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# El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park

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A Plan for the Development of a Satellite  
Museum in the town of El Dorado on the  
Sacramento Placerville Transportation  
Corridor





## **Executive Summary**

**The El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park will be a county museum satellite facility where historical railroading artifacts will be displayed and operated for the enjoyment and education of the public. Located in the town of El Dorado utilizing the existing Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC) right of way, near Oriental Street, the Railroad History Center will recreate the historic Southern Pacific El Dorado Depot, have additional track for railroad cars, locomotives and support equipment, and will have an operating excursion train, along with visitor services, exhibit and maintenance facilities. The Park includes a restroom, picnic tables, a play structure, and paved and natural trails.**

**The Railroad History Center and Park is being developed in phases, with the first phase completed. The excursion train now offers rides to the public every Sundays on inspection cars between Shingle Springs and Diamond Springs, and track maintenance and fuel reduction in the operating territory is being done on a regular basis. In the future, existing artifacts restored by County Museum Volunteers, will be placed at the site and displayed, a replica of the El Dorado Depot will be built and the excursion train will continue to enhance the authenticity of the living history experience.**

**The El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park will be an important asset to the County of El Dorado. It will provide an exceptional location to better exhibit and interpret a distinctive collection of artifacts, relieving crowded conditions the County Museum. It will anchor the El Dorado Western Railroad, an excursion railroad currently offering public rides between Shingle Springs and Diamond Springs and preserving the tracks from the County Line to Diamond Springs. It will provide a tourist destination to the town of El Dorado and its surroundings, and it will place El Dorado County on the map with a far reaching and passionate population of Rail Fans.**

**The Park will provide recreational amenities, as well as parking and a staging area for the El Dorado Trail. The El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park, adjacent to the El Dorado Community Hall will become a dynamic historical and recreational feature for the community.**



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**El Dorado County Historical Museum**

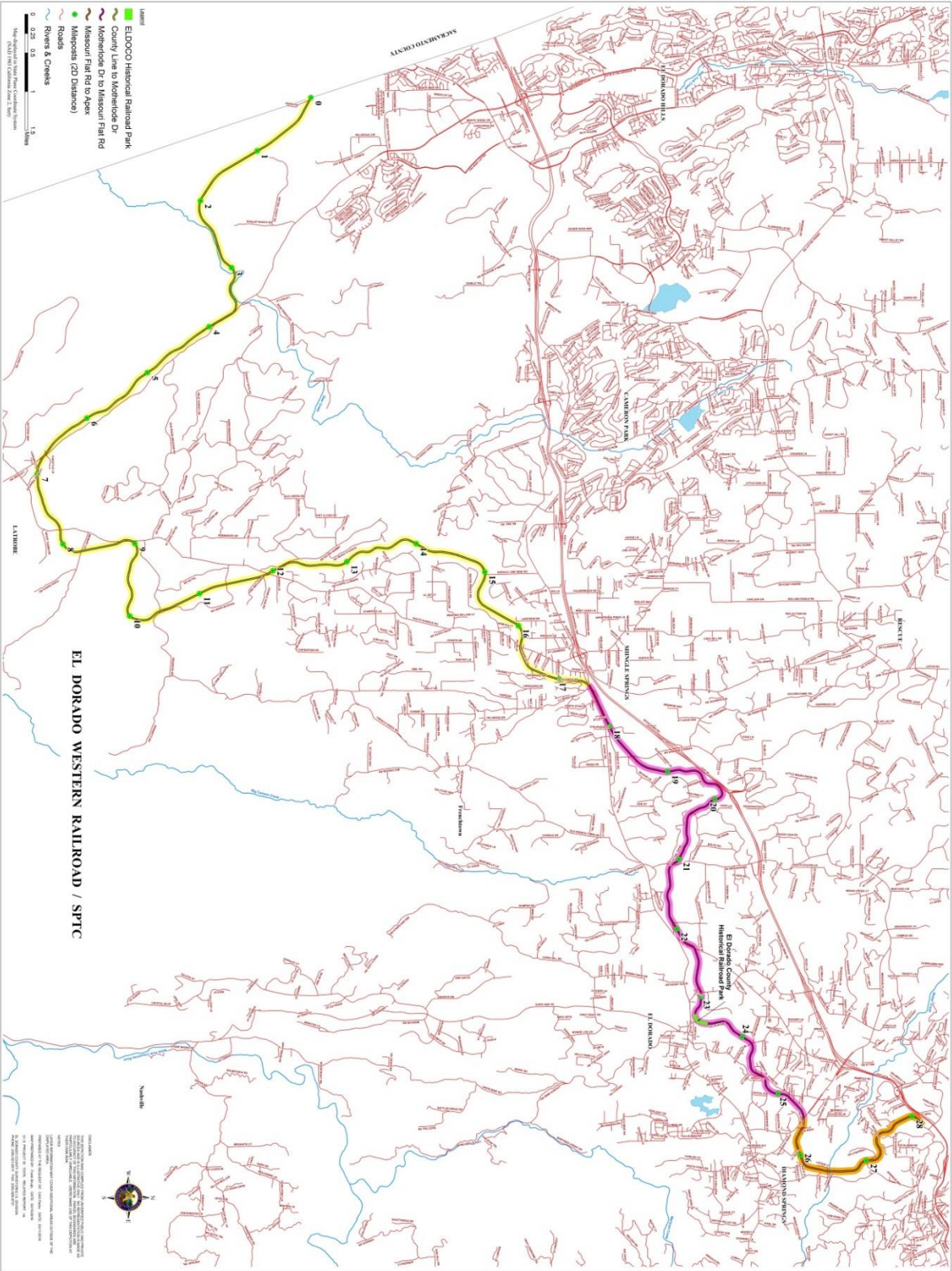
The El Dorado County Historical Museum opened to the public in 1974 at its current location on Placerville Drive. Mary Cory, Museum Administrator since 1999, currently has a staff of 110 volunteers carrying out the day to day functions of the County Museum. The Board of Supervisors appoints seven “at large” members of the public to the Historical Museum Commission who provide oversight to the County Museum and make recommendations to the Board regarding County Museum policy and future plans. The Museum is a division of the Library Department.



