



02

Tribal Input and Community Engagement

Community members participate in a GRT Workshop in Hopland

2.1 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Input from California Native American tribes and community engagement helped to inform the project goals, trail design elements, amenities, access points, opportunities and constraints, policy considerations, and next steps for the Great Redwood Trail. This engagement guided the development of a Master Plan that seeks to prioritize the needs of tribes, local communities, and diverse trail users and stakeholders. Additional collaboration with California Native American tribes, adjacent landowners, and local agencies and organizations, as well as ongoing engagement with tribal community members and the broader community will continue to be essential to future trail design phases, construction, and operations.

FALL 2022 – SPRING 2023

- ▶ Began engagement with California Native American tribal chairpersons, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), tribal nonprofits, tribal community members, associations, and the general public.
- ▶ Developed and opened project website, survey, and interactive map tool.
- ▶ Held interviews and focus group meetings with key stakeholder groups, such as elected officials, landowners, and advocates.

SPRING – SUMMER 2023

- ▶ Ongoing tribal engagement, including follow-up to letters sent to California Native American tribal chairpersons and THPOs via email and phone calls.
- ▶ Held the first round of in-person community workshops in Fortuna and Willits, and one online workshop.
- ▶ Tabled at community events and held ongoing stakeholder meetings.

FALL – WINTER 2023

- ▶ Ongoing tribal engagement, including in-person and Zoom meetings with California Native American tribal chairpersons and THPOs, elders, and tribal community members.
- ▶ Held second round of in-person community workshops in Alderpoint and Hopland, and one online workshop.
- ▶ Tabled at community events and held ongoing stakeholder meetings.

SPRING – SUMMER 2024

- ▶ Ongoing tribal engagement, including in-person and zoom meetings with California Native American tribal chairpersons and THPOs, elders, and tribal members, phone calls, presentations, and other communications.

- ▶ Public Draft of GRT Master Plan released; release publicized via e-newsletters, postcards, radio ads, social media and website posts, flyers in local communities, email, and newspaper articles.
- ▶ Feedback from California Native American tribes and public comments on Draft of GRT Master Plan collected via in-person and virtual meetings, email, phone, and online comment tools.
- ▶ Held third round of in-person community workshops in Eureka and Ukiah, and one online workshop.
- ▶ In May 2024, GRTA sent letters to 30 California Native American tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission's tribal contact list and invited them to engage in formal government-to-government communication as required by AB-52. Follow up emails and phone calls were made to the 16 tribes closest to the GRT project area. Formal consultation occurred at the request of two California Native American tribes.
- ▶ GRTA distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on May 1, 2024 kicking off a public scoping period to provide interested parties the opportunity to offer early input on the scope of environmental issues and potential environmental effects to be considered in the GRT program EIR (PEIR). GRTA held an online public scoping meeting May 14, 2024 and accepted comments through June 10, 2024.

FALL 2024 – FALL 2025

- ▶ Incorporated feedback from Draft Master Plan and PEIR scoping comment periods and ongoing tribal engagement and community outreach into the GRT Master Plan.
- ▶ Held online workshop in December 2025 to share updates on the Master Plan and legislative updates that led to a stop work order on the PEIR.



At community workshops, participants were able to visit stations and complete activities, including commenting on large-scale maps of the GRT corridor

The engagement process comprised two efforts: 1) seeking input from California Native American tribes and tribal community members, and 2) listening to residents, future users, and stakeholders along the GRT corridor. To do this, the engagement process centered on partnerships with several community nonprofits who work with diverse communities across the GRT region. The State Coastal Conservancy and GRTA contracted with the following community partners for the Plan:

- ▶ **North Coast Opportunities (NCO)**
- ▶ **Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA)**
- ▶ **Jen Rice**
- ▶ **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy**
- ▶ **Zander Westbrook Design**

These partnerships are a part of a long-term process to build trust, improve communication and collaboration, and foster a common vocabulary and understanding across different communities, future users, and stakeholders along the GRT corridor.

By the Numbers

The team connected with residents and stakeholders along the GRT corridor in many ways: through regional GRT Master Plan tribal and community outreach and engagement events, tabling at existing community events, targeted stakeholder meetings, surveys, and web-based input tools. In total, there were:


725
total attendees

 **6**
in-person
workshops

 **4**
online
workshops

 **32** tribal community
and general public
events attended

Over
70
stakeholder
meetings



767
surveys
completed

1,977
subscribers to
the GRT email
list




153 & **329**
unique & votes on
comments & comments

on the GRT Master Plan
web map

Over **600** comments, including **37**
substantive letters, received during the Draft
Master Plan and PEIR scoping comment periods.

2.2 WHAT WE HEARD

This section summarizes key aspirations and concerns that the project team heard throughout the engagement process for the Master Plan. This engagement lays the groundwork for continued collaboration with tribal and community partners for future phases of trail design, implementation, and operations. The proposals included in this Plan were guided by tribal, community, and stakeholder input and collaboration. Description of specific engagement strategies used and input received are included in the remaining sections of this chapter.



Participants gather outside to learn more about the GRT Master Plan at a workshop in Alderpoint

Table 2: Key themes and solutions proposed

| KEY THEMES WE HEARD | WHAT WE HAVE PROPOSED and INITIATED |
|---|--|
| <p>GRT Economic Benefits and Community Integration. There are many opportunities for economic benefits and development along the trail corridor.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The GRT will be a transformational economic engine. In total, the completed GRT and associated impacts are estimated to generate \$102,568,000 in annual recreation/tourism/retail, health, and transportation benefits, as well as \$5,490,000 in annual tax revenue increase (see Appendix A for a detailed GRT Economic Benefits Assessment). ▶ Trail Management (Chapter 5) includes recommendations for supporting the creation of trail-related jobs, such as in construction and maintenance, for tribal community members and local residents. The GRT will also create trail-oriented development opportunities to grow the tourism industry. See the Trail-Oriented Development section of Chapter 4 for more details. ▶ The GRT will be supported by trailheads, linear parks, and day-use areas that will provide new space for events and other activities. Learn more in the GRT Trail Use and Design Guide (Chapter 4). |
| <p>New Trail Network and Connections. The trail will provide new connections to a wide range of destinations, including other local trails and regional trail networks, and serve as a new recreational opportunity.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The GRT will connect to numerous communities and destinations along the rail corridor. These new and improved connections will be supported with amenities such as new trailheads and wayfinding signage. To see the extents of the GRT and the various destinations and communities it connects to, see the Segment Maps in Appendix E for more information. |

| KEY THEMES WE HEARD | WHAT WE HAVE PROPOSED and INITIATED |
|---|--|
| <p>Inclusive GRT Design. The trail should include accessibility for different ages, abilities, and trail uses including for people using mobility devices, walking/hiking, biking, and equestrians.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trail sections will accommodate hikers, cyclists, people who use mobility devices, and equestrians through a variety of trail types and amenities. See the GRT Trail Use and Design Guide (Chapter 4) for more details. ▶ A central goal for the GRT design is to create a high-quality trail experience with access to previously inaccessible recreational destinations for people with disabilities. See the Accessibility section of the GRT Trail Use and Design Guide (Chapter 4) for more information. ▶ Chapter 4 includes information about ongoing measures for ensuring the trail meets or exceeds applicable accessibility standards. ▶ GRTA could work with partners to develop and adopt policies for the safe use of e-bikes and power-driven mobility devices on the GRT. |
| <p>Desired Trail Amenities. Top trail amenities requested include restrooms, access to water, campgrounds, public art, multilingual wayfinding signage, interpretive elements with tribal collaboration, benches, and picnic areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These top amenities and others are included in the Trail Amenity section of the GRT Trail Use and Design Guide (Chapter 4). |
| <p>Operations and Maintenance: Funding and Responsibility. Who will maintain the trail (e.g., regular cleanups), how much will it cost to build and then to maintain?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No singular entity will maintain the entire GRT; rather, maintenance will require a collection of regional and local partners. Chapter 5 documents the policies, strategies, planning, budget, and staffing needs for maintaining and operating the trail. |
| <p>There is a desire for opportunities that allow volunteers to work together with tribal and community members, stakeholder groups, and agencies to get the trail built and to then maintain the trail.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Volunteers are a critical part of trail maintenance and operations. See the Volunteers section of Chapter 5 for recommendations, such as how volunteers can assist with maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities. ▶ There are also existing volunteer groups in Ukiah and Humboldt County who can be partnered with and whose resources could be expanded to help maintain the GRT. |
| <p>GRT Impact on Cultural Resources and Sites. Trail construction and increased public access to the trail, river, and surrounding areas could harm sacred tribal lands. There is an opportunity to protect and honor tribal land, cultures, landmarks, and sacred spaces. Identify opportunities for local tribes to benefit through interpretation and restoration contracts and/or co-management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ See the Tribal Engagement section (Table 3 on page 53) for recommendations for how to address concerns and ideas of California Native American tribes. ▶ The project team is committed to ongoing engagement with individual California Native American tribes to determine their unique needs and desires. This will include additional meetings with tribal leaders and associations, presentations to tribal councils, tabling at community events and engaging with tribal communities as appropriate, and in some cases, government-to-government communication. ▶ GRTA Board has directed staff develop a proposal for a formalized, ongoing tribal advisory committee, to be implemented in 2026 to develop long-term relationships and engage in robust dialog consistent with the goal of aligning protection and preservation of tribal and cultural resources with the implementation of the Great Redwood Trail. ▶ State of California has appropriated \$5,000,000 to fund GRTA's implementation of tribal cultural resources preservation projects. |

