

El Dorado County Cemetery Advisory Committee

2019 Report to the Board of Supervisors

Accomplishments

Increased engagement

Cemetery Advisory Committee (CAC) membership, staff, and volunteers more active and engaged. Meetings less difficult and better attended.

- New chair, first line staff contact, fraternal seat, archaeologist seat, District 1 and District 2 seats, Board of Supervisors (BOS) representative all generally more active and engaged.
- Increased vigilance by committee members on behalf of potentially threatened cemeteries:
 - Missouri Flat
 - St. Michaels
 - Mormon Island
 - Rose Springs
 - Diamond Springs
- Better relations/communications with staff. We are working together.
- CAC-related volunteerism in support of staff.
 - Super-volunteer Maggie Killackey assisting County Cemetery Operations.
 - Maggie Killackey and Mike Roberts mapped and marked (100+ section signs) in Placerville Union Cemetery. Much easier to find “Uncle Joe.”
- Increased engagement with outside stakeholders.
 - Local and regional history groups.
 - Numerous research projects with El Dorado County Historical Society volunteers
 - Renaissance Society presentation by Dr. Bob
 - Sacramento Regional History Consortium participation
 - Conference of California historical societies tour
 - County Counsel and County Planning Services Division – both variously engaged. Each gave a workshop.
 - Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park – The park superintendent recently sought CAC recommendation with regard to handling Chinese Cemetery discovery. CAC produced long-time volunteer Mary Ann Schroth, who experienced the cemetery first hand in the late 1930’s (on a date!).
 - Gold Bug Park leadership is co-leading Save the Graves.
 - Arts and Culture El Dorado is co-leading Save the Graves.
 - Veteran’s groups – We continue to work to try to identify unknown veteran graves.
 - D.A.R. – Plaque possibly coming to Placerville Union Cemetery.
 - Local cemetery districts. Kelsey attends CAC meetings regularly.
 - Church groups – Mormons have been volunteering at Placerville Union Cemetery.



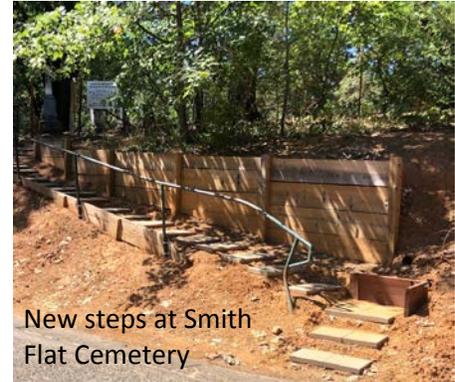
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- Scouts – Place flags on veterans’ graves throughout county for Memorial Day.
- Families of the interred – We’ve been reluctant to ask the families for anything yet. But many have met us on Memorial Day or through Save the Graves.
- County Chamber – Jumped in aggressively in support of Save the Graves event.
- American River Conservancy (ARC) – Hosted cemetery tours by Mike Roberts over last two summers... and continuing this summer.
- Increased volunteer activity – The “Adopt-a-Cemetery-Project Program” was approved by BOS last year. It is currently in use by staff independent of CAC, but has not been fully embraced by CAC members, despite encouragement from chair. Recommend BOS consider revising CAC formation resolution to include some level of volunteer commitment on behalf of voting members.

Volunteer projects in 2018-19:

- Placerville Union section markers
- Placerville Union inventory
- Placerville Union cleanup
- Mosquito cleanup
- Smith Flat entrance



Cemetery visitations

Keeping an eye on smaller, out-of-the-way cemeteries has never been more important. Most are either remote, difficult to find, difficult to access, or all three. Recommend BOS consider revising formation resolution to include some level of visitation and status reporting annually for voting members. CAC members visited and reported on these lesser-known cemeteries in the last year:

- Indian Diggings
- Latrobe
- Mormon Island
- Rose Springs
- Cold Springs
- Skinner
- Log Town
- Middletown
- Planter’s House
- Johnson’s Ranch
- Missouri Flat
- St. Michaels
- Nelsonville



Cemetery Events

- Memorial Day cleanup and presence.
- Rose Springs Celebration.
- Save the Graves (October 2019).

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- Public tours (through ARC) of numerous local cemeteries:
 - El Dorado
 - Smith Flat
 - Coloma Protestant and Catholic
 - Uniontown
 - Placerville Union, Jewish, and Old City
 - Methodist Church
 - Hospital (Pest House)

Workshops

Land use workshop was held with County Planning Services Division. Cemetery Law workshop held with County Counsel.

Staff Accomplishments

- County Counsel completed a quiet title action to validate County ownership and management of the El Dorado Cemetery. Similar actions are being researched for two additional cemeteries.
- Cemetery Operations facilitated two workshops for CAC members (one on zoning and one on cemetery law).
- Cemetery Operations initiated improvements in record keeping practices (this is a work-in-progress; many more improvements are needed and are being initiated as workload allows).
- Utilized the Adopt-a-Cemetery-Project Program, approved by Board of Supervisors in 2018, for several volunteer projects in various cemeteries: removal of trees downed by PG&E in Georgia Slide, field survey to prepare for Ground Penetrating Radar survey in Placerville Union (two-thirds completed), improved the walkway for safety and convenience in Smith Flat, authorized Nello Olivo Winery to take groups on tours of Placerville Union Cemetery, authorizing daily dawn and dusk gatekeeping by neighbors of the El Dorado Cemetery (in process).
- Set up the County of El Dorado Cemeteries Fund under the El Dorado Community Foundation.
- Completed a survey of sixteen other California counties to determine common best practices in funding cemetery for upkeep.
- The Cemetery Director provided an enlightening report on the status of County-operated cemeteries for the Board of Supervisors.