

DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors

BY: Supervisor Cann

PHONE: 966-3222

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Presentation by Bradley Cleveland, Sierra Geotourism Project Manager, and Jim Dion of the National Geographic Society Relative to Geotourism in the County; and Adoption of a Resolution Supporting the Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Sierra Business Council, and Yosemite National Park are working with partners in Mariposa County to promote geotourism by forming a broad-based Geotourism Council. A press event is being planned for August 19, 2009, at the Mariposa Museum and History Center to launch this project.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Financial Impact? () Yes (X) No	Current FY Cost: \$	Annual Recurring Cost: \$
Budgeted In Current FY? () Yes () No () Partially Funded		
Amount in Budget: \$ _____		List Attachments, number pages consecutively _____
Additional Funding Needed: \$ _____		Resolution _____
Source:		Information on geotourism _____
Internal Transfer _____		_____
Unanticipated Revenue _____ 4/5's vote		_____
Transfer Between Funds _____ 4/5's vote		_____
Contingency _____ 4/5's vote		_____
() General () Other		_____

CLERK'S USE ONLY:

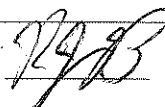
Res. No.: 09-421 Ord. No. _____
Vote - Ayes: 5 Noes: _____
Absent: _____
 Approved
 Minute Order Attached No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

Date: _____
Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California
By: _____
Deputy

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

Requested Action Recommended
 No Opinion
Comments: _____

CAO: 

MARIPOSA COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 09-421

A Resolution Supporting the Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project

WHEREAS, the geotourism approach is all-inclusive, focusing not only on the environment, but also on the diversity of the cultural, historic, and scenic assets of Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, the geotourism approach encourages citizens and visitors to get involved rather than remain tourism spectators; and

WHEREAS, the geotourism approach helps build a sense of identity and pride, stressing what is authentic and unique to Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, the National Geographic Society has successfully developed geotourism projects in other communities, including the Northern California Coast, the Central Cascades, the Glacier National Park region known as the Crown of the Continent, and the Greater Yellowstone region; and

WHEREAS, the National Geographic Society defines “**GEOTOURISM**” as tourism that sustains and enhances the geographical character of Mariposa County and the entire Sierra Nevada region—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Sierra Business Council, and Yosemite National Park are working with partners in Mariposa County to promote geotourism by forming a broad-based Geotourism Council that will engage local residents in developing a print mapguide and interactive website that will offer destination information that identifies natural, cultural, and historic attractions that define the Sierra Nevada.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, a political subdivision of the State of California, hereby resolves to support the SIERRA NEVADA GEOTOURISM PROJECT.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors this 18th day of August 2009 by the following vote:

AYES: ABORN, TURPIN, BIBBY, CANN, ALLEN
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: NONE