| KEY THEMES WE HEARD | WHAT WE HAVE PROPOSED and INITIATED |
|---|---|
| <p>Public Safety. There are many remote areas along the trail that might result in personal safety issues with little to no cellular service and limited access to law enforcement and emergency services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Operations and maintenance of the GRT will include many strategies to address personal safety concerns related to remote areas and emergency services. These include, but are not limited to, development of a regionally-coordinated mile marker/emergency response system, solar powered call boxes, and a reservation/permit system. See Chapter 5 for more information. ▶ Backcountry trailheads may include sign-in kiosks where trail users can check in and out before and after hiking segments of the GRT. See Chapter 4 for more details on backcountry trailheads and access. ▶ Consider developing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with law enforcement and first responders to ensure a coordinated emergency response. |
| <p>Protecting the Environment. Providing more public access to the trail and the river could harm the environment (e.g., waste, fire risk, toxins and pollutants during construction, hunting/illegal poaching, etc.).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The GRT will improve existing conditions along the corridor including removal of hazardous waste, failed culverts, and more. The GRT Trail Use and Design Guide (Chapter 4) includes approaches to navigating and avoiding environmental issues when constructing the trail. ▶ Ongoing operations and maintenance of the GRT includes rules and regulations for fire use, hunting, trash and debris removal, and other environmental concerns. Additionally, design, construction, management, and operation of the GRT will endeavor to protect and enhance natural resources present along the corridor. Strategies for environmental stewardship and maintenance are outlined in Chapter 5. ▶ GRTA Board has directed staff, to the extent feasible, protect, preserve, and restore sensitive natural resources along the trail corridor, remove environmentally damaging railroad infrastructure, restore fish passage and other ecologically important features and steward, honor, and care for the land. ▶ GRTA has entered into professional services agreements to further these goals and develop a consistent, actionable framework to identify, assess, and remediate toxic pollutants resulting from railroad operations along the GRTA-controlled right-of-way of the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad, and develop a prioritized checklist and maps that the GRTA Board of Directors and staff can utilize to identify and prioritize restoration projects to be incorporated into segment level trail development in the Eel River watershed. ▶ State of California has appropriated \$3,000,000 to GRTA to fund environmental restoration in the Eel River Canyon. |
| <p>Needs of the Unhoused Community. People experiencing houselessness will set up encampments on the trail, leading to increased property crimes, robberies, and nuisance activities. How will resources be provided to people experiencing houselessness?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Part of ongoing trail maintenance and operations will include working with local public health experts, social service providers, and law enforcement to prevent encampments and provide services to people experiencing houselessness. See Chapter 5 for more information. ▶ The GRT design will feature lighting along trail segments in developed areas to help deter nuisance activities and crime. ▶ GRTA has hired property managers to regularly monitor the corridor and provide resources to people experiencing homelessness. Partnerships have been made with social services agencies, law enforcement and local jurisdictions to address this community-wide issue. |
| <p>Neighbor Concerns. Providing more public access could place additional burden on the people who have been conserving this land for generations, including trespassing and nuisance issues.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The GRT Trail Use and Design Guide (Chapter 4) includes design treatments along the trail to increase the security of the GRT to and from adjacent private properties, such as fencing and landscape buffers. ▶ Trail Management (Chapter 5) includes recommendations for addressing landowner concerns like trespassing, such as “No trespassing off trail” signage, monitoring issues with law enforcement and landowners, and working with landowners on appropriate fencing if needed. |

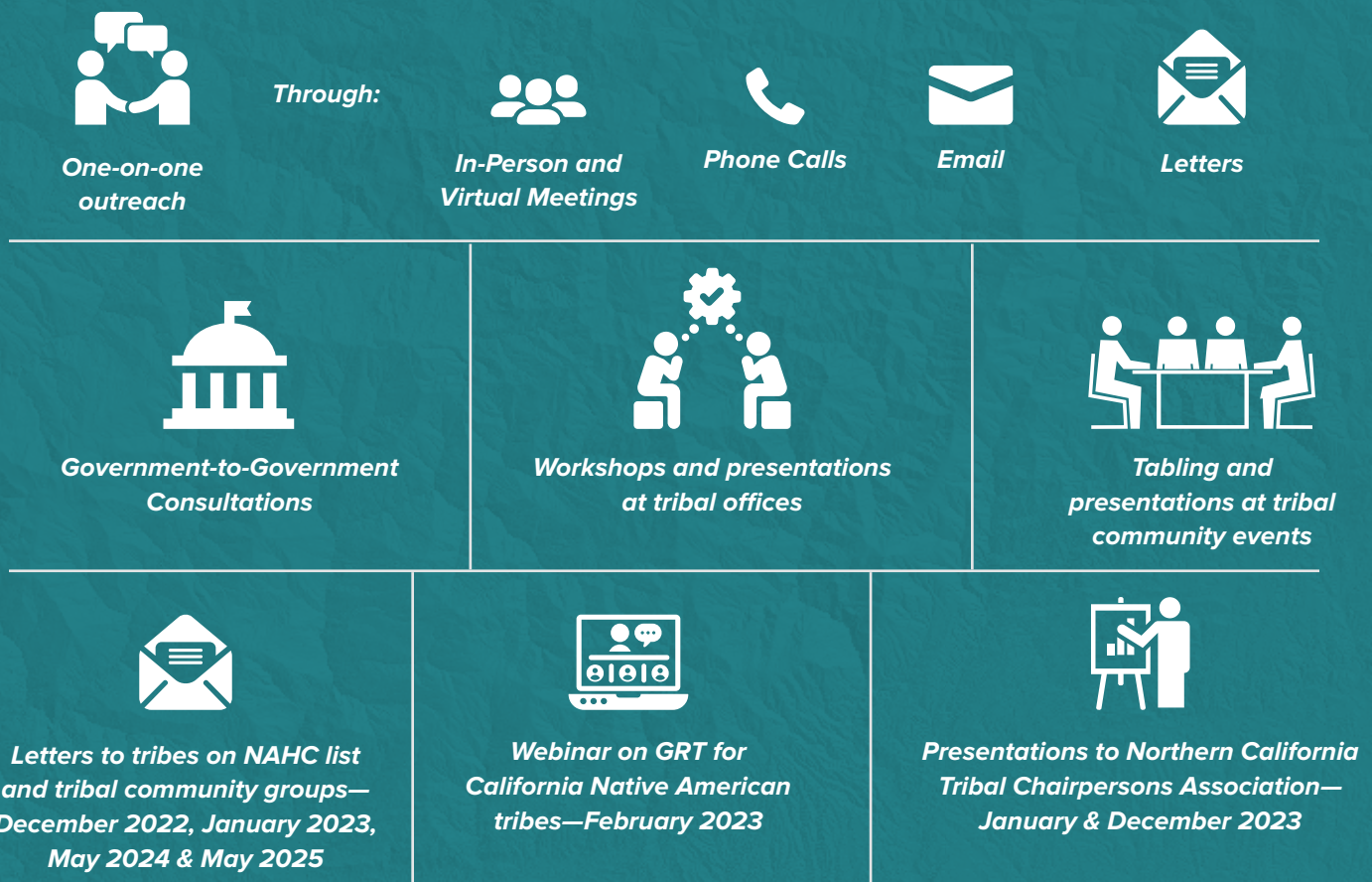
Tribal Engagement

The GRT right-of-way travels through multiple ancestral tribal lands including lands of federally and non-federally recognized tribes. The Master Plan project team—consisting of GRTA and SCC staff and community partners—understands that each tribal government is a separate sovereign entity and that distinct tribal communities may have different interests. During the course of tribal outreach and engagement for the Master Plan, the project team reached out to all tribes on the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) contact list for the project area. The project team also conducted in-person visits to tribal offices to make introductions to tribal staff and government leaders, when possible. The project team presented to tribal governments and attended tribal community events to provide information and solicit input on the GRT Master Plan.

