

Martis Valley trail route selected

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

An alignment paralleling the south side of Highway 267 has been selected for a proposed 9.5-mile multiuse trail through the Martis Valley near Truckee.

The Northstar Community Services District board voted for the alignment Wednesday after easements could not be obtained for an alternate route that would have followed an existing dirt road farther south through the valley.



"The Northstar Property Owners Association was not willing to grant easements for the valley alignment, and we respect that decision," said Mike Staudenmayer, the district's general manager.

The district is lead agency for the Martis Valley Trail, a controversial Placer County project.

"The highway alignment is also preferable to the Army Corps of Engineers and was found to be slightly environmentally superior in the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) analysis," Staudenmayer said. "There are a lot of interested stakeholders, and we're doing the best we can to do it right."

The board also approved a design and consulting contract with Auerbach Engineering Corp. of Tahoe City for the first segment of the trail, from the Nevada/Placer county line to the wildlife viewing area.

Construction of that approximately 1-mile-long section is

expected to begin next year.

Almost 3,000 feet of the initial section, within the wildlife viewing area owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, will not be paved initially but will have a packed surface, Staudenmayer said.

"We're actively working with the Corps as (the trail project) progresses through National Environmental Policy Act review, hopefully within the next year," he said.

The cost of the trail, from the county line to the Village at Northstar, is expected to be \$12 million, of which the district currently has \$4 million in grants – enough to build the first segment and design the rest, Staudenmayer said.

"We have more fundraising to do, but we hope to get it built as quickly as possible," he said.

The plan is to extend the trail from Northstar's Village to the ridge line overlooking the Tahoe basin, where it would connect at the Four Corners area with Forest Road 73, known locally as the "Fibreboard Freeway."

The 10-foot-wide trail would be available to all pedestrian and non-motorized uses, with the exception of equestrians.

The only motorized use would be powered wheelchairs.