



Mammoth Trails Regular Meeting Agenda

January 14, 2010

4–5:30 p.m.

Mammoth Lakes Library: Ellie Randol Reading Room

A. Call to Order: MLTPA Foundation President/CEO John Wentworth called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. at the Mammoth Lakes Library, 400 Sierra Park Rd., Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Also in attendance were Mammoth Trails Charter Members Alana Levin (High Sierra Triathlon Club); Phyllis Benham (Mammoth Nordic); Stacy Corless (Friends of the Inyo); John Armstrong (Eastside Velo); Forrest Cross (Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center); Malcolm Clark (Sierra Club); and Kathy Copeland (Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra); Town of Mammoth Lakes staff members Steve Speidel, Danna Stroud, and Stuart Brown; USFS staff member Mike Schlafmann; guests Clayton Mendel (395 Fat Tire Council) and Jennifer Girard (Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center); and MLTPA staff member Kim Stravers.

B. Additions to Agenda: None.

C. Special Updates

1. TOML Recreation Department Reorganization Update (Danna Stroud)

a. Mammoth Trails Discussion: Ms. Stroud recapped the formation of the Mammoth Region Recreation Council (MRRC) and its partners (USFS, TOML, Friends of the Inyo, MLTPA, and Mono County), noting that the process is being facilitated by Terry “Gooch” Ross and that the goal is to see if we can develop a regional recreation effort (*see attached flowchart*). This effort came into being because the Town had been considering a shift in its emphasis on, and the importance of, recreation. Due to jurisdictional issues and other stumbling blocks, the region-wide council idea was tabled, but it was identified through this process that the USFS needs its own association to take on capacity building, financial pass-through capabilities, and other work. Models for this type of organization exist throughout the U.S., such as the San Juan National Forest Association, the San Bernardino National Forest Association, and others; they all support their related government agencies through programming, fundraising, and other activities. This type of overarching organization doesn’t currently exist in the Eastern Sierra, though we do have more focused organizations with strong USFS relationships, such as the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association (ESIA), which runs bookstores up and down the Highway 395 corridor, and Friends of the Inyo (FOI), which supports programming, stewardship, and other activities.



There is interest in determining how to maximize efficiencies between these groups, but this discussion has been tabled for the moment.

Ms. Stroud went on to identify a second concern, which is how to redesign the way recreation is handled by the TOML. Currently they are responsible for core services, such as the Whitmore pool facility and karate classes, which are traditional municipal parks and planning programs found across the U.S. The TOML also is responsible for some interaction with public lands and recreation on those lands, which is important for residents as well as tourists. Currently the idea is being explored that these interests be separated, such that the TOML continues to handle core services but essentially divorces itself from recreation on public lands, while a second, nonprofit entity, tentatively being referred to as Mammoth Lakes Recreation (MLR), would become the eyes and ears and possible implementer of the Town's interests on public lands, engaging directly with the USFS to develop programming, management, and other services on an ongoing basis. Mammoth Lakes Housing is a model for this; they have a funding mechanism and a standing contractual relationship to the TOML, and in return they are able to extend the Town's capacity without increasing demands on TOML staff. This reorganization concept has been presented to the Tourism and Recreation Commission and the MRRC group and will go to Town Council at their regular meeting on January 20; Council will be asked for their opinions on this recommendation and for direction to staff and stakeholders on how to formalize what MLR would look like and how to establish its funding sources. Measure R is a potential funding source; alternatively or additionally, the group could be membership driven, or could pursue grants and business development. MLR would in return provide capacity to support projects such as the Sherwins Area Recreation Plan (SHARP), the Lakes Basin Special Study (LABSS), Mammoth Trails, and others. There is still a question about how to grow core services within the TOML; in response to this, partnership opportunities with Mono County are being explored, such as the formation of a special recreation district.

Ms. Stroud continued by explaining a parallel effort being undertaken by TOML staff, commissioners, and Council members to provide a recreation plan for the TOML. They have developed five strategies to elevate recreation's representation in and by the TOML (*see attachment*). Town Council will be asked at their



January 20 meeting to accept this recreation plan. Ms. Stroud briefly discussed the role the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) will play in this reorganization, noting that when Measure A monies are redistributed to this organization, a gap will be left in the existing recreation department in terms of funding existing staff positions. It has not yet been determined how much of the Measure A funding will go to the DMO once that transition is complete this summer, nor how the Tourism and Recreation Commission will operate at that point or how applications for Measure R funding will be handled.

Lastly, Ms. Stroud announced the possibility of an extension of the utility user's tax appearing on the June 2010 ballot. This tax has so far been used to pay down the debt resulting from the creation of Shady Rest Park and other facilities and could bring in \$700,000 to \$900,000 annually if extended. It is possible that this tax could be applied to recreation.