Overall, feedback included concerns about protection of tribal cultural resources and ancestral lands, interest

in who would be responsible for maintaining the trail, protection of native and cultural plants, and involving tribes in the design, construction, and operations and maintenance of the GRT. Table 4 provides a summary of specific concerns and feedback received during a webinar hosted for tribes and from representatives of individual tribes who gave their consent to share conversation summaries in the Master Plan. Summaries of what we heard from tribal community members during outreach at tribal community events is included in [Table 6](#). GRT Master Plan recommendations, which incorporate tribal input and seek to address concerns expressed by tribes, are listed in [Table 3](#). These Master Plan recommendations are a starting point to envision a successful Great Redwood Trail, which will continue to evolve in future phases of trail development through deeper discussions and collaborations with California Native American tribes and tribal communities.

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT DURING MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT:



Tribal Recommendations

The tribal recommendations listed here were developed based on feedback from individual tribes and from recurring ideas heard from multiple tribes. These recommendations seek to address this input and were used to inform many sections in the Master Plan, providing tangible guidance for the GRT. Tribes

have distinct cultural histories and relationships to place, therefore specific GRT projects will require additional communication and collaboration with California Native American tribes to understand unique contexts.

TABLE 3: GRT master plan recommendations that seek to address input from California Native American tribes

| RECOMMENDATION | LOCATION IN THE MASTER PLAN |
|--|---|
| 1. Respectfully consult early and often with tribes to build long-term relationships and collaboration. | Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation G-3) (page 218) |
| 2. Early in project implementation planning, work with appropriate tribes to identify culturally sensitive sites and plant species for protection or tribal access. All cultural resources investigations will be conducted and paid for by the GRTA or local trail development partners and involve tribal participation. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 124 and page 192) |
| 3. Where feasible, the GRTA should work with tribes to design and engineer trail elements that avoid or minimize interference with sensitive cultural sites and sacred spaces. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 124 and page 158) |
| 4. Early in project implementation planning, identify opportunities to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and invite tribal participation in ecological restoration activities, landscaping design and maintenance plan development. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 124 and page 131) |
| 5. Invite interested tribes to collaborate on management and use of portions of the trail that cross ancestral tribal lands. | Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation G-3) (page 218) |
| 6. Create opportunities for holders of tribal knowledge to engage in paid stewardship activities such as construction monitoring, leading guided excursions, performing trail monitoring, or maintenance and restoration. | Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation G-3) (page 218) |
| 7. Explore ways to connect tribal members with job opportunities that value local tribal cultural knowledge and related experience. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 124) Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation G-1) (page 211) |
| 8. Celebrate and honor local tribal culture by installing tribal artwork along the trail that is developed by local tribes and tribal people. Consult with appropriate tribes to develop interpretive signage that accurately reflects local history and continued connection to place. | Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation OP-11) (page 242) |
| 9. Consult with California Native American tribes regarding trail naming for sections that are within their ancestral lands. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 124 and page 195) |
| 10. Consider building an interpretive center and/or culturally important buildings. If built, ensure it is located in collaboration with local tribes to avoid trespassing or identification of and possible damage to sensitive cultural resource areas. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 195) Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation OP-11) (page 242) |
| 11. Take steps to ensure the trail is as safe as possible for all. | Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation G-6) (page 223) |
| 12. Consider creating a memorial to Murdered and Missing Indigenous People (MMIP) in close collaboration with local tribes and tribal communities. | Chapter 4: Trail Use and Design (page 124 and page 195) |
| 13. Form a tribal advisory committee to provide input as the GRT is developed. | Chapter 5: Trail Management (Recommendation G-3) (page 218) |

Table 4 provides a summary of specific concerns and feedback received during a webinar hosted for tribes and from representatives of individual tribes who gave their consent to share conversation summaries in the Master Plan.

Table 4: Specific input from California Native American tribes

| TRIBE OR TRIBAL ASSOCIATION | ENGAGEMENT TYPE | DATE | WHAT WE HEARD |
|---|--|------------------|---|
| Blue Lake Rancheria | Meetings with tribal representatives | Various | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Tribe is interested in being the owner and steward of the section of the trail that is contiguous to Blue Lake Rancheria Trust lands. This section will be in proximity to existing and new infrastructure on the Blue Lake Rancheria, and the tribe wants to ensure trail design and operation meets the needs for safety, security and lighting. For the portion of the GRT that is not contiguous to the Blue Lake Rancheria Trust land, the tribe is interested in partnering for the trail build out. The Tribe is cognizant of the importance of protecting cultural resources and reducing the potential environmental impacts from the proposed trail. |
| Multiple (11 distinct California Native American tribes) | Webinar hosted by GRT Master Plan Team | February 8, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Many tribes have ecological stewards and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) that would be good resources for the team. ▶ Tribes are working actively on signage on other trails and want to get their language and history out. They would like to look at opportunities to add back special plant species. They recommend connecting with the Native American Heritage Commission. ▶ Perhaps jobs could be listed with Native entities first. ▶ Small tribes may have to share monitors during construction and may not have as many paid or full-time staff in the planning and design phase. ▶ The trail should consider culturally important plant protection and enhancement. Close collaboration and coordination could also facilitate opportunities for tribal ethnobotanical knowledge to be incorporated. |

Table 5: Summary of tabling at tribal community events

| EVENT (LOCATION) | DATE | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Good Fire Workshop at Mateel (Redway) | January 7, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The project team handed out flyers, stickers, and magnets to share information about the GRT Master Plan. |
| Intertribal Youth Campout (Fort Bragg) | June 22, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Project team staff provided informational flyers about the GRT Master Plan to attendees. |
| Coyote Valley Big Time, hosted by Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians (Redwood Valley) | July 1, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Make sure tribal voices are heard throughout the engagement process. ▶ Health and wellness are a great part of why this trail can be so beneficial. ▶ Addressing safety concerns is essential. ▶ There is a desire for more public art by Native people. |
| Sherwood Valley Big Time, Hosted by Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians (Willits) | July 8, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ More information needs to be brought to California Native American tribes (especially tribal leaders). ▶ The tribal community could be interested in getting involved with the engagement of the GRT Master Plan once we speak with the Tribal Council. ▶ Who is going to consult with us regarding protection of the land and cultural sites? ▶ Who is going to maintain and keep the land clean and well cared for? ▶ Will there be Native art along the whole GRT? ▶ Encourage children to walk and bike more and it would be great to have a safe trail for them to do that in and around Willits. |
| Pinoleville Big Time, hosted by Pinoleville Pomo Nation (Ukiah) | July 15, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ FAQs and project fact sheets were handed out to event participants. |
| Round Valley Blackberry Festival (Covelo) | August 19, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Top concerns included safety, natural resource protection, and protection and preservation of petroglyphs and sacred sites, as well as protecting the ancestral land that the proposed trail would be going through. ▶ Round Valley Indian Tribes members/elders were in attendance and expressed interest in ongoing engagement with the tribe. ▶ A lot of individuals would not respect or understand the cultural significance of sacred sites. Make sure that there would be measures taken to protect and preserve those historical, spiritual places as well as trash not being left behind. ▶ Generally, people were interested in the GRT timeline, connections to other trails, and safety for people walking and biking. |
| Wiyot Day, Hosted by the Wiyot Tribe (Loleta) | August 26, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use native place names in signage and interpretive materials. |
| Indian Days, hosted by Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria (Loleta) | September 30, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Emphasize accessibility where appropriate, increase inclusivity. ▶ Tribes agree that we need to honor the land and specific sacred spaces, but not all tribes/tribal members agree on how to do so. ▶ Avid trail users in attendance are excited about more opportunities to hike with their dogs and noted that we need to plan for dogs (e.g., water access, trash cans for pet waste). |
| Native Art Expo (Ukiah) | October 28, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Want to get youth more involved so they can think about what economic development opportunities they would be interested in related to environment and climate action. ▶ Interest in how tribes can be involved in discussions about where art meets natural resource protection and cultural resource protection. |

Equity-Focused Engagement

The project's outreach and engagement team (NCO, RCAA, Jen Rice, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and Zander Westbrook Design), worked with additional local community-based organizations (CBOs) to lead equity-focused engagement:

- ▶ **Arbor Youth Resource Center**
- ▶ **Boys and Girls Club**
- ▶ **Peninsula Community Collaborative**
- ▶ **Ukiah Vecinos en Acción**

These organizations were selected by NCO and RCAA due to their interest in the GRT and opportunity to connect with youth, low-income residents, and predominantly Spanish-speaking communities. Without this focused engagement, the project team might not have been able to hear from these voices because they are often left out of traditional planning processes. Each of the CBOs were paid an honorarium to support the engagement work of the GRT Master Plan. Collaborating with these locally focused CBOs helped foster trust and understanding and elicited valuable insights from the communities the CBOs serve.

