

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NEWS

HUMBOLDT COUNTY JULY 2020



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Moving Forward

by Jenny Weiss

As our country reels from the painful losses of life from the coronavirus pandemic and grapples with racial strife and national unrest brought on by systemic racism, many people are struggling to visualize what the future holds for our community and nation. Re-imagining how we work, provide our children with education, and restructure how businesses operate is a difficult task with many unknowns. Being open to change and willing to move forward in new ways is key to opening the country back up safely and equitably. Communities, governments, and organizations across the country are doing what they can to address health concerns and disparities.

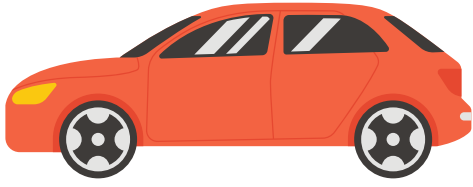


Tiny protester with simple sign. Photographer unknown

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership announced in early June that they have removed 'Enforcement' from their 6 E's framework. The organization has long prioritized equity and social justice and strives to 'undo the systems that prevent Black people, indigenous people, and people of color from moving around the world safely, healthily, joyfully, and in their full expression of self'. In the past, enforcement was relied upon, as well as **equity, engineering, encouragement, education, and evaluation** to assess and address capacity and needs around children walking and bicycling to school. In order to accommodate this, **engagement** has been added as the 6th 'E' because listening to communities and working with community organizations to understand their needs is how Safe Routes to

School programs should be getting off the ground according to the National Partnership. Involvement of law enforcement officers will not cease entirely as police officers may continue to be involved through engagement and officer enforcement of traffic violations will continue to support SRTS efforts by keeping roadways safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

The League of American Cyclists also announced their plans for their Fall 2020 Bike Friendly America applications to temporarily be taken offline so the League can evaluate application questions about enforcement of road safety. Safe streets are for everyone therefore everyone should have the same opportunities to move around on roadways and in neighborhoods without the threat of violence, being discriminated against, or not having the infrastructure or education needed to stay safe while using non-motorized transportation modes. In the coming weeks and months, we will likely be hearing more guidelines about how to reframe our work in order to maintain and grow healthy, safe communities for all. The Humboldt County Safe Routes to School Task Force invites its partners and community members to be part of the conversation and help shape the future of creating more equity in safe streets. If you have any recommendations or want to be involved in this discussion, please contact weiss@nrsrcaa.org.



Traffic Deaths Down During COVID-19 But Roads are Riskier

The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in people staying home and driving less. Preliminary data from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) shows that California had a 75% decrease in vehicle crashes between March 19 and April 30 when compared to the same time period in 2019. The data also shows reduced numbers of people killed and injured in crashes. The California Highway Patrol also reported fewer DUI arrests during this time period. We can assume that fewer cars on the roadways resulting from the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent Stay at Home orders are at least partly responsible for this positive news but not all drivers have been adhering to the law.

A recent [report](#) by the National Safety Council found that motor vehicle related deaths dropped in March 2020 compared with March 2019 but the number of miles driven dropped by over 18%. When comparing the numbers of miles driven in March 2020 and March 2019 it showed a 14% spike in fatalities. Fewer cars on the road means wide open streets with fewer obstacles which have also caused a 113% increase in the number of speeding citations for vehicles traveling over 100 miles per hour according to the California Highway Patrol.

As more and more people take to the streets by foot or bicycle for exercise amid the pandemic, it is imperative to remember that reduced traffic does not mean there is no traffic. The need to be on high alert when walking or cycling is still a major necessity. Motorists should be avoiding distractions, obeying speed limits, practice defensive driving, and have an increased awareness of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Parents and caregivers should also stay engaged with teen drivers and practice with them frequently.

For more information on how drivers can learn to better share the road with pedestrians and cyclists, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website at www.nhtsa.gov/share-road-its-everyones-responsibility.



