The Great Redwood Trail:

A Vision of the Future

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NORTH COAST RAILROAD AUTHORITY

2019 California State Trails Conference

Caryl Hart: Board Member, North Coast Railroad Authority

Michael Jones: Founder, Principal, Alta Planning + Design

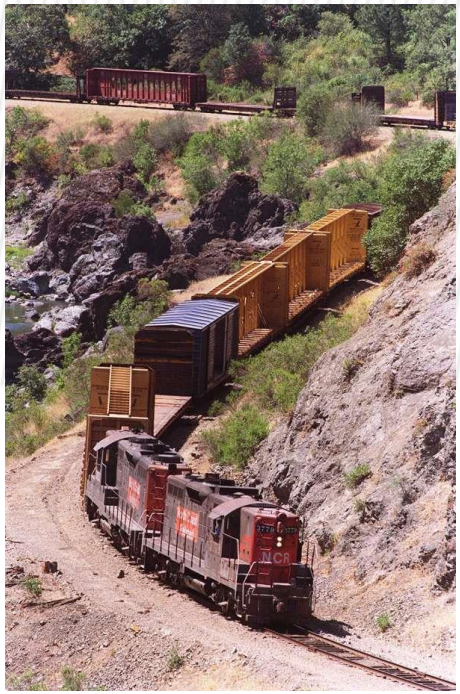
Background

Background/History
Status of Current Legislation
Comparable Trails
Completed Segments
Next Steps
Potential Goals
Photo Tour

Background

A complicated railroad history…

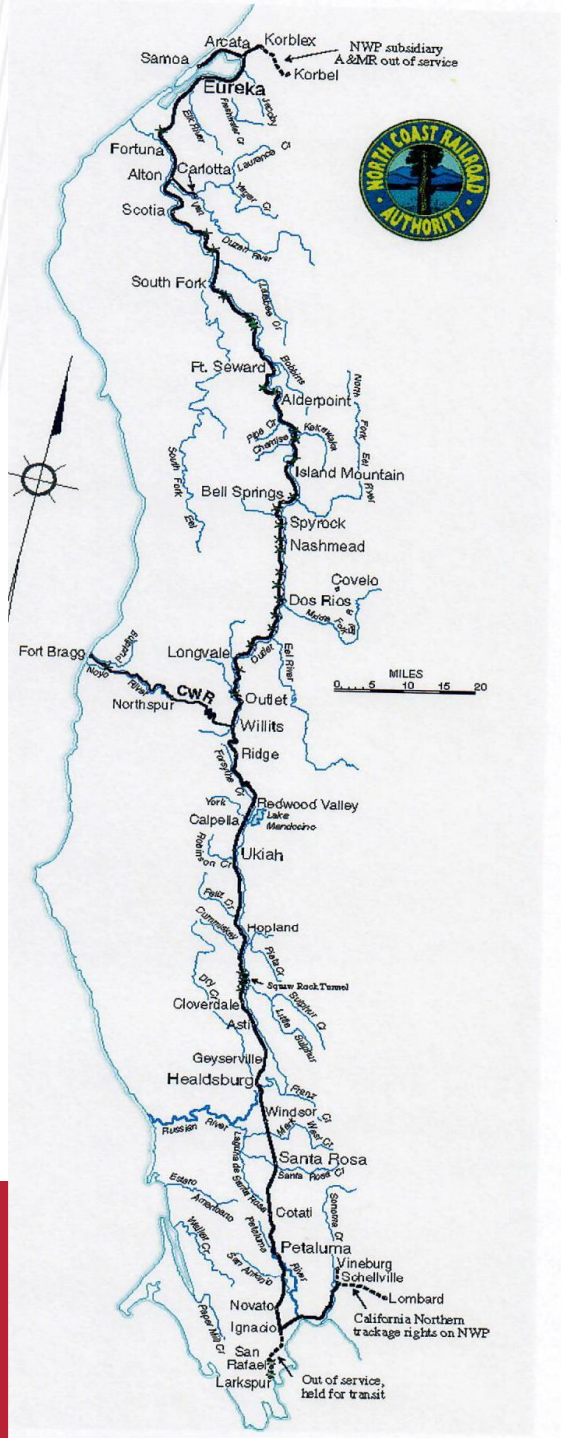
- Northwestern Pacific Railroad (completed 1914)
- Southern Pacific Railroad
- Floods of 1964
- Island Mountain Tunnel Fire 1978
- Eureka Southern 1984
- North Coast Railroad Authority 1989
- Willits – South Lease to California Northern 1993
- Willits - North Closure 1996
- Closure of entire line 1998
- NWP Co new freight operator 2010
- SMART 2012



