



Board Agenda Item 50

DATE: January 28, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Sally Gomez, County Librarian
David Rodriguez, Chair, Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

SUBJECT: Historical Landmark - Whitmore Ferry

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve designation and placement of Whitmore Ferry on the County's Register of Centennial Places; and**
- 2. Authorize the Chairman to execute the certificate for a Centennial Place.**

Approval of these actions will allow the Whitmore Ferry to be placed on the County's Register of Centennial Places comprised of physical surroundings and localities used for special purposes with 100 years or more of activity in Fresno County. It would become the 353rd landmark on the local register. The Historic Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission recommends historic sites and structures to be listed on the Fresno County's List of Historic Places. Approval by the Board of Supervisors encourages preservation of our County's history.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board could choose to not approve these actions, which would result in the Whitmore Ferry not being added to the list of historical places at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions.

DISCUSSION:

The Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission recommends your Board approve the application for Whitmore Ferry to the County's List of Centennial Places.

Whitmore Ferry, commonly known as Kingston Crossing straddles the Fresno and Kings County line. The crossing on the Fresno County side is located in the Laton-Kingston Park, right outside of the town of Laton. It was in about 1854 that L.A. Whitmore established this ferry across the lower Kings River. Its official license was issued by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors on April 2, 1855. From 1854 to 1873, the Ferry served residents of Fresno County as a means of crossing the Kings River until the permanent bridge was completed. Although there is no longer evidence of Whitmore Ferry, there is a California Centennial Historical Marker located on the Kings County side.

The site holds significance for a number of reasons beyond its use for local residents. It was the first ferry crossing on the lower Kings River in the San Joaquin Valley. Between the years of 1858-1861 it was used by

the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. It was here that despite the short-lived service, stagecoaches could change horses and cross the river on route to and from San Francisco, linking communication between the West and East. It is around the Ferry that the town of Kingston quickly arose.

It was much later, in 1950 that the California Centennial Commission approved a marker for the Ferry on the Kings side of the river while both Fresno and Kings County applied separately in 1965 for funding to each create county parks on their respective sides of this location.

The Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission reviewed the application during its May 9, 2024 meeting and the Commission unanimously voted to recommend that Whitmore Ferry be added to the Fresno County's Register of Centennial Places.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Historical Landmark Certificate

CAO ANALYST:

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