

Expanding Regional and Local Trails in Humboldt County

“State of the Trails” Report

June 2016

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- The Trail Project Life Cycle
- Future Vision and Current Projects
- Bureau of Land Management Recreational Trails
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Prepared by:



With funding from:



INTRODUCTION



Arcata Community Forest



Hikshari' Trail

Purpose

Trails give people options for safe, active transportation and recreation and provide social, environmental, and economic benefits to our communities. Considerable effort is being made working toward the goal of a network of connected regional and local trails in Humboldt County. The purpose of this brochure is to highlight some of the accomplishments of the last five years and provide updates on trail projects currently being developed. In addition, this brochure identifies some of the challenges faced by trail projects and describes strategies being used by local agencies and organizations to deliver new trails for the public to use and enjoy.

This brochure was prepared by the Humboldt County Public Works Department to support the 2016 Trails Summit scheduled for June 4, 2016, at the Wharfinger Building in Eureka.

Types of Trails

The term “trail” is used here to describe any route physically separated from a roadway that enables non-motorized travel within a community, between communities, or through a natural area.

Trails are an essential part of a balanced, multimodal transportation system that is safe, accessible, and sustainable.

Trails can be developed in conjunction with roadway improvements (such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and enhanced crosswalks) to support “active transportation” and the associated health benefits of walking, running, cycling, or rolling. Trails also provide recreational access for enjoying parks, beaches, forests, and other open spaces of the North Coast.

An important distinction for trails is the type of surface, which is closely connected with the trail’s purpose and design.

Paved Surface Trails

Trails with paved surfaces (also known as shared-use paths or multi-use trails) are designed to meet established design standards. These standards focus on meeting the needs of the trail users, maintaining safety, minimizing impacts, and constructing a stable facility. Paved surface trails are accessible to users with a wide range of ages, abilities, and modes of travel.

These trails may have parallel lanes conveying users in opposite directions along with graded shoulders, traffic control signs, and culverts or bridges where necessary.

Projects to develop paved surface trails follow a rigorous process comparable to road projects, and the majority of the

construction is performed by licensed contractors. Local examples of paved surface trails include the Hammond Trail in McKinleyville, the Hikshari’ Trail in Eureka, and the multi-use trail completed in 2015 along Alliance Road and L Street in Arcata.

Natural Surface Trails

Trails with natural surfaces (also known as off-road trails) are primarily used for recreation within natural areas. Natural surface trails are built using guidelines that identify desired ranges for attributes such as tread width or slope but allow flexibility based on constraints such as trees, topography, and drainage features.

Natural surface trails can be designed for multiple-use (traveling by foot, bicycle, horse, or mobility aid) or single-use and can be built with a combination of labor provided by contractors, the California Conservation Corps, CAL FIRE Conservation Camps, and volunteers.

Local examples of natural surface trails include the Arcata Community Forest, Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, Sequoia Park in Eureka, Freshwater Farms Reserve, the Ossagon Trail in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, and levee trails in Fortuna, Blue Lake, and Orick.

THE TRAIL PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

The trail project life cycle is composed of as eight progressive phases:

1. Planning
2. Funding acquisition
3. Preliminary engineering, environmental evaluation, and permitting
4. Engineering plans and specifications
5. Right-of-way
6. Construction
7. Mitigation
8. Management and maintenance

The five phases prior to construction comprise the “project development” process. The details of each phase will vary depending on the type of trail, funding source, and agency leading the project. Reaching completion can require three to five years for small projects and 10 to 20 years for larger, more complicated projects. While the following summary applies primarily to paved surface trails built with transportation-based funding, natural surface trails follow a similar process.

1 Planning

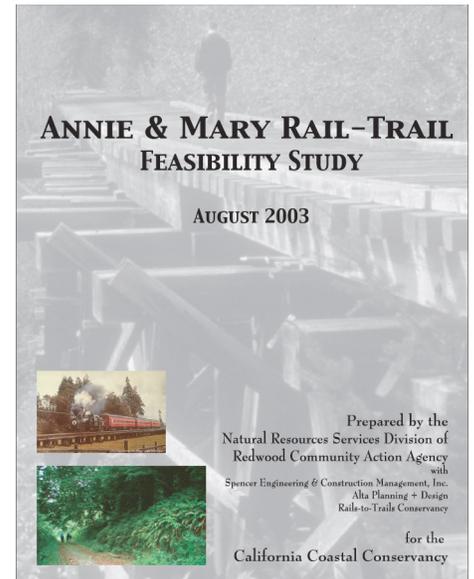
The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is a joint powers authority that serves as the transportation planning agency for local transportation facilities. HCAOG prepares long-range planning documents which provide the framework for managing and improving the local transportation system. These documents are the starting point for transportation investment and advancing trail projects. Important plans include the Humboldt Regional Transportation Plan (2014), Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan (2012), and Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan (2010).

Another foundational planning document is the Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy prepared by Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) in 2011. This report provides a detailed evaluation of opportunities to extend the California Coastal Trail through Humboldt County. The California Coastal Trail is envisioned as a state-wide contiguous network of public trails, beaches, and routes that connect coastal communities and increase coastal access opportunities. This report serves as a guide and tool for implementing individual trail projects along the coast in a coordinated manner.

After initial planning efforts to identify the overall vision of a trail connection, more specific planning studies are often developed to further define the scope of the project, identify issues and constraints, develop conceptual designs, evaluate feasibility, and estimate costs.