Virtual Trails Summit Recap

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this year's Trails Summit was held online but despite the new format, there was no shortage of exciting local trail news and information. Sponsored by the Humboldt Trails Council and facilitated by Redwood Community Action Agency's Emily Sinkhorn, the event combined live speakers as well as recorded videos from the County of Humboldt, Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association, and the Cities of Arcata, Eureka, Blue Lake, Fortuna, and Rio Dell. The event culminated with State Senator Mike McGuire presenting an update on the Great Redwood Trail.

The County of Humboldt's Deputy Director of Environmental Services, Hank Seemann, gave an update on the County's trail efforts starting with the McKay Community Forest. Located on Eureka's north east border just outside of city limits, the McKay Community Forest is slated to have approximately 30 miles of multi-use trails. The County is currently completing the environmental studies needed to complete the trail plan trail plan which should be circulated for public comment later this summer. Once it is approved by the County Board of Supervisors, initial construction may begin. The County plans to hire a consulting forester to help manage and harvest timber with revenues anticipated to cover maintenance costs, much like the Arcata Community Forest.



Above: Humboldt Bay Trail North, Arcata

The County is also working hard to complete the Humboldt Bay Trail by filling in the 4 mile gap along the bay between Arcata and Eureka. In 2019, Humboldt County was awarded funding through the Active Transportation Program (ATP) and they are currently working through project development phases to get the approval to begin construction.

With funding from ATP, the community of Manila will also be receiving a 1/2 mile paved shared-use path along Hwy 255 as a collaborative effort between the County and Caltrans. It is expected that construction will begin on this project in 2021.



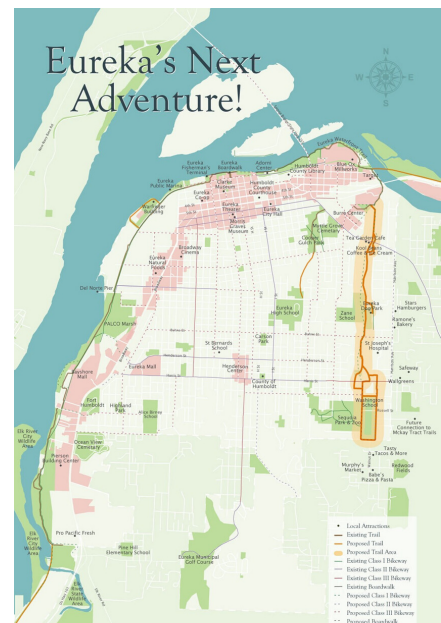
Above: Annie & Mary Trail Phase I Groundbreaking

The County is working with the community to develop the old railroad corridor along the Mad River between Arcata and Blue Lake. For more than two decades, a vision to develop the old railroad corridor into a trail has been pursued and the first phase of the project has already begun.

The City of Blue Lake recently held a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction on the first section of the Annie & Mary Trail connecting downtown Blue Lake to Chartin Road near the Blue Lake Rancheria. From there, efforts are underway for a Phase 2 to connect to the Glendale area to Chartin Road. Humboldt County and Caltrans are partnering on an ATP application this summer for funding to fill in that gap and better connect inland residents to coastal communities and services.

The City of Arcata has also been working on Annie & Mary Trail efforts through its Arcata Annie & Mary Trail Connectivity Project. Outreach to the public helped create the preferred route which will stretch from the Arcata skatepark and the destination will be the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District's Park 1. The Arcata A&M Trail will ultimately connect to the Arcata City Trail and Bay Trail North which are already in place and widely used.

The City of Eureka has also been busy trail planning through it's Bay to Zoo Trail efforts. The City has a larger vision of better connecting the Bay Trail to Eureka neighborhoods and the Bay to Zoo Trail would ultimately provide connectivity from the north end of the Waterfront Trail to Sequoia Park and Zoo and will also provide a safe route to Zane Middle School. The City is currently working on an ATP Cycle 5 application which would fund construction of the 2 mile paved path as well as provide an education and encouragement program for Zane students.



Above: The City of Eureka's Bay to Zoo Trail is highlighted in orange.



Further south, the City of Rio Dell is administering a Safe Routes to School project also funded by ATP that will better connect neighborhoods currently separated by Highway 101 via active transportation modes. The project will include the installation of bike lanes and intersection improvements and an education and encouragement program at Eagle Prairie Elementary School has also been underway since 2019.

