

COUNTY OF NEVADA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Heidi Hall, 1st District
Edward C. Scofield, 2nd District
Chair Dan Miller, 3rd District
Vice-Chair Susan E. Hoek, 4th District
Hardy Bullock, 5th District

Julie Patterson Hunter,
Clerk of the Board

NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: June 22, 2021
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Julie Patterson Hunter
SUBJECT: Resolution endorsing and certifying the Kentucky Ridge Mine Site, located at 10615 Lone Lobo Trail, Nevada City, CA 95959 (APN 052-060-018) as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 21-01.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached resolution requested by the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission to approve the designation of the Kentucky Ridge Mine Site, located at 10615 Lone Lobo Trail, Nevada City, CA 95959 (APN 052-060-018) as a Nevada County Historical Landmark.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: The Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission (NCHLC) submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors on March 19, 2021, requesting that the Board approve the designation of the Kentucky Ridge Mine Site as a Nevada County Historical Landmark. Earlier that same day, the NCHLC unanimously approved Craig Rohrsen's application for historical designation of the site with the designation of NEV 21-01. Please see Agenda Item SR 21-0247 for additional details.

Craig Rohrsen's May 7, 2021 application to officially designate the site provides details on its historic value and commemorates the enslaved people who worked there and eventually became free members of the local community. The Kentucky Ridge Mine – which likely spanned over a hundred acres on the southern downslope of Kentucky Ridge leading down to Deer Creek – was founded by Colonel William F. English (1807-1852), a former elected official, militia member and plantation owner from Florida. In late 1849, English commissioned the construction of a steamship in Philadelphia, the Commodore Stockton, to transport himself, other Southern planters and their enslaved people to California to mine for gold. He brought between 30 and 45 enslaved people, including women and children. At least four of his workers came with the understanding that they would work for 18 months in exchange for their freedom. They began mining the site in 1851. By numerous accounts, the mine was not efficiently run and was operated with crude methods and tools. On August 27, 1852, English was killed in a gun accident, resulting in his mining company's dissolution.

Some of the former workers stayed on the site to mine for themselves, but many of them migrated down to Grass Valley and settled in the Boston Ravine area. Many of the former slaves went on to become active members of the community, practicing trades and raising families. The husband of one of the former slaves, Isaac Sanks, also a freed Black man, became a religious leader, businessman and newspaper reporter who helped Black Americans gain the right to serve on juries

and the right to vote by 1870. He is believed to be the first Black man to run for public office in California when he ran for Grass Valley town trustee in 1870.

This historical landmark designation will help to raise awareness that this business venture relied on an enslaved workforce, as well as the fact many enslaved people in California had to purchase their own freedom. Colonel English was one of over a dozen slave owners in Nevada County at that time. Admirably, these enslaved people later became free, respected and trusted members of our early communities.

Kentucky Ridge Mine was located on the southern downslope of Kentucky Ridge leading down to Deer Creek, just west of Lone Lobo Trail. There is a rock foundation structure located downslope from the applicant's residence which may be a remnant of the original Chile Mill, a crude quartz mill that was used to process ore at the mine.

At the request of the NCHLC, local non-profit advocacy organization, Color Me Human, reviewed and provided comments on this historical designation.

The Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors on March 19, 2021 (and a revised application on May 7, 2021), requesting the Board of Supervisors approve the designation of the Kentucky Ridge Mine Site, and recommends that the Board of Supervisors designate this site as a Nevada County Historical Landmark.

Item Initiated by: Sarah Holyhead, Administrative Analyst II
Item Approved by: Julie Patterson Hunter, Clerk of the Board
Submittal Date: June 2, 2021