2 Funding Acquisition

The majority of funding for planning, design, and construction of trail projects comes from state and federal grant programs, which are highly competitive. Different phases of the project



development process are often funded separately. The cost for pre-construction phases can range anywhere from 20% to over 40% of the construction cost. Multiple sources are often needed for full project funding.

One of the primary funding sources for local agencies to develop trail projects is the state Active Transportation Program, administered by Caltrans. The goals of the Active Transportation Program include increasing the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking, increasing the safety and mobility of non-motorized users, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing public health. The first two cycles of funding were awarded in 2014 and 2015. Applications for the third funding cycle are due June 15, 2016, and the next funding cycle is anticipated in 2018.



Eureka Waterfront Trail Phase C Boardwalk

THE TRAIL PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

Local trail projects are eligible for other transportation funds such as the State Transportation Improvement Program; however, currently this program has very limited funding available. The Governor and legislature continue to work on options for increasing investments in transportation infrastructure (see fixcaroads.com for more information). Another regular funding source for trail projects is the State Coastal Conservancy.

Grant programs fund pre-construction and construction phases, but are not available for management and maintenance costs, which must be borne by the project's lead agency or a partnering organization. The lack of sufficient funding for trail management and maintenance looms as the major limiting factor for expanding regional trails in Humboldt County.

3 Preliminary Engineering, Environmental Evaluation, Permitting

This phase produces the technical studies necessary to define the project design, evaluate alternatives, identify opportunities to avoid or minimize impacts, and prepare the documents to apply for regulatory permits. This

phase often has the longest duration due to the iterations needed to avoid or reduce environmental impacts and the administrative processes of the permitting agencies.

4 Engineering Plans and Specifications

This phase produces the engineering plans, specifications, and estimates of material quantities and costs which together provide the basis for the construction contract.

5 Right-of-way

The lead agency must purchase property, obtain easements from affected property owners, or acquire other forms of authorization to construct a trail within the project area. In addition, some projects require relocation of utilities or other obstructions.

6 Construction

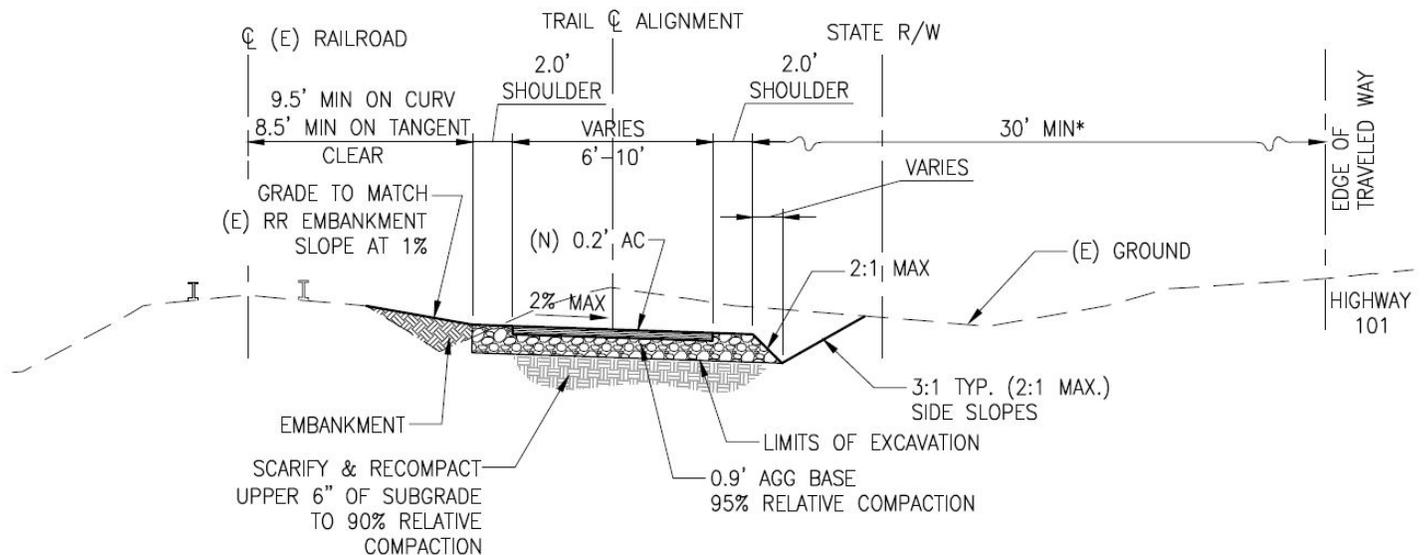
The lead agency administers the construction contract and oversees the contractors and other labor sources to perform the work that builds the project.

7 Mitigation and Monitoring

The lead agency is often required by the regulatory permits to implement mitigation measures that offset the impacts of the project, and to monitor the long-term effectiveness of these measures. Mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands is a typical mitigation requirement. The area of wetlands that must be created or enhanced is often several times larger than the area impacted.