In 2016, HCAOG and the County funded the Eureka to Scotia Trail Corridor assessment to conceptually plan trail connections between communities from Eureka to Scotia. This

planning effort initially focused on utilizing the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) rail line but the preferred alignment is on the Rio Dell side of river so that residents can take advantage of the wide open recreational opportunities along the river bar in Rio Dell. The city took the trail concept to develop a Phase 1 that will consist of a 1/2 mile long interpretive trail starting at the NE end of Edwards Drive continuing through downtown along the riparian corridor and connecting to Davis Street. The city is currently applying for ATP Cycle 5 funding to implement for Phase 1.

The Friendly City of Fortuna has also been a champion in prioritizing and pursuing trails in the community. The Gene Lucas Community Center now has a 1 mile long trail meandering through wetland ponds and the riparian corridor of Strongs Creek and connects to Newburg Park. The newly constructed Dennis Wendt Memorial Trail provides connectivity from the north end of town at Palmer Blvd along the NCRA rail line to 3rd Street near its intersection with Main Street. This gravel trail was developed and constructed by Sean Swanson of the River Life Foundation and is a great example of how the NCRA right-of-way can be maintained while also being used as a trail that provides river access until the



Above: Fortuna's Dennis Wendt Memorial Trail

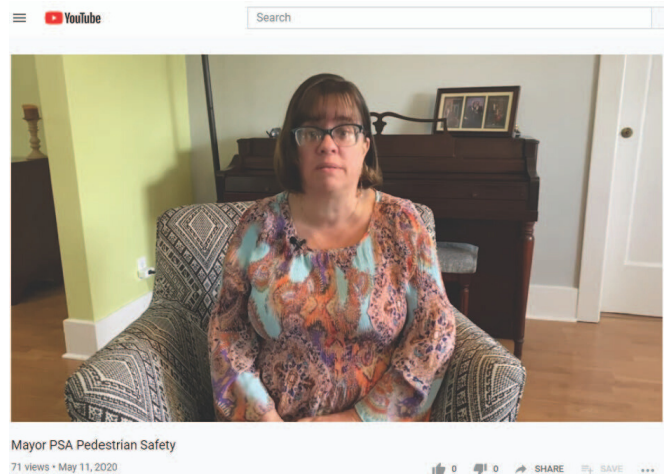
Great Redwood Trail can be constructed. The City's largest trail project is the Strongs Creek Trail, part of the John Campbell Memorial Greenway. This alignment was identified in the City's 2010 General Plan and further refined in the 2014 Master Plan for the City of Fortuna. Once completed this 2 1/2 mile trail will connect the Riverwalk to the Gene Lucas Trail and Newburg Park. The City is currently working with developers and property owners to obtain the right-of-way and easements needed to construct the project. They hope to have the easement for the first 1.2 miles of trail completed by the end of the year and are actively seeking implementation funding.

Senator Mike McGuire finished up the Summit by providing an update on the Great Redwood Trail. He has served as a champion for this project by introducing legislation through the Great Redwood Trail Act, SB 1029, which was signed by the governor in late 2018 and initiated this project. The grand vision of the trail is to convert 300 miles of dilapidated rail line between San Francisco and Humboldt Bay connecting Trinity, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin Counties via the longest rail-trail in the United States. The first step the state of California is taking is to audit all of NCRA's finances and start to transition the rail agency to a trail agency. They have also started on the master planning process which required them to survey the entire rail line. Now that surveys have been complete the report is due to be submitted to the legislature by July 2020. It is expected that the rail line will formally be transitioned later this year. Senator McGuire reported that just a few weeks ago, NCRA board took the first concrete step to prioritize the trail by voting to give up rights south of Mendocino County where SMART (Sonoma Marin Area Rapid Transit) will manage the rail and trail corridor. The state has also been able to significantly pay off massive NCRA debts including a CEQA lawsuit that is now resolved. State law mandates all debts be paid off before the agency is dissolved. Once the state's audit is finalized, the recommendations will be put into a new bill, SB 356, that will include language to close NCRA and assign a successor agency to start building the trail. Railbanking, or establishing an agreement to preserve the rail corridor, comes next. This ensures the out-of-service rail line can be used as a trail until a railroad might need the corridor again for rail service. Railbanking is expected to happen in 2021.