THE ARBOR YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER IN UKIAH

offers youth programs around education support, housing navigation, peer mentorship, health and well-being, employment workshops and more. During the GRT Master Plan process, Arbor Youth conducted weekly trail clean-ups along the trail and invited GRT Master Plan project team members to join.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF UKIAH

provides a positive, healthy learning environment for children by offering programs related to education, arts and culture, and health and wellness. Boys and Girls Club partnered with NCO and the GRT Master Plan team to offer community events, including a Back-to-School Bash in Ukiah on August 12, 2023.



Partnering with local community-based organizations like Ukiah Vecinos en Acción allowed the project team to engage with predominantly Spanish-speaking communities

PENINSULA COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE (PCC)

is a residence-based community group comprised of residents from Manila, Samoa, and Fairhaven, and aims to improve well-being and safety on the Samoa Peninsula. On March 20, 2023, PCC led a community walk along a portion of the GRT corridor near Manilla Park, with 12 residents in attendance.

Comments received during the walk included:

- ▶ Bike connectivity between communities is important.
- ▶ The community wants to get more involved in advocating for the transition of the corridor to a trail to make it happen as soon as possible.
- ▶ Families want their kids to be able to travel through the community in a safe way.
- ▶ People appreciated getting on the trail, noticing wetlands, and seeing opportunities for education.



Community walk with residents near Manila Park

UKIAH VECINOS EN ACCIÓN (UVA)

provides information, guidance, and advocacy on health equity, emergency preparedness and response, economic development, and civic engagement. They led a series of Ukiah GRT-based events, called Viernes con UVA, on June 30, July 28, and August 25, 2023.

Key themes heard at these events included:

- ▶ Focus on health and wellness – people love that the trail can provide free access to physical activity.
- ▶ Important for people to know where to access the trail and more signage in English and Spanish is needed.
- ▶ There is a desire for more community events along the GRT.
- ▶ Accessibility for different types of trail users is a concern.
- ▶ Trail design should consider safety and visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists.



General Public

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The project team hosted four in-person public workshops throughout the GRT region and master planning process. Generally, these workshops aimed to share information on the GRT and the GRT Master Plan process, trail best practices, trail experiences, economic benefits and opportunities of the trail, and gather input on participants' ideas and concerns about the trail.

Each workshop featured different stations that participants could visit to learn and provide feedback about specific topics. Two additional in-person workshops were held in April 2024 to receive feedback on the Draft Master Plan. An overview of the six community-based in-person workshops and key takeaways can be found in [Table 6](#).



Fifty-seven community members joined the project team for a workshop in Hopland

Table 6: Summary of in-person workshops

| LOCATION | DATE | NUMBER OF ATTENDEES | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--|----------------|---------------------|---|
| Fortuna River Lodge Conference Center (Fortuna) | March 22, 2023 | 98 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ General input included concerns about protection of cultural resources, private property, trespassing, unauthorized uses, and homeless encampments. ▶ Common ideas and opportunities included: signage/mile markers, equestrian infrastructure, access to restrooms and water, and emergency access. People were also interested in campgrounds, historical narratives (particularly tribal), and environmental restoration. ▶ Common concerns and issues included: illegal hunting/poaching, trespassing and private property rights, livestock safety, e-bike speed limits, adequate equestrian user access, fire risk, and enforcement and rescue in the more remote GRT sections. |
| Willits Community Center (Willits) | March 23, 2023 | 69 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Concern about safety of landowners and trail users in remote areas, general support for the GRT and volunteering, as well as concerns about private property, trespassing, unauthorized uses, and homeless encampments. ▶ Common ideas and opportunities included: bed and breakfasts, safe passage through town for non-motorized users, and GRT kiosks providing wayfinding, advertisement, and concessions. ▶ Common concerns and issues included: sanitation/trash, water/sewer infrastructure, and accessibility for different user groups. |
| Volunteer Fire Hall (Alderpoint) | July 26, 2023 | 70 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ General comments included concerns about GRT being a “good neighbor,” protection of cultural resources, trail maintenance, protection of private property, and encampments. ▶ Common ideas and opportunities included: boat launch and river access, campgrounds, and access to restrooms and water. ▶ Common concerns and issues included: trespassing, accessibility for different users, access for safety and emergency services, and funding for long-term maintenance and costs. |
| Brutocao Cellars (Hopland) | July 27, 2023 | 57 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Concerns about adjacent private property ownership and the width of the GRT ownership, trespassing, homeless encampments, and fires. ▶ Common ideas about economic benefits from tourism and attracting national/international attention. ▶ Participants requested Hopland GRT staging area and rest stop, including public art, restrooms, bike and car parking, electric chargers for bikes and cars, bike repair stations, shade, wayfinding, hydration stations, benches and picnic seating, play areas, and a visitor/interpreter center with information about the trail. |

Table 6: Summary of in-person workshops, continued

| LOCATION | DATE | NUMBER OF ATTENDEES | WHAT WE HEARD |
|---|----------------|---------------------|---|
| Sequoia Conference Center (Eureka) | April 9, 2024 | 119 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Restrooms, trailheads, and campgrounds are the most important trail features to include on the trail. ▶ Common ideas and opportunities included closing the trail gap along the Eureka waterfront and keeping as many jobs and as much money as local as possible. ▶ Common concerns and issues included: Being realistic about trail construction and maintenance challenges, working inclusively with landowners and California Native American tribes, and funding. |
| Ukiah Valley Conference Center (Ukiah) | April 10, 2024 | 42 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Restrooms, trash cans, trailheads, and campgrounds are the most important features to include on the trail. ▶ Common ideas and opportunities included: Enlisting as many different groups as possible and providing a diversity of uses (e.g., fishing and river access). ▶ Common concerns and issues included: Diverting funding for the trail from more urgent issues, not including California Native American tribes in the planning process, and formatting community meetings to be more of a town hall style. |



In addition to in-person workshops (Table 6), the project team offered four online workshops via Zoom:

- ▶ April 24, 2023 – 45 attendees
- ▶ August 2, 2023 – 32 attendees
- ▶ April 16, 2024 – 32 attendees
- ▶ December 16, 2025 – 180 attendees

The online workshops provided a flexible opportunity for California Native American tribes, stakeholders and residents from along the GRT and beyond to share their concerns and ideas for the trail. As with the in-person workshops, the project team presented the GRT and the GRT Master Plan process, trail best practices, trail experiences, and economic benefits and opportunities associated with the trail. Throughout the presentation, attendees were asked to participate in a series of polls, asking for their opinion on different GRT-related topics. Following the presentation, participants were invited to use the Q&A feature to share additional concerns, questions, and ideas for the trail.

Key takeaways from the online workshops included:

- ▶ Most attendees said they felt excited about the Great Redwood Trail.
- ▶ The top trail features desired by participants included restrooms, river access/boat launches, landscape and ecological areas, rest areas, and overlooks.
- ▶ Common concerns of participants included safety, emergency access, how long the trail will take to build, homeless encampments, fire, trail maintenance, connecting to other trails in the region, and equestrian access.
- ▶ Common desires and ideas expressed by participants included accessible design, honoring California Native American cultures, economic benefits and development along the trail, connectivity between towns along the trail, and trail docents.

TABLING AT COMMUNITY EVENTS

Throughout the GRT Master Planning process, the project team shared information and received feedback at 19 community events. This allowed the project team to table at gatherings and popular public events across the region, sharing information about the GRT Master Plan and receiving feedback from community members and a wide range of stakeholders. Tabling events help the GRTA connect with people who might not be able to attend a more formal workshop, by meeting them in their daily lives at school events, festivals, celebrations, block parties, community walks, and more. [Table 7](#) below includes a summary of gatherings and community events attended by the project team.



