



January 27, 2015

Mr. Randy Moore
Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region
U.S. Forest Service
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592

Dear Randy,

The Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative (ESRC) was established with the general purpose of enhancing regional recreation opportunities through focused engagement and collaboration with the stakeholders and gateway communities of the Eastern Sierra. The USFS "Framework for Sustainable Recreation" was an inspirational document for the ESRC, and while recreation is a significant driver of the Eastern Sierra's economic and social vitality, implementation of the USFS "Framework for Sustainable Recreation" offers National Forests across the country with opportunities to leverage untapped capacities in pursuit of all aspects of the diverse USFS mission, from recreation and rural economic development to the ecological restoration and maintenance of the health, beauty, and resilience of National Forests and Grasslands.

In support of the Inyo National Forest Management Plan Revision process, ESRC convened diverse recreation enthusiasts for a series of professionally facilitated public meetings producing an "ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy" for consideration by the U.S. Forest Service. The "ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy" and the "ESRC Recreation Values, Principles, and Guidelines" have been finalized and are attached for your review and consideration. We are also including a copy of the USFS "Framework for Sustainable Recreation", as the efforts of the ESRC cannot be considered complete without consideration of this document.

On behalf of over seventy individuals who drafted the "ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy" and the "ESRC Recreation Values, Principles, and Guidelines" that have informed the ESRC's efforts, we request that you consider the following:

1. A reasonable extension of the release date of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the accompanying Draft Alternatives sufficient to allow staffs of Region 5 and the three early adopter forests the opportunity to actively engage stakeholders to integrate the USFS "Framework for Sustainable Recreation" into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the accompanying Draft Alternatives. The USFS "Framework for Sustainable Recreation" only increases in relevance with today's "facts on the ground," and because it proactively anticipates future conditions for public lands and the USFS, the ESRC recommends that the USFS "Framework for Sustainable Recreation" be strategically



integrated into the Inyo NF forest management plan decision along with management plan decisions for the Sierra and Sequoia NFs.

2. A reasonable extension of the release date of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the accompanying Draft Alternatives sufficient to allow staffs of Region 5 and the three early adopter forests opportunities to actively engage with the ESRC and the “ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy” in order to integrate recreation perspectives into the draft alternatives. The “ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy” has been intentionally drafted per the requirements of the “2012 Planning Rule”, offering management-level concepts for USFS consideration. The Travel Management Plan decision on the Inyo National Forest is a regional illustration of the value of community-based collaborative efforts, and it would appear that the “2012 Planning Rule” was crafted with these types of outcomes in mind. The collaborative incorporation of appropriate elements of the “ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy”, along with the USFS “Framework for Sustainable Recreation”, is a strategic opportunity identified by the ESRC because it illustrates a symbiotic relationship between recreation and conservation which is directly consistent with the intent of contemporary USFS planning efforts
3. The national implications of Region 5 collaborative engagement with its “early adopter” forests which may serve as a model for collaboration for those forests that have yet to begin their forest plan revision efforts. The “2012 Planning Rule” requires robust collaborative engagement, and the opportunity for R5 and the three early adopter forests to engage with citizen generated collaborative efforts offers a scalable model for engaging diverse interests and stakeholders for regional and national planning efforts.

The “2012 Planning Rule” and the designation of the Inyo, Sierra and Sequoia National Forests as “early adopter forests” advances the USFS’ strategic interests by codifying opportunities for effective collaboration and thereby engaging a responsible public on behalf of their public lands. On behalf of the engaged public participants of the ESRC, we thank you for the opportunity to share their insights and encourage you to allow a reasonable window of time to fully take advantage of the opportunities that are inherent in the USFS “Framework for Sustainable Recreation” and the “ESRC Proposed Recreation Strategy”.

