

PRESS RELEASE: FOTR & RTF STILL COMMITTED AFTER BOS DECISION

Volunteer Coalition and Non-Profit Reflect After County Board of Supervisors Vote

Placerville, CA January 26, 2010: In a historic event, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors voted to formalize the alignment of the world-famous Rubicon Trail. This decision includes a handful of important bypasses around some of the more difficult sections of trail, providing trail users the option of taking a less difficult route around the toughest segments of trail. In a meeting which lasted well into the night, the Board of Supervisors heard arguments from county residents, off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, environmental activists, the U.S. Forest Service, and the State Parks OHV Division about how to best define the trail which winds through the scenic Sierra Nevada west of Lake Tahoe.

The Board of Supervisors discussed options for addressing a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The DOT listed three options for consideration, ranging from establishing 1.) a single defined trail, 2.) a defined trail with bypasses around the most difficult sections, and 3.) a 'corridor' option which would have included wide areas where specific trails might be defined. In the end, the Board of Supervisors chose the option of a single route with bypasses, which they felt provided the widest range of opportunities for public access while still addressing the CAO. Tom Celio, Director of DOT, stated that all options presented would be able to address the CAO.

This County action formally recognizes the main alignment of the Rubicon Trail and a handful of alternate routes with multiple levels of difficulty near Devil's Postpile, Forgotten Sluice, Little Sluice, Indian Trail, and the True Old Sluice. Selecting this middle option is a balance between recognizing a single trail and recognizing every existing alternate and bypass. *"In reality we lost very little"* said Scott Johnston, President of the Rubicon Trail Foundation, *"We are still committed to working with the County – this was a good step toward satisfying the Water Board's CAO."*

In a frustrating last-minute twist which caught the public by surprise, the Board of Supervisors also voted to reduce the size of the largest rocks in the iconic Little Sluice Box, a signature section of Rubicon Trail near Spider Lake with high technical difficulty. This controversial proposal, **was** put forth by Supervisor Jack Sweeney after the public comments session was closed. *"I and other members of our volunteer community were blind-sided by the discussion/decision to alter Little Sluice"*, said Jacquelyne Bebe Theisen, Trail Boss for the Friends of the Rubicon (FOTR). *"Our volunteers deserved the opportunity to discuss the alteration of Little Sluice with the Board of Supervisors – and we will. This is not over."*

RTF and FOTR will work together to push the County Department of Transportation to lead organizations and agencies together to identify and employ non-explosive management techniques to minimize impacts at Little Sluice and still comply with the Board of Supervisors' instructions. In the meantime, FOTR and RTF will continue to work with the County to mitigate concerns in the area by distributing WAG bags (for collecting human waste) and spill kits (for cleaning up fluids spilled by damaged vehicles); reaching out with education from the kiosks, providing roving trail patrol and mid-trail staff; and delivering internet-based education.

On several occasions during the course of the meeting, the Board of Supervisors expressed how grateful they were for the incredible commitment of the OHV community who volunteer thousands of hours a year educating trail users, performing trail maintenance, and cleaning up and addressing sanitation issues. The volunteers of FOTR, Jeepers Jamboree, California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs, and many other local clubs and independents have worked together to maintaining Rubicon Trail for more than 50 years. The joint efforts of the County, the Forest Service, the California OHV Division, and these volunteers provide an unprecedented example of a collaborative process that works, and are a shining example to land managers and user groups across the nation. *"We have to move forward, and keep our volunteers motivated. It's going to be a challenge, but we can and will succeed,"* Theisen added, *"We are relieved that after ten years of discussing the issue of trail alignment with little action, the County has finally identified what routes they will maintain in conjunction with the Volunteers."*

FOTR's extensive volunteer coalition coordinates with RTF's federally recognized non-profit organization, and with 8+ years of FOTR volunteerism and 5+ years of RTF fund-raising, we expect that the Rubicon Trail will continue to be an environmentally sound, viable, year-round trail accessible to the public for years to come. If you would like to help with our efforts, you can sign up for a Friends of the Rubicon work party at: www.FriendsoftheRubicon.com or send your tax deductible donations to: Rubicon Trail Foundation PO Box 2188 Placerville, CA 95667. Donations may also be made with Paypal or major credit cards by calling 888-6RUBICON.

More information is available at www.RubiconTrailFoundation.org and www.FriendsoftheRubicon.com

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For more information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with a representative of RTF or FOTR, please e-mail Scott Johnston at President@rubicontrailfoundation.org or Jacquelyne Bebe Theisen, Friends of the Rubicon Trail Boss and Volunteer Leader at bebehumr@gmail.com