

Sierra Nevada Conservancy-Progress Report

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2008 (Proposition 84)**

Grantee Name: Lassen Land and Trails Trust

Project title: Modoc Line Land Acquisition Evaluation and Management Plan

SNC Reference Number: SNC 070252 Submittal Date: 12/14/11

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Check one:

6-Month Progress Report
 Final Report

6-Month Progress Reports should reflect the previous six months. **Final Reports** should reflect the entire grant period.

A. Final Report Summary: Through the SNC’s grant to support the Modoc Line Land Acquisition Evaluation and Management Plan, Lassen Land and Trails Trust was able to complete the initial assessment of the 85.6 mile linear rail corridor for acquisition as a public recreational trail, acquire the property and develop a management plan to guide the development of the trail. The plan has been adopted by the Board of Directors of the Trust and an implementation strategy is in development based on the management plan. The trail is now open and in use by the public on a limited basis.

B. Deliverables or Outcomes Completed and Milestones Achieved:

- Title report
- Appraisal of the 85.6 linear mile corridor (2,053 acres)
- Environmental assessment
- WCB grant for acquisition
- Completion of acquisition; press release and celebration with stakeholders and partners
- Additional funding was secured from the Bureau of Land Management to assist in an inventory of the property and development of the management plan.
- Preliminary engineer’s structural review and report
- GPS coordinates; mapping and resource inventory completed for corridor
- Communications Plan designed and implemented to learn stakeholder concerns and preferences regarding use of the trail
- Management Plan drafted; reviewed; public comment sessions (2)
- Management Plan in final version; to be adopted as management guidance by Lassen Land and Trails Trust Board of Directors, January 2012

- C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered:** During the open houses held for public comment, we learned a great deal more than in the initial public sessions. Responses to the draft were more focused regarding the recommended management of the trail than during initial conceptual conversations. At the northern end of the line there is greater concern regarding trespass from the trail onto private lands adjacent to the trail corridor. In addition, there were some very constructive suggestions regarding maintenance, suggested access locations and regulations. The plan is stronger for these suggestions. In particular, given the extensive use of the trail to access public lands for hunting, stronger and more explicit language was adopted to curtail use of firearms within the trail corridor.
- D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved:** The discussions with Fire Districts in Likely and Madeline have been milestones in building local support and developing local champions for the trail. There was a great deal of apprehension regarding the water resources, which had been in place through the rail road operations. Beginning cooperative discussions has led to a better understanding between those communities and the Trust regarding the trail.
- E. Compare Actual Costs to Budgeted Costs:**

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	Budgeted SNC Dollars	Actual Dollars
Consultant Services	\$7,090.00	\$7090.00
Coordination by LLTT Staff	\$15,000.00	\$15000.00
Modoc Line Trail Master Plan	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$39,090.00	\$39,090.00

Explanation:

- F. Do you have information to report on the project-specific Performance Measures for your project?** Lassen Land and Trails Trust has completed the project and met the project-specific Performance Measures as stipulated in our grant agreement:
1. Performance Measure – Feet of trail to be constructed or improved planned and eventually implemented: The Management Plan identifies improvements needed along the 85.6 mile corridor; existing access points and those recommended for users and improvements.
 2. Performance Measure – Significant Sites Protected: The Management Plan identifies specific historical and cultural resources, as well as natural resources, within the corridor and makes recommendations regarding their protection. In addition, there is a broader corridor of influence identified with natural, historical and cultural resources identified for interpretation and future protection. Six specific historical cultural resources are identified for conservation and interpretation, for example the Modoc wars near Likely and the sheep shipping center of Madeline; pre-historical resources are

mentioned but confidential pending NEPA/CEQA. Natural resources are identified via ecosystem geography, topography and geomorphology, soils, hydrology, fire, vegetation and wildlife species. Examples include the South Fork of the Pit River valley and the extensive wetlands and migratory waterfowl habitat, as well as pronghorn sighting opportunities south of Snowstorm Canyon.

3. Performance Measure - Acres of Land Improved or Restored: The Master Plan provides improvement and restoration opportunity data based on the analysis of trail threats to water quality and identifies areas for treatment. Specifically, areas include 16 bridges and culverts where drainage off of the railroad grade is of concern; crossing of the South Fork of the Pit River and the irrigation canal in Likely; and the adjacent wetlands and irrigation canals north of Likely.
4. Performance Measure – Number and Diversity of People Reached in Planning Process: The Open Houses in Susanville and Alturas had 19 participants; initial use survey and Plan comments both via mail and on-line elicited 47 responses. 127 Plan drafts were distributed to the Board of Supervisors of both Modoc and Lassen counties; Alturas and Susanville City Councils; local fire and police, as well as search and rescue; BLM staff in both Eagle Lake and Alturas field offices; adjacent landowners; utility companies; CalTrans; local tribal entities; recreational user groups and business owners. The Trails Committee of the Board of Lassen Land and Trails Trust was the primary arbiter of the Plan with staff.
5. Performance Measure – Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments: The Management Plan acknowledges the role of the Modoc Line Rail Trail in an integrated and connected regional trail network identified in recreational resource plans by the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, Lassen and Modoc Counties, the City of Susanville and the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.