On behalf of the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative –

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Town Council
Town of Mammoth Lakes

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Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative Proposed Recreation Strategy

Prepared in Support of the
Inyo National Forest Management Plan Revision

January 26, 2015

<http://eastsierrarec.org>

<http://mltpa.org/advocacy/esrc-public-meeting-information>



Contents

Recreation Strategy Summary	3
How To Review This Recreation Strategy	5
ESRC Value = Stewardship and Partnership.....	6
ESRC Value = Diverse Use and Experiences	8
ESRC Value = Resource Protection.....	11
ESRC Value = Communication Infrastructure	13
ESRC Value = Healthy and Sustainable	16
ESRC Value = Access for All	18
Project Level Input Received From Stakeholders	20
ESRC Recreation Values, Principles, and Guidelines.....	21

Recreation Strategy Summary

The purpose of the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative has been to provide a series of public forums for gathering community input and guidance on how the Inyo National Forest (INF) might best foster “Recreation” through its Management Plan. The resulting document is a Recreation Strategy intended to address the range of management issues required for forest plan revision with a “recreation lens” perspective.

The ESRC process invited broad stakeholder participation and collaboration through five public meetings engaging residents from nine INF and Eastern Sierra “Gateway Communities” along the Hwy 395 corridor and numerous institutional, government, conservation, and recreation stakeholder groups.

The ESRC emphasized “Re-Creation” (restoration to health) as an organizing principle linked to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Vision statement: *“Renewing Body and Spirit, Inspiring Passion for the Land.”* Inspired by the USFS publication *“A Framework for Sustainable Recreation”*, the ESRC developed a community consensus at the first meeting around a set of clear Recreation Values, Principles, and Guidelines and applied these Values to all planning activities that followed:

The ESRC Recreation Values:

- Stewardship and Partnership
- Diverse Use and Experiences
- Resource Protection
- Communication Infrastructure
- Healthy and Sustainable
- Access for All

“The key to getting lots of strangers to work together is not to create an endless stream of new laws or institutions but to create a set of shared values. Laws are something you merely obey. Values are something you feel.” ~ Edward Slingerland

The Recreation Strategy outlined in this document conforms to the USFS 2012 Planning Rule by outlining extensive community input in the format of Desired Conditions > Objectives > Standards > and Guidelines. The Desired Conditions are further clustered into the ESRC Recreation Values Framework. Forty-eight Management Level Desired Conditions and three at the Project Level are detailed in this report.

Recurring themes for ESRC stakeholders enumerated in the strategy document include:

- Recreation values as Management Plan guiding principles
- Activating public land stewardship via partnerships with gateway communities and recreation user groups
- Recognizing and enhancing the symbiosis between conservation and recreation
- Utilizing volunteer efforts by community members to expand INF management capacity
- Anticipating and resolving user conflicts through active and effective collaboration

How to Review This Recreation Strategy

The following ESRC Meetings were conducted to craft the content for this Recreation Strategy:

- ESRC Values, Principles, and Guidelines Developed Via Consensus Workshop Method at the ESRC Kickoff Meeting September 14, 2014
- Desired Conditions Originally Derived from Stakeholder Input at the ESRC Gateway Community Meetings Conducted October 28 and 30, 2014
- Draft Strategy Aligned to the 2012 Planning Rule Compiled from Stakeholder Input at the November 12, 2014 ESRC Public Meeting
- Final Draft Compiled with Stakeholder Input at the January 14, 2015 ESRC Meeting

This document has been formatted to focus on Management Plan level recreation strategy components based upon public input and defined by the 2012 Planning rule as follows:

Management Level: Guide future project and activity decision making. The plan must indicate whether specific plan components apply to the entire plan area, to specific management areas or geographic areas, or to other areas as identified in the plan. Every plan must include the following plan components: Desired Conditions, Objectives, Standards, Guidelines, Suitability of Lands.

Several Project Level components are also reported on page 20 of this document:

Project Level: An organized effort to achieve an outcome on National Forest Service lands identified by location, tasks, outputs, effects, times, and responsibilities for execution.

Overall this framework provides an organized summary of input offered by community members to the ESRC Recreation Strategy. The summary is provided as a series of tables sequentially representing ESRC Values as the organizing framework together with Inyo National Forest planning elements (Desired Conditions, Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines). The Desired Conditions were derived from public input supplied at the ESRC Gateway Community meetings held October 28 and 30, 2014.