Senator McGuire reminded the public that another benefit of trails is that they are great economic drivers. California's outdoor recreation economy is one of the fastest growing sectors in the entire United States and accounts for countless employment opportunities. The Great Redwood Trail will be a huge benefit to the region not only by its beauty and potential for exercise and social interactions, but will increase property values, tax revenues, and will help revitalize economically depressed regions. For more information on The Great Redwood Trail, visit www.thegreatredwoodtrail.org.

Pedestrian Safety Message From Eureka Mayor

Hello. I'm Mayor Susan Seaman. As I've mentioned in my previous communications, the City of Eureka is working diligently to support the health and well-being of our citizens, our community, and our economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Above: Eureka Mayor Susan Seaman talks about Pedestrian Safety for a YouTube video

You may have noticed more people out for walks lately. The shelter-in-place order has folks itching to get out of the house, even if it is just for a stroll around the neighborhood. Walking is a great way to relieve stress and get a little exercise. But with more folks out for walks, I want to make sure that everyone is safe--both from the coronavirus and also from vehicular strikes. Here are a couple things to keep in mind:

- With more people out walking, it is important that we all take steps to be safe. This means maintaining a social distance of 6ft, where possible. If you are walking, before entering the street to avoid another person be sure to look both ways for traffic. For drivers, be aware that there are more people walking than usual and they may be walking in unusual places to maintain social distancing.
- For most traffic signals within Eureka, the pedestrian signal will display whether or not you push the crosswalk button. You can avoid that high touch button by simply waiting for the light to change and the pedestrian signal to appear.
- Drivers, be on the lookout for pedestrians! California law requires motorists to yield for pedestrians at any marked crosswalk or unmarked crosswalks at an intersection. I have been in conversations with Eureka Police Chief Steve Watson to make additional efforts regarding pedestrian safety.
- Also remember, if you're on a multi-lane street and other cars are stopping near a crosswalk, this is an indication that there is likely someone in the crosswalk. If you're on a one-way street, remember to look the opposite direction of traffic for pedestrians.

● We are always on the lookout for ways to make our streets safer. If you see something that is unsafe--whether it is a missing curb cut, poor visibility, cracked or damaged sidewalk, or any other safety issue--please report this information to Street Story, an online survey platform where individuals can report safety concerns. City, county and Caltrans staff use Street Story to help identify areas of concern. Data from Street Story can help our governments obtain state and federal grant funding. You can report this data at <https://streetstory.berkeley.edu/city/Eureka>

Mostly, enjoy walking in the community. We have wonderful trails and hiking areas, but there's also much to appreciate in our neighborhoods.

Again, I'm Mayor Susan Seaman, and I appreciate your attention to this message, and your commitment to doing everything you can to protect our community. Be safe, stay healthy, be patient with yourself and kind to your neighbors and family. Take good care of yourself. We'll talk again soon.

 Mayor Seaman's YouTube video can be viewed [here](#):



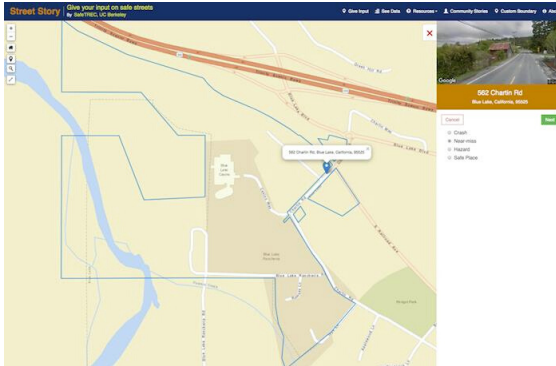
GOT NEWS?

Share it!