Background

Facts….

- Length:
- Larkspur–Cloverdale 72.7 miles
- Cloverdale – Willits 54.3 miles
- Willits-Arcata 153.0 miles
- Total 280.0 miles
- Major Trestles 19
- Bridges 38
- Tunnels 42
- Longest Tunnel 4,313 feet



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- SB 1029 approved May 30, 2018 by Senate 36-1
- Governor signs SB 1029 September 30, 2018
- Willits-Cloverdale to SMART
- Senator Michael McGuire: "…create a Great Redwood Trail for hiking, biking, and riding, that may be in the public and economic best interests of the north coast."
- Transportation Agency (Caltrans) in consultation with Natural Resource Agency to conduct an Assessment by July 2020
- Prioritization of southern section assessment

SB 1029:

- A preliminary assessment of the viability of constructing a trail on the entirety of, or a portion of, the property, rights-of-way, or easements owned by the North Coast Railroad Authority, and recommendations relating to the possible construction of a trail, including both of the following:
- (A) Options for railbanking and the governance structure or ownership structure for a new or successor entity that is necessary to railbank property, rights-of-way, and easements along the rail corridor.
- (B) A preliminary assessment of which portions of the terrain along the rail corridor may be suitable for a trail.

Updates:

- SB 356 transfers assets south of Willits to the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) district.

- April 10, 2019: NCRA Board approves settlement of lawsuits with environmental groups over old EIR

- April 11, 2019: Assembly Budget Subcommittee approved the Administration's budget proposal for $3 million to complete process identified in SB 1029

- $1.5 million for a property assessment
- $500,000 to assess debt, lawsuits
- $1 million for preliminary trail assessment

Comparable Trails

- Pacific Crest Trail
- San Francisco Ridge Trail
- San Francisco Bay Trail
- Tahoe Rim Trail
- Tahoe-Pyramid Trail
- American River Parkway
- SMART Multi-Use Path
- East Coast Greenway
- Appalachia Trail

Pacific Crest Trail

- Proposed by Clinton Clarke as part of Pacific Crest Trail System Conference 1935-1938
- Joint effort with Clarke, Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Ansel Adams
- 2,000 mile route planned by YMCA groups
- 1968 LB Johnson defined the PCT and Appalachia Trail in the National Trails Systems Act.
- Constructed by volunteers and the Federal government
- Finished in 1993; TPL has added public lands along route

Tahoe Rim Trail

- 1981: Glen Hampton, USFS Recreation Officer, envisions 150-mile loop trail
- 1982: Granted non-profit status
- 2001: Trail completed with 200,000 volunteer hours
- 2003: 96 miles of TRT dedicated as a National Recreation Trail