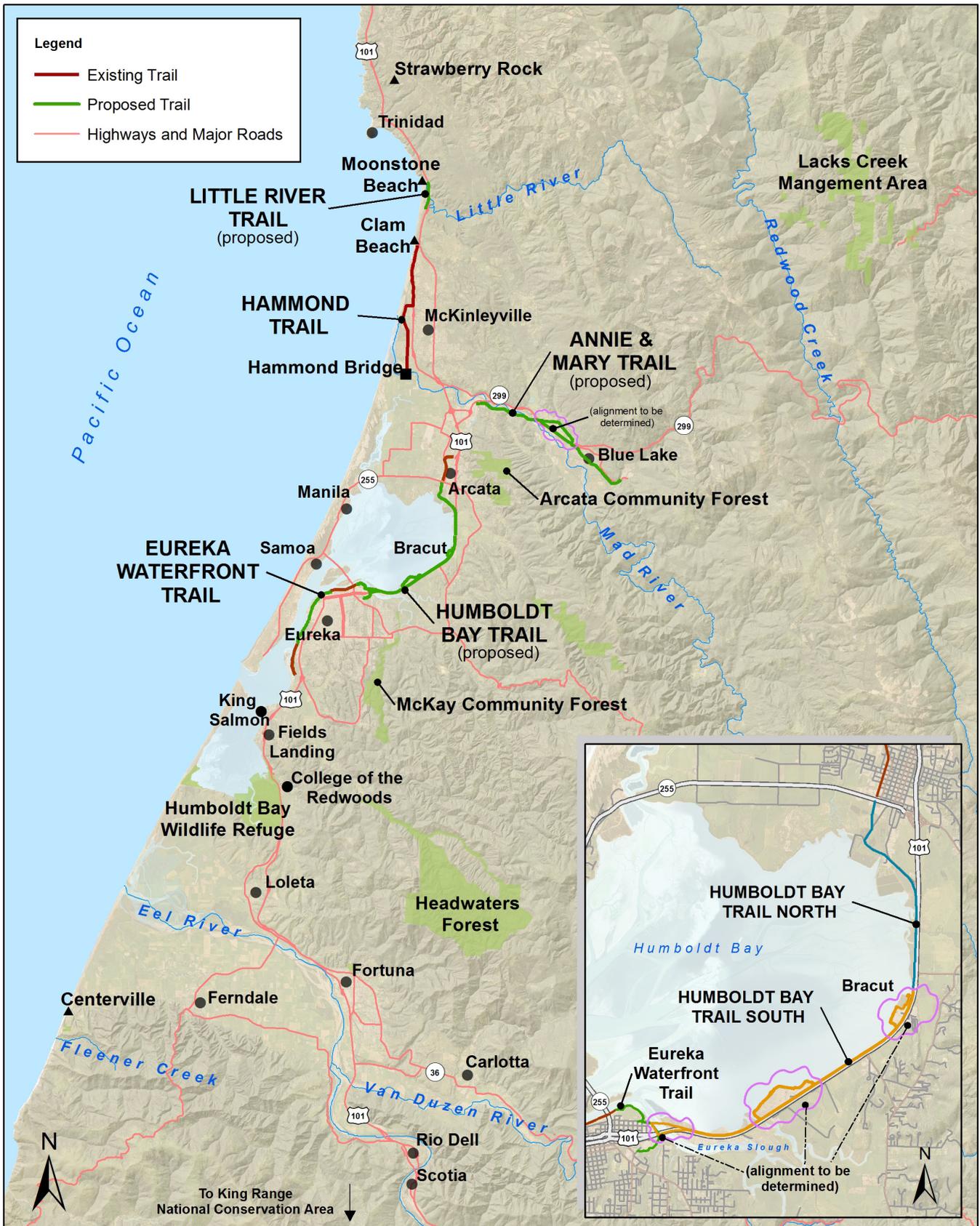
8 Management and Maintenance

The trail is built! Then the responsibilities for management and maintenance begin. Examples include vegetation management, monitoring and treating potentially hazardous conditions, responding to incidents and inappropriate use, abating vandalism, storm damage repairs, and various repairs required due to wear-and-tear and deterioration over time. Proper management and maintenance are essential for public safety and protecting the investments that were made to create the new trail.



Typical cross-section for Bay Trail North (GHD, 2016)

REGIONAL TRAIL PROJECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



REGIONAL TRAILS

FUTURE VISION AND CURRENT PROJECTS

OVERVIEW

The broad vision for trails in Humboldt County includes a continuous trail system along the coast with an interconnected trail network connecting our cities and small communities. Near the population center around Humboldt Bay and the surrounding areas, regional trails are envisioned between Trinidad to the north and Scotia to the south with branches to Blue Lake, Freshwater, Carlotta, and other inland communities.

The regional trail vision for Humboldt County will require several generations of trail builders and supporters to achieve. Trail projects are complex and expensive due to the various constraints and competing priorities for funding. Local agencies are currently taking a practical approach of building the regional trail network through a series of incremental projects, one to two miles at a time. Some cities are focusing first on improving roadways (especially “Safe-Routes-to-Schools”) before taking on projects for separated trails. Trail projects are carefully planned to have immediate benefit (connecting to destinations and/or transitioning to other facilities) and to link with other future planned trails.

The following pages describe the overall vision for trail connections and provide a brief update on trail projects and planning efforts currently in progress.