BRAD ABORN, Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board



STEVEN W. DAHLEM, County Counsel

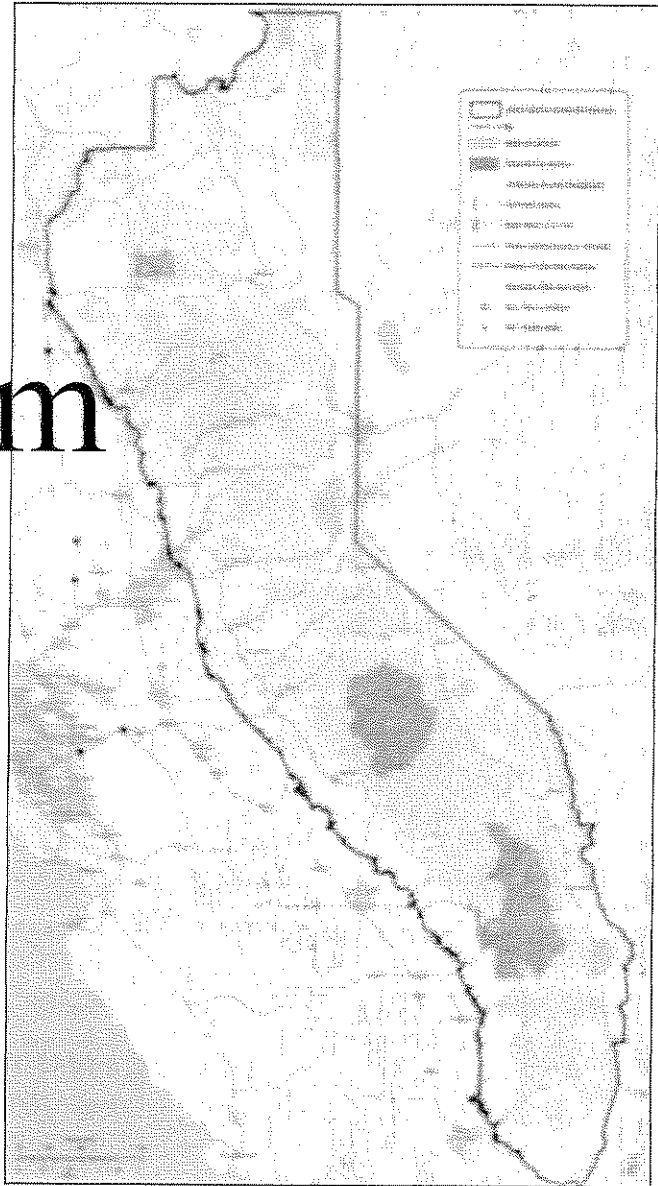
Sierra Nevada Geotourism

To John Muir the Sierra Nevada was the **Range of Light**, "its glorious floods of light, the white beams of the morning streaming through the passes, the noon day radiance on the crystal rocks."

The Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project seeks to capture the history and heritage of the extraordinary mountain range—the longest, highest and most spectacular in the lower 48.

Sierra Nevada communities have long depended upon travelers for their livelihood. The mountain range became a tourist destination with the creation of Yosemite Park during the Civil War and the construction of a narrow-gauge railroad to the shores of Lake Tahoe a decade later.

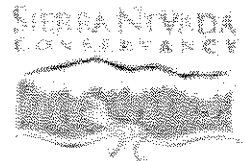
This project seeks to promote tourism for the 21st century, tourism that can conserve the region's historic towns and heritage sites, restore and protect the landscape, and sustain local businesses and communities.



Highlighting the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Sierra

The National Geographic Society is working with local organizations, businesses and residents to map the best of the Sierra. We invite you to recommend historic, cultural and natural landmarks; events, attractions and activities; businesses, farms and ranches; artists, artisans and storytellers who capture the region's unique character and beauty.

Using your recommendations, National Geographic will produce a Geotourism website and print MapGuide to promote travel that celebrates and sustains what is most distinctive about the **Range of Light**—its scenic landscapes and vibrant local communities; rich biological and cultural diversity, and captivating history.



About Geotourism

Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.

Geotourism incorporates the concept of sustainable tourism—that destinations should remain unspoiled for future generations—while allowing for enhancement that protects the character of the locale. Geotourism also adopts a principle from its cousin, ecotourism—that tourism revenue can promote conservation—and extends that principle beyond nature travel to encompass culture and history as well: all distinctive assets of a place.

The Geotourism Charter: Governments and allied organizations can sign this statement of principles as a first step in adopting a geotourism strategy. After thus committing to a geotourism strategy, signatories should then work with local communities to determine their geotourism goals.

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism, like a doctor's code of ethics, means "First, do no harm." It is basic to good destination stewardship.

Sustainable tourism does not abuse its product—the destination. It seeks to avoid the "loved to death" syndrome. Businesses and other stakeholders anticipate development pressures and apply limits and management techniques that sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, scenic appeal, and local culture.

It conserves resources. Environmentally aware travelers favor businesses that minimize pollution, waste, energy consumption, water usage, landscaping chemicals, and excessive nighttime lighting.