For each Desired Condition members of the public were asked to outline Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines during the ESRC meetings conducted Wednesday, November 12, 2014 and Wednesday January 14, 2015 at Cerro Coso Community College in Bishop.

This report was organized and prepared by the ESRC Leadership Team carefully preserving the original contributions of community members throughout the strategy framework.

ESRC Value = Stewardship and Partnership

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
1. Community Steward Programs	Establish community financed interpretive programs to educate public about ecology, history, LNT, culture of an area	Assign appropriate staff person to facilitate agreements with INF to provide volunteers	Interpretive staff either paid or provided by volunteers
2. Forest Service collaboration with community groups	-INF will actively collaborate with community groups to address management and recreation goals -INF should also collaborate with tribal leadership as to management and location of sacred land and burial sites	Partnerships should include a broad variety of groups to represent the diversity of uses and interests on the forest	The INF and community groups will have established partnership structures to facilitate communication
3. Repair trails and bridges with community stewardship as appropriate	Engage more partners for front country & backcountry trail repair and maintenance by doubling MOU's in the next 5 years	Create outreach program to engage partners – clearly communicate project guidelines	Identify and publish/ promote projects that could be implemented by partners
4. Stewardship opportunities for visitors and residents	-Expand on the ground stewardship capacity through establishment of local stewardship groups in each “gateway community” -Provide 20 stewardship projects for out of town groups per year	Ensure projects occur in each community and addresses more than one “use”	-Streamline and prioritize facilitation of local and regional groups stewardship project requests -Where possible provide free or low cost facilities for stewardship groups (e.g. campground)
5. Improve partnerships and their ability to work on forest	INF hires or designates a coordinator specifically to work with partnership groups	INF being proactive in seeking out partnership objectives	Develop with partners a volunteer stewardship corps

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
6. Volunteer- stewardship and interpretation	Within 2 years of plan implementation fund a staff or a volunteer coordinator (VC)	VC will develop a collaborative volunteer strategy that supports stewardship and interpretive plan components	-Should incorporate all gateway communities -Facilitate diverse user groups to identify “good fits” for stewardship and interpretive programs/ projects
7. Improve work with permitted outfitters to monitor and manage resources	Within 3 year permitted outfitters will actively contribute to monitoring resources and restoration as needed by the agency through a standardized and timely system of reporting.	Permitted outfitters and INF will collaborate to create a system of reporting that meets INF needs and does not put undue burden on the permitted outfitters.	-Both parties work together to meet the resource objectives mandated to the INF and foster economic health of permitted outfitters -Both parties will respectfully recognize restraints of the other (financial constraints of outfitters, policy constraints of INF, etc.)
8. Establish training of volunteers throughout region and across all activities	-Define volunteer roles to focus and expand training -Engage stewardship partners and create volunteer service agreements or MOU’s within 1 year of plan implementation -Volunteer coordinator acts as hub for related volunteer groups -Inventory current volunteer pool	-USFS developing strategy -Define best practices for each specific volunteer role -Establish risk management guidelines and publish	-Develop system of evaluation -When practical utilize existing practices and guidelines of stewardship groups -Facilitate volunteer participation & remove barriers for volunteers to engage on the ground) -Develop training curriculum -Recruit diverse pool of volunteers
9. Resolve user conflicts through building community capacity for collaborative engagement	-Develop citizen report system for identifying user conflicts -Use system to monitor conflicts -Create a long term plan for addressing user conflicts	-Mitigate user conflicts with input from community -respond to user conflicts in a timely manner	Provide separate trails for different uses where necessary to reduce conflicts