TRINIDAD TO ARCATA

This area includes the existing Hammond Trail which extends over five miles from Clam Beach County Park to the Hammond Bridge which crosses the Mad River southwest of McKinleyville. One of the County of Humboldt’s top priorities is to replace the 540-foot-long Hammond Bridge, which has a wonderful history of railroad use starting in 1941 and re-purposing for a trail crossing in 1983, but is in poor condition due to corrosion. The County will be applying for construction funds in June 2016 with a goal of replacing the bridge within the next five to seven years before the existing bridge must be taken out of service.

The trail vision for this area includes the proposed Little River Trail which would extend the Hammond Trail northward from Clam Beach through Little River State Beach, across Little River over a widened highway bridge, and into the community of Westhaven, which is linked to Trinidad via Scenic Drive. RCAA completed a feasibility study for this proposed trail in 2014. The City of Trinidad and the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust are currently leading the effort to build a comprehensive strategy for advancing the Little River Trail, and the Land Trust has offered to maintain the trail (except for the widened highway bridge which would be maintained by Caltrans). The Trinidad Coastal Land Trust is also pursuing funds to acquire an easement for an authorized recreational trail to Strawberry Rock, which is owned by Green Diamond Resource Company.

In 2015, the City of Trinidad received funds to rehabilitate the existing Van Wycke Trail and construct improvements for non-motorized use on adjacent city streets. Construction is planned for 2019. McKinleyville Community Services District is in the planning phase for expanded recreational trails along the lower Mad River at the west end of School Road in conjunction with a restoration project. Humboldt County Public Works is seeking funds for Safe-Routes-to-School roadway improvements on McKinleyville Avenue.



Hammond Trail at Clam Beach

REGIONAL TRAILS

FUTURE VISION AND CURRENT PROJECTS

HUMBOLDT BAY TRAIL

The Humboldt Bay Trail is envisioned as a network of trails around the perimeter of the bay. For the last several years, the focus for the Humboldt Bay Trail has been on developing a continuous multi-use trail from Arcata to Eureka and a continuous trail around the Eureka waterfront. Public support is high for a trail connection between the two largest cities of Humboldt County and the project has been a regional priority for many years. The trail between Eureka and Arcata is proposed to be situated within the U.S. Highway 101 and railroad corridors (with some potential site-specific exceptions). The Humboldt Bay Trail is being developed as a collaborative effort between HCAOG, County of Humboldt, City of Arcata, City of Eureka, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), State Coastal Conservancy, North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA), and a variety of other agencies and organizations.

In 2012, the NCRA commissioned the Humboldt Rail Corridor Committee which established several findings and recommendations related to trail projects. The committee affirmed the “rail-with-trail” approach in which trails are designed with a minimum separation distance (normally 8.5 feet) from the tracks to protect the ability for future restoration of freight and passenger excursion service. The committee noted the possibility for clearly defined and strictly limited exceptions to its trail policy if the potential for restoring rail service is not compromised. In 2015 and 2016, NCRA approved license agreements with the City of Eureka and City of Arcata for trail projects around the bay within the railroad right-of-way.

The Humboldt Bay Trail between Eureka and Arcata is being developed in conjunction with the Eureka-Arcata Highway 101 Corridor Improvement Project, which will improve highway safety and operations at six at-grade intersections. In 2013, the projects were linked through action of the Coastal Commission. At the September 2013 hearing of the Coastal Commission, Caltrans and HCAOG proposed that the corridor improvement project would not commence construction until funding and right-of-way for the portion of the Bay Trail between Eureka and Arcata are secured. The Coastal Commission accepted this proposal and made it a condition of future permitting. The proposed trail between Eureka and Arcata has a 10-foot-wide paved surface with two-foot-wide shoulders on each side, with barriers to separate the trail from the railroad or highway as needed for safety.

While the current focus of the Humboldt Bay Trail is connecting Eureka and Arcata, future phases could include extending south from Eureka with the ultimate goal of connecting to the Eel River Valley, and extending west from Arcata with the ultimate goal of connecting to Manila and Samoa.



Arcata-Eureka Highway 101 Safety Corridor

REGIONAL TRAILS

FUTURE VISION AND CURRENT PROJECTS

Eureka Waterfront Trail

The City of Eureka will soon construct three trail projects (Phases A, B, and C) to complete the Eureka Waterfront Trail portion of the Humboldt Bay Trail. The upcoming projects will construct a total of 3.75 miles of new trail to provide a continuous 6.3 mile trail along the bay. The projects were designed to fill the gaps between the Hikshari' Trail in south Eureka near the Elk River estuary, the existing promenade boardwalk in Old Town, the existing shoreline trail in Halvorsen Park, and the existing trail near the Target store.

Phase A of the Waterfront Trail will connect to the Hikshari' Trail at Truesdale Street and extend north through the Palco Marsh behind the Bayshore Mall to Del Norte Street. Phase B will begin at Del Norte Street and continue north along Railroad Avenue and Waterfront Drive to C Street, near the Fisherman's Terminal Building. Phase C will extend from Halvorsen Park along the margin of Humboldt Bay to the existing Target trail along Eureka Slough, and then continue under the Highway 101 bridge to Tydd Street in the Myrtle town area. The Phase C project will feature a 600-foot-long boardwalk passing over a salt marsh near Eureka Slough and will provide the connection point with the proposed trail from the Eureka-Arcata highway and railroad corridor.

The total estimated cost for construction and mitigation of the three Waterfront Trail projects is \$5.1 million. In May 2016, the final portion of construction funding was secured, and the Coastal Commission authorized the City's coastal development permit. Construction of Phase A is scheduled to begin this summer, and construction of Phases B and C will begin in 2017.

