

Will the view kill property values?

By [Ross Farrow](#)
News-Sentinel Staff Writer
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Within two weeks or so, up to 500 unused railroad cars will be parked indefinitely along the entire length of Kennefick Road in Acampo — all the way from the Mokelumne River to the Sacramento County line at Dry Creek.

Central California Traction, which owns the railroad line along Kennefick Road, has a surplus of rail cars, used to carry lumber, because of the economic slowdown, said Dave Buccolo, the company's general manager.

Four or five property owners on the east side of Kennefick who don't have a permit from the traction company face having their driveways blocked by the line of cars or paying an estimated \$10,000 for Central California Traction to build an asphalt crossing over the tracks and add signage, Buccolo said.

Several property owners with gravel driveways have permits, so they don't have to worry about having their driveways being blocked, he said.

"We are not going to block any of those driveways without talking to somebody there," Buccolo said.

However, at least one couple isn't sure whether they have a permit or not. Judy Stagno and Greg Rosato, who live on Kennefick Road south of

Jahant Road, said they hadn't heard about the train plans until they saw a two-car train going south along the tracks ripping, out trees and shrubs on Tuesday afternoon.

The train, known as an "extractor," has a huge, mechanical claw that grabs trees and rips them out.

An extractor, a machine used for removing vegetation, grinds down a tree in seconds Tuesday on the railroad tracks along Kennefick Road. (Brian Feulner/News-Sentinel)

"Property values are going down as it is," Stagno said. "Who's going to want to buy this house with this view?"

The couple, like others on Kennefick Road, will have a view of rail cars out their front window.

Stagno and Rosato said they didn't ask about a permit when they moved to their current residence 10 years ago because trains hadn't run on the tracks since September 1998.

Rosato added that transients, who occasionally walk along Kennefick Road, may end up living in the rail cars and commit crimes in what is now a quiet rural neighborhood.

"It's very upsetting," said Julia Priest, who lives on the west side of Kennefick Road and is a former News-Sentinel Panorama editor. "My worry is my property value while

this is going on. A pastoral country environment will now be essentially a railroad yard."

Rosato added, "The thing I don't understand is that they didn't send any notices to tell what they were doing."

Buccolo admits he wasn't sure how to contact residents affected by the plan, but added the tracks are the property of Central California Traction and not the homeowners.

Contact reporter [Ross Farrow](#) at rossf@lodinews.com.

Central California Traction at a Glance

Stockton-based Central California Traction provides freight service five days a week from Stockton to Pacific Coast Producers and other companies in Lodi's industrial area east of Highway 99. The traction line also goes west to the Port of Stockton.

The company was originally a second streetcar line for Stockton in 1905. Electronic passenger train service from Stockton to Lodi began in 1907 in competition with Southern Pacific Railroad. Three years later, the line reached Sacramento.

The traction line still has tracks going from Lodi north across the Mokelumne River via a 1905 concrete arch bridge. However, trains don't currently cross the Mokelumne.

Two-thirds of the traction company is owned by Union Pacific Railroad, while the remainder is owned by Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad.

The company can be reached at 466-6927.

Source: Central California Traction Co



Judy Stagno and Greg Rosato watch as an extractor, a machine used for removing vegetation, grinds down a tree in seconds Tuesday on the railroad tracks along Kennefick Road. Central California Traction plans to park 400 to 500 unused lumber railroad cars indefinitely on unused tracks there. (Brian Feulner/News-Sentinel)

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