The Mission of the County Museum is:

- To exhibit and interpret the heritage of El Dorado County
- To be a valuable historical resource to the community
- To collect, document and preserve artifacts and records significant to the county’s history
- To provide a rewarding experience for volunteers and enhance the museum’s significance to the community

Map of the Sacramento Placerville Transportation Corridor (with the Park Location labeled)



## **EL DORADO COUNTY HISTORICAL RAILROAD HISTORY CENTER and PARK**

The El Dorado County Historical Museum has been collecting, preserving and restoring artifacts from the County's rich railroading and logging past for many years with the goal of developing a satellite museum to display and operate these historically valuable artifacts in an accurate context.

The Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC) adjacent to the Town of El Dorado was identified as a suitable location where the county's railroading history can be presented to school groups, tourists and the general public, and the history of railroad technology, such as steam locomotion, will be interpreted. The SPTC in the town of El Dorado is ideally positioned with a wide right of way, the Community Center close by, and the concept of the historical railroad park warmly received by local merchants and residents. The Railroad History Center and Park is in compliance with the Master Plan for the SPTC adopted by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in 2003. The conceptual Plan for the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2009. The El Dorado County Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the development of a park in this location in the El Dorado County Parks and Trails Master Plan, adopted in 2012.

The El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park will operate under the direction of the Museum Administrator and the Parks Manager, utilizing volunteers to carry out many of the day to day functions.

The site plan for the Railroad History Center and Park includes a public restroom, the placement of park amenities such as picnic tables and a play structure, as well as parking for equestrian trailers. Established and well-used trails run through the park location. A draft



CEQA study has been completed for the area. The future location of a replica of the El Dorado Depot, a static display building, a Restoration Shop, and additional track have been determined. An excursion train operation, the El Dorado Western Railroad, operates every Sunday alternating boarding locations between Shingle Springs and El Dorado to provide a living history experience for visitors.

*Southern Pacific Railroad's El Dorado Passenger and Freight Station with the El Dorado School, now the Community Hall in the left background*

## Current Resources – infrastructure, artifacts, equipment, archives, buildings

### **Sacramento Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC)**

After Southern Pacific ceased operation on the rail in El Dorado County, the SPTC-Joint Powers Authority was created to govern and maintain the corridor. The SPTC extends from the City of Sacramento, through the City of Folsom and the County of Sacramento, and into El Dorado County to the Apex, near the future County Justice Center.

- Railroad Tracks in El Dorado County begins at the western county line (milepost 119.4) through Latrobe, Shingle Springs, and El Dorado, and ends in Diamond Springs at Missouri Flat Road (milepost 147.4).
- Trails – known as the El Dorado Trail, a natural trail runs beside the railroad tracks from Folsom, past the county line to Missouri Flat Road, with a paved trail starting on the east side of Missouri Flat Road and continuing through Placerville to Camino Heights.

### **Significant Rail Artifacts**

The El Dorado County Historical Museum has a fine collection of artifacts relating to the railroading history of El Dorado County:

- Diamond & Caldor Lumber Co. Rail Bus and Flat Car
- Diamond & Caldor Lumber Co. Logging Bunk Car
- Diamond & Caldor Lumber Co. Shay Locomotive #4
- Camino Placerville & Lake Tahoe Railroad Caboose (restored)
- Camino Placerville & Lake Tahoe Railroad Track Inspection Car (restored)
- Michigan-California Lumber Co. Porter Steam Locomotive
- Drover's Caboose and Box Car
- Track, plates, spikes, switches and at grade crossing signals preserved from track removal projects; logging carts, and equipment and tools from lumber railroads
- Turntable castings (2) made at Knights Foundry from an original 1882 railroad turntable