Katy Trail, Missouri: 240 miles

Hut-to-Hut Hiking

Selected Existing/Planned Trails on NWP Corridor

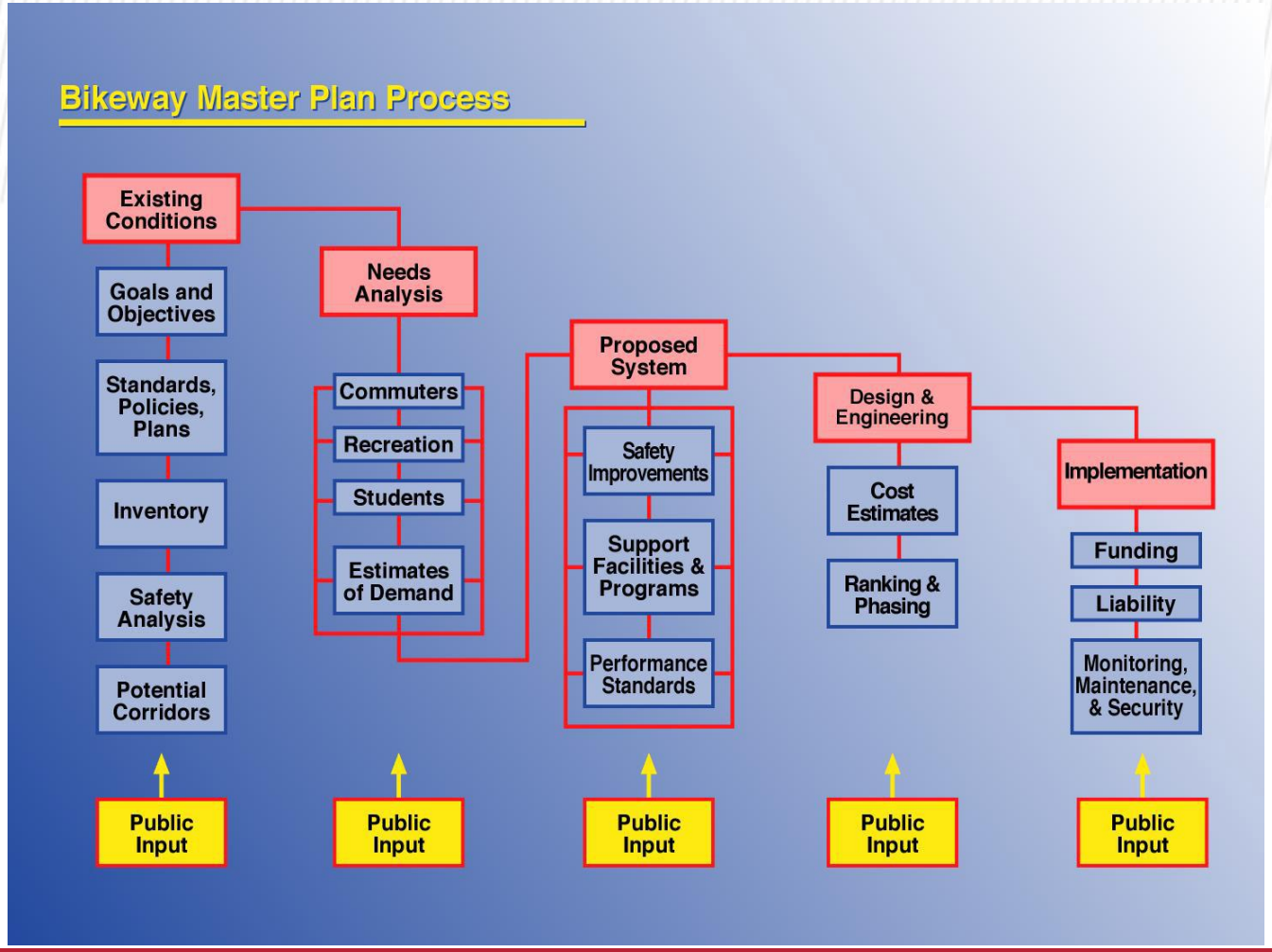
- Annie & Mary Trail
- Arcata Rail Trail
- Humboldt Bay Trail
- MCOG Rail Trail Plan
- Ukiah Rail Trail
- Willits Rail Trail
- SMART Multi-Use Path
- Joe Rodota Trail (Sonoma)
- North-South Greenway (Marin)

HUMBOLDT BAY TRAIL
Connecting Arcata and Eureka
Part of the California Coastal Trail
ELK RIVER
Bayshore Mall
HWY 101
Del Norte St.
HWY 255
HWY 255 / SAMOA BLVD
Arcata
EUREKA SLOUGH
Myrtletown
HWY 101
Bracut
OLD ARCATA RD

