

## **BOARD TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**FROM:** MICHAEL J. JOHNSON, AICP - Director of Planning

**SUBJECT:** Western States Trail – Resolution in Support of a National Historic and Scenic Trail

**DATE:** June 12, 2007

---

**SUMMARY/ACTION REQUESTED:** Approve a resolution supporting an amendment to the United States Code designating the Western States Trail/Tevis Cup Loop as a National Historic and Scenic Trail. The resolution will be forwarded to Senators Feinstein and Boxer with a request from the Western States Trail Foundation and the Western States Endurance Run Foundation for the introduction of new legislation to study and designate the trail. A similar resolution will be requested of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

**BACKGROUND:** The Western States Trail starts at Squaw Valley and ends in Auburn, for a total length of 100 miles. The trail ascends from the floor of Squaw Valley to the Emigrant Pass. From Emigrant Pass, the trail follows the original route used by the gold and silver miners of the 1850's. From its high point at Emigrant Pass the trail extends westerly, climbing another 15,540 feet and descending 22,970 feet before reaching Auburn. The trail is well known and nationally recognized for 2 endurance races: 1) Western States Endurance Run and 2) the Tevis Cup. Auburn's moniker, "The Endurance Capital of the World", is directly linked to the use of the Western States Trail.

**DISCUSSION:** The trail is presently designated a National Recreational Trail. This new designation would add the Scenic and Historic designations to the same route. This elevates the status of the Western States Trail to be on a par with other nationally-recognized trails such as the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Iditarod National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

These designations carry no regulatory implications upon the one section of land (less than 640 acres or 1 square mile) that remains in private ownership. "Wilderness" or "Wild and Scenic" designations have regulatory implications – the "Historic" and "Scenic" designations do not. Furthermore, the designation conveys no regulatory implications over future federal land use and has no effect on current authorized federal projects, to include the Auburn Dam. The designation will occur after a study is completed which validates the historic and scenic quality of the trail

and that the pattern of land ownership along the route ensures trail integrity. This study will be jointly prepared by the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior.

One of the benefits of the designation, other than additional national recognition, will be ability of the private support foundations to expand their public outreach and opportunities to secure public support for trail maintenance.

The Western States Trail Foundation and the Western States Endurance Run Foundation have consulted with the staffs of Senators Feinstein and Boxer and with the counsel to both the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and Committee on Environment and Public Works. They have been advised to submit a request for the new designation to both Senators with an expression of support from both Placer and El Dorado Counties. The Board's resolution and letter of support will be transmitted directly to both Senators.

**FISCAL IMPACTS:** There are no fiscal impacts associated with this Board action. Indirect benefits (e.g., sales tax and transit occupancy tax revenue) may accrue to the County from the national recognition that the trail will receive and the continued use of the trail for popular endurance races and other events.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The staff has the following recommendations for the Board's consideration:

1. Authorize the Chairman to sign the attached resolution.
2. Authorize the Chairman to sign the attached cover letter to Senators Feinstein and Boxer.

Respectfully Submitted,

MICHAEL J. JOHNSON, AICP  
Director of Planning

**EXHIBITS:** The following exhibits are provided for the Board's consideration:

- Exhibit A:** Draft Board of Supervisors Resolution
- Exhibit B:** Draft Cover Letter to Senators Feinstein and Boxer
- Exhibit C:** Western States Trail Route
- Exhibit D:** Western States Trail - Fact Sheet

MJ/LEC/lec

T:\pin\loren\os\bosmemo\BOS western states staffrpt060407.doc

cc: Tom Christofk

**Exhibit A**  
**Board of Supervisors Resolution**

Before the Board of Supervisors  
**County of Placer, State of California**

In the matter of: **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT  
OF STUDY AND DESIGNATION OF  
THE WESTERN STATES NATIONAL  
HISTORIC AND SCENIC TRAIL**

Resol. No: \_\_\_\_\_

Related to Ord. No: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS,

WHEREAS,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_.

by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Attest:  
Clerk of said Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
WHEREAS, the Western States Trail (with Tevis Cup Loop) extends 100 miles in length from Squaw Valley to Auburn, California, passing through the Counties of Placer and El Dorado; and

WHEREAS, the Western States Trail initially came into being as a Native American track, and in the middle years of the nineteenth century developed into the principal

route of travel by foot and stock between the gold fields of California and the silver fields of Nevada; and

