



## Public Notice

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), via a local agency federal-aid transportation program, will extend federal aid in support of an El Dorado County Project known as the Rubicon Trail at Ellis Creek Bridge Project (Project). Where public recreational property would be used, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC §303) requires analysis of project impacts on recreational values and consideration of means to avoid adverse impacts where they are determined to exist. Located about 2.2 miles north of Loon Lake within the Eldorado National Forest (ENF), the Project proposes to install a prefabricated steel truss bridge to replace the existing low-water crossing (LWC) at Ellis Creek. The new bridge would be approximately 16-feet wide and 70-feet in length, and would serve motorized vehicles that traverse the Rubicon Trail. The new bridge would be located approximately seventy feet (70') downstream of the existing LWC and would create approximately three hundred thirty feet (330') of new trail. During construction, the existing LWC would continue to be in use. After construction, the former trail alignment for the LWC, approximately three hundred ninety feet (390'), would be abandoned and revegetated. The total disturbed area would be approximately 1.5 acres. As a result of the design and staging, the Project would not impact existing recreational functions within the ENF. If you have any questions, please call Joe Robinson at (530) 741-4597.

**Background:** Water quality issues from recreational uses of the Eldorado National Forest have become a growing concern over the last several years. In order to provide water quality improvements to specifically address motor vehicle use along the Rubicon Trail, El Dorado County requested federal funding to replace the existing LWC on the Rubicon Trail at Ellis Creek. The Project is consistent with the April 2008 *Final Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement*, which allows public motor vehicle use on over 1,800 miles of roads and trails across the ENF. While this Project proposes to build a bridge that replaces a LWC on a new parallel alignment, the Project meets federal standards for bridge replacement in recognition of concerns with both water quality and safety impacts associated with LWCs. In 2008, the Project was included in a funding program for replacement or rehabilitated bridges. Subsequently, the Project was specifically included as a water quality improvement in a Cleanup and Abatement Order issued to the County and USFS by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Detailed information regarding this proposal is contained in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project which is currently being circulated for public comment. **The County will hold a public meeting discussing project details on December 16, 2010.**

**Determination:** Caltrans has evaluated Project impacts on ENF property and determined that the impact on its public recreational use will be *de minimis* (minimal). The impact to ENF is considered to be minimal since the Project would preserve the continued recreational use by its design, and serves to enhance safety and the environment. The Project as proposed therefore will not adversely impact the recreational uses of ENF or impair recreational values.

**Contact Information:** If you would like to provide comments regarding the information in this notice, please submit them either by US Postal Service or by email, as indicated below:

- **Written comments regarding this notice may be submitted via US Postal Service to:**  
Department of Transportation, District 3  
Susan Bauer, Chief, Branch M-1  
Office of Environmental Management  
P.O. Box 911  
Marysville, California, 95901-0911
- **Comments may be submitted via email to [sue\\_bauer@dot.ca.gov](mailto:sue_bauer@dot.ca.gov)**

**The deadline for submitting comments is: January 16, 2011.**