2. **Mammoth Region Recreation Council (MRRRC) Update (Danna Stroud & John Wentworth):** This item was discussed in item C1a.
3. **Future Projects**
 - a. **Challenge Cost-Share Agreement (TOML & USFS):** Mr. Schlafmann explained that this money, which comes from the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), was leveraged by the TOML's Measure R award and will be spent partly on completion of the Lake Mary Road Bike Path (LMRBP). The total cost of this trail is approximately \$7 million, \$5 million of which has already been spent on road construction. He noted that a lot of what is recommended in SHARP blends very nicely into existing plans for the path's completion. More infrastructure is needed in the Lakes Basin to complete the path experience, but that is a separate effort. The Mammoth Trails Map, Signage and Wayfinding Committee's (MSWC) efforts will tie into this project as well.
 - b. **Trail System Master Plan Signage and Wayfinding Implementation (John Wentworth):** Mr. Wentworth introduced this effort and referred the group to Chapter 5 of the Trail System Master Plan (TSMP), from which the design intent for this system came. Mr. Schlafmann announced that everything must be in for bid by March 1, and that the USFS has given itself two years to complete this project, though the actual federal deadline associated with the grant money is much longer. He noted that public meetings will be required of the signage contractor to develop themes, etc., for the interpretive portion of this effort, and that wayfinding and interpretive signage are separate projects. Mr. Speidel gave a brief



presentation to the group of the design intent, showing examples of how other entities have already been using these recommendations to influence their own signage and wayfinding projects, such as the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA). He shared illustrations of all 10 signage types that will come forward with this project, as well as a map of GIS points representing existing signage, trash cans, and other facilities. At least one segment of trail will feature each sign type in the array to represent the complete system and will be free of any other (i.e., existing) sign types. Mr. Speidel showed physical examples of signage pieces and explained how they are constructed, modified, and replaced. He noted that this design intent has been shared with the Tourism and Recreation Commission, which is supportive, as well as a subcommittee of the Planning Commission, who will share it with their fellow commission members at their next meeting with the expectation that the commission will in turn recommend this design intent to Town Council. Mr. Wentworth announced that the MSWC would reconvene between now and March 1 to review the current bid package and provide comments to the TOML. He directed interested persons to contact MLTPA for more information about participating in the MSWC.

- c. **Mono County Recreation Access Tool (MCRAT):** Mr. Wentworth described the MCRAT project, which is a joint venture between MLTPA and FOI to complete the first phase of a recreation inventory for Mono County. Monies from a previously awarded Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) grant to MLTPA are being used to put the initial workflow together, but the actual data collection will be funded by grants from Mono County and the Local Transportation Commission (LTC). Volunteers will be needed, and MLTPA will provide updates to Mammoth Trails as the program is developed.
- d. **Trail System Master Plan CEQA:** Mr. Wentworth announced that the SNC grant to the TOML to complete the environmental analysis on the TSMP and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been unfrozen. Ms. Stroud noted that there's a Request for Proposals (RFP) out for consultants to do the work. The Tourism and Recreation Commission will be making recommendations to Town Council on February 17 about accepting non-CEQA dependent portions of the plan so that work such as the signage and wayfinding program can continue.
- e. **Lakes Basin Special Study (LABSS):** Mr. Wentworth noted that this effort is also being funded by the SNC, but through a separate



OSV community, and that they had taped footage of Mammoth Nordic explaining how to get a map, where to park, etc., for a Shady Rest PSA. Additional PSAs covering OSV usage and dog policy are planned for the future. Mr. Schlafmann noted that there will be opportunity next summer to make improvements to the new staging area.

a. **OSV Parking:** This item was covered in item C9.

b. **Nordic Staging:** This item was covered in item C9.

10. Summer of Stewardship 2010 (John Wentworth & Stacy Corless): Mr. Wentworth stated that FOI and MLTPA are prepping their application to the National Forest Foundation (NFF) for SOS 2010, noting that they desire to expand the program this summer. He added that they will be contacting Mammoth Trails in the future regarding member participation, leveraging, business partners, and other matters. Mr. Schlafmann requested that the next meeting agenda contain an item regarding a program overview. Mr. Wentworth added that the SOS 2010 could include demolition of identified signage if requested, to assist with the signage and wayfinding effort discussed earlier in the meeting.

11. Lake Mary Road Bike Path/Wharlis Ski Trail at Tamarack: Mr. Wentworth explained that the LMRBP bridge is causing interference with grooming of the cross-country ski trails. Ms. Girard shared that she had met with John Milne and Peter Bernasconi of the TOML as a follow-up to a pre-winter discussion, and that she was able to demonstrate how Tamarack interacts with the LMRBP project and how it is currently problematic. They discussed potential improvements.

D. Organizational Items

1. Approval of December 17, 2009 Minutes (Kim Stravers): The minutes were accepted by consensus as written.

2. Mammoth Trails Event-Planning Calendar Update (Kim Stravers & Clayton Mendel): Ms. Stravers announced that a calendar system had been put into place and that the goal is to print copies to share with the group before each meeting.

3. Data Development Update (Chuck Megivern): As Mr. Megivern was unable to attend this meeting, this item was tabled.

a. **Additions to Geodatabase Since December Meeting:** See above.

b. **Outstanding Data Needs:** See above.

E. Member Events and Projects

1. Recent Events: None.

2. Upcoming Events: Ms. Corless announced that FOI will lead a ski tour through the Jeffrey Pine forest burn area north of June Lake on January 23, and that they will collaborate with Mammoth Nordic on February 20 to



lead a tour through the Shady Rest ski trails. Ms. Stroud shared that the TOML is trying to elevate exposure of the winter biathlon on March 28.

F. Announcements and Updates: None.

G. Requests for Future Agenda Items: None.

H. Next Meeting: Thursday, February 18, 2010, 4–5:30 p.m., Mammoth Lakes Library Ellie Randol Reading Room

I. Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Wentworth at 6:04 p.m.