WHEREAS, William Brewer in his journal ("Up and Down California") for August 30, 1863 describes his travel from Squaw Valley to Foresthill along the Western States Trail, including the route now known as the Tevis Cup Loop; and

WHEREAS, the Western States Trail today largely retains its single-track character as it was used in the nineteenth century, remaining the most intact historic trans-Sierra crossing, unaffected by the presence of roads or railroads; and

WHEREAS, the portion of the Western States Trail from Last Chance to Michigan Bluff has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge ("No Hands Bridge") that carries the Western States Trail across the Middle Fork of the American River, boundary between the Counties of Placer and Eldorado, has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Western States Trail embraces the dramatic scenery of the entire watershed of the Middle Fork of the American River, ranging from the Sierra crest and Granite Chief Wilderness; forests of Red Star Ridge, Duncan Canyon Roadless Area, and Deadwood Ridge; the mighty and steep canyons of the Middle Fork and its principal tributaries; to the native oaks and grasses of the Sierra foothills; and

WHEREAS, in 1931 Placer County Constable Robert Montgomery Watson located and marked the Western States Trail; in 1955 the Western States Trail became the route of the world's first and premiere 100-mile endurance trail ride, the Western States (Tevis Cup) Trail Ride; and in 1974 the Western States Trail became the route of the world's first and premiere 100-mile endurance run, the Western States Endurance Run; and

WHEREAS the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, in their respective areas of responsibility have designated the entire length of the Western States Trail as a National Recreational Trail;

WHEREAS designation of the Western States National Historic and Scenic Trail conveys no regulatory implications over future federal land use and has no effect on current authorized federal projects, to include the Auburn Dam;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

(1) The Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer, California, hereby expresses its support for designation by Act of Congress of the Western States Trail (with Tevis Cup Loop), as a National Historic and Scenic Trail, as defined in Section 1244 of Title 16 of the United States Code; and

(2) This Board of Supervisors urges the Congress of the United States, through its California delegation, to enact such legislation, authorization, and appropriations as may be necessary to secure the inclusion of the Western States Trail in the National Historic and Scenic Trail System; and

(3) This Board of Supervisors authorizes the Chairman to communicate this resolution and letter of support to Senators Feinstein and Boxer.

# County of Placer Board of Supervisors

175 FULWEILER AVENUE  
AUBURN, CALIFORNIA 95603  
530/889-4010 • FAX: 530/889-4009  
PLACER CO. TOLL FREE # 800-488-4308

EC. "ROCKY" ROCKHOLM  
District 1

ROBERT WEYGANDT  
District 2

JIM HOLMES  
District 3

KIRK UHLER  
District 4

BRUCE KRANZ  
District 5



The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Inclusion of Western States Trail in the National Historic and Scenic Trail System

Dear Senators Feinstein and Boxer:

On behalf of the County of Placer, I am pleased to provide to you with the attached Board of Supervisors Resolution that supports the passage of legislation leading to the designation of the Western States Trail as a National Historic and Scenic Trail.