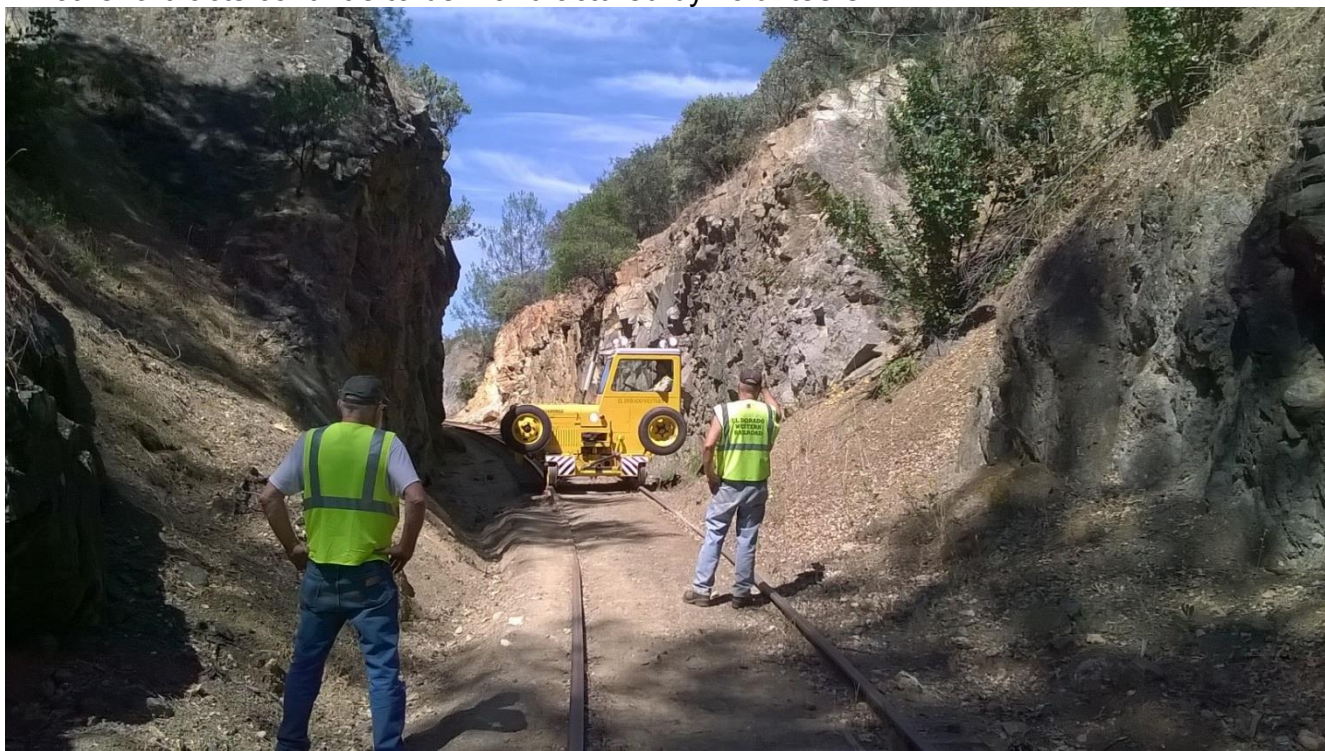


*Restored Camino Placerville & Lake Tahoe Railroad Caboose*

## Railroad Equipment

The El Dorado Western Railway Foundation (see page 15) owns vintage railroad items which reflect the history of railroads, and are currently used or will be used for the excursion railroad and track preservation purposes:

- Plymouth Locomotive (18 ton) built in 1940s
- 40 ft Army Flat Car built in 1945
- Southern Pacific Railroad Cabooses (2) built in the 1940s
- Four 8-seat gasoline powered inspection cars
- GE diesel locomotive (45 ton)
- Track support equipment and tools - track mobile, push cars, tool car, two storage containers and track tools
- Machine Shop at the County Museum – with the vision of an operating historical railroad in mind, volunteers and museum commissioners assembled a comprehensive machine shop at the County Museum in the mid-1990s where unique parts for the Shay Locomotive and other artifacts continue to be manufactured by volunteers



*Track mobile in the Tunnel Cut*

## Railroad Archives

The County Museum and volunteers have amassed a large collection of historical resources relating to the railroad and logging history of the County. The County Museum actively collects photographs, documents, ephemera, artifacts and tools which will be used in the exhibits and displays in the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park. Also, working with the extensive resources of the California State Railroad Museum as well as other railroad museums, we anticipate continuing to build our collections as the development of the Park progresses.



## **Shingle Springs Depot**

Constructed in 1896 and restored in 2006, this historic building was donated to the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation in 2015 by Marlon Ginney to be used in support of the preservation and interpretation of the County's railroad history. The Depot is associated with two parcels stretching between the tracks and Mother Lode Drive, which is used to hold railroad equipment, tools, the restored CP&LT Caboose, and provides public and volunteer parking for EDWR operations.



*El Dorado Western Railroad volunteers at the Shingle Springs Depot on October 11, 2015 at the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event of the Railroad reaching Shingle Springs,*

## **El Dorado Station**

Built by Ed Hagen in 2010 and leased to the County for \$1.00 per year, this temporary building is used for ticket and merchandise sales, tourist information, and railroad history displays.