Project team staff set up a booth at the Blackberry Festival in Covelo to share project information

Table 7: Summary of tabling at public events (in chronological order)

| EVENT (LOCATION) | DATE | WHAT WE HEARD |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Godwit Days (Arcata) | April 14-16, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Attendees were excited about the GRT and sections already being built. ▶ There are many destinations in the area that the trail could connect to, such as beaches. |
| Día del Niño (Ukiah) | April 30, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Many people in Ukiah walk and bike on the GRT for commuting and recreation. ▶ Families would like the GRT to provide easy, safe access to schools. |
| Bike Month Humboldt Celebration (Eureka) | May 20, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ People are excited about the GRT and want to be kept in the loop about progress on the new Humboldt Bay Trail segment. |
| Kinetic Sculpture Race (Ferndale) | May 27, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Manila residents are excited about the possibility of a trail connecting them to Arcata and generally support the GRT. |
| Willits Frontier Day (Willits) | June 30, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The public has safety concerns, especially north of Willits near Spy Rock and Covelo. ▶ Attendees wanted to know how the GRT can benefit small, local businesses in Willits and other rural towns. ▶ Families are excited to use the trail. |
| Fourth of July (Eureka) | July 4, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a desire for hostels along the GRT. ▶ Support for equestrian use along the trail. |



The project team tabled at the Willits Frontier Days event in June 2023

| EVENT (LOCATION) | DATE | WHAT WE HEARD |
|---|------------------|---|
| Annie and Mary Days (Blue Lake) | July 9, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Along the A&M Trail, the rocks of the gravel trail surface are too large to be equestrian friendly. ▶ Request for a bridge at Mad River. |
| Redwood Empire Fair (Ukiah) | August 3-6, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The project team attended and passed out flyers about the GRT Master Plan. |
| Eureka Block Party (Eureka) | August 5, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintenance of the GRT is a concern, especially trash and human waste. ▶ Request for restrooms at regular intervals along the trail, but maintenance of these facilities is a concern. |
| Wildwood Days (Rio Dell) | August 5, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Request for surfaces that are gentler on feet than asphalt. ▶ Concern about landslides at Scotia Bluffs and how the trail will navigate this area. Other concerns included encampments, trespassing, and how long it will take to construct the trail. |
| Back-to-School Bash (Ukiah) | August 12, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Requests for artwork, such as murals, and water stations along the trail. ▶ Request from residents to extend the GRT to south Ukiah. ▶ Natural resource protection is a top concern. |
| Mendocino College WOW Week (Ukiah) | August 28, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Generally, students were interested in the GRT and expressed excitement/interest in being more involved. ▶ Top concerns were natural resource protection, safety for bicyclists, and desire for more trails and paths. |

| EVENT (LOCATION) | DATE | WHAT WE HEARD |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Peninsula Beautification/Mural Celebration (Manila) | September 10, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Excited to see the trail happen. ▶ Questions about how the trail will cross 255 safely. |
| Festejando Nuestra Comunidad (College of the Redwoods) | September 16, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tribal input needs to be a priority. ▶ Make GRT timeline information available. ▶ Excited to see a trail all the way down to San Francisco Bay. |
| Friends of GRT Celebration Event (Dyerville) | October 14, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Make trail users feel safe to leave valuables in their cars while they use the trail. ▶ Safety for people using the trail is a key concern. ▶ Need to create time and space for tribes to honor their ancestors and ancestral lands before it becomes a trail. ▶ Need to protect tribal cultural resources, sites, and way of life. |
| Mendocino College Día de los Muertos (Ukiah) | October 25, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The project team attended and passed out flyers to share information about the GRT Master Plan. ▶ Many students were not aware of the GRT but felt it is important to make sure the land is protected, especially in alignment with Native ways. Speak to elders, as they know best. ▶ Concerns about trash, and trail users taking native plants. Encouraged use of more signage to teach users how to be respectful. ▶ Want to see murals with more diverse art along the trail. Suggestion to have an art class offered through Mendocino College that helps artists demonstrate their skills publicly. |
| Loleta Harvest Days (Loleta) | November 3, 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A lot of excitement for the GRT and want to expedite it. ▶ Excited for safe ways to exercise with family, and to see what the trail could do to improve safe transportation between work, school, and errands. ▶ Concern about GRT traffic mitigation strategies and user safety in towns. |
| Humboldt Trails Summit (Eureka) | June 1, 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Questions about how the trail will connect to other local trails and amenities. ▶ Interest in coordination between GRTA and other local trail groups and agencies for restoration and trail maintenance. |
| Humboldt Bay Trail South Grand Opening (Eureka) | June 28, 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A lot of excitement about the newest segment of the GRT. Specific comments about the new opportunities for safe commutes to work and local businesses, incorporation of artwork on the Eureka Slough Bridge, and large community turnout for the trail opening. ▶ Interest in learning more about and supporting the next segments prioritized for development. |

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

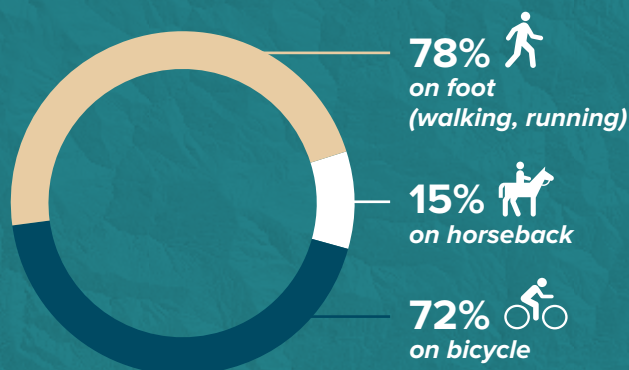
The project team used digital engagement tools to augment in-person engagement and to reach more people. These included an online public survey and an interactive web map tool.

PUBLIC SURVEY

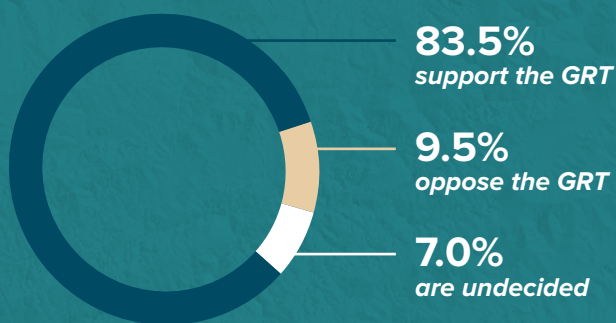
As part of the engagement process, the project team created a 24-question online survey using SurveyMonkey. This public survey was developed in English and Spanish and remained open for responses for over a year starting in October 2022. The survey was distributed to various stakeholders and publicized by the project team, as well as by local groups and agencies. Respondents self-selected and were not randomly sampled and therefore do not necessarily represent the views of the general population of GRT county residents and future/current users. In total, 767 respondents answered the first page of the 3-page survey (questions 1-9), and 508 (66%) of these respondents continued to the second page. Of the 508 respondents who answered questions 10-17 on page two of the survey, 480 (62.5% of the original 767) completed the survey by answering at least some of the questions 18-24 on page 3.

The survey asked respondents about their support for the GRT, how often they use trails, how they would use the GRT, what modes they would use along and to/from the trail, preferred trail types, preferred trail features and amenities, and top concerns about the GRT and ideas about how to address these concerns. Key takeaways from the survey are summarized on the following pages.

Mode of Travel



General Support/Opposition




56.1%
of respondents would be interested in volunteering to help maintain the trail.

Geographic Distribution

Respondents who spend a significant amount of time in rural areas/smaller towns were more likely to oppose the GRT than those in urban areas.



Will Trail Proximity Induce More Use?

83% 
of respondents said they would use trails more often than they currently do if they had more nearby trail access.

Trip Purpose


87% 
of respondents said they use trails for recreation or exercise.

40% 
use trails for transportation (e.g., commuting).

Most Requested Amenities



Restrooms were the most-desired trail feature, listed by 56% of all respondents,

followed by directional signs/mile markers at 46%. 

MOST CITED CONCERNS

Concern about homeless encampments and littering was consistently high among survey respondents, and concern for personal safety was consistently noted regardless of respondents' view of the trail. Additionally, maintenance was a more important concern to respondents who support the trail, while impacts on the environment were important for both respondents who support and those who are undecided. Further, concern about trespassing or property crime was particularly high among respondents opposed to the trail, and moderately high among undecided respondents. Finally, emergency access was particularly important to undecided respondents.

