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New trail section heads west

By Ken Paglia | Democrat staff writer

PLACERVILLE resident Kathryn Miele and her Labrador Vito try out the new portion of the El Dorado Trail near Forni Road. The trail runs from near the jail to Missouri Flat. Work continues on remodeling the railroad trestle over Weber Creek. Democrat photo by Pat Dollins

A celebration Saturday will commemorate the newest paved section of the El Dorado Trail.

A mile-and-a-half section from Forni Road across from the government center to the Weber Creek trestle was completed last week.

This Saturday is National Trails Day, and the organization Trails Now is holding a celebration to introduce the new trail section.

At 10 a.m. at the government center on Fair Lane in Placerville there will be a presentation by El Dorado County Supervisor Ray Nutting.

Following the presentation participants will walk or bike the new section.

"We want people to enjoy it and get out for health sake, fun sake, and recreation sake. We want for people to be part of their community and get out and see the trail. We want people to know another part of the history of the trail corridor is still alive," said Melba J. Ray-Leal, chairman for the National Trails Day celebration event.

Part of the project is still being completed, as the Weber Creek bridge is currently being renovated. Once the bridge is renovated, a trail can be completed that would allow people to go from Forni Road to the town of El Dorado.

Eileen Crim, chairman of Trails Now, told the Mountain Democrat, "This one Saturday is huge because the historic bridge is being renovated for use, and we'll connect the community of Placerville with the business and cultural district of Missouri Flat Road."

Trails Now is a non-profit group that promotes the development of the El Dorado Trail.

Last year the section from Jacquier Road to Camino Heights was completed. A section from behind Wal-Mart on Missouri Flat Road to Oriental Street in El Dorado was also completed last year.

Crim has been involved in developing local trails at one level or another for almost 40 years, she said.

The project to be commemorated Saturday has been a collaborative effort five years in the making with help from the El Dorado County Transportation Commission, the Recreation Commission, the Trail Advisory Committee and El Dorado County Public Works, Crim said.

The El Dorado County Department of Transportation has oversight of the project.

The ultimate goal of Trails Now is to have an open trail corridor from Sacramento to South Lake Tahoe. The historical rail corridor spans Folsom to Camino.

East of Camino the National Historical Trail goes from Pacific House to South Lake Tahoe, but there is a missing link from Pacific House to get across the American River Canyon, Ray-Leal said.

From Sacramento to Folsom the American River Parkway connects with the rail corridor, she said.

Participants on Saturday should look for the Administration Building sign at the government center (300-360 Fair Lane). The celebration will be held in the area near the sign.

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