## **El Dorado Western Railroad Volunteers**

The museum volunteers who work directly with the railroad artifacts bring with them many necessary skills, such as welding, machining, and detail knowledge specific to railroads, track and locomotive restoration. They also have a network of friends, family and other railroad fans to provide the necessary labor to lay track. Many of these volunteers are also members of the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation, the nonprofit group dedicated to the support of the El Dorado Western Railroad.

## **Railroad History Center Development Plan**

Development of this facility, which includes the Railroad History Center, Restroom and Park features, and the paved Class I bicycle trail, is being done jointly by County Museum staff and volunteers, Parks Division staff and Community Development Agency staff. The Railroad History Center, the focus of the County Museum staff and volunteers, is discussed in this document. Park amenities, playgrounds, picnic areas and equestrian parking is the focus of County Parks Division and trail construction is the focus of Community Development Agency.

### Vision

The El Dorado County Railroad History Center will be a premier museum facility dedicated to the preservation, display, interpretation and operation of the County's railroading history including providing tangible railroad experiences for the public.

### Phase One (Completed):

- 1) *Establish Excursion Rail Operation* - The El Dorado Western Railroad living history program has been operating on a regular Sunday schedule year round since 2011 using track inspection cars. Rides alternate between a boarding location in El Dorado and one in Shingle Springs.
- 2) *Maintain and preserve the SPTC Corridor* - Railroad volunteers, under the direction of the County Historical Museum Administrator and Parks Division Manager, are actively doing weed abatement and repair along the Corridor to preserve it for the future.
- 3) *Acquisition of Shingle Springs Depot and Yard* - Due to the generosity of Marlon and Delores Ginney, the Shingle Springs Depot was donated to the El Dorado Western Railroad Foundation. A storage building is located nearby, and additional track and railroad equipment is also on the property. The CP&LT Caboose has been restored and is currently on display at the site.

### Phase Two (Underway in 2016):

- 1) *Finalize the Site Plan and Complete CEQA* - The Site Plan was finalized in 2015 (page 11) at the same time that the Initial Study in compliance with the CEQA was prepared. Approval of the CEQA document is expected in 2016.
- 2) *Restroom Facilities* - The County Parks Division successfully acquired a grant to build restroom facilities at the location. Completion date will be in 2016.
- 3) *Restore Plymouth Locomotive* - Railroad volunteers will finish the restoration of the Plymouth Locomotive in 2016. This working railroad equipment will be used to provide locomotive power for track maintenance equipment and for hauling passenger cars when authorized to do so.
- 4) *Track Improvements* - Install required track signage, replace 200 ties on Main Track and install 100 feet of the historical El Dorado siding, planned for completion in 2016.

### Phase Three (2017-2018):

- 1) *Track Maintenance Yard in Diamond Springs* - Diamond Springs Yard at the end of line at Missouri Flat Road will be a track maintenance yard and storage site. It is a future site for boarding and disembarking passengers.
- 2) *Restoration Shop and Display Track* - This facility will house the County Museum's machine shop and yard for ongoing restoration and maintenance work on the historical artifacts and railroad equipment. Dual track, to accommodate standard and narrow gauge rail-based equipment will be installed for train movement and to display historical rail artifacts.
- 3) *Park facilities* – playground and picnic areas to be planned and developed by the Parks Division
- 4) *Excursion Rail Operation Development* - As approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 17, 2014, a section of track, rail equipment and crew training will be completed to FRA standards, which includes trail improvements, allowing for both Class 1 rail use and trail use.