Top 5 Concerns by Support for the GRT

| | SUPPORT | UNDECIDED | OPPOSE |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1 |  Encampments or Littering |  Other |  Trespassing or property crime |
| 2 |  Maintenance |  Encampments or Littering |  Encampments or Littering |
| 3 |  Impacts on the Environment |  Impacts on the Environment |  Other |
| 4 |  Accessibility |  Trespassing or Property Crime |  Personal Safety |
| 5 |  Personal Safety |  Emergency Access |  Impact on Privacy |



Existing trail in Eureka

INTERACTIVE WEB MAP

In addition to the public survey, community members and stakeholders provided input along the GRT corridor through an online web tool that allowed people to “like,” “dislike,” and add their own comments. This tool, which was hosted on the project website, gathered 153 unique comments and 329 votes.

Common themes of the comments included:

- ▶ Information about trail segment maintenance and partnership opportunities
- ▶ Ideas for future connections to/from the trail, and connections to other regional trails and paths like the Golden Gate Bridge
- ▶ Safe bicycle and pedestrian connections/access to the trail
- ▶ Desired trail access points
- ▶ Ideas for trail elements, such as campgrounds, restrooms, and playgrounds
- ▶ Existing businesses to highlight and economic opportunities along the trail
- ▶ Environmental and wildlife concerns
- ▶ Equestrian needs, such as horse trailer staging areas

The comments that received the most likes from other participants were:

“Converting the old Redwood Valley School into a Great Redwood Trail Visitor Center + campground + park / playground + long-term parking for trail hikers and bikers could be a great use of already public land!”

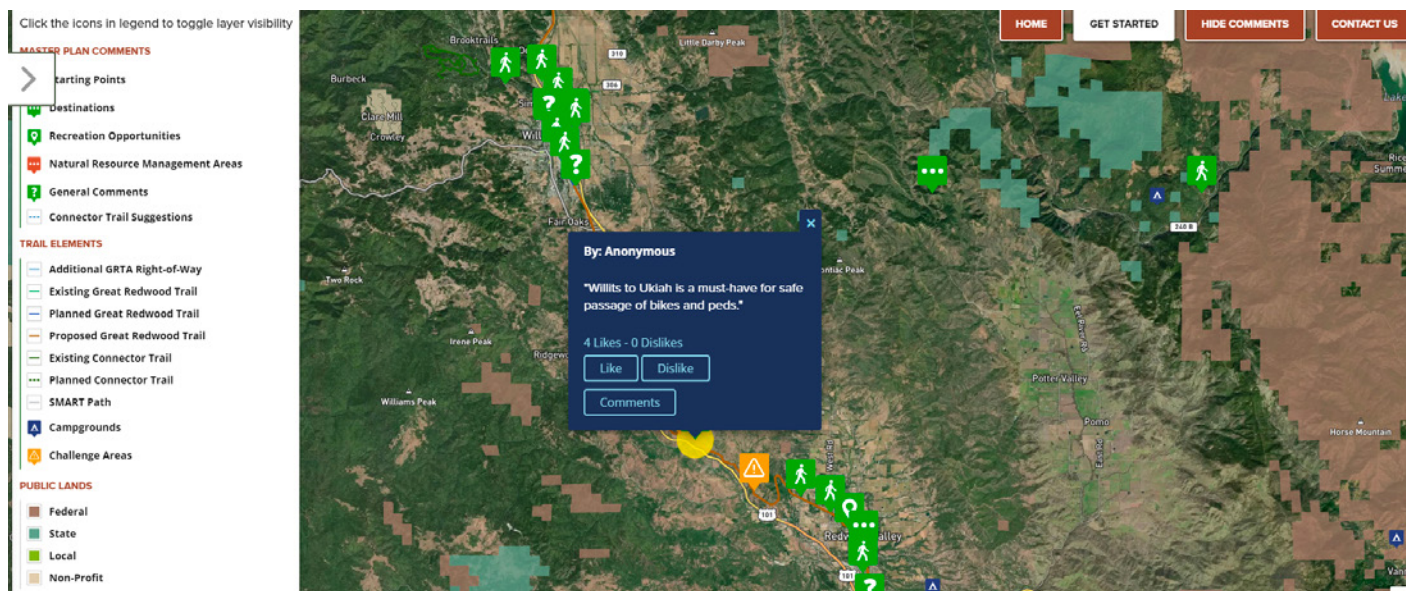
 18 Likes

“We live in Manila and are thrilled to have the start/end of the trail right in our neighborhood! Manila residents need a safe trail to access Arcata by bike and/or other wheeled devices. The Great Redwood Trail will do this!”

 16 Likes

“I like the idea of taking the train, i.e., not driving to Cloverdale and starting from there.”

 10 Likes



Community members and stakeholders left over 150 comments on an interactive map of the GRT corridor



Tabling at 32 tribal gatherings and popular public events allowed the project team to share information about the Master Plan and gather input from a wider range of people

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The project team used various communications channels to share information about the GRT Master Plan, notify residents and stakeholders about the project, and promote upcoming community engagement opportunities. Information about the GRT Master Plan was available at the website GreatRedwoodTrailPlan.org and included a project summary and timeline, the survey and interactive web map tool, upcoming events and workshops, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), e-newsletters, and Master Plan-related documents and maps. Three e-newsletters were sent out to the GRT mailing list during the development of the Draft Master Plan. The e-newsletters featured Master Plan updates, tribal engagement spotlights, CBO engagement spotlights, and more.

To help promote public workshops and attract people to the project website, social media posts were shared on GRTA's Instagram and Facebook pages, as well as through partners' social media platforms. Facebook advertisements were also purchased to further promote community workshops and drive more visits to the project website. In addition to digital communications, postcards and letters were mailed to GRT-adjacent landowners to introduce the project and invite them to attend the first round of public workshops.

Further, the project team used radio to reach people in the project area, particularly in rural communities and the most remote areas. The GRT Master Plan project team did interviews with KZYX and KMUD, and sent public service announcements (PSAs) to encourage KZYX, KMUD, KHUM, KIDE FM, and KINS listeners to attend public workshops and visit the Master Plan website for more information.



Social media posts were used to promote workshops on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter



14,128 postcards were sent to residential and business addresses adjacent to the corridor to ensure neighbors knew how to connect with the planning process

Stakeholder Groups

Throughout the development of the GRT Master Plan, the project team met with over 70 stakeholders and stakeholder groups to share information about the Plan, listen to concerns and ideas for the trail and learn about additional engagement opportunities. Stakeholder groups included local jurisdictions and elected officials, landowners, tourism/economic development agencies, trail user groups, the Farm Bureau, and more. **Table 8** provides a thematic summary of the range of stakeholders engaged and their key concerns and ideas for the trail. Recommendations from this stakeholder input are incorporated into **Table 4** and throughout the Master Plan.



Community members learn about and provide feedback on the GRT Master Plan at a community workshop in Alderpoint

Table 8: Summary of stakeholder groups engaged

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--|--|--|
| Elected Officials and Local Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Blue Lake City Council ▶ Hopland Municipal Advisory Committee ▶ Humboldt County Association of Governments ▶ Humboldt County Board of Supervisors ▶ Mendocino County Planning Department ▶ Mendocino County Board of Supervisors ▶ Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Committee ▶ Trinity County Planning Department ▶ Willits City Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Primary concerns include fire hazard, emergency response, trespassing onto adjacent private property, natural resource protection, cultural resource protection, and long-term funding for ongoing operations and maintenance. ▶ Restrooms and misuse of restrooms are a major maintenance concern. ▶ There are numerous economic development opportunities and opportunities to re-purpose GRTA land holdings for community benefit. ▶ The trail could help increase safety in areas that were previously high crime, though remote areas are a safety concern. ▶ Excitement for the trail connecting to Blue Lake, but some are concerned about costs and influx of negative uses. |
| Law Enforcement, Fire Departments, First Responders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alderpoint Volunteer Fire Dept. ▶ CAL FIRE ▶ Fortuna Police Dept. ▶ Laytonville Fire Dept. ▶ Mendocino Sheriff’s Dept. ▶ Humboldt Sheriff’s Dept. ▶ Coast Guard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Primary concerns of law enforcement include emergency responder access, trespassing, fires, assaults, and homicides. ▶ Extra support would be needed for emergency services along the GRT. Ideally, there would be dedicated emergency services provided by GRT partners, sheriffs’ depts., police, fire depts., State Parks, and/or GRTA. ▶ GRTA should develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with law enforcement agencies in Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt Counties. This MOU could delineate which jurisdiction or agency could respond to emergencies in particular areas, which is critical where there are overlapping areas of responsibility. |

