTY

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Raymond Nutting 
Date: 7/30/2012
Re: Citizen's Coordination Committee, item 14 on 7/31/12

Route designation (now called Travel Management) resulted in approximately 40% of roads that were available for use to close thus affecting safety (wood gathering for example to help prevent catastrophic fire), our economy (tourist activity) and our culture (access to camping for the citizens). A lawsuit filed in 2009, recently resulted in the interim (and possible permanent) closure of 42 roads in the Eldorado National forest (it is more like 80+). All of this was done with no consideration to the cultural impact, the economic impact or impact to safety. And, according the record of decision, our county had no input.

In our press release of April 17, 2012, Supervisor Briggs and I expressed our concerns regarding the cultural impact of these closures. The Mountain Democrat quoted, "These roads have been in use for recreation for decades (some for a century, and provide a unique and irreplaceable opportunity for citizens to enjoy the land which they own" and, "A blanket closure of all 42 roads fails to take into account the enormous negative economic impact this will have on El Dorado County and closing these roads will discourage citizens from coming here to recreate this summer, the resulting confusion and uncertainty will no doubt discourage recreational use of the Eldorado National Forest for subsequent seasons also. It has been estimated that vehicular recreation in the Eldorado National Forest produces a net positive economic effect estimated to exceed \$2 million per year to El Dorado County." These comments, while wise in their nature, came too late. Once again we found ourselves behind the eight ball and beyond the time allotment for public comment.

And, now we are faced with a Categorical Exclusion, which, if allowed **could** result in complete destruction of these roads without county or public input or any environmental impact statement. This is a contradiction to the aforementioned Travel Management Plan's minutes, which did include the perspective that if the roads closed were ever needed for emergency access would be allowed. Again, this was done without any local input prior to public comment due by August 13, 2012. It is

imperative for us to be at the negotiating table and the Coordination Committee is a means to get us there.

There are many issues coming down the turnpike via policies ... Cal/EPA (Title 27), USDA (The Secretary of Agriculture has announced 21 members selected to serve on the National Advisory Committee, on forest management, from local governments) and legislation..... SB 1284 (This bill would make several revisions to the Mandatory Minimum Penalties for air quality purposes), SB 1169 (This Bill would make a variety of technical changes to provisions of the Water Code and Government Code related to the State Water Resources Control Board) and HR 1485 (Catastrophic Wildfire Protection).. to name a few.

The scope of issues this board deals with on a daily basis prevents attention to every detail. Our Board, like anyone in a leadership role, relies on contributions from resources and input from various voluntary groups to make informed decisions. The USFS itself openly solicits voluntary public contributions. The Coordination Committee's function is to bring before the Board of Supervisors concerns raised by its members, constituents or even the Board itself to receive direction on those issues our Board deems necessary to pursue. As an individual supervisor we cannot do it all or be everywhere. We must rely on the public and volunteerism to inform us. The face to face negotiating with the federal government still lies with our Board. Policy is still set by the board. And, each supervisor, should they so choose, can still open their own dialogue with federal government.

While there may be some minimal cost associated with a Coordination Advisory Committee, it is clear that the cost savings to the county related expenditures after a preventable fire such as Angora (which may include a damaged water supply infrastructure) or the gained revenue presented by careful consideration of the economic impact of actions taken at the Federal level..... by a well-informed Board of Supervisors, will lead to a multiple positive net gain for the county of El Dorado. A Coordination Advisory Committee will lead to a more cultural and economically stable El Dorado County.