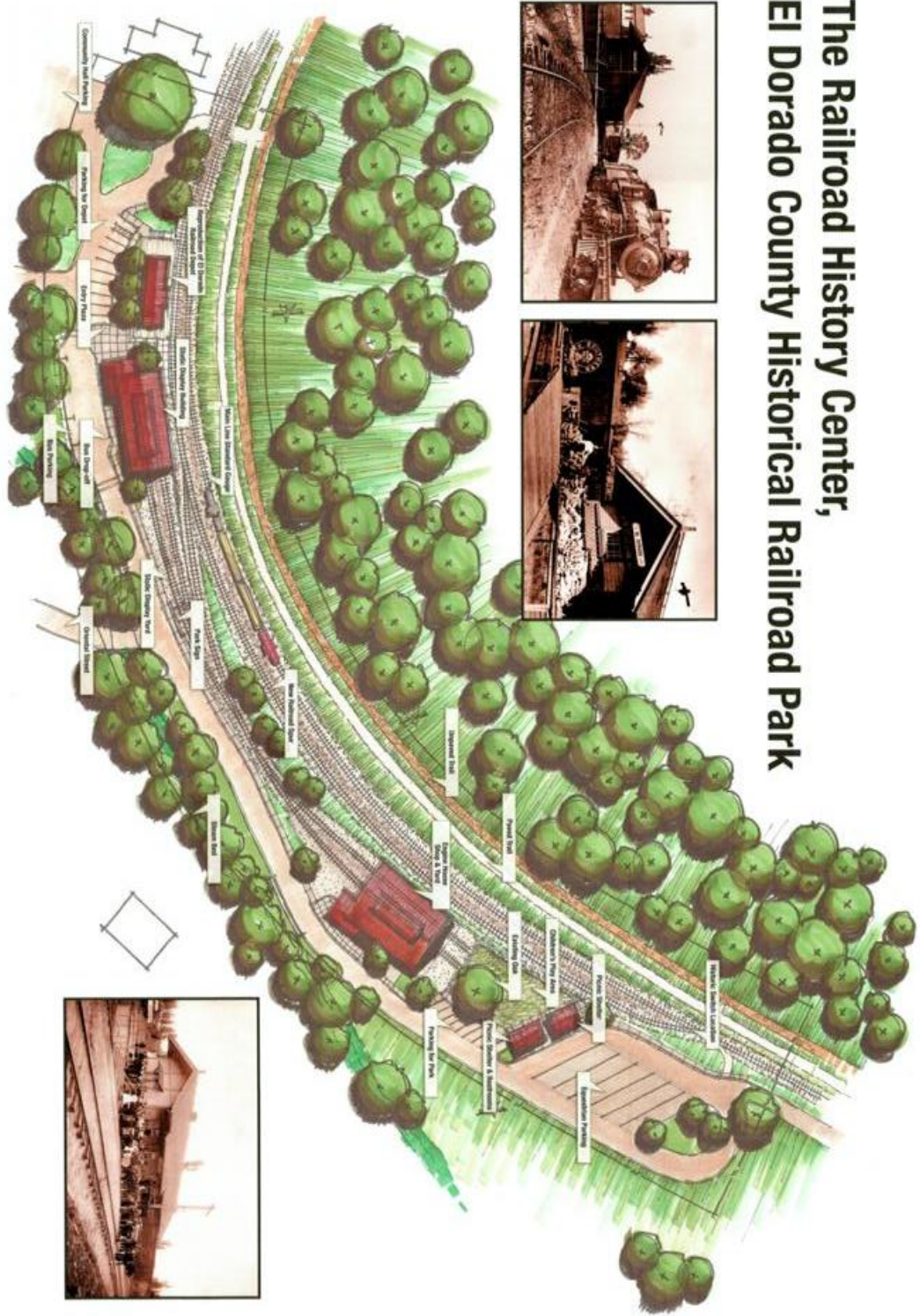
### Phase Four (2018-2020):

- 1) *Display Building* - Placed adjacent to the El Dorado Railroad Depot, this building will provide a large area to exhibit historical artifacts, provide space for displays on the history of railroads in El Dorado County, and for use as an interpretation center for school groups.
- 2) *Track Improvements and Maintenance* - Repair the gap in Segment 1; install historical turntable in original location in Shingle Springs; install at grade crossing gates and signals in Segment 2
- 3) *Shingle Springs Yard and Diamond Springs Yard* - Install 1882 Turntable in original location in Shingle Springs yard; build a Boarding Platform in Diamond Springs Yard
- 4) *Park and Trail Development* – to be developed by the Parks Division and the Community Development Agency

### Phase 5 (2020-2025)

- 1) *Historic El Dorado Railroad Depot* - Construct an accurate reproduction of the historic 1888 Southern Pacific Depot for Excursion Train ticket sales, a gift shop, visitor amenities and exhibit space.
- 2) *Excursion Train* - Add additional passenger carrying options to the El Dorado Western Railroad, as equipment becomes available and is restored

**The Railroad History Center,  
 El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park**



## **Funding**

The operation of the El Dorado Western Railroad is currently funded with donations received primarily by the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation (See page 15.) The Excursion Railroad, providing rides on the Track Inspection Cars, and a small gift shop produces a small but steady revenue stream. The El Dorado Western Railway Foundation has actively pursued grants and donations for restoration work and materials, such as the Community Enhancement Grant awarded in 2014, El Dorado Merchants fund-raisers, and individual donations and in-kind services continue to provide funding. Other sources of funding come from the El Dorado Museums Foundation, the County Museum's nonprofit support organization, and the County Museum Trust Fund contributed to artifact restoration projects.

Working with other county departments, funds for facility planning and development will be pursued as grants become available.

## **Stakeholders**

The concept for the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park, located on the SPTC in El Dorado, was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 25, 2009 with support from the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Trails Advisory Committee, the El Dorado County Historical Society, the El Dorado Community Center, and the merchants of the town of El Dorado.

In order to develop plans that support a community-wide rail-based program and facility, Museum staff and volunteers have participated in a number of different forums to discuss SPTC development and use, with the position of developing trails alongside the rails for the entire length of the SPTC. There has been public support for the preservation of the rail, and support for "rails and trails" voiced at various public meetings, such as at many El Dorado County Board of Supervisors meetings, the recent November 4, 2015 SPTC-JPA Board meeting, and the June 23, 2015 public meeting to discuss possibilities for the El Dorado Railroad History Center and Park.

Museum staff and volunteers have been involved in past efforts with the SPTC Oversight Committee, and worked with County DOT and General Services staff. Currently the Parks Division staff provides direction and oversight on SPTC projects and operations impacting the preservation, repair, and maintenance of the track. El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park staff and volunteers will continue to be active participants in the future of the SPTC, an important county and regional asset.