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--|--|---|
| State and Local Natural Resource Agencies and Organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Avenue Trail Group ▶ California Department of Fish and Wildlife ▶ California Trout ▶ Humboldt Redwoods State Parks ▶ Mendocino County Resource Conservation District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shively Bluffs tunnel is currently impassable, so an alternative route could be considered. In some areas, could possibly add a separated trail next to Avenue of Giants. ▶ Bridges could work well for crossing during certain times of year. |
| Federal Natural Resource and Regulatory Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Bureau of Land Management ▶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ▶ National Park Service ▶ US Forest Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ US Forest Service would like to see the GRT connect to the Bigfoot Trail (to the east of the GRT). ▶ Concerned about impacts on water quality and fish (salmon and steelhead). ▶ The lack of access to the river through BLM and private lands is a major challenge to managing the GRT and Eel River. This also includes the land between the GRT and river that will be used by trail users. River access is key but will come with more management complications – waste management, impacts to wildlife, etc. ▶ The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program within NPS may be able to provide technical assistance. ▶ NPS capacity to help on the GRT, other than perhaps the Rivers & Trails Program, is limited due to lack of resources. BLM staff in Arcata would also have limited capacity to support concessionaires and perform operations/maintenance tasks. |
| Tourism and Economic Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Arcata Economic Development Corporation ▶ Community Economic Resilience Consortium ▶ Fortuna Chamber of Commerce ▶ Garberville Rotary ▶ Humboldt County Convention and Visitors Bureau ▶ Humboldt Workforce Coalition ▶ Loleta Chamber of Commerce ▶ McLean Foundation ▶ Norcal Apex Accelerator ▶ Redwood League of Cities ▶ Southern Humboldt Family Resource Center ▶ Visit Mendocino County ▶ Willits Chamber of Commerce ▶ Redwood Region Rise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A key element of GRT success will be an environmental development angle. How can the GRT benefit small local businesses along the trail? How will it encourage more economic development in the surrounding area? ▶ Encouraging youth to get more involved in the GRT throughout its development and beyond. ▶ Cities not adjacent to the GRT rail-trail are envious of cities that are. ▶ Strong desire to create a welcoming place to share Southern Humboldt culture. Southern Humboldt lacks resources and economic opportunities – GRT could help change this. ▶ Residents intentionally want to live remotely but also want economic opportunities for their kids to keep them on the land. ▶ General excitement about the trail and related development opportunities, including building job opportunities. |

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--|---|--|
| Trail Users with Disabilities and Accessibility Advocates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Designing Accessible Communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Important to include people with disabilities in the GRT process from the outset of trail planning and throughout the life of trail development and operations, so that concerns can be anticipated and properly integrated into trail design. ▶ Trail elements to consider: signs that work for all (for blind/visually impaired, hearing impaired), picnic tables with arms for wheelchair users, kiosks that are the correct height for people in wheelchairs. ▶ Be aware of the many new technologies that help make trails more accessible to disabled populations. |
| Trail Users – Bicyclists and Pedestrians | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adventure’s Edge ▶ Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities ▶ Friends of Annie and Mary Trail ▶ Humboldt Trails Council ▶ Manila Moves | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The trail should be family-friendly and be accessible to users of all ages and abilities. ▶ Manilla wants connectivity to the trail, which would connect residents to other areas along the trail. ▶ Concerns about regular maintenance and homeless encampments. ▶ Parking at certain points would be better than just bike racks as people would like to park and ride if one must come before the other. In addition to bicycle parking, provide vehicle parking at certain points along the trail to support park and ride opportunities. ▶ Desire for showers at certain areas where bicyclists tend to ride/stop, particularly in remote areas without access to towns. ▶ A paved surface would be ideal for bicycling but packed gravel could also work. ▶ A priority segment should be between Willits and Ukiah, which is currently not bike friendly. ▶ Create loops that incorporate roads and trail(s). ▶ Set speed guidelines for e-bikes to ensure safety for all trail users. ▶ There is momentum to complete this trail, let’s keep it going. ▶ The connection to Blue Lake is a critical piece of the beginning of the trail. |
| Trail Users - Equestrian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Julia Peterson ▶ Susan Combs ▶ Karen Underwood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Equestrians are eager to help and can be mobilized to do many things in support of the trail, including trail monitoring, hauling materials into the backcountry, fundraising, etc. ▶ Equestrians want to feel welcome and are a diverse group with a variety of desires. ▶ Top trail elements requested include freshwater access and large parking/staging areas for trailers. ▶ Making the Carlotta Spur a gravel trail could be a good “starter” project as practice for the Eel River Canyon. ▶ Providing river access or view access is important and should be deeded access that considers shifting rivers. |

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS | WHAT WE HEARD |
|---|--|---|
| Trail Users – River and Boating Access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Black Butte River Ranch ▶ Alderpoint-Dos Rios Shuttle Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Eel River Canyon community needs economic opportunities and GRT seems like a good option. ▶ People should have more recreational access to Eel River. ▶ There is interest in further developing visitor services along the river and the trail. |
| Timber | Timber Heritage Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The primary goal/desire is for an expansion to use railbikes to help fund a future excursion train. ▶ They would like the opportunity to collect historic pieces of the railroad that would otherwise be scrapped or salvaged. ▶ Request GRTA assess rail with trail route options from Samoa to Arcata. This assessment could include pros/cons, cost estimates, and property ownership. |
| Farming and Ranching | Mendocino County Farm Bureau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Desire for rail with trail and rail connections to the interstate network. ▶ Concerns about fire and emergency access, as well as public safety, trespass, and trail-related crime. ▶ Want the State to fund GRT operations and maintenance, including more funding for law enforcement and fire personnel, as well as dedicated trail employees. ▶ Concerns about trail users’ sanitation and human waste interfering with safe crop production. Concerns about use of eminent domain. ▶ Concerns about fees associated with private use of GRTA right-of-way. |
| Landowners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alex Hubert ▶ Amy Machado ▶ The Buckeye Conservancy ▶ Chris Weston ▶ George Pinches ▶ Glen Schieffer ▶ Jack Rice ▶ Jennifer Famoso ▶ Liz and Randy Whitlow ▶ Lori Morettini ▶ Marty Holzhauser ▶ Melvin Black ▶ Michelle Bushnell ▶ Robert Davis ▶ Sarah Scudder ▶ Sherri Horan ▶ Stuart Bewley ▶ Valerie Elder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Acknowledge residents’ knowledge and experience, their concerns and interests, and ask them how they want to be engaged in the process. Public safety and river access/trespass/encroachment are major concerns for them. ▶ Interest in future economic development opportunities (campgrounds, etc.); need to address zoning barriers to these kinds of overnight and other trail-related developments. ▶ Need to address trespassing – signage, education, and enforcement. Concerns about some “bad actor” trail users causing costly issues for adjacent landowners, realities of access in/out of the canyon, and services/facilities for trail users. ▶ Create a trail law enforcement division, funded, working with local law enforcement. ▶ A rails-to-trails program between the northern and southern parts of the Eel River Canyon would be amazing for the public. ▶ Concerns about impacts to wildlife. If landowners must put up fences to prevent trespassing, there could be unfair wildlife impacts. Access for wildlife to water (the river) is important. If trail users are using the river and connected creeks, there are potential impacts to otters, eels, beavers, and other wildlife. Need to find a way to keep folks on the trail. ▶ Swimming/river access is concerning to landowners because of the lack of public land between the corridor and the river. That kind of access, and camping, is unwanted in private areas with private ownership. |

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Winegrowers | Mendocino Winegrowers Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working with landowners/vineyard owners will be key for the GRT. ▶ Security is a major concern – interested in trail docents, funding to staff up local law enforcement, overnight permit system. Volunteers on bikes occasionally monitoring the trail. Physical fence may not stop the problem – the solution may need to be more than that. ▶ Excitement about having new people come into Mendocino County. Economic opportunities – have people camp on vineyard land, spend money on tasting rooms, etc. |
| Cannabis Cultivation | Mendocino Cannabis Alliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Members are proud of their history in cannabis industry and want to expand tourism to the Emerald Triangle. ▶ Cannabis industry is ready to partner with GRT and tourism industry. ▶ There are retail/economic development opportunities right along the trail. ▶ Would like to see infrared fire-spotting cameras on trails. |
| Environmental Advocates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alternatives 2 Toxics ▶ Californians for Alternatives to Toxics ▶ Friends of the Eel/Friends of the Great Redwood Trail ▶ Humboldt Volunteer Trail Stewards ▶ Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) ▶ Save the Redwoods League ▶ Sierra Club ▶ Russian River Watershed Association ▶ Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Potential for the GRT corridor to become a conservation acquisition corridor. ▶ GRT could be a spine for trails connecting to redwoods and preserves along the corridor. ▶ Concerns about clean water, watershed restoration, and enhancement of habitat around the trail. ▶ Need more public river access points (90% are privately owned property in the watershed). It is challenging to get to the river – plan for river access. ▶ There are concerns about how toxins will be handled, how CEQA will be handled, and how Indigenous concerns will be handled. ▶ Prioritize trail clean-ups – part of building the trail is cleaning up the mess. There is a large amount of debris in the river – railcars, scrap metal in the riverbed, culverts- all make it unsafe to recreate. ▶ Prioritize environmental cleanups and preservation related to the rail and other related parts of building the GRT (e.g., historic sawmill sites, historic train stations). ▶ Concerns were raised about CEQA. ▶ The trail needs to feel like it is a safe place to walk. |