Bay Trail North (Arcata to Bayside Cutoff)

In 2008, the City of Arcata initiated planning and design for the northern segment of the envisioned multi-use trail linking Arcata and Eureka. The Bay Trail North project will connect to existing trails within the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and then integrate with the railroad and highway corridors, extending along the shoreline of the bay to an endpoint north of Bracut Industrial Park. The majority of the trail will be constructed along the east side of the railroad, and the southern terminus will transition onto the shoulder of Highway 101 south of Bayside Cutoff. The project will construct 3.0 miles of new trail. The project is complicated due to the constraints within the highway and railroad corridors and the proximity to wetlands which are highly regulated.

The total estimated cost for construction of the Bay Trail North project is \$4.7 million. The final portion of construction funding is pending with the State Coastal Conservancy. In addition, Caltrans is implementing a large-scale wetland mitigation project which will meet most or all of the mitigation requirements of the Bay Trail North project. The Coastal Commission will consider authorizing the City's coastal development permit within the next few months, likely in September. If the coastal development permit is approved, construction could begin in early 2017.

Bay Trail South (Bayside Cutoff to Eureka)

The County of Humboldt is leading the development of the Bay Trail South segment which would provide the interconnecting link between Eureka's and Arcata's trail projects currently in progress. The project area extends for a total length of nearly four miles. The County was awarded funds to complete the engineering and permitting phases.



City of Arcata trail near Alliance Road

REGIONAL TRAILS

FUTURE VISION AND CURRENT PROJECTS

Significant challenges facing Bay Trail South include:

- Limited space between the railroad and highway
- Permitting restrictions and limitations due to the proximity to wetlands and sensitive coastal resources
- Crossing of Eureka Slough (approximately 700-800 feet)
- Mature stand of Eucalyptus trees near the former California Redwood Company lumber mill
- Deteriorated condition of portions of the railroad prism
- Exposure to potential inundation and/or erosion along the bay shoreline and effects of sea level rise
- No current dedicated funding source for management and maintenance

In addition, the project area has a unique situation at the Bracut Industrial Park. It has commonly been perceived that the railroad right-of-way is continuous around the bay; however, a discontinuity occurred in 1986 after Northwestern Pacific Company conveyed ownership of a land parcel to Bracut Lumber Company. Humboldt County will soon begin working with the private landowner to address trail alignment and right-of-way at this property. The trail alignment will need to be compatible with land use at the facility and meet applicable safety standards. Details regarding location, compensation, and liability remain to be resolved.

Completion of Bay Trail South will require several years due to the project's size and complexity. Preliminary cost estimates for right-of-way and construction range from \$9 to \$12 million, and costs for environmental mitigation are estimated at \$1.5 to \$2.0 million. Future funding will need to be secured for these components.

Northern Peninsula (North Spit)

The trail vision for the Northern Peninsula of Humboldt Bay includes connections between the communities of Samoa and Manila with Eureka (via the Samoa Bridges) and Arcata (generally parallel to Highway 255). Two trail projects are currently in progress.

In 2015, the County of Humboldt and Caltrans secured Active Transportation Program funds to construct one-half mile of multi-use trail parallel to Highway 255 in Manila between Pacific Avenue/Dean Street and Lupin Drive. This project will deliver the first multi-use trail centrally located within Caltrans right-of-way in Caltrans District 1. The trail will link neighborhoods and enhance access to the Manila Community Center and Redwood Coast Montessori. The County will design and construct the trail and Caltrans has committed to either maintain the trail or provide funds for maintenance. Construction is expected in 2019 or 2020. This project will provide the first step toward the goal of a trail connection between Manila and Arcata, which has been identified as a top priority by many Manila residents. A Manila-Arcata trail connection will be challenging due to the limited available space within the highway corridor.

Several partners are collaborating on a plan to construct a 3.8-mile trail network in conjunction with Samoa Pacific Group's Town of Samoa development. The County plans to apply for construction funds in June 2016 and the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Conservation and Recreation District has committed to be the agency responsible for maintenance. If funded, construction is projected to begin in 2021.

EUREKA TO COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

A continuous trail is envisioned extending south from Eureka, connecting to the communities of King Salmon and Fields Landing and linking with College of the Redwoods and the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Planning in this area is still in the conceptual stage. A small study to analyze opportunities and constraints for potential trail connections between Eureka and College of the Redwoods (and southward into the Eel River Valley) was initiated in April 2016. Key partners for future trail projects in this area will include Humboldt County, City of Eureka, Caltrans, PG&E, the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Conservation and Recreation District, College of the Redwoods, and NCRA.

REGIONAL TRAILS FUTURE VISION AND CURRENT PROJECTS

ANNIE AND MARY TRAIL

The Annie and Mary Trail is a proposed multi-use trail connecting the cities of Blue Lake and Arcata along a route following the former Arcata & Mad River Railroad line, currently owned by NCRA. The Friends of the Annie and Mary Trail organization was formed in 1997 to provide community support and fundraising for the trail.

In 2003, a detailed study was completed analyzing opportunities and constraints related to trail development. In 2008, NCRA passed a resolution expressing willingness to cooperate with local stakeholders on achieving multi-modal transportation use of the line. HCAOG and Humboldt County subsequently completed corridor-wide technical studies to assess environmental conditions and evaluate the railroad right-of-way.