G. Were there any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this Agreement that are not a part of the budgeted deliverables? If so, please attach copies. No there were none.

H. Next Steps: With the adoption of the Management Plan by the Trust's Board of Directors, an implementation strategy will be designed to begin the development of the trail in 2012.

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.llttweb.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: _____

Lassen Land and Trails Trust

MODOC LINE RAIL TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN
Comments on Draft Plan

NAME: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

COMMENTS

Document Chapter
(Plan or &/or Page
Appendix) # Sentence(s) # Comments

Document (Plan or Appendix)	Chapter &/or Page #	Sentence(s) #	Comments

Other Comments:



IN BRIEF: THE MODOC LINE RAIL TRAIL



Acquisition of Railway as Trail

- ◆ The Modoc Line is an 85-mile railway corridor, running north from Wendel to Alturas, and previously owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. Lassen Land and Trails Trust purchased the Modoc Line in 2008 with a \$420,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board.
- ◆ The purchase was through a process known as *railbanking*. The *Rail to Trails Act* of 1983 allows the federal government to regulate the disposition of potentially abandoned railroad lines to preserve the right of way in case of a need for future rail use. It also made way for alternative transportation uses for railway corridors, including trails.



History of the Railway

- ◆ The Modoc Line was the centerpiece of the Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad. The N-C-O (*termed many names like Narrow, Crooked and Ormery or the Northern California Outrage*) was a narrow-gauge rail line. Southern Pacific Railroad bought the N-C-O in 1925 and converted the line to standard gauge between 1927 and 1928.
- ◆ Union Pacific Railroad assumed control of the line in 1996 and stopped operation of trains over the Modoc Line in 1997. Rails and ties were removed from the Modoc line between Wendel and the McArthur siding near Alturas during 2003 -2004.



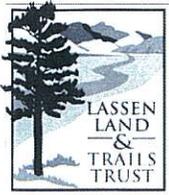
The Modoc Line's Future

- ◆ The Modoc Line Rail Trail is a cooperative project between the Bureau of Land Management, Lassen and Modoc Counties, Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Fish and Game, Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Lassen Lands and Trails Trust as lead.
- ◆ The next step is to adopt the Management Plan for the Modoc Line Rail Trail and to begin development of the trail. Lassen Land and Trails Trust, with assistance from the Bureau of Land Management and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has developed a draft management plan and is seeking comments from land owners, trail user groups and partners. Comments are due by Friday, September 30, 2012.



The Management Plan

- ◆ The objectives for a trail management plan include: identification of appropriate uses, grade and structural improvements, access points, signage and facility improvements, and routine maintenance needs. A PDF of the draft management plan can be downloaded at www.llttweb.org, or by calling (530) 257-3252.



THE MODOC LINE RAIL TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN: IN SUMMARY



Recommendations for Development

- ◆ The Modoc Line, an 85-mile railway corridor which runs north from Wendel to Alturas, is being proposed as a shared use trail.
- ◆ Establish priorities for the phased development of each of the seven segments identified in the plan to best use resources effectively and 'open' segments of the trail with highest demand earlier in the development process.
- ◆ Ultimately, six access points are recommended. Each will include facilities for parking, interpretation and visitor information.
- ◆ Siting of several overnight camping facilities along the trail.
- ◆ Installation of gates and fencing to facilitate secure passage for all users while ensuring the safety of livestock and adjacent private property.
- ◆ Implementation of guidance and traffic rules in order to encourage the safe use of the trail by all users.
- ◆ The development and training of a volunteer crew to monitor and assist with the oversight and maintenance of the trail.



The Modoc Line's Future Management

- ◆ The Modoc Line Rail Trail is a cooperative project between the Bureau of Land Management, Lassen and Modoc Counties, Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Fish and Game, Sierra Nevada Conservancy with the Lassen Land and Trails Trust as lead.
- ◆ Lassen Land and Trails Trust will work with each of the cooperating organizations to secure funds and resources for the development and long-term management of the trail.

A PDF of the draft management plan can be downloaded at www.llttweb.org. For more information, please call (530) 257-3252.