

Appendix E
Communication Plan and Stakeholder
Survey

Lassen Land and Trails Trust

Communication Strategy For Public Engagement Modoc Line Management Plan

draft 1 October 13, 2010

Situation

Having assumed ownership of the rail line known as the Modoc Line, the Lassen Land and Trails Trust is engaged in developing a trail management plan. Ideas are needed from potential recreation users, adjacent landowners and government agencies to help formulate this management plan.

Key Messages

Chapter 4 - The Modoc Line is an 85-mile-long rail line formerly used by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). After UPRR discontinued rail service in 1997X, the Lassen Land and Trails Trust, with funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, purchased the right of way. The Modoc Line passes through public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and other properties owned by numerous private landowners.

Chapter 5 - Under a Rail Banking Agreement with the federal Surface Transportation Board, the rail corridor is to be managed as a public recreational trail.

Chapter 6 - This will keep the corridor intact and available for future conversion back to rail use if ever deemed necessary.

Chapter 7 - The LLTT is developing a management plan to guide recreational use of the trail.

Chapter 8 - Public input is needed to help determine the types of uses for the trail, access points, facility development, and possible limitations.

Chapter 9 - Input is needed from adjacent landowners so that steps can be taken to protect private lands and interests, while allowing public recreation uses.

Chapter 10 - Local, state and federal government agency input is needed so that development of the trail management plan is consistent with applicable laws, regulations and land use standards and guidelines.

Chapter 11 - This is the first step in a process to develop a management plan that will be shared with the public in draft form before adoption as a final management plan.

Target Audiences

Adjacent landowners

See attached list

Federal Agencies

BLM Eagle Lake and Alturas field offices
Modoc National Forest
Modoc National Wildlife Refuge

State Agencies

California Department of Fish and Game
Caltrans
CAL FIRE Lassen-Modoc-Plumas Unit

Local Government

Lassen County Supervisors
Modoc County Supervisors
Modoc Land Use Commission
Lassen County Fish and Game Commission
Modoc County Fish, Game and Recreation Commission

Environmental Groups

California Wilderness Coalition
Pheasants Forever

Industry Groups

Lassen County Cattlemen's Association
Modoc County Cattlemen
Lassen County Farm Bureau
Modoc County Farm Bureau

Sporting Groups

Organized Sportsmen of Lassen County
Lassen Sportsmen's Club
California Mule Deer Association

Outdoor Recreation Groups

Susanville Area Bicycling Association
Lassen Motorcycle Club
Division 36, American Motorcyclist Association
Recreation Outdoors Coalition

Tribes

Susanville Indian Rancheria
Pit River Tribe

Business Organizations

Lassen County Chamber of Commerce
Alturas Chamber of Commerce

Conservation Entities

Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
North Cal Neva Resource Conservation and Development Council

Action Plan**Objectives of the Trail Master Plan**

Identification of Modoc Line Access Points (Trailheads)

Identification of Appropriate Trail Uses & Locations

Identification of Signage Needs

Identification of Needed Railroad Grade Improvements

Identification of Needed Facility Improvements

Identification of Routine Maintenance Needs

Development of a Trail Plan Implementation Schedule

Lead: Linda Hansen

Due Date: October 19

Develop letters for landowners, agencies and user groups, inviting their input

Lead: Liz Norton

Due Date: October 19

Develop a survey questionnaire, including mechanisms for online and paper responses

Lead: Leah Larsen, Jeff Fontana

Due: October 19

Develop mailing lists for outreach

Lead: Leah

Due Date: October 19

Develop map showing trail segments

Lead: Leah

Due Date: October 29

Develop Standing Display

Lead: Leah, Jeff

Due Date: November 6 (membership mixer)

Develop formats and schedule open house events in Susanville and Alturas

Lead: Leah, Liz, Jeff, Linda

Due Date: October 29

Schedule briefings with County Boards of Supervisors, the Flurnoys, and any other selected groups or individuals (Snow Storm Ranch)

Lead: Leah, Liz, Jeff, Linda

Due Date: October 29

Develop and distribute news release:

Announce availability of survey

Summarize Modoc Line plan development

Announce open house opportunities

Lead: Jeff

Due Date: First week November

Distribute survey on LLTT's web site and via hard mail

Lead: Leah

Due Date: First week of November

Survey Instrument

Dear neighbor, trail user or partner:

The Lassen Land and Trails Trust values your thoughts regarding the development of the Modoc Line as an 85-mile long public recreational trail. The following survey is a way for you to share your thoughts about the trail's development.

As background, Lassen Land and Trails Trust acquired the stretch of line from Wendel in Lassen County to just 12 miles south of Alturas in Modoc County. We acquired it after Union Pacific Railroad discontinued rail service in 1997. Under a Rail Banking Agreement with the Federal Surface Transportation Board, the Trust has committed to manage the corridor for public trail use, and we are developing a plan to guide that use.

A map has been provided to assist you in completing the survey. Thank you for taking a few moments to complete it on-line through our website, www.lttweb.org, or simply print it and mail your completed survey to: Modoc Line, Lassen Land and Trails Trust, PO Box 1461, Susanville, CA 96130. Please submit your completed survey by **Wednesday, December 15, 2010**.

MODOC LINE RECREATIONAL TRAIL SURVEY

1. My interest in the Modoc Line is as:

- Adjacent landowner
- Lease holder
- Hiker
- Biker
- Off Road Vehicle User
- Local government official
- Regional agency partner
- Other _____

2. How would you use the Modoc Line recreational trail?

- Mountain biking
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Working uses. Please specify: _____
- Off Road Vehicle Use

3. Should the Modoc Line be segmented for motorized and non-motorized uses, or should it be shared for the entire length of the line?

