



**NEVADA  
COUNTY**  
CALIFORNIA

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Vice Chair Heidi Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
Edward C. Scofield, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Lisa Swarthout, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Susan Hoek, 4<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair Hardy Bullock, 5<sup>th</sup> District

Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**BOARD AGENDA MEMO**

---

**MEETING DATE:** July 9, 2024

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board

**SUBJECT:** Resolution designating the Arrastra, located in the Tahoe National Forest in the vicinity of Meadow Lake, as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 24-04

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the attached Resolution.

**FUNDING:** N/A

**BACKGROUND:** On March 15, 2024, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission (NCHLC) voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to designate the Arrastra, located in the Tahoe National Forest in the vicinity of Meadow Lake, as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 24-04. Specifically on March 11, 2024, Tahoe National Forest District Ranger, and representative of the current owner of the property on which the proposed landmark is located, Tom Parrack, applied to the NCHLC requesting the site of the Arrastra be considered and designated as a County historical landmark.

As outlined in the attached supporting documents, an arrastra, derived from the Spanish word “arrastar” meaning “to drag,” is a device for crushing ore, and a practical device used in California gold mines before the advent of stamp mills and then as a less expensive and often more practical alternative. The remains of this particular arrastra, which is owned by the U.S. Forest Service, are believed to be the only example of original Mexican or Chilean mining technology remaining in Nevada County and it remains on the site where it was originally used. In the late 1800s, there were about 100 arrastras at work in California, which were able to treat about 1-3 tons of ore per day, particularly in areas where only small quantities of high-grade ore were present for treatment. Many 49ers had no knowledge about or experience in mining for gold. That knowledge was supplied initially in part by miners from Mexico and Chile, which had gold and silver mines, and precipitated the reliance on gold mining technology such as the Mexican arrastra and the Chile mill.

The Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission has noted that no plaque or marker will be placed on site. As is noted within their application, the Historical

Landmarks Commission is mindful of the problems posed by vandalism for historical landmarks. In fact, the electronic edition of their landmark guide contains a protection message to remind the public, "As you visit our landmarks, remember they are part of our history and should not be tampered with. Many are on federal or state land and subject to rules such as a ban on metal detectors and a prohibition on removing anything you find from the site. If you discover any vandalism, please notify the publisher." As such, out of an abundance of caution for the historical significance of this arrastra, its exact location will remain confidential which allows for the continued protection of the arrastra while also allowing the historical significance of Mexican and Chilean miners in Nevada County to be highlighted to the public.

As such, there is no doubt that this arrastra is a historical landmark. Therefore, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution designating the Arrastra, located in the Tahoe National Forest in the vicinity of Meadow Lake, as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 24-04.

Initiated: Carissa Cyr, Administrative Analyst II

Approved: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board

Submittal Date: June 25, 2024