



County of El Dorado Cemetery Advisory Committee

Keith Leech, Cemetery Director
PJ Patton, Cemetery Advisory Committee Chair
Susan Mickus, District I Representative
Vacant, District II Representative
Kevin Tierney, District III Representative

Bonnie Wurm, District IV Representative

Supervisor Jack Sweeney, BOS Representative
Julianne Van Leeuwen, BOS Alternate
Brian Golmitz, Assistant County Coroner
Lysa Daniels, Native American Representative
Ramona Tripp-Verbeck, Native American Alternate
Douglas Walker, Archaeological

Representative

Jeff Clark, District V Representative

Barney Noel, Fraternal Org. Representative

Report to the Board of Supervisors 2005

Introduction

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors established, by Resolution 128-2002, the El Dorado County Cemetery Advisory Committee consisting of eleven members. Representatives include one committee member from each of the five Board of Supervisors districts, one member representing a recognized fraternal organization, one member representing a recognized Native American organization, one member who is a trained professional archaeologist, a member of the Board of Supervisors, the County Coroner, and the County Cemetery Director or their designees.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors of issues, concerns and problems related to cemeteries within the County
- Serve as a liaison among County Departments and interested community groups and citizens
- Report to the Board of Supervisors on the status of cemeteries, make recommendations regarding future activities and projects and report on findings resulting from the Committee's research.

The Cemetery Advisory Committee meets regularly on the third Monday of each month at 3:30 PM in Conference Room A.

Committee Accomplishments

- Revision to the existing Cemetery Ordinance – The Committee discussed at length the need for setbacks in the ordinance in order to protect existing cemeteries. With the assistance of staff from County Counsel and the Planning Department, the Committee agreed on a 40 foot setback with the requirement that ground penetrating radar or other investigative techniques be used to determine the extent of the burials in the cemetery. The 40 foot setback takes into account health and safety issues related to burials, the historic and aesthetic nature of our pioneer cemeteries, and provide a respectful distance between construction and the last place of rest for citizens of El Dorado County.
- Mission Statement for Native American Burial and Sacred Sites – The Committee discussed the issues relating to Native American Burial Sites and on May 21, 2003 adopted the statement:
The El Dorado County Cemetery Advisory Committee is aware of and sensitive to the need for privacy and confidentiality in addressing issues relating to Native American burial and sacred sites. The committee also recognizes the need for inclusion of the Native American community in resolving issue related to these sites.

The Committee followed the progression of a State Senate Bill which protections the confidentiality of Native American sites and records. This bill was signed into law September 2005.

- Revision of Cemetery Advisory Committee priorities – The Committee has been meeting regularly since 2002 and in order to better address the issues relating to cemeteries in El Dorado County, the

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Committee agreed upon a reordering of the prioritized assignments in Resolution 128-2002.

- Minimum Standards for Cemetery Maintenance and Restoration was adopted by the Committee in November of 2003. Please see attached Appendix A. The Committee members and staff physically inspected 20 county cemeteries to determine the standards for cemetery maintenance and restoration.

Current Committee Projects

- Celebrate the Cemeteries – This event, planned in collaboration with the Board of Education and the Youth Commission engages teachers and their students in exploring cemeteries as a resource for artistic and historical inspiration.
- October as Cemetery Appreciation Month – The Cemetery Advisory Committee has asked the Board of Supervisors to declare October as Cemetery Appreciation Month in 2003, 2004 and 2005 as a way to increase public awareness and appreciation for the county's cemeteries
- Historic Cemetery Brochure - A brochure is being developed that will provide information about public cemeteries in the county which are historically interesting and accessible to tourists. It will be distributed at the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce.
- Clearinghouse for information about the care and preservation of cemeteries – General Services staff attended a national workshop on the preservation of historical cemeteries and brought that information back to the Committee in order to disseminate the proper care and treatment of cemeteries to their communities.
- Identify and organize available information about cemeteries - Committee members and staff are coordinating the compilation and recording in written form of information, records, and historical data relating to County cemeteries

Future Committee Projects

- Make recommendations for a County-wide maintenance and operations plan.
- Research legal titles of cemeteries to determine their public or private status, and for possible legal recognition of privately owned cemeteries.
- Develop recommendations regarding the designation of appropriate cemeteries as Pioneer Memorial Parks.

General Cemetery Activities

Many individuals and groups are involved with the care, concern, and research of cemeteries throughout the county. In addition to issues handled by the Department of General Services, the County Museum, local historical societies, Boy Scout troops, and other have involved themselves with El Dorado County cemeteries. These are a few that have come to the attention of the Cemetery Advisory Committee:

- Cold Springs Cemetery – Cleaned up and cared for by Eagle Scout Michael Johnson
- Latrobe Cemetery – Inventoried by Eagle Scout Tyler Brady
- Smith Flat Cemetery – Roots and Gold Dust is compiling a history and comprehensive list of individuals interred there
- Mosquito Cemetery – research and identification of burials by a volunteer at the County Museum
- Canine Forensics identified the Bayley House Cemetery
- Archiving Burial Permits at the County Museum
- Completion of maps for the El Dorado Cemetery, Georgetown Cemetery and Uniontown Cemetery
- El Dorado County Hospital Cemetery
- Metropolitan House Cemetery
- El Dorado House Cemetery
- Planters House Cemetery
- Frenchtown Cemetery (owners adjacent came to a meeting regarding 40 ft setback)

Cemetery Advisory Committee Concerns

- Two vacant seats (District 2 and District 5)
- Limited budget to improve conditions of county-owned cemeteries (i.e. fencing)
- Limited personnel for routine maintenance on current county cemeteries
- Limited personnel for researching cemetery legal status, mapping, research and database management

Conclusion

The El Dorado County Cemetery Advisory Committee members feel that progress has been made on concerns regarding cemeteries in El Dorado County. We support the actions taken by General Services staff on issues regarding possible impacts on cemeteries through development projects. We are optimistic the revisions to the Cemetery Ordinance requiring setbacks will help preserve cemeteries and we are looking forward to continuing to work on the tasks assigned to us in Resolution 128-2002.

Committee Staff:

County Counsel's Office, Rebecca Sudtell
Planning Department, Gina Hunter
Museum Administrator, Mary Cory
General Services, Debbie Lane