- Segmented
- Shared

Why? _____

If segmented, where should it be non-motorized? _____

4. Road access points are indicated on the map. Do you believe that those access points are adequate?

- Yes
- No

If not, please elaborate: _____

5. Should there be seasonal restrictions on uses of the trail?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate why restrictions should be applied and during which season.

- Wildlife conflicts. Season: _____ Wildlife: _____
- Land use conflicts. Season: _____ Usage: _____
- Recreational conflicts. Season: _____ Usage: _____
- Other _____ Season: _____ Usage: _____

6. What types of trail support facilities need to be developed?

- Trail heads w/ maps
- Road access points
- Campsites for through hikers
- Stock tanks
- Corrals
- Access to potable water
- Interpretive signage
- None
- Other _____

7. Would you support a reasonable use fee to offset management and maintenance costs?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what would you be willing to pay for day use? _____ Overnight campsite? _____

8. Please use the space below to offer any other recommendations or concerns you have regarding public use of the Modoc Line as a recreational trail.

9. I am interested in volunteering to work on the trail.

- Yes
- No

If yes, what kind of work are you interested in? _____

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: _____ **Affiliation/Organization:** _____
Address: _____ **Town:** _____ **State** ____ **Zip** _____
Phone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Outcomes Summary

Votes concerning the segmentation or shared use of the Modoc Line (for motorized and non-motorized use) were split almost entirely evenly. The most common reason given for segmenting the line is to avoid use conflicts (for instance, between bicyclists or equestrian users and off road vehicle users, two use types which many respondents who favor segmentation consider to be incompatible). The second most common reason given for segmentation can be summed up as noise concerns regarding the possible shared use of the trails between motorized and non-motorized users. This can probably be viewed as connected with or related to the concerns over use conflicts, as a number of respondents expressed both of these concerns simultaneously (for example, one birder was concerned that noise related to motorized use of the Line would scare off wildlife). A couple of respondents identified their primary concern over the Line's shared use as environmental in nature, though specific details were generally not given.

The most common response given by those who favor shared motorized and non-motorized use for the length of the Modoc Line states, basically, that use of the trails will likely be insufficient to warrant segmentation. There were a number of variations on this response which nevertheless expressed the same sentiment, more or less-- ie "so you will get more use." A couple of respondents who favored sharing the Line for the full length expressed concerns over the costs of segmenting the line, or potential management difficulties-- ie "segmenting the line would be too costly and a nightmare to enforce." In general, these concerns were secondary to the notion that trail use will be too low to justify segmentation-- ie "less cost-- not enough use to justify segments." Other respondents mentioned the ease and convenience of motorized access to the more remote areas along the Modoc Line, or the possible need for emergency vehicle access, as reasons for shared use, although these were unique points that were raised by one or two individual respondents but not mentioned by any others.

Close to half of those respondents who favor shared motorized/non-motorized use of the Line identified themselves as off-road vehicle users, and of the fifteen respondents who identified themselves in some capacity as off-road vehicle users, eleven favor sharing the Line rather than segmenting it. Of the nine respondents who identified as equestrian users, five favored segmenting the Line and four favored sharing. The correlation suggests that off-road vehicle users are more likely to favor shared use of the Line, while equestrian users may be more likely to favor segmenting it for motorized/non-motorized use, although exceptions exist on both sides.

People identifying as bicyclists (not to the exception of other interests in the Modoc Line) make up the largest proportion of respondents, with about 47.8% of respondents identifying as bicyclists. The next largest group is hikers, with about 28.3%, and then off-road vehicle users and various working users, each with around 26.1%. Equestrian users make up about 19.6% of respondents, which is about the same proportionally as respondents who are adjacent landowners, with other indicated interests in the Line coming up considerably lower. In this respect, the survey results in general are probably

more representative of hikers, bicyclists, and off-road vehicle users than they are of equestrian and other users. (Although respondents who identified their interests in the Line as “other” or “working” uses were just as common as those who are off-road vehicle users, no particular group falling under these categories can be considered representative of the total group, as the write-in responses in these areas were quite diffuse. The most widely represented group here was grazing permittees, which made up 8.7% of the total write-in responses for other or working uses, with horse-drawn vehicle use and hunting coming up next, with about 6.5% each.)

Those who prefer segmenting the Line are not necessarily in wide agreement over which parts should be non-motorized. The sections which were most frequently singled out as being ill-suited for motorized use were section 3 (the Snowstorm Mountain region, between Karlo and Crest) and section 7 (the Tule Mountain region, between Madeline and Likely). These sections were followed by 4, 6, and 8 (Crest to Ravendale, Termo to Madeline, and Likely to McArthur Siding, respectively). Every part of the Trail was named by at least some respondents as being ideal for restricted vehicle use. Some respondents named specific areas or roads within those sections, such as “Snowstorm Canyon from access road to Snowstorm Ranch north to Crest.” Others indicated that they would prefer non-motorized use in areas where motorized use is already limited, or in areas with substantial shade, if possible, but these were isolated responses which were in general not repeated by other respondents.

Respondents overwhelmingly stated that they consider the road access points indicated on the map are sufficient. The three who said that the indicated points were not adequate were not generally consistent in their reasons, and the five who stated they were unsure typically said they needed to do more research, or gave no reasons.

Respondents were almost evenly split on the question about whether there should be seasonal restrictions on use of the Trail. Most of those who favor seasonal restrictions did not specify when, or for what reasons. Most of those who did indicate possible reasons for seasonal restrictions expressed concerns over trail uses during inclement weather, erosion control, and the possibility of trail damage caused by motorized use during wet conditions. Two respondents mentioned snowmobile and skiing uses during winter as possible reasons for restrictions, but did not give specifics.