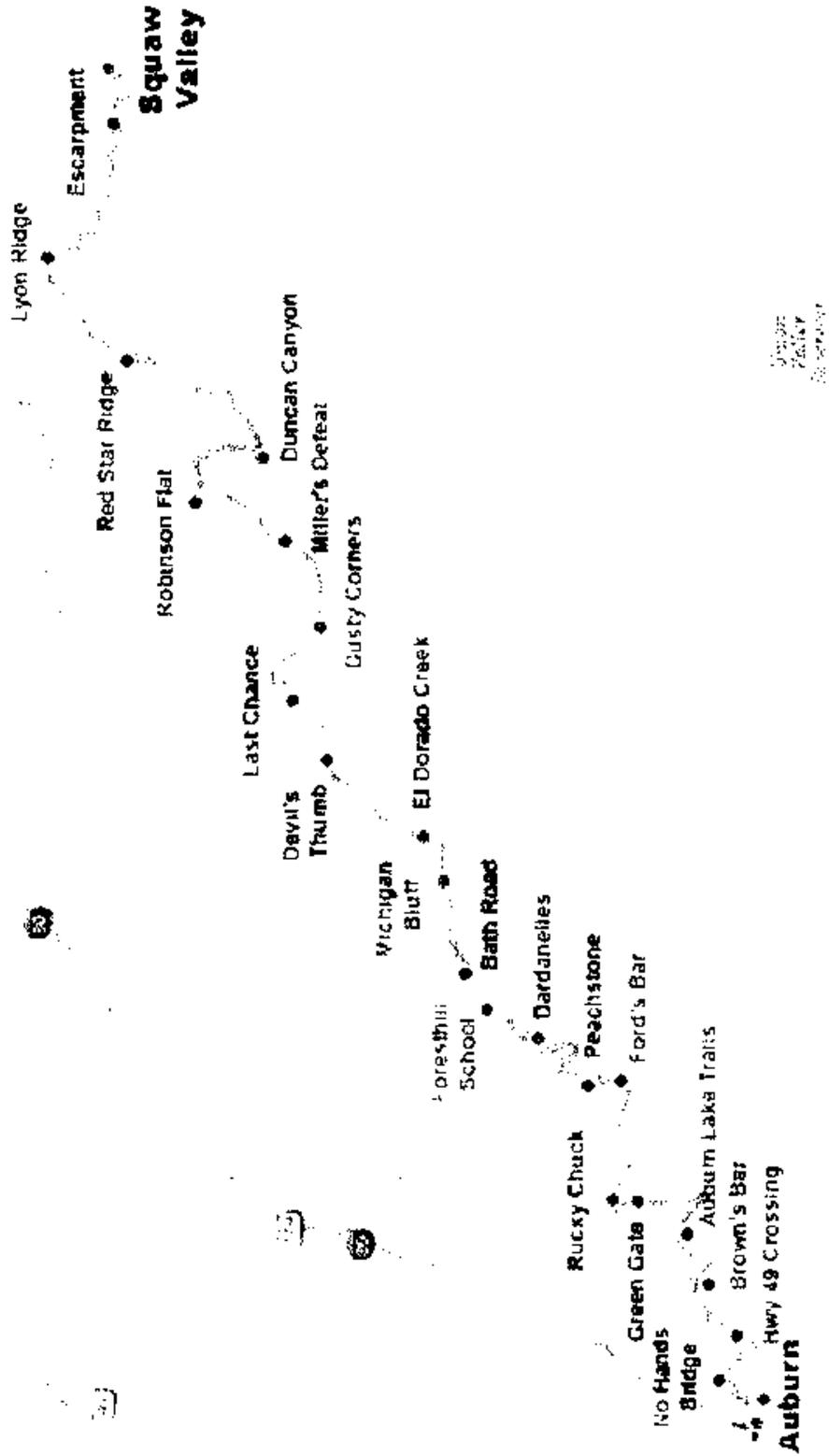
As you know the Western States Trail has played an important role in the Native American and Gold Rush-era history of California and the West. The Trail is unique and worthy of national recognition due to its historical integrity and the quality of the scenic environment as it passes from the summit of the Sierra Nevada at the Emigrant Pass to the historic downtown in the City of Auburn. This historical and scenic character of the Trail is combined with its international reputation as the location of two premiere endurance races: the Western States Trail Ride (Tevis Cup), and the Western States Endurance Run.

The Placer County Board of Supervisors is encouraged by your interest and support for this effort. If there is any assistance that our staff can provide, please do not hesitate to ask. On behalf of my fellow Board members, thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, Placer County Board of Supervisors

Exhibit C  
Western States Trail Route



335

**EXHIBIT D**  
**Western States Trail Fact Sheet**

- The Western States Trail (WST) is one of only a few east-west trail routes from the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada to the Sacramento Valley that is largely untouched by development.
- Before the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, the WST provided one of the few links between California and the boomtowns that emerged in Nevada following the discovery of silver.
- Except for one parcel of land now in negotiation for public acquisition, the trail is entirely on public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service or the California Department of Parks and Recreation or private lands on which the owners have granted a permanent public easement for trail use.
- Since 1955 the WST has been the home of the Western States 100 Miles One Day Ride (Tevis Cup)
- Since 1974 the WST has been the home of the Western States 100 Endurance Run - the "crown jewel" of ultra-marathons.
- The highest point on the WST route is the Emigrant Pass at an elevation of 8,774 feet.
- The lowest point on the WST route is the North Fork American River crossing on "No Hands Bridge" at 800 feet in elevation.
- From its high point at Emigrant Pass the trail extends westerly, climbing another 15,540 feet and descending 22,970 feet before reaching Auburn.
- The trail starts at the Robie Equestrian Camp south of Truckee and east of the Truckee River and ends in Auburn, CA.
- The maintenance, upkeep and improvements of the WST is almost entirely performed by volunteer resources contributed by the equestrian and running foundations that host the premier 100 mile endurance events noted above.