ESRC Value = Diverse Use and Experiences

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
<p>1. Keep open riding areas for OHV-OSV not restricted to trails</p> <p>a. Create OHV OSV access (back to town)</p> <p>b. Add OHV/Trail accesses</p>	<p>-Create a comprehensive plan for motorized (OHV & OSV) access to all communities/ portals by 2019</p> <p>-Maintain open riding for OSV recreation where consistent with other objectives</p>	<p>-Must avoid sensitive habitat, wetlands, riparian areas</p> <p>-Must work within existing guidelines and regulations</p>	<p>-Should have sufficient community/user group input</p> <p>-Should be groom-able in winter and provide for multiple types of OHV recreation</p> <p>-Should be compatible with other uses</p>
<p>2. Winter use of mountain bikes on groomed trails</p>	<p>Fat biking permitted on forest managed groomed trails within 2 years (non-ski area/ concessions)</p>	<p>Forest rule updated to allow fat biking and grooming bike specific trails</p>	<p>Promotion of way finding and multi-use etiquette</p>
<p>3. Expand quiet cross country ski opportunities</p>	<p>-Create a comprehensive winter non-motorized recreation plan on the Mammoth/ Mono North Zone Ranger District by 2019 including all areas</p> <p>- Groomed trails for cross country</p>	<p>-Must follow existing plans and regulations</p> <p>-Provide a reasonable balance of opportunity recognizing motorized use displaces non-motorized use</p>	<p>-Should connect to communities</p> <p>-Should identify partners/ funding sources</p> <p>-Should be compatible with other uses</p>
<p>4. Add more mountain biking trails (purpose built regional trails system)</p>	<p>-Organize trails stakeholders to inventory existing trails and plan future trails within 5 years</p> <p>-Build mountain bike trail network within special use permit areas</p>	<p>Trail maintenance priorities/ needs identified and resources assigned (stewardship partners organized and engaged as needed)</p>	<p>Consider all trail user needs – high quality user experience (maps, signs, skills progression, enforcement of compatible uses)</p>
<p>5. Ensure enough flexibility in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) to account for current, new, and emerging uses and site specific management</p>	<p>Conduct regular user surveys by engaging diverse community partners and recreation groups to quantify uses amount and types</p>	<p>Upgrade ROS as new uses emerge – Allow for site specific management and community engagement in maintenance and development (Minimum 5 year cycle to account for new use)</p>	<p>-Use regular user group outreach</p> <p>-promote partner stewardship of recreation resources</p> <p>-keep a positive conversation open with users</p> <p>-Build flexibility into the ROS</p>

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
6. Provide for existing grazing activities and open historic grazing lands	Maintain existing grazing rights through the planning period and open 5% until there is no more demand	Areas to be grazed and opened shall be evaluated and the prime areas shall be prioritized for opening	Monitor grazing activities for any potential resource damage and identify mitigation to address such issues
7. Spring skiing access throughout Inyo NF including Tioga Road	-Address growth in back-country skiing -Expand opportunities to meet demand by opening roads -Help fund ESAC -Adapt to climate change by opening roads sooner	Promote volunteer participation in avalanche forecasting condition reporting	-Beacon practice – provide signage and areas -Have interactive maps at locations
8. Activity viewing arbor glyphs and other cultural representation (one example is Lundy Canyon)	Identify existence and locations of areas of historical, archaeological, anthropological significance	Under professional guidance use local citizen groups who are familiar with the area	Establish interpretive signage
9. Expand Fishing Access a. Examples include fishing, canoe, alpine skiing, kayak, SUP at Saddlebag and fishing at Corning Ranch	-Partner with service and user groups to create and maintain trails to and around fishable waters -Create specific areas with necessary parking and access for kids and people with disabilities	Help create access for stocking trucks to evenly disperse trout throughout the waters	Partner with CA Fish and Wildlife for access to fishing regulations (not enough information for fishing)
10. Birding and wildlife viewing	Damaged and degraded habitats for watchable wildlife and plant species are identified and the agency restores a targeted percent of the highest priority habitats over a 10 year period	Upon recognition that a habitat is becoming degraded by specific actions or activities the agency will take immediate steps to modify/ terminate those activities to protect and restore the habitat	Forest Service should increase interpretive signage and educational resources to enhance the public wildlife viewing experience