## El Dorado County Railroad History

Understanding the history of El Dorado County must include knowing about and appreciating the history of the County's railroads. As written in many publications, including journalist Doug Noble's series of *Mountain Democrat Newspaper* articles, the railroads in El Dorado County were instrumental in the county's economic growth and culture during the twentieth century.

The Sacramento Valley Railroad, the first railroad west of the Mississippi River, started at the docks of Sacramento and eventually extended its operation to Shingle Springs in 1865. For



*Diamond Springs Depot before 1946*

many years, Shingle Springs was a major freight depot where wagons met the train and transported goods to Placerville and east along the Placerville-Carson City Wagon Road to the mines in Virginia City. The railroad was finally extended to Placerville in 1888 with freight and passenger service. This made it possible for refrigerated railroad cars to transport the county's pear crop and dairy products to Sacramento, and then distributed across the country. Products from the County's two major lime quarries were also shipped by rail.

While active, the Southern Pacific Railroad built and operated five passenger and freight stations in El Dorado County: Latrobe, Shingle Springs, El Dorado, Diamond Springs, and Placerville. Southern Pacific Railroad maintained these stations and the miles of main track, sidings, bridges and spurs. Their maintenance included keeping brush and weeds down, cleaning culverts and drainage ditches, keeping the track and bridges to specific standards, and the necessary work to maintain an active railroad.

As the Gold Rush began to fade, logging became an integral part of the county's economy. Two companies, the California Door Company and the Michigan-California Lumber Company developed narrow-gauge railroads to move timber to their lumber mills. Both narrow gauge railroads began operation in 1904. These railroads carried logs and cut lumber from the remote forests of the county to lumber mills in Pino Grande (near present-day Mosquito,) Camino, Caldor (near present-day Grizzly Flat,) and Diamond Springs. The finished wood was then transported to the Southern Pacific Railroad at the turntable in Placerville or using the spur at Diamond Springs where it was transported to Sacramento and to the much wider markets beyond. Until diesel trucks took over in the 1950s, these railroads were familiar sights in El Dorado County.



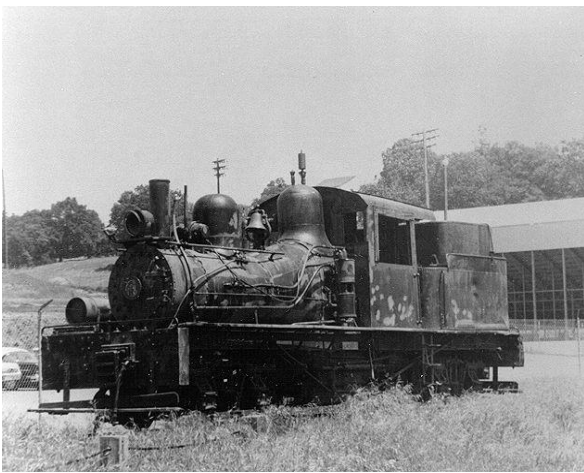
*A Diamond & Caldor train hauling lumber pulls into Cole's Station on the way to the Diamond Springs Mill, c. 1920*

The logging railroads ended operations in 1952 and the last regular service on the SPTC by Southern Pacific Railroad occurred in 1986. The Main Track from Missouri Flat Road to the east were removed by Southern Pacific Railroad, with the right of way in Placerville sold to CalTrans, and Michigan California Lumber Company removing the CP& LT tracks between Placerville and Camino. The only remaining track in El Dorado County is on the SPTC from Missouri Flat Road to the County Line, and can provide the authentic sense of place and history, as we remember, preserve, and understand this vital industry, its technology and the people who were involved.



*Site of the El Dorado Station after it was demolished*

Following the rescue of the Diamond & Caldor Shay No. 4 locomotive by Bev and Joe Cola, the push at the County Museum to restore and someday operate historical railroading artifacts has been carried on by volunteers. Skilled volunteers are working on the meticulous restoration of the railroad artifact collection while research continues to be conducted in all areas relating to the history of the county's railroad lines as well as the history of the artifacts themselves. The El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park will provide a focus for these efforts and share the County's rich history with locals and tourists alike.



*The Shay #4 in the Fairgrounds before it was moved*



*Shay Locomotive #4, Michigan-California Railbus, Porter Steam Locomotive and narrow gauge parlor car undergoing restoration in the Museum Yard*

## **El Dorado Western Railway Foundation (EDWRF)**

Beginning in 1994, a small group of museum volunteers began the restoration of the Diamond and Caldor No. 4 Shay locomotive on the grounds of the El Dorado County Historical Museum with the support of Beverly Cola and members of the Historical Museum Commission. Restoration of a narrow gauge passenger car and driver's caboose soon followed.

The crew started the construction of the engine house to secure the locomotive and protect it from the elements. Acquisition of considerable quantities of large shop machinery and tooling made it possible to move ahead with restoration. Additional rolling stock, turntable castings and other items for the interpretation of logging in El Dorado County have also been acquired. Restoration of the D&C No. 4 continues to this day.