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS | WHAT WE HEARD |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Land Trusts and Conservancies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Buckeye Conservancy Board ▶ North Coast Regional Land Trust ▶ The Wildlands Conservancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Need to engage landowners productively and creatively to understand how the trail may impact existing ranch operations and seek ways to minimize that impact. ▶ Need to hear and understand adjacent landowners’ concerns, as well as the unique and pragmatic challenges associated with the more rugged/remote aspects of the corridor – or risk not being taken seriously and/or opposed. ▶ The Wildlands Conservancy is willing to play a role in development within the canyon outside of their property, connecting the GRT with California Native American organizations and potentially helping acquire more preserves within the Eel River Canyon. |
| Homeless Service Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Affordable Homeless Housing Alternatives ▶ Mayor of Eureka ▶ Northcoast Environmental Center ▶ Friend of Boon ▶ The People of New Directions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Need to involve houseless community members and build trust. Treat houseless people with respect. ▶ Focus on making all trail users feel safe. ▶ Trail ideas include signs along the trail with resources for houseless, trash cans, ambassadors with training on houselessness. ▶ Docents are helpful for connecting people to services. Also consider houseless resource fairs along the trail. ▶ Persistent outreach is needed. ▶ Severe weather is an issue for all users of the trail. Consistent access to water will be critical. |
| Miscellaneous | Eureka Women’s Club | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Generally enthusiastic about the trail but skeptical about the ability to build it continuously because of so many different stakeholders and landowners. ▶ Accessibility for all is a top priority. ▶ Desire for charging stations for phones, electric mobility devices, and e-bikes. |
| | Piner High School Students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The project team presented to students at Piner High School to share information about the GRT, the Master Plan, and the economic impact of the trail. No specific input was documented. |

2.3 HOW PUBLIC AND TRIBAL INPUT STRENGTHENED THE PLAN

The Master Plan reflects substantial refinement based on public comment, tribal consultation, stakeholder engagement, and feedback since the April 2024 Public Draft. As detailed in this chapter, engagement included workshops, surveys, web-based tools, tabling at community and tribal events, and government-to-government consultation. In addition, GRTA received over 600 comments and 37 substantive letters during the Draft Master Plan and PEIR scoping comment periods. The input resulted in clearer policy recommendations, expanded management strategies, and more defined implementation responsibilities in the final plan. The following topics changed most substantively based on community and tribal input:

TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP AND CULTURAL PROTECTION

California Native American tribes consistently emphasized early and ongoing consultation, protection of sacred sites and ancestral lands, incorporation of indigenous languages and local interpretation materials, economic participation, and meaningful involvement in trail governance. Tribal feedback also highlighted the need to respect culturally important plants, ensure construction monitoring, and create space to honor ancestral lands.

In response, the March 2026 Plan advances structural commitments beyond those outlined in the April 2024 Draft. These include:

- ▶ Formalizing a Tribal Advisory Committee to provide ongoing input
- ▶ Creating opportunities for holders of tribal knowledge to engage in paid trail development and stewardship activities
- ▶ Committing to tribal collaboration in identifying and protecting culturally sensitive sites and species
- ▶ Celebrating and honoring local tribal culture by installing amenities along the trail that are developed by local tribes and tribal people
- ▶ Identifying dedicated funding for tribal cultural resource protection projects

Together, these updates reflect a clear evolution from consultation during planning to long-term partnership and collaboration during implementation.

EEL RIVER CANYON PERMIT SYSTEM AND BACKCOUNTRY MANAGEMENT

Concerns about safety, wildfire risk, environmental degradation, emergency access, trespassing, and cultural resource impacts were especially pronounced for the remote Eel River Canyon segment. The March 2026 update responds by further defining recommendations for a structured backcountry permit and reservation system.

This permit framework is designed to:

- ▶ Manage visitor capacity in potentially environmentally and culturally sensitive areas
- ▶ Coordinate overnight reservations and designated camping areas
- ▶ Support user accountability through check-in/check-out systems
- ▶ Improve emergency response through tracking and mile marker coordination
- ▶ Integrate tribal and ranching input into visitor education
- ▶ Reduce wildfire risk and sanitation impacts

The 2024 Draft recommended exploring a backcountry permit system; the 2026 update clarifies its purpose, operational integration, and role in long-term stewardship. This shift directly addresses public safety and environmental concerns raised in workshops, survey responses, and stakeholder meetings.

GOOD NEIGHBOR AND AGRICULTURAL INTERFACE STRATEGIES

Adjacent landowners, agricultural producers, ranchers, and rural communities expressed strong concerns about trespassing, livestock safety, sanitation, nuisance behavior, trail-related crime, and impacts to working lands. These concerns were echoed by local elected officials, law enforcement, and farming organizations.

The updated Plan strengthens “good neighbor” strategies, including:

- ▶ Fencing and landscape buffers in appropriate locations
- ▶ “No trespassing” signage and education
- ▶ Coordination with law enforcement and emergency responders
- ▶ Monitoring and adaptive management approaches
- ▶ Clarification of maintenance responsibilities

The Plan also draws on case study-informed policy ideas such as East Bay Regional Park District’s coordination practices for trails across grazing lands and the Napa Valley Vine Trail’s AgRespect program. These approaches emphasize user education, stewardship messaging, collaboration with agricultural operators, and proactive communication to reduce potential conflicts. The updated framework reflects a balance between enforcement tools and relationship-based strategies.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Accessibility emerged as a distinct and consistent theme across public workshops, stakeholder meetings, and survey results. Participants emphasized inclusive design for people with

disabilities, multilingual wayfinding, safety for families, and equitable access to recreation and transportation.

The March 2026 Plan elevates accessibility as a foundational design principle. Updates include:

- ▶ Inclusive trail design accommodating multiple user types
- ▶ Multilingual signage and interpretive elements
- ▶ Consideration of adaptive mobility equipment in remote segments
- ▶ Amenity and policy recommendations supporting the safe use of power-driven mobility devices

Accessibility is no longer framed solely as a feature; it is integrated into the Trail Use and Design Guide and operations planning.

PUBLIC SAFETY, EMERGENCY RESPONSE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Emergency access, wildfire risk, encampments, and dumping were among the most frequently cited safety and nuisance concerns. In response, the updated Plan outlines:

- ▶ A regionally coordinated mile marker and emergency response system
- ▶ Potential solar-powered call boxes in remote areas
- ▶ Recommendation for Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with law enforcement and first responders
- ▶ Additional wildlife preparedness and vegetation management strategies
- ▶ Environmental restoration commitments, including identifying dedicated funding for restoration projects in the Eel River Canyon, and environmental compliance review

These updates clarify how safety and environmental protection will be integrated into both design and operations.

EVOLVED ROLE OF THE GRTA: CLEARER STAFF ROLES AND IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

A recurring question across engagement efforts was: Who will build, manage, and maintain the trail, and how will it be funded?

The March 2026 update provides greater clarity regarding the Great Redwood Trail Agency's role. The Plan more clearly defines:

- ▶ GRTA's coordination responsibilities with local jurisdictions, tribes, and emergency services
- ▶ Operations and maintenance frameworks involving regional and local partners
- ▶ Staff responsibilities related to permitting, safety, restoration, tribal coordination, and long-term management

This represents a shift from high-level vision toward operational clarity, defined partnerships, and implementable governance structures.

Collectively, the revisions demonstrate that tribal and community engagement meaningfully shaped the Master Plan. Public input strengthened stewardship commitments, refined backcountry management through a broadened permit system recommendation, clarified agricultural interface strategies, elevated accessibility, enhanced safety and restoration planning, and clarified the GRTA's leadership and implementation role.



Great Redwood Trail corridor south of Willits

