

Received 11/15/2017
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EL DORADO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**524 Main Street
Placerville, CA 95667**

EDC Community Services
Dept. of Transportation
2850 Fair Lane Ct.
Placerville, CA 95667
Attn: Donna Keeler

November 1, 2017

Re: Response to Invitation to Comment

El Dorado Trail Extension

Dear Ms. Keeler:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the cultural resource impact of your proposed trail project.

As with any project in this part of El Dorado County, extreme care should be taken to research the background of the site, and to have a cultural resource professional examine its surface features. Please devote additional narrative to the specific impacts caused by the Trail Extension Project. Due to the extensive history of intense prehistoric and historical use in this area, the El Dorado County Historical Society has focused its attention on the completeness of the prospect's discussion of impacts.

Our membership responded with concerns that with the construction of the trail, the railroad will remain fully functional as it has for 130 years. The mitigated Negative Declaration documents do not seem to address this issue nor do the cross sections presented represent the tracks remaining in place. This could be an item of major concern to our Society and the general community as a whole.

Douglas A. Walker

Douglas A. Walker
Resource Coordinator, EDCHS
edhistoricalsociety@gmail.com



Exhibit B

Donna Keeler <donna.keeler@edcgov.us>

El Dorado Trail IS/MND

3 messages

Donna Keeler <donna.keeler@edcgov.us>
To: Jackie Neau <jackieno@gmail.com>
Cc: Dustin Harrington <dustin.harrington@edcgov.us>

Mon, Nov 13, 2017 at 5:06 PM

Hi Jackie,

Below is the link to the environmental document. The

<https://www.edcgov.us/Government/dot/Documents/Public%20Review%20Draft%20ISMND%2010-14-17.pdf>

The Project drawings start on Page 3-5.

Feel free to contact me or Dustin once you've had a chance to review the trail placement and crossings. Dustin can be reached at 621-5950.

When you get a chance, can you send me your mailing address and the correct address for the Friends of El Dorado Trail? I am so sorry you did not get the notification.

Talk to you soon,
Donna

--

Donna Keeler
Principal Planner
County of El Dorado
Community Development Services
Transportation Department
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-3829 / Fax (530) 626-0387
donna.keeler@edcgov.us

Jackie Neau <jackieno@gmail.com>
To: Donna Keeler <donna.keeler@edcgov.us>
Cc: Dustin Harrington <dustin.harrington@edcgov.us>

Fri, Nov 17, 2017 at 10:48 AM

Hi Donna,

Contact Info:

Jackie Neau
1525 Sean Drive
Placerville, CA 95667
jackieno@gmail.com
530.621.0649

Exhibit B

Friends of El Dorado Trail
P.O. Box 1388
Placerville, California 95667
eldoradotrail@gmail.com

Just a few comments, that jump out:

- The more the class 1 can be kept to one side of the tracks, the more it reduces user conflict. There are 3 separate uses, class 1 trail, dirt trail, and excursion train, all traveling in 1-2 directions at any given time, which means a minimum of 5 ways of traffic will potentially be converging at several points. Not ideal.
- I would like to emphasize extra attention be given to staging areas, so as not to destroy the dirt trail use.
- The signage to be included seems vague.
- The signage indicated that it's going to include the excursion train signage. Is that correct? The SPTC Master Plan specifically states excursion trains will not be subsidized with taxpayer funds.

Attached are comments from Don Rose. Don Rose is the key person working on the dirt trail improvements.

Thanks and have a great weekend!

Jackie

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Comments on Initial Study - El Dorado Trail Extension by Don Rose.docx

20K

Donna Keeler <donna.keeler@edcgov.us>
To: Jackie Neau <jackieno@gmail.com>
Cc: Dustin Harrington <dustin.harrington@edcgov.us>

Fri, Nov 17, 2017 at 2:22 PM

Hi Jackie,

Thanks for email with comments from and Don. We'll review and attach them to the staff report to the BOS with other late comment letters received.

We checked our mailing list and the IS/MND Notice was sent to The Friends of El Dorado Trail at P.O. Box 1388, Placerville. Is it possible that another member of the group picked it up? We don't anticipate sending out additional notices on this project, bur regardless I'll hang on to your home address just in case.

