



Historic Highway 99 Association of California (HH99AC)

Project Name: Pine and Palm Sign and Preservation Project

Project Number: 03MAD21002

Project Lead: Michael Ballard – President, Historic Highway 99 Association of California

Interested Parties:

- Caltrans District 6 – Fresno, CA
- Southern Yosemite Visitors Bureau – Brooke Smith
- Fossil Discovery Center – Madera, CA

Project Background:

The Pine and Palm, a Deodar Cedar and Canary Island Palm, are located in the median of State Highway 99 (06-MAD-99-05.7) south of the city of Madera, CA, approximately 1.75 miles south of Ave 12, and 2.1 miles north of Ave 9. These trees have existed at this location since the 1920's and their exact origin is unknown at this time. In 2005, the "pine" fell in a storm and was replaced in 2007. In 2025, Caltrans plans to widen the highway to six-lanes and pave the median. Caltrans has proposed that new trees, 15 pines and 15 palms, be planted alongside the southbound lanes adjacent to the current location and possibly marking the median barrier with art depicting a pine and palm. No additional measures are planned by Caltrans at this time. The trees are set to be removed sometime in early 2026.

Project Description and Alternatives:

Three project alternatives were reviewed and studied for feasibility. Alt 1, or a variant of such, is our preferred option and the most feasible. **All plans subject to Caltrans approval and funding availability.**

Alt 1 (Preferred) Signs Only-

HH99AC to place two signs in each direction. One initial "Landmark Ahead" or "Point of Interest Ahead" sign in each direction and one sign in each direction marking the location with the legend "Pine and Palm, Halfway between Oregon and Mexico" with the latter flipped for the other direction. Signs could be paid for through donations with Caltrans or contractor posting them following completion of the South Madera Six-Lane Project. The signs should be large enough to be read at 65 mph, if possible.

Example signs:

- 45th Parallel signs along I-5 in Salem, OR near Exit 260. Located on RS on NB side, LS on SB side. Pole mounted. Green/White. "45th Parallel, Half Way Between The Equator And North Pole". Research is ongoing regarding placement and approval of these signs.

Existing trees to be relocated to a site TBD pending funding of relocation. Fossil Discovery Site has expressed interest as have some private parties. Location has potential for a California Historic Landmark status pending local support.

Work with Madera County to develop a pullout along Road 30 / Golden State Blvd (west side frontage road) to view the site.

Alt 1a: Minimal Alt 1-

Same as Alt 1 except only one sign placed in both directions. No "Landmark Ahead" or "Point of Interest" sign to be placed under this alternative.

Alt 2: Alt 1 Plus Turnout-

Same as Alt 1 with a safety pullout along SB 99 for travelers to stop at the trees (Southern Yosemite Visitors Bureau proposal). Pullout would require additional R/W and potential agreements with adjacent land owners. There is a residential building adjacent to the site which would be adversely affected by a southbound pullout and the Union Pacific RR is close to the NB lanes.

Alt 3: Alt 1 Plus Northbound Trees-

Same as Alt 1 with new trees planted on the northbound side of State Route 99. Issues with R/W and distance to railroad may be problematic.