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
11. Keep Dispersed Camping (universally across INF Area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Maintain widespread opportunity for dispersed camping - Improve management of dispersed camping (fire, trash...) -Make sure people understand appropriate dispersed camping etiquette; update informational brochures, signs, etc. -Complete inventory of dispersed camping areas every 5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educate on proper dispersed camping etiquette -Limited promotion of areas -Discourage inappropriate areas such as habitat, historic sites, etc. -Monitor heavily used recreation areas for dispersed camping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discourage inappropriate areas e.g. habitat, historic sites, etc. -Tiered guidelines based on use/area for time limits -Where dispersed camping is becoming over used create improved campgrounds

ESRC Value = Resource Protection

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
<p>1. Protect streams and wetlands and wilderness</p> <p>a. Establish better standards to protect streams and meadows</p> <p>b. Restoration of streams science based standards to maintain ecologically healthy landscapes</p>	<p>-Restore stocked streams, lakes, and work with other agencies such as the state that gives out stocking permits; Establish baseline to maintain riparian ecosystems</p> <p>-Develop standards within 5 years based on observation of effective and less effective means to accommodate recreation</p>	<p>Seasonal monitoring of stocked waterways and lakes to ensure ecological health and availability to all species</p> <p>-Maintain and enhance recreational access while working to achieve desired conditions</p>	<p>Restore streams with native fish and ecological health for all the avian, mammal, amphibian, reptile species</p> <p>-Experiment with recreational access to observe and improve means to achieve desired conditions</p>
<p>2. Glass Mountain and Dexter Canyon Roadless areas have wilderness values and characteristics</p>	<p>-Monitor these areas for wilderness values and characteristics on an annual basis within budgetary constraints</p> <p>-Maintain existing wilderness aspects identified</p> <p>-Establish non-motorized backcountry management areas as appropriate</p>	<p>-Prohibit road building and timber harvest</p> <p>-Hand treatment of fuels</p> <p>-Limit motorized use to existing routes</p> <p>-Manage wood collecting areas</p>	<p>-Review current grazing permits based upon range/ meadow monitoring</p> <p>-Allow for prescriptions that enhance wilderness values (wildlife, water quality)</p> <p>-Evaluate for wilderness designation</p>
<p>3. Improve protections for species that use riparian and meadow habitats</p>	<p>-Re-plant a lot more Native hard wood trees like Pine, Sycamore, and Oak to create more shade for wildlife</p> <p>-East of Crowley Lake sage grouse viewing and habitat restoration</p> <p>-Maintain high quality sage grouse habitat on the Inyo NF</p> <p>-Enhance Rush Creek habitat for Willow Flycatcher and other</p>	<p>Monitor and record status of sensitive and endangered species</p>	<p>When recreation is in conflict with sensitive species rule in favor of the species</p> <p>Note: Owens Valley has an over-abundance of cottonwood trees (this needs to change)</p>

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> riparian species -Restore riparian areas to improve habitat -Protect and restore the Yellow Legged Mountain Frog habitat -Manage post fire forest to maximize black backed woodpecker populations 		
4. Improve protection of high mountain meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Desired conditions for meadows should be written for specific meadow typology based upon best available science -To protect rare plant communities plant impact surveys will be conducted prior to permission for the desired use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with agencies, universities, and community organizations (i.e. meadow experts) to develop a standard protocol for assessing meadow conditions -Measured by completing reports and following recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If the Desired meadow Condition is not met place mandatory use restrictions (e.g. recreation, grazing, etc.) and implement restoration practices and mandatory protocols -INF staff and volunteers can be used to facilitate the work
5. Protect Scenic, Ecological and Recreational Values	Maintain unimpaired vistas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protect scenic, ecological, and recreational values as Scenic Areas -Be sensitive to viewsapes when considering renewable energy projects -Have strong VQO's or SMS in new plan to protect our valued views 	
6. Boehler Canyon should be roadless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -(1 year) Review of science-based studies of effects of previous motorized activity on meadow in Boehler Canyon -Review need for Native American access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consult with Native Americans to determine their reasons for access to Boehler Canyon -INF should avoid future mitigation by banning access to motorized vehicles to protect 	The easily accessed meadows in Boehler Canyon are fine examples of Eastern Sierra riparian and meadow environments