Next Steps

- NCRA organization
- Funding
- Advisory committee/Staff/Public outreach
- Rail corridor title
- Assessment Study
- Environmental Review
- Preliminary Feasibility/Engineering
- Full EIR
- Full Engineering
- Implementation by phase
- Management plan/operations

Trail Feasibility Elements



Potential Goals

- A continuous trail within the NWP corridor
- Protect safety/privacy of adjacent landowners
- Make trail accessible to wide variety of users
- Restore/enhance environment, esp. stream habitat
- Improve emergency vehicle access
- Enhance local economies
- Restore/maintain railroad infrastructure to extent feasible
- Trail design to reflect feasibility, environment, safety needs
- Provide adequate support facilities esp. in isolated areas
- Prohibit fires during fire season

Photos Charlie Gandy

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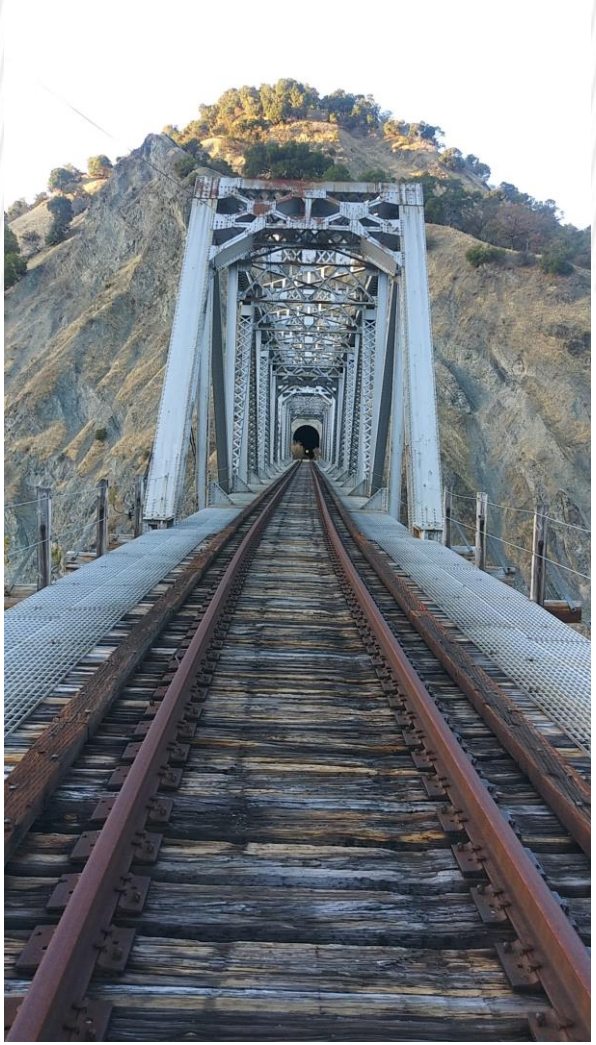
Existing Conditions/Key Issues