In early 1997, the group incorporated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, chartered under the laws of the State of California and the federal government. The officers and directors of the foundation represent a wide range of talent, including mechanics, engineers, machinists, a financier, historians, an accountant, and administrators along with considerable background in railroad operation and historic rail preservation. All EDWRF members are volunteers of the County Museum. The EDWRF associate members express their support of the preservation of railroad history through annual dues

The historic Shingle Springs Depot was recently donated to the EDWRF. It will be used to present El Dorado County railroad history, Shingle Springs history, and currently supports the operation and maintenance of the El Dorado Western Railroad. The EDWRF has been instrumental in providing financial support to all aspects of the County Museum's efforts to preserve railroading history and the maintenance and operation of the SPTC as a historic railroad corridor. The EDWRF owns the Diamond & Caldor Shay No. 4, track inspection cars, the 1963 track mobile, and other track maintenance vehicles.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the EDWRF and the County Museum defines their financial support of the El Dorado Western Railroad. The EDWRF Board of Directors provides railroad expertise and long range planning assistance to County staff. They are actively supporting Railroad History Center and Park. Planning is underway to apply for grants, both locally and throughout the national railroad community, to pursue funding for restoration and building costs.



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## **SACRAMENTO PLACERVILLE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR (SPTC)**

What is now the SPTC was originally surveyed by F.A. Bishop (the same F.A. Bishop who surveyed the route for the Transcontinental Railroad) in 1853. Due to a number of funding and construction challenges, the railroad line in El Dorado County lost out to the Central California Railroad as part of the Transcontinental Railroad. However, the economic benefits of having a railroad spurred local merchants and civic leaders to make sure the railroad was eventually completed to Placerville in 1888. The right of way, acquired through various means – easements, fee title, and purchase, follows a winding route still there today, always maintaining a 2% or lower grade, as required by the railroad. Southern Pacific Railroad acquired the line shortly after it had been completed to Placerville, and dubbed it the “Placerville Branch.” By 1904 the Camino Placerville and Lake Tahoe Railroad was built to connect the lumber mill in Camino to the Southern Pacific Railroad in Placerville. Other lumber companies, fruit packers, lime quarries, and manufacturers quickly set up warehouse and loading platforms along the line.

When Southern Pacific Railroad decided to terminate regular freight trains in 1986, rather than abandon the railroad, they sold it to the SPTC-JPA formed for that purpose. The SPTC-JPA is made up of a representative from four jurisdictions: the County of El Dorado, the County of Sacramento, the City of Folsom and the Sacramento Regional Transit District. The corridor was purchased in part with funds acquired through the Rails to Trails Act and the Reciprocal Use and Funding Agreement (RUFA) was adopted, establishing the management responsibilities of the SPTC-JPA and the representative governments. In 2003 El Dorado County adopted the SPTC Masterplan.

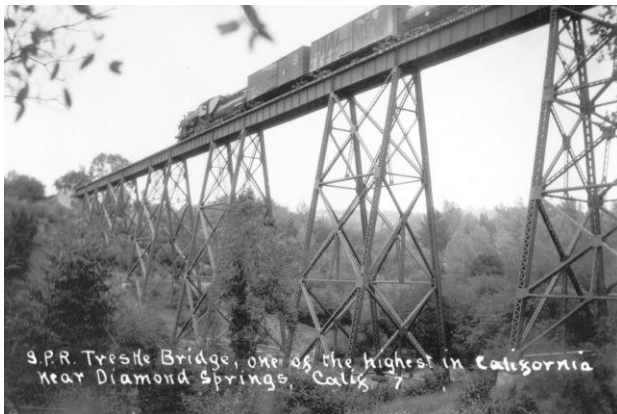
The SPTC in El Dorado County is now 28 miles long, with the track down the center, a maintenance road constructed by Southern Pacific Railroad along sections of it, with walking and mountain biking trails worn onto the corridor over the years. The corridor varies in width from 66 feet to 225 feet, with the wider sections in the areas where stations and loading platforms were historically constructed. Over the years, various spurs and sidings having been removed, track paved over on South Shingle Springs Road, track removed at Missouri Flat Road, and CalTrans widened Highway 50 on the portion of the right of way they acquired directly from Southern Pacific Railroad.

The SPTC has become an important recreational and historical resource for El Dorado County residents as well as many local, regional and international visitors. The El Dorado Trail, constructed under the authority of El Dorado County, is now a paved bicycle trail, from Missouri Flat Road east to Camino Heights. Mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians also enjoy the natural undeveloped trail along the SPTC west of Missouri Flat Road. Plans are underway to develop a pedestrian overpass on Missouri Flat Road and continue the paved trail to El Dorado.

The railroad track that remains is the only track left in El Dorado County. It has been used over the years by visiting Speeder groups, the Placerville Sacramento Valley Railroad out of Folsom, and the El Dorado Western Railroad, the County Museum's railroad program.

The SPTC-JPA Board of Directors unanimously agreed at their November 2, 2015 meeting that track will not be removed for any foreseeable projects. As plans develop for building a natural trail along the length of the SPTC, and for constructing the paved Class I trail and pedestrian overpass at Missouri Flat Road, the tracks will be improved and the El Dorado Western Railroad will provide public rides in the segment from Shingle Springs to Missouri Flat Road, maintain the track for the entire length, and the Placerville Sacramento Valley Railroad has been offering excursion rail in the section from Folsom to Latrobe. The SPTC Maintenance and Operation Plan will be instrumental in the Parks Division's management of the SPTC.