ESRC Value = Communication Infrastructure

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
1. Establish reliable protocols for closing of public roads across all agencies	Contact all organizations by email, USPS, and posting on USPS public bulletin boards.		Check in with local tribal partners as not to interfere with any traditions or sacred lands or burial sites.
2. Improve non-motorized trails signage forest wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Restoration of Signs, Kiosks, Maps (examples include Shady rest, Saddlebag lake, Minaret vista) -Conduct forest wide trail inventory (review old trails inventory) -Restore information boards and trail signs -Upgrade kiosks with interactive QR codes technology -Expand non-motorized opportunities -Recycle roads as trails -Add cultural sites information (ranches, mines, Native American) to activity legend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Modernize and standardize sites -QR codes – more languages -QR codes – download maps -Promote appropriate use -Weather resistant signs -Improve quantity and quality of staging areas -Provide experience and difficulty signage in advance -Progress will be measured by completed reports -Recommendations for protection and closure of sensitive areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consistency signs -Kiosks as access points -Clear rules for access -Weather covers (snow) -MLTPA in is best example -Note South Tufa fee area on highway 395 signage (example) -Funding needs to be provided to be in compliance with Federal and State laws and county ordinances -To protect cultural resources which may be impacted by increased visitation surveys will be conducted by INF archeologists and trained volunteers
3. Communication needs to be in languages besides English; Many visitors do not speak/read English well	<p>Identify most common languages used and provide necessary information in handouts at trail-heads, campsites, etc. -(e.g. Spanish, Vietnamese, etc.). Make English clear and concise as possible for other user groups.</p>	<p>Translate existing front country information signs, campsite and safety information to the most commonly used languages other than English as determined by surveys and related data collection.</p>	<p>Expand to other languages or to translating handouts with cultural/historical information as well. Also use international symbols.</p>

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
4. Improve Portal kiosk signage to include natural and cultural history info	Identify locations and themes, work with partners to develop content, install 10 kiosks per year forest wide; ensure at least 4 themes (e.g. history, natural history, LNT...) addressed yearly	Prioritize installation/ repair of kiosks with ready funding and long term partners.	Restore and enhance existing signage before installing additional new signage at a given location.
5. Common information systems across all jurisdictions	-Within one year of INF plan adoption convene identified jurisdictions and partners to establish standards, timeframe, and process for adoption -Establish common language and graphic systems for recreation information	-Establish standards, protocols, and procedures for symbology -Region wide info distribution using technology -Standardize Road #'s on maps	Work within opportunities and constraints of federal USFS guidelines with appropriate outreach and inclusion of all appropriate partners including local jurisdictions, user groups, and public safety
6. Modify ROS maps to reflect winter recreation opportunity so "primitive" areas are accessible in winter too	-Better manage use to provide accessible opportunities for primitive recreation in winter -Acknowledge that some roaded areas are "primitive" in winter	Provide a balance of primitive and semi-primitive (motorized) recreation opportunities	
7. Better education to public on L-N-T (Leave No Trace)	-Train and deploy a team of volunteer rangers/ educators to educate users in the field with a priority on high impact areas -Request that users sign a L-N-T pledge when they pick up backcountry permits -Increase signage/ education at high impact trailheads	-When there is ample evidence that L-N-T practices are not being followed ranger/ volunteer patrols should be increased in that area -Ensure that backcountry permits address all aspects of L-N-T	-The agency should make L-N-T materials/ signage/ phone pp available to all users -Any digital 395 resources developed should include information on L-N-T