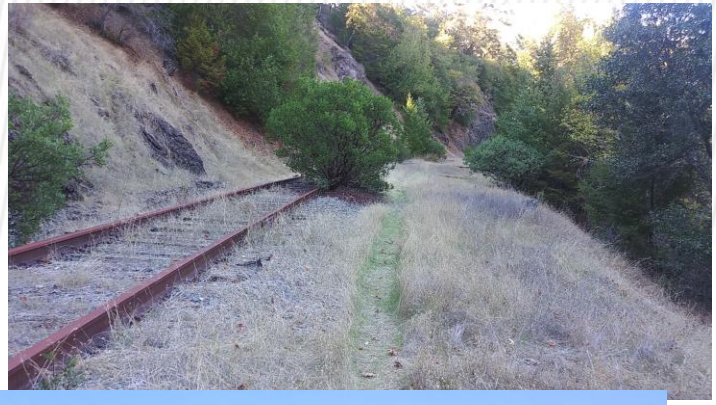
Tunnels/Bridges

Landslides/Overgrowth

Relics

All photos Charlie Gandy

Alderpoint Station



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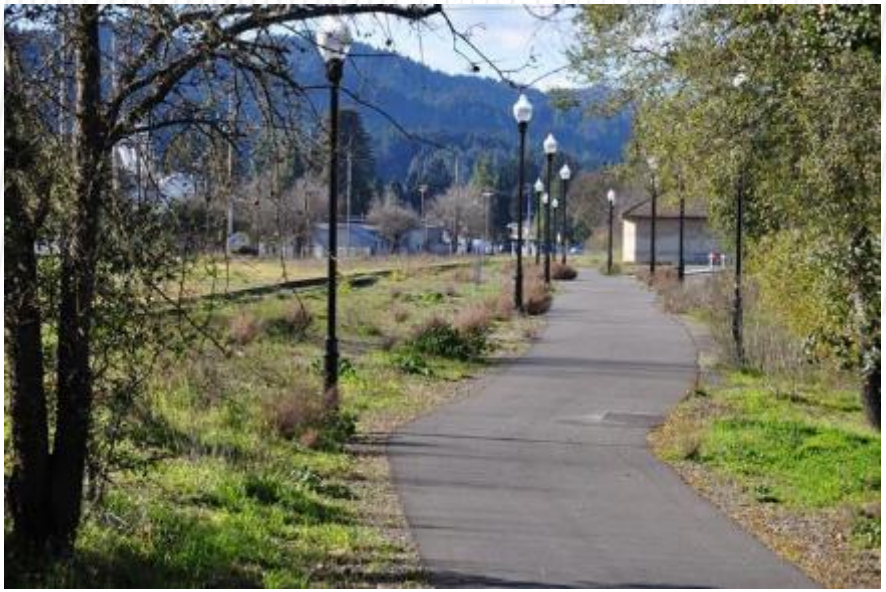
Ready-made Trail Corridor



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SMART MUP

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SMART MUP

Preliminary Usage/Benefits Analysis

When completed, the Great Redwood Trail will:

- Attract 1,200,000 annual users (paved surface)
- Generate $10 million/year in new visitor revenue