17-1246 D 3 of 6

11/17/2017

Edcgov.us Mail - El Dorado Trail IS/MND

Have a great weekend as well!
Best,
Donna

[Quoted text hidden]

Exhibit B

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Don Rose's comments:

It was disappointing to see that the natural trail was not mentioned in the Initial Study for the El Dorado Trail Extension -- Missouri Flat Road to the Town of Eldorado and Missouri Flat Road Bike/Pedestrian Over Crossing Project, other than briefly in passing. It was my understanding that the environmental study would incorporate the natural trail as part of the project. Unfortunately, the paved trail as proposed would obliterate much of the existing natural trail, including the sections from the El Dorado train station to Milepost 143, the entire section from Blanchard Road to Forni Road, and from Forni Road to the industrial spur siding approximately 400 feet west of the west end of the Wal-Mart building.

It is important that the natural trail be preserved through this section of the SPTC corridor, as it is an important part of the 30 mile natural trail in the corridor, and provides an important recreation asset for those who prefer recreational pursuits of a more rugged and adventurous nature. The section in question has been signed as a legitimate trail for approximately 10 years, but has been in use for much longer than that. The following should be considered as potential ways to preserve the natural trail in this section:

1. From Blanchard Road to the industrial spur siding west of the Wal-Mart building, on the side of the railroad track opposite the existing natural trail and the proposed paved trail, the terrain is quite flat, both side to side and longitudinally. Therefore, consideration should be given to building the paved trail on the opposite side of the track from the existing dirt trail. At the same time, the existing dirt trail should be improved by moving it farther from the track in those sections where it is close to the track. This would require some clearing of brush.
2. Alternatively, a new natural trail could be created on the opposite side of the track from the existing natural trail in those sections where the paved trail would obliterate the existing natural trail. With the recent brush clearing done by the CCC in this section, little additional work would be required. A new natural trail could be easily created on the opposite side of the track simply by weed eating grass and raking debris, with the following exceptions:
 - a. It appears that the CCC failed to clear a section of heavily wooded area on the north side of the track west of Wal-Mart, which appears in the upper right quadrant of Sheet 6 of the Initial Study, situated directly across the track from the industrial buildings. Thinning that brush would open up a flat bench above the track, which would be perfect for a trail, though in the interim the natural trail could run along the shoulder of the track.
 - b. Sheet 4 shows a shallow creek just east of Blanchard Road on the south side of the track, and a more extensive wetland further to the east. The trail crossing for the first could be accommodated with a rock armored wet crossing or a short puncheon bridge. For the second, more extensive wetland, the trail could cross over the end of the existing railroad culvert and skirt the wetland at the base of the railroad embankment. These methods of dealing with wetlands have been approved for other sections of the corridor.

Exhibit B

c. Just east of Forni Rd. on the north side of the track is a low area overgrown with blackberry bushes, with a large fallen pine tree parallel to the track. The fallen tree needs to be removed, and the area cleared of blackberry vines.

d. In one or two places, a short section of bench cut-trail will need to be constructed to negotiate slopes that angle out from the track.

Also, the natural trail access point on the west side of Blanchard Road consists of a steep slope, which is too steep to climb. It needs to be made more user-friendly.

All of the above labor can be accomplished easily by volunteers using hand tools, with the exception of the removal of the large fallen pine tree east of Forni Rd.

Unfortunately, from the El Dorado station to milepost 143, the only option is to have the paved trail and the natural trail on the same side of the track, but the terrain is flat and the corridor should be wide enough to accommodate that.

Please note that it is important to maintain a natural trail separate from the paved trail to accommodate the needs of natural trail users. According to the 2017 survey conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association, in the United States there are 9 million mountain bikers, 8.5 million trail runners, and 42 million hikers. My own research indicates that there are 4 to 5 million equestrian trail riders. This total of nearly 65 million natural trail users equates to nearly 22% of the population over six years old in the United States. The greater Sacramento metropolitan area, consisting of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo counties, has a population of 2.5 million people, 22% of which equates to 500,000 natural trail users in the four county area. The popularity of natural trail recreation is obvious at places such as Cronan Ranch near Coloma and Hidden Falls near Auburn, where parking lots are full by midday on weekends. Hidden Falls has now gone so far as to institute a reservation system.

These recreational users of natural trails are interested in an adventurous experience on rugged natural terrain. A flat gravel shoulder of a paved trail will not provide for the needs of these user groups. Trail runners and hikers enjoy negotiating the ups and downs of rugged terrain. Mountain bikers have bikes that are specially equipped for rough surfaces, and equestrians do not like riding along the shoulder of paved trails because road bikers travel at speeds of 15 mph or more, and they're very quiet, so a road bike approaching a horse from behind often startles it, causing it to bolt.

Finally, in planning and using staging areas, I hope that attention is given to not disrupting the existing natural trail. And I also hope that the Department of Transportation can cooperate with the trail community in the planning and construction of the project