In March 2016, the City of Blue Lake initiated conceptual design, data collection, and public outreach to support a grant application to the Active Transportation Program for the Annie and Mary Trail Phase 1 Project, which would provide trail connectivity within city limits along South Railroad Avenue from Chartin Road to H Street (near Stardough's Café and the Logger Bar). The project concept is a separated path on the north side of South Railroad Avenue that would provide connectivity between the central downtown area and existing sidewalks on Chartin Road. If funded, funds would be available in 2019 to begin the project development process with a target for construction of 2021.

Later in 2016, Humboldt County plans to initiate a feasibility study for the next phase of the Annie and Mary Trail that would connect Blue Lake and the community of Glendale. This study will consider the feasibility of locating a multi-use trail on the north side of Highway 299 within Caltrans right-of-way from Blue Lake to Glendale Drive in Glendale.

Key partners for future phases of the Annie and Mary Trail will include Humboldt County, City of Blue Lake, Blue Lake Rancheria, Caltrans, the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, City of Arcata, NCRA, and Friends of the Annie and Mary Trail. Determining the lead agency to implement projects and securing funding remain to be resolved.

EEL RIVER VALLEY (Fortuna, Rio Dell, Scotia)

The vision for this area includes a trail connection between the Eel River Valley and Humboldt Bay region, along with trail connections between the City of Fortuna, City of Rio Dell, Town of Scotia, and community of Loleta. A preliminary analysis of potential trail connections was initiated in April 2016. These connections will be challenging due to space constraints near existing infrastructure and the need for crossing the Eel and Van Duzen Rivers. The City of Fortuna and City of Rio Dell are currently focusing on road improvements for bike and pedestrian safety within their respective cities.

REGIONAL TRAILS

FUTURE VISION AND CURRENT PROJECTS

FORTUNA

Downtown and Riverwalk Area Complete Streets and Connectivity

Many Fortuna residents utilize the Sandy Prairie Levee along the Eel River near Riverwalk Drive for walking and biking. However, this levee trail is separated from the majority of the city by Highway 101. Currently the two options for crossing Highway 101 (the 12th Street overcrossing and Kenmar Road undercrossing) do not have accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian use. In 2015, the City received a planning grant to study conceptual alternatives for road improvements to support access by all users. This study will support the development of future projects to provide non-motorized connectivity between the central city, the Eel River, and the levee trail.



Figure 5-3: Photo Showing Existing Conditions along Strongs Creek Between South Fortuna Boulevard and Redwood Way (Top) and Photo Simulation of the Trail and Greenway (Bottom)

John Campbell Memorial Greenway/Strongs Creek Trail

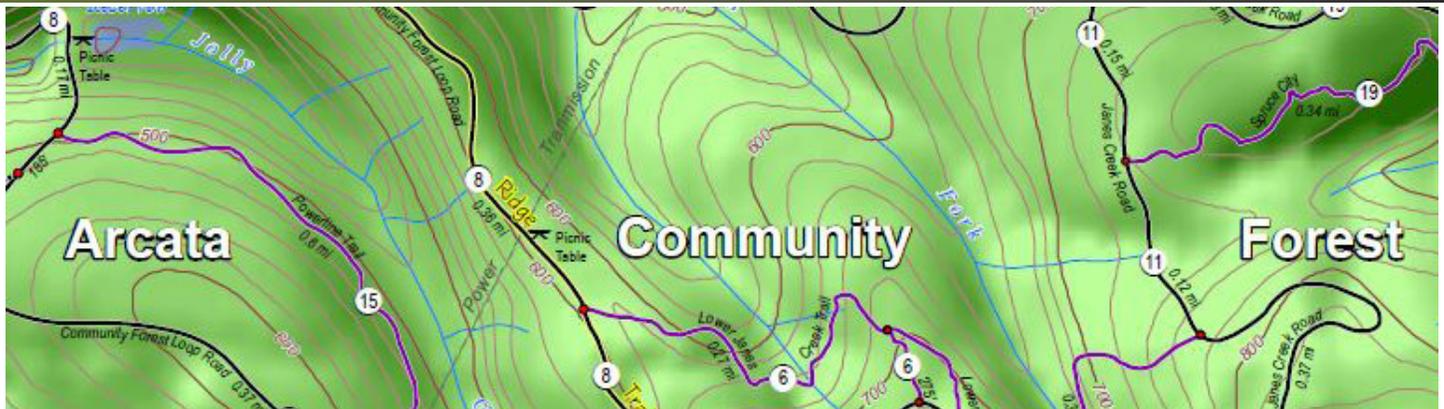
In 2014, the City of Fortuna completed a Master Plan study for the John Campbell Memorial Greenway/Strongs Creek Trail. The Master Plan describes a linear park along the bank of Strongs Creek including a paved multi-use trail between Highway 101 and Rohnerville Road. The route would provide connections for non-motorized travel between the River Lodge Conference Center, Mill District, Strongs Creek Plaza Shopping Center, Redwood Memorial Hospital, Sequoia Springs Retirement Cottages, low-income housing projects, the Senestraro neighborhood, and Newburg Park. A phased development sequence is proposed to meet near-term and long-range objectives based on available funding and partnership opportunities. In June 2016, the City will apply to the state Active Transportation Program for funds to develop the first segments of the Strongs Creek Trail, including paved trails between the River Lodge and Fortuna Boulevard and along Rohnerville Road between Redwood Way and Newburg Park. The City will continue to pursue developing the other segments in order to complete the paved trail along the entire route identified in the 2014 Master Plan.