It respects local culture and tradition. Foreign visitors learn about and observe local etiquette, including using at least a few courtesy words in the local language. Residents learn how to deal with foreign expectations that may differ from their own.

It aims for quality, not quantity. Communities measure tourism success not by sheer numbers of visitors, but by length of stay, distribution of money spent, and quality of experience.

What is Geotourism?

Geotourism adds to sustainability principles by building on geographical character—"sense of place"—to create a type of tourism that emphasizes the distinctiveness of its locale, and that benefits visitor and resident alike.

Geotourism is synergistic. All the elements of geographical character together create a tourist experience that is richer than the sum of its parts, appealing to visitors with diverse interests.

It involves the community. Local businesses and civic groups work together to promote and provide a distinctive, authentic visitor experience.

It informs both visitors and hosts. Residents discover their own heritage and how the ordinary and familiar may be of interest to outsiders. As local people develop pride and skill in showing off their locale, tourists get more out of their visit.

It benefits residents economically. Travel businesses do their best to use the local workforce, services, and products and supplies. When the community understands the beneficial role of geotourism, it becomes an incentive for wise destination stewardship.

It supports integrity of place. Destination-savvy travelers seek out businesses that emphasize the character of the locale. Tourism revenues in turn raise local perceived value of those assets.

It means great trips. Enthusiastic visitors bring new knowledge home, telling stories that send friends and relatives off to experience the same thing—a continuing business for the destination.

Sierra Nevada Geotourism: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Geotourism?

Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of a place, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents. Geotourism encompasses a range of niches including adventure and nature-based travel, eco- and agri-tourism, cultural and heritage travel.

What is a MapGuide?

The Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project will generate a website and a printed MapGuide. Both the poster-sized map and interactive website will offer destination information that identifies natural, cultural, and historic attractions that define the Sierra Nevada.

How will the website and mapguide be developed?

First, the Sierra Business Council, Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Yosemite National Park will convene a "Geotourism Council" of local residents and community leaders, historic preservationists and environmentalists, agricultural interests and business owners, artists and artisans to oversee the project.

Next, the Geotourism Council will sponsor public forums and presentations around the region to encourage community involvement in the project. During a three month "nomination period," the council will collect recommendations from local residents and visitors for the website and print MapGuide.

Nominations may include historic structures and archeological sites, scenic landscapes and wildlife viewing areas, trails and outdoor recreation, local cuisine and culture, festivals and events, artists and river guides—the people and destinations that contribute to the Sierra's unique beauty and diversity.

Finally, the National Geographic will work with the Geotourism Council to review the nominations, edit the material, and design a high-quality National Geographic-branded map and website. National Geographic will have final editorial control of the co-branded website and MapGuide.

What is the role of the Geotourism Council?

The council will encourage community participation in the nomination process; ensure nominations reflect the diversity of the region; identify themes and work with National Geographic to edit and design the website and MapGuide.

Once the website is completed, the council will oversee distribute the print MapGuide, and market the website. In addition, the council will work with the diverse communities of the Sierra to contribute fresh material for the website, and to encourage long-term stewardship of the region's natural, historic and cultural assets.

How will this project benefit Sierra Nevada communities?

The Geotourism project seeks to sustain and enhance the assets that make the Sierra a premier tourism destination by encouraging a sense of stewardship among residents and visitors alike. The MapGuide and website will promote the range's natural, historic, and cultural sites to domestic and international visitors seeking authentic experiences.

Who supports this project?

The lead sponsors are the Sierra Business Council, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Yosemite National Park, and the National Geographic Society. In addition, over ten individuals and organizations wrote letters of support for our Scenic Byways grant, including the Mariposa County Economic Development Office, the Chamber of Commerce, and Visitors Bureau; the Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce; the Foothill Conservancy; and the BLM's Bishop Field Office. We continue to seek support from business, civic, and nonprofit organizations; federal land managers and local governmental agencies; farmers, ranchers and community leaders.