The SPTC is a significant asset to the county for its recreational value and its historical importance. Over the years, there have been various discussions by different user groups, both independent trail and rail groups, and those that had been formed at the direction of the Board of Supervisors or County staff, such as the Trails Advisory Committee, and the SPTC Oversight Committee, among others. These many users and stakeholders involved in its care, use and development are a testament to its worth as a feature in El Dorado County.



*Historical view of the Southern Pacific Railroad Trestle Bridge over Weber Creek, and the current Bridge converted for pedestrian use as part of the El Dorado Trail.*

The SPTC was originally created as a railroad corridor, and in the section remaining with track in place, continues as a railroad corridor. Instead of just providing the means for transporting the valuable products produced in El Dorado County to market, the Corridor now provides the means for residents and visitors to enjoy the distinctive recreational opportunities that El Dorado County has to offer by taking a train ride, riding a bicycling or a horse, or running, hiking, and walking in the historic Placerville Branch of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

## Railroad Safety

It is vital that the El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park comply with all applicable Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirements for operational safety. Current operations use the existing standard gauge track. Work is underway to bring the track up to FRA standards, and in compliance with the CPUC. Many of the County Museum's railroad cars and engines are narrow gauge requiring track laid out at 3 feet wide. By the use of dual track on the main line, in the Railroad History Center, and designated areas, such as in the segment of track from El Dorado Road to Blanchard Road, the Railroad Park operation can co-mingle standard and narrow gauge rail activity along the SPTC.

Restored artifacts will be operated on the main line. Additional track will accommodate most of the current railroad artifacts undergoing restoration and will provide exhibit space, allow rolling stock to be moved, and create space for loading and unloading passengers.

The El Dorado Western Railroad volunteers undergo yearly training, and currently fulfill required certification and documentation. The current protocol for carrying the public on Inspection Cars is in compliance with the California Public Utilities Commission. The plan to use full size equipment will be done in compliance with FRA standards. At that time, and as part of the El Dorado Western Railroad development program, at-grade crossings will be improved, a yearly track and bridge inspection will be held, and crew will be trained and certified. The El Dorado Western Railroad Volunteer Handbook provides detailed procedures and polices following standard professional practices.



Museum staff and volunteers are aware that before operating a full size train, protocols will need to be established that preserve the safety of all rail and trail users. Such items as CPUC authorized trail crossings will be needed, trail bridges constructed, required signage installed, and the proximity of the trail to the rail will be adjusted as necessary.

The first section of track to be completed to FRA standards will offer maximum safety to rail and trail users. The El Dorado Western Railroad operates at speeds under 10 miles per hour. No tunnels or bridges are involved on this segment.

By working with County departments and commissions, such as the Community Development Agency, the Parks and Trails Division, and the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Railroad Park will be developed in compliance with county regulations and with safety as the number one priority.

## Conclusion

The El Dorado County Railroad History Center and Park will be a great asset to the County of El Dorado. It will:

- ☑ Provide an exceptional location to better exhibit and interpret a distinctive collection of artifacts which will allow visitors a tangible experience with the county's past.
- ☑ Provide an anchor to the dynamic El Dorado Western Railroad, operating between Shingle Springs and Diamond Springs
- ☑ Relieve crowded conditions at the current County Museum facility allowing for the acquisition of important historical artifacts associated with El Dorado County's past, and the space to exhibit them in an attractive and educational manner.
- ☑ Provide a tourist destination to the town of El Dorado and its surroundings, with a resulting increase to the county's economy
- ☑ Place El Dorado County on the map with a far reaching and passionate population of Rail Fans

Contact: Mary Cory, Museum Administrator, (530) 621-5828 or [mcory@co.el-dorado.ca.us](mailto:mcory@co.el-dorado.ca.us). Additional information about the County Museum is on the web at: <http://museum.edcgov.us>



*Historical photographs are from the El Dorado County Historical Museum collection; others taken by Museum Volunteers Harry Critchfield and Steve Karoly.*

El Dorado Western Railroad projects



## The CP&LT Caboose

The Camino Placerville & Lake Tahoe Caboose was unique to the railroad that hauled lumber from the Michigan-California Logging Company Mill in Camino to the end point of the Southern Pacific Railroad in Placerville.



This Caboose went out of service in the 1950s, and was eventually donated to the County Museum in the early 1990s. After sitting for almost 20 years, a group of volunteers took on the task of rebuilding this significant El Dorado County artifact.



The CP&LT Caboose is now on display near the Shingle Springs Depot and is beautiful reminder of the County's railroad and logging history.





# EL DORADO COUNTY RAILROAD HISTORY CENTER AND PARK

A project of the El Dorado County Historical Museum



This Report was written for the purposes of presenting the Railroad History Center and Plan to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, April 2016, as an update of the conceptual plan approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 25, 2009

Mary Cory, Museum Administrator  
EL DORADO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
104 PLACERVILLE DRIVE  
PLACERVILLE, CA 95667  
March 1, 2016