Trail Types

Single Track Unpaved Trail

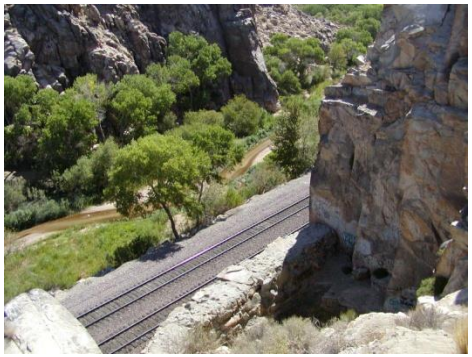
Wider Track Unpaved Trail

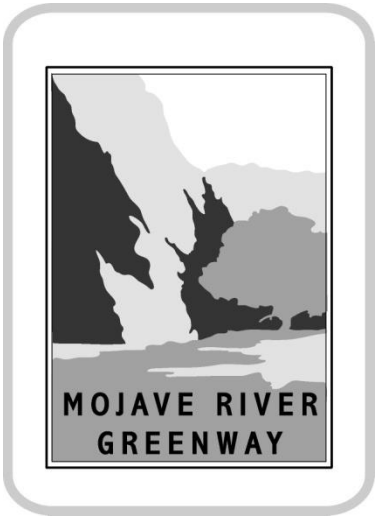
Trail Types

Multi-Use Trail

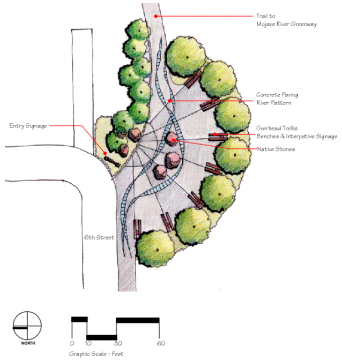
Class I Bike Path

Trail Design Themes

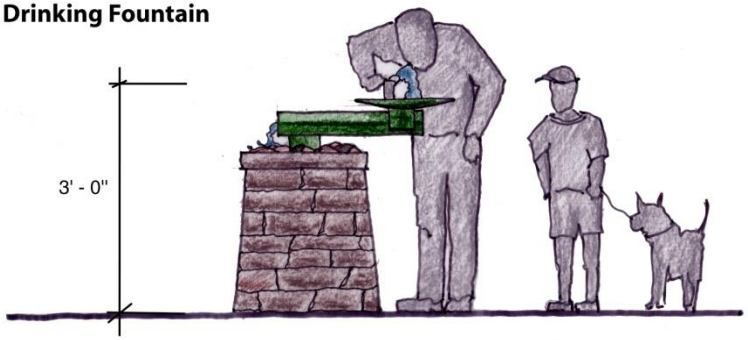




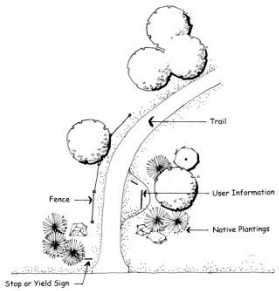
Entry Plaza Concept

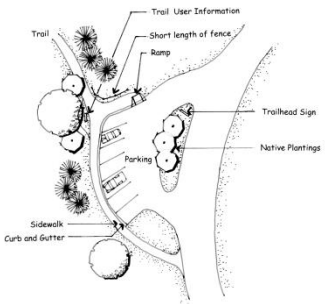


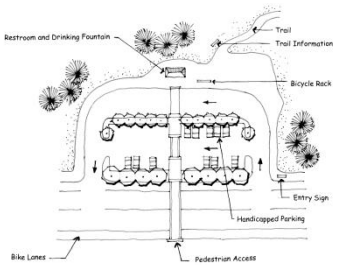
Drinking Fountain

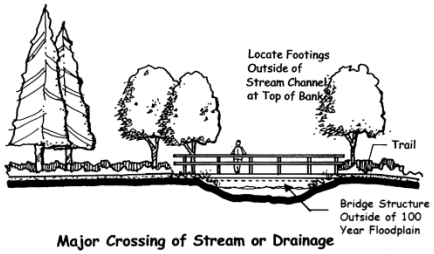


Alta Trail Design Standards



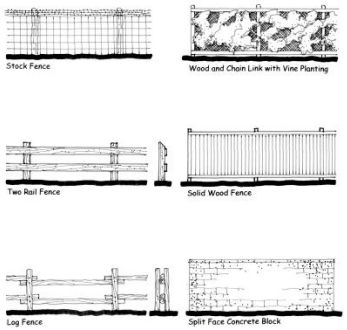


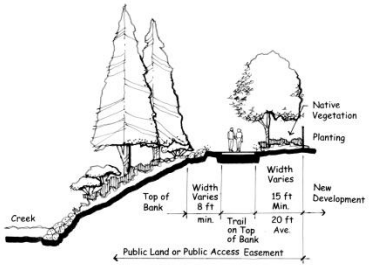


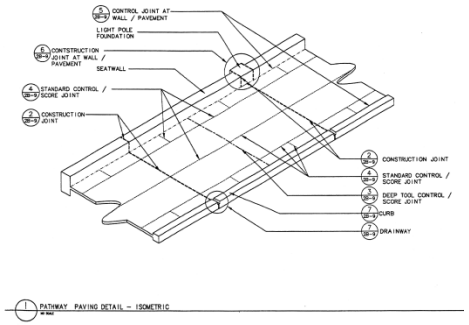


Trail Heads and Staging Areas

Foot Bridges







Fencing and Barriers

Paving Detail

EEL RIVER CANYON PHOTO TOUR

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Photos: Liquid Fusion Kayaking/
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Thank you!