

June 4, 2008

## Working on the El Dorado Trail one section at a time

By Rosemary Revell | Democrat staff writer



*A NEW SECTION of the El Dorado Trail is officially opening Saturday. The ceremony will take place at the Jacquier Trailhead parking lot, Jacquier Road in Placerville starting at 9 a.m. Democrat photo by Pat Dollins*

National Trails Day is traditionally the first Saturday in June in the United States. The objectives of the day include promotion of public awareness of and appreciation for America's trails as well as encouraging cooperative efforts among different trail users: walkers, joggers, hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.

Early June is generally a time of moderate weather motivating the one million nation-wide participants to take part in a variety of trail activities in over 3,000 events.

One of the most frequently occurring activities on National Trails Day is the opening or dedication of new trails or trail sections.

This year, events in Placerville are right in sync with National Trails Day.

On Saturday at 9 a.m. the El Dorado County Trails Advisory Committee and Trails Now are inviting bicyclists, walkers, joggers, equestrians, and trail enthusiasts to join in the opening ceremonies for the new section of El Dorado Trail running from Park Way Drive to Los Trampas Drive in Placerville.

The festivity is taking place in the parking lot on Jacquier Road. Admission is free to the public, and water and snacks are being provided. Local dignitaries will be on hand to speak. Following the ceremony, the public is invited to walk one mile up the new section of trail for a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The El Dorado Trail is now more than six miles in length. Our goal is to have the trail go from Sacramento American River Bikeway to the Tahoe Rim Trail. We have to figure out how to build a bridge over the American River first, though. Right now, we send the Pony Express mail over by pulley," said Trails Now chair person Eileen Crim, 69, of Pleasant Valley.

El Dorado County Supervisor Jack Sweeney and Placerville Mayor Carl Hagen will be on hand to speak as well as Lester Lubetkin from the United States Forest Service; manager of airport, parks and grounds Jordan Postlewait; El Dorado County Commissioner of Parks and Recreation Robert Smart; Crim; and Melba Ray-Leal, author of *Women and the Pony Express*."

Smart is master of ceremonies and he has already informed the speakers they each have five minutes. Each speaker will be addressing different trail concerns.

Melba recently rescued three 800-pound granite markers during the highway improvement in Camino. The milestones will be relocated rather than discarded. The milestones have long been landmarks on the local scene. Placed every mile along Highway 50 between Placerville and South Lake Tahoe, they announce the distance from Placerville," Crim said.

RayLeal also participates in the Pony Express reenactment, a designated historical event commemorating the famous riders. As a rider, Ray-Leal embodies the title of her book.

The Pony Express was a private mail delivery service that sought to get a government contract. Although the company did not succeed in that aim, the riders created a legend and made history.

The Pony Express trail was added to the National Trails System in 1992 and is preserved by the National Park Service. Locally, the trail runs from Pollock Pines to Placerville and on to Folsom and Old Sacramento.

El Dorado Trail has a serendipitous history of opening new sections of trail on dates of some national significance. On National Public Lands Day, Sept. 29, 2007, the Trails Advisory Committee and Trails Now hosted a similar event celebrating the opening of a natural trail between Missouri Flat Road in Placerville and Oriental Street in El Dorado.

Crim heard that California Trails and Greenways Conference was giving awards for trail-related events and activities, so she applied for one. The 2007 trail section opening ceremony won an award.

The award was presented at the conference held from May 29 through 31 at the Bahia Resort on Mission Bay in San Diego. While Crim did not travel to San Diego to accept the award, her appointed representative was on hand to receive it.

The purpose of the California Trails and Greenways Conference is to present a forum for education regarding non-motorized recreational trails in California.

On Saturday at 9 a.m., the opening ceremony for a new section of El Dorado Trail will take place at the trailhead in the parking lot on Jacquier Road. There is no cost to the public and water and snacks will be available. After a short hike of one mile, there will be a ribbon cutting.

For information call Crim at (530) 644-3322.

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