Contact weiss@nrsrcaa.org to share stories, resources or content for this newsletter



Tribal Road Safety Data



Above: Screen shot of the Blue Lake Rancheria from the Tribal Street Story Tool

Funding for road safety improvements is often awarded based on collision data that documents issues and justifies improvements. The Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) and the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) are two major data sources that track and report pedestrian and cyclist involved injuries and fatalities that are a result of vehicle collisions. Data from these sources is lacking on tribal lands because crashes on or near tribal lands are often

under reported and that puts these communities at a disadvantage when competing for safety project funding. The data that is available also shows that Native Americans are at a higher risk for traffic injuries.

There are many factors contributing to the under reporting of crashes in tribal areas including a lack of expertise in traffic collision investigating and reporting and a lack of resources available to adequately maintain and train staff. There is often a lack of necessary equipment, software, and internet connections to accurately report collisions as well.

The [Safe Transportation Research and Education Center \(SafeTREC\)](#), in collaboration with the [National Indian Justice Center \(NIJC\)](#) have been working together to help tribal entities collect and submit this data to the SWITRS. A tribal crash data tool was developed that gives tribes access to a web-based interactive analysis and mapping tool for tribal areas. More information about the Tribal Safety Data Collection project can be found [here](#) and to learn how to use the tool, click [here](#). SafeTREC has also modified its Street Story Tool for use in and by Tribal communities in California. Called the Tribal Street Story Tool, it helps communities source their own data on road

conditions and transportation safety issues on and near tribal lands by receiving reports of road hazards, collisions, and near misses between vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists. The Tribal Street Story Tool can be accessed [here](#).



Above: Student in the Hoopa Valley carries a skateboard.

Have a Safe & Healthy Summer!

By setting an example and involving the whole family in safety and wellness goals, you will be teaching others to make healthy and responsible choices that will serve them for a lifetime.



Be visible when walking & biking. Wear bright colors and carry a light at night.



Get outside and exercise!
Wear a mask and keep 6 feet away from others.



Use your brain and always wear a helmet when biking.



Never walk or bike while using your phone.



Prevent collisions by being predictable. Use hand signals.



Follow all rules of the road and signage.



Cross at intersections or crosswalks. Set an example for younger people.

★ Thank you for being a 'Walk Star' and a 'Roll Model!' ★

*Above graphic is available for reproduction.
Contact weiss@nrscaa.org*

RESOURCES

Summer Meals location and pick up times can be found here for Arcata School District, Eureka City Schools, McKinleyville Union School District, and Eel River Valley schools.

Summer Lunch Program

June 15th-August 14th
Monday-Friday
12:15pm-1:45pm

Eagle Prairie Elementary parking lot
95 Center St., Rio Dell, CA 95562

Free sack lunches for all children under 18.

Questions? Call the Rio Dell Community Resource Center at 764-5239



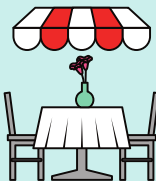
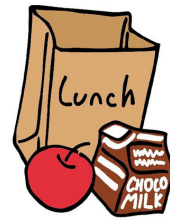
PROGRAMA DE ALMUERZO DE

15 DE JUNIO-14 DE AGOSTO
LUNES-VIERNES
12:15 PM-1:45PM

ESTACIONAMIENTO DE EAGLE PRAIRIE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
95 Center St., Rio Dell, CA 95562

BOLSA DE ALMUERZO GRATIS PARA NIÑOS MENORES DE 18 AÑOS

¿PREGUNTAS? LLAME AL RIO DELL COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER A 764-5239



City of Eureka Offering Free Sidewalk Encroachment Permits



During the coronavirus epidemic, the City of Eureka will administer free encroachment permits to business owners within city limits allowing for public dining and other outdoor activities on public sidewalks as long as they follow sidewalk access requirements. To apply or for more information contact Public Works at 707-441-4194.



To learn more about what **Natural Resources Services - RCAA** is up to, visit our website [here](#).



This newsletter has been developed for school teachers, administrators, transportation planners, public health, and pedestrian and bike safety advocates in order to keep you informed of the latest news involving our local Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School efforts and programs. For more information contact weiss@nrsrcaa.org or (707)269-2062.