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
8. Re-classify backcountry skiing under the XC ski family/logo so that the logos work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visitor Centers communicate information about winter recreation opportunities to visitors -Access points are reviewed regularly to adapt signage to use patterns 	Adapt maps and trailhead signage to identify access points for backcountry skiing and snowboarding	Standardized signage for backcountry winter recreation is inventoried and maintained on an annual basis
9. Designate official snow play areas such as Deadman Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide accessible areas sufficient to meet demand -Locate in non-motorized areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Locate areas with safe run-outs -Parking safe distance from roadways - Install signage and information kiosks at sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved signage -Steer visitors to safe dispersed areas
10. Partner with capacity and skill-sets in contemporary technology to take advantage of the broadband opportunities offered by Digital 395 and other providers to enhance the visitor experience on public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leverage Digital 395 to bring high-capacity broadband circuits to INF offices for purposes of network and Internet to improve productivity and reduce cost -Provide free publicly accessible Wi-Fi networks at all Visitor Centers and Ranger Stations within the Inyo National Forest -Work to extend network and Internet circuits to kiosks and entrance stations where visitors can get additional information before entering public lands -Integrate public lands recreation, interpretive, way-finding, and associated experiences with contemporary technology to enhance public lands recreation experiences 	Establish project/program objectives along with clearly identified roles and responsibilities for the National Forest and its partners to ensure successful outcomes	Work within the opportunities and constraints identified for the USFS and its use of contemporary technology

ESRC Value = Healthy and Sustainable

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
1. Manage and monitor wilderness areas with wilderness rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have “circuit riding” wilderness rangers visit every major high use drainage frequently (e.g. Bishop Creek, Big Pine Creek, Rock Creek, Mammoth Basin, Pine Creek) -Wilderness Ranger budget used for broader purposes than Whitney trail 	More Ranger presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Embody LNT -Enforce Bear rules -Teaching Wilderness Ethics
2. Limit motorized impact in open areas to reduce OHV damage	Inyo County and Bishop Chamber working hard to promote more recreation and bring more tourists.	Work together to minimize duplicate efforts.	Agencies and groups collaborate to foster progress.
3. General – Improve access to recycling on forest service land	Identify and prioritize high/moderate use areas that lack recycling facilities.	Install paper, plastic, aluminum recycling containers (including propane recycling at campsites) in identified areas.	Expand to harder-to-reach areas.
4. Improve decaying infrastructure improve visitor experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Budget more money for Forest service -Update the Recreation Facility Analysis (2007?) within 1 year of plan implementation. -Increase private sector investment by 5% per year throughout planning period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prioritize high use and key access locations. Communicate with stakeholders the process for infrastructure improvements. -Require consideration of contracting out existing facilities/ programs and opening new areas and activities to private sector investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use the Recreation Facility Analysis to prioritize infrastructure improvements; build a timeline for facility repair and maintenance. -Consider incentives for the private sector to partner with non-profits and community organizations.

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
5. Damaged streams need restoration to support fishing and habitat	Identify at-risk degraded riparian habitats- restore 5% or 10 miles within 5 years of plan approval	-Restoration needs to accommodate reasonable recreational access, native species diversity and high water quality. -Manage grazing to achieve healthy riparian habitats.	Work with other agencies and conservation partners.
6. Mitigate loss of infrastructure trails, campground, roads, bridges, trail signs a. Maximize use of existing facilities for all seasons	-Inventory infrastructure conditions every 3 years -Restore or stabilize to prevent more than 10% loss per year -Improve 10% per year	Follow established maintenance standards	Prioritize by use; avoid peak use times and make maximum use of partnerships
7. More restroom facilities, trash pick-up, water for campers and RV'ers	-Safe and clean restrooms for visitors system-wide -Removal of materials that attract bears and disease carrying rodents -Provide access to safe/ potable water -Examples include restroom facilities at June Lake, Silver lake, Rush Creek and water at Grandview campground	USFS Standards including Federal, State, local laws and regulations	-Monitoring and evaluation of system wide facility use and current condition/ needs -Site visitor report cards -Volunteer site visits
8. Add and enhance the current INF system roads and trails	-Identify needs and opportunities for new trails for users and communities -Over the life of the plan increase USFS trail system by identified %	-Work with local community groups (RPACS, etc.) to enhance and maintain trails -Analysis of user created trails outside of system to incorporate or restore	-Adopt maps and signage for new system trails -Utilize partnerships with expertise on trails -Plan trails to ensure sustainability and habