

1 INTRODUCTION

The Placer County (County) Department of Facility Services is proposing the North Fork American River Trail Project (proposed project), which consists of a 14.2-mile multiple-use, natural-surface trail and two staging termini.

This Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been prepared to respond to comments received on the August 2007 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the proposed project, and to describe corrections and revisions made to the DEIR. The FEIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 et seq.).

Public Resources Code Section 21091 and Section 15105(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines state that the public review period for the draft or recirculated EIRs shall be not less than 30 days and should be no more than 60 days. When a DEIR is submitted to the State Clearinghouse, as is the case here, the public review period shall normally be not less than 45 days. The DEIR's public review began on August 7, 2007 and ended on September 24, 2007. A public comment meeting was conducted by the County on August 23, 2007.

The FEIR consists of a summary description of the proposed project, list of commenters, comments on the DEIR, responses to significant environmental points raised in those comments, revisions to the DEIR, and the mitigation monitoring and reporting program. The County will consider the DEIR and FEIR together when it reviews the proposed project for action.

These documents are available for review at the following addresses:

Placer County
Department of Facility Services
11476 C Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

Auburn Library
350 Nevada Street
Auburn, CA 95603

Placer County Clerk-Recorder's Office
2954 Richardson Drive
Auburn, CA 95603

1.1 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The specific objectives of the proposed project analyzed in the DEIR are to:

- ▶ Provide access to the North Fork American River canyon within the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) to a wide variety of users.
- ▶ Route the trail to discourage informal connections to the lake/river.
- ▶ Allow multiple nonmotorized uses along the trail.
- ▶ Reduce visibility of trail from river/lake.
- ▶ Minimize environmental impacts of trail construction, including the avoidance of sensitive areas.
- ▶ Promote safe grades and safe alignments.
- ▶ Connect to staging termini.
- ▶ Provide connections to existing trails.

- ▶ Ensure emergency access to trail.
- ▶ Minimize conflicts with private property.
- ▶ Design an alignment to minimize conflicts with trail users.

To meet these project objectives, the County proposes construction of the following project components:

- ▶ a 14.2-mile natural-surface, multiple-use trail accommodating hiking, biking and equestrian use;
- ▶ bridges and stream fords to accommodate stream crossings;
- ▶ two staging areas at the trail termini (Foresthill Road and Ponderosa Way);
- ▶ portable restroom at the Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus;
- ▶ signage; and
- ▶ informational kiosks at both staging termini.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE FINAL EIR

As required by CEQA and Section 15088 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the lead agency (Placer County) is required to evaluate and provide written responses to comments on significant environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the North Fork American River Trail DEIR. The DEIR is incorporated by reference in its entirety, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150.

Comments on the project were received in three ways.

- ▶ Written comments were received by letter or e-mail during the public comment period.
- ▶ Oral comments were received at the August 23, 2007, public comment meeting.
- ▶ Written comments were received at the August 23, 2007, public comment meeting.

This FEIR contains public comments on the DEIR received from agencies, organizations, and individuals.

1.3 DEIR PUBLIC CIRCULATION, FEIR CERTIFICATION, AND FUTURE STEPS IN PROJECT APPROVAL

On August 7, 2007, the County released the DEIR for public review and comment for a 45-day period ending September 24, 2007. A Notice of Availability was filed with the Placer County clerk's office; published in the Auburn Journal and Colfax Record, and distributed to a broad mailing list. A meeting to receive public input on the DEIR was held at the Placer County Planning Commission hearing room on August 23, 2007, and comments were made by various individuals at that meeting. Written comments were received from agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Section 15090 of the State CEQA Guidelines states that prior to approving a project, the lead agency shall certify that:

- ▶ the FEIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA;
- ▶ the FEIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency, and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the FEIR prior to approving the project; and
- ▶ the FEIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

The County will hold a public hearing as part of its Board of Supervisors meeting on August 26, 2008, to consider certification of the FEIR and to decide whether to approve the proposed project.

1.4 ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT OF THE FINAL EIR

This document is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, “Introduction,” describes the purpose and content of the FEIR, provides an overview of the environmental review process, and presents a summary of the proposed project.

Chapter 2, “Master Responses,” contains master responses to environmental comment issues raised by multiple commenters.

Chapter 3, “Responses to Comments on the DEIR,” contains a list of all parties who submitted comments on the DEIR during the public review period, copies of the comment letters received, and individual responses to the comments.

Chapter 4, “Revisions to the DEIR,” presents revisions to the DEIR text made in response to comments, or to amplify, clarify or make insignificant modifications or corrections. Changes in the text are signified by ~~strikeouts~~ where text is removed and by underline where text is added.

Chapter 5, “Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan,” includes a list of all mitigation measures included in the DEIR and identifies the individuals or organizations responsible for implementing and verifying implementation of those measures.

Chapter 6, “References,” includes the references to documents used to support the comment responses.

Chapter 7, “List of Preparers,” lists the individuals who assisted in the preparation of this document.