The City has identified opportunities for new trails to be developed northwest of Newburg Park on a large agricultural parcel being developed for community uses by the McLean Foundation. In addition, the City supports the long-term vision of a trail connection from Fortuna to the Headwaters Forest. The City is working to implement Safe-Routes-to-School projects for Toddy Thomas Middle School and South Fortuna Elementary.

RIO DELL

In 2015, the City of Rio Dell was awarded an Active Transportation Program grant to create new non-motorized routes on roads leading to Eagle Prairie Elementary School and Monument Middle School. The project will construct new bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps on several busy city streets. In addition, the project will re-configure two major intersections to encourage compliance with stop signs (discourage rolling stops), reduce speeds, and reduce intersection crossing distance. Construction is expected in 2019. The City also plans to continue looking for opportunities to improve trail connectivity and public access along the banks of the Eel River.

COMMUNITY FORESTS



Arcata Community Forest and Arcata Ridge Trail

The City of Arcata owns and manages three community forest units with a total size of over 2,300 acres, including the Arcata Community Forest, Sunny Brae Forest, and Jacoby Creek Forest. A total of 7.1 miles of new trails have been constructed within the Arcata Community Forest and Sunny Brae Forest within the last three years, contributing to 19 total trail miles. Trail maps can be downloaded onto smart phones for free from the Avenza Map Store (avenza.com).

For nearly 10 years, the City has been working to complete the Arcata Ridge Trail which will be a four-mile continuous trail connecting the Arcata Community Forest and Sunny Brae Forest units, which had previously been separated. With community fundraising support from Bat N' Rouge events and other donations, along with state and federal grants, the City has incrementally acquired parcel ownership or easements to support a trail connection from West End Road on the north side of Arcata to Buttermilk Lane in Sunny Brae. Thousands of volunteer work hours have contributed to trail construction. The next step for the Arcata Ridge Trail is to design the Fickle Hill Road crossing and the approach trails on each side of the road. This connection is anticipated to be completed in 2017.

McKay Community Forest

In August 2014, Humboldt County acquired 1,000 acres of forestland with federal and state funds to establish a community forest southeast of Eureka, near Myrtle town and Cutten. The McKay Community Forest will follow the Arcata Community Forest model of managing for multiple values including environmental stewardship, sustainable timber harvest, and recreation.

In 2015, the County began preparing a Public Access and Trails Plan with support from the McKay Community Forest Advisory Group. Opportunities to create over 20 miles of trails have been identified. However, planning for access points with suitable parking and trail access connections is the current challenge. The County continues to coordinate with owners of adjacent properties to develop collaboration opportunities. Parking area layouts are being prepared with consideration for traffic impacts and ensuring compatibility with adjacent land use. In addition, preliminary designs for several bridge crossings are being prepared to support funding acquisition and permitting efforts.

A draft Public Access and Trails Plan is expected to be released for public review in late summer/early fall. This plan will provide the basis for environmental review and permitting. Commencement of trail building is tentatively targeted for early 2017. Much of the trail building will depend on volunteer work crews. Further information on the McKay Community Forest is available at www.humboldt.gov/mckayforest.



McKay Community Forest

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

NEW RECREATIONAL TRAILS

LACKS CREEK MANAGEMENT AREA

The Lacks Creek Management Area is located approximately 40 miles northeast of Arcata in the Redwood Creek watershed and offers trails through oak woodland and Douglas fir forests with views of the Coast Range. Several miles of mountain bike and multi-use trails were recently constructed at Lacks Creek to fulfill the recreation use goals of the Lacks Creek Management Plan. Volunteer Trail Stewards, Greenway Partners, Fogline Trail Systems, Americorps, Hoopa Tribal Civilian Community Corps, and Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association contributed funding and labor to create a network of trails that will serve several user groups including mountain bikers with varying levels of expertise.

KING RANGE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

This recreational area on the Lost Coast includes the nine mile Pacific Rim Trail and 14 mile Paradise Royale Loop. These single track mountain bike trails were designed and constructed over five years through a partnership with the International Mountain Biking Association, California Conservation Corps, Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association, and an ad hoc group of local riders. Enhanced trail maps are available online (mtbproject.com).

HEADWATERS FOREST RESERVE

BLM will soon release an Environmental Assessment for a proposed seasonally-available hiking trail approximately 1.5 miles along the south side of the South Fork Elk River (South Side Trail). The South Side Trail would be moderately strenuous and provide visitors with an alternative to the existing and very popular Elk River Trail. BLM also plans to modify the existing Elk River Trailhead parking lot to increase parking capacity and improve traffic flow.

LOST COAST HEADLANDS

BLM plans to construct a new trailhead and trail at the former Centerville naval facility along the coast west of Ferndale. The new trail will connect to the Fleener Creek trailhead and provide visitors with more opportunity to enjoy the spectacular vistas from this coastal grassland bluff.

For additional information on any of the locations and trails, please contact the BLM Arcata Field Office at (707) 825-2300 or check the BLM website (<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/arcata.html>).



Lacks Creek Management Area

OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT TRAILS



Community involvement is essential for supporting existing trails and continued progress toward achieving the vision of an interconnected regional trail network.

The following list identifies six ways that you can support trails in Humboldt County:

1. Use and Enjoy Trails. Trails are intended to enhance safety and quality of life in our communities. The simple act of using and enjoying trails demonstrates that trails are valuable community assets and helps make them dynamic places.

2. Connect with Public Agencies. Look for opportunities to communicate priorities, comment on plans and reports, and participate in meetings. Several local agencies have committees or advisory groups that focus on trails:

City of Arcata - Parks & Recreation Committee; Forest Management Committee; Open Space Committee

City of Eureka - Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Commission

HCAOG - Highway 101 Corridor and Bay Trail Ad Hoc Committee

County of Humboldt - McKay Community Forest Advisory Group

3. Join a Community Organization. Existing organizations involved with trails include:

Bigfoot Bicycle Club

Friends of the Annie & Mary Trail

Friends of the Dunes

Humboldt Bay Bicycle Commuters Association

Humboldt State University Natural Resources Club

Humboldt Trails Council

McKinleyville Land Trust

Northcoast Regional Land Trust

Northern California Horsemen's Association

Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association

Redwood Empire Endurance Riders

Southern Humboldt Community Park

Trinidad Coastal Land Trust



4. Participate in Public Hearings. Trail projects are periodically on the agendas at public meetings and hearings (for example, at city councils, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, the HCAOG board, and the California Coastal Commission).

5. Participate in Volunteer Trail Stewards. The Volunteer Trail Stewards is a program of the Humboldt Trails Council to support local public agencies. The Trail Stewards organize volunteers to help offset the costs of managing and maintaining trails and provide the eyes and ears of the community to promote safe and appropriate use. Launched in 2011, the Trail Stewards provide regular support for the Hammond Trail, Hikshari' Trail, Arcata Community Forest, and Humboldt Coastal Nature Center, and have signed up volunteers in anticipation of working at the McKay Community Forest. The Trail Stewards have a strong track record of organizing dedicated and skilled volunteers for fun and meaningful work in support of trails. The Trail Stewards coordinate with the Volunteer Center of the Redwoods/RSVP to promote involvement from retirees and older adults.

Further information is available at www.facebook.com/humboldttrailsCouncil, or contact Stacy Becker (sbecker@reninet.com) or Rees Hughes (rees.hughes@humboldt.edu).

OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT TRAILS

6. **Donate Funds.** One of the top priorities in the next one to two years is to develop a comprehensive funding strategy to support management and maintenance of the Humboldt Bay Trail and other regional trails. This strategy will likely need to combine public funds along with a fund-raising campaign for private donations. In 2015, the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund was established at the Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF) to provide a mechanism for donations to assist in funding the construction and on-going costs of the Bay Trail. Other funds managed by HAF include the Sequoia Park Improvement Fund and Arcata Forest Fund. Donations to these funds can be made by contacting HAF (442-2993 or chrisw@hafoundation.org) or sending checks to HAF, 373 Indianola Road, Bayside, CA, 95524. In addition, most community organizations involved with trails depend on donations along with volunteer efforts to advance their missions.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST FIVE YEARS (2011-2016)

2011

- Volunteer Trail Stewards program initiated.
- City of Arcata completed preliminary design plans and studies for Bay Trail North.
- RCAA completed Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy.

2012

- City of Eureka constructed the 1.5-mile Hikshari' Trail.
- City of Arcata constructed the first segments of the Arcata Ridge Trail.
- NCRA Humboldt Bay Subcommittee affirmed the "rail-with-trail" approach.

2013

- Humboldt County initiated preliminary technical studies and conceptual design for Bay Trail South.
- Humboldt Bay Trail and Highway 101 Eureka-Arcata Corridor Improvement Project linked through compliance with California Coastal Act.

2014

- HCAOG initiated the multi-agency Highway 101/Bay Trail ad hoc committee to ensure coordination.
- HCAOG completed five-year update of the Humboldt Regional Transportation Plan.
- RCAA completed Little River Trail Feasibility Study.
- City of Fortuna completed John Campbell Memorial Greenway and Strongs Creek Trail Master Plan.
- Humboldt County completed Safe-Routes-to-School project for Grant School in Eureka and road improvements for non-motorized use on School Road and Murray Road in McKinleyville.
- Humboldt County awarded funds to acquire 1,000 acres for McKay Community Forest.
- Humboldt County awarded funds for engineering and permitting of Bay Trail South.
- Five projects awarded funding in Cycle 1 of the Active Transportation Program.

2015

- City of Arcata completed 1.5-mile Arcata City Trail along Alliance Road and L Street, connecting Larson Park/Arcata Skate Park and Samoa Boulevard.
- Six projects awarded funding in Cycle 2 of the Active Transportation Program.

2016

- Grand opening for the Northcoast Regional Land Trust's Freshwater Farms Reserve.
- City of Eureka ready to construct the first of three phases to complete the Eureka Waterfront Trail.
- City of Arcata nearing the end of permitting for Bay Trail North, aiming to begin construction in 2017.
- City of Blue Lake ready to apply for funding for Phase 1 of the Annie and Mary Trail.
- City of Fortuna ready to apply for funding for Phase 1 of the John Campbell Memorial Greenway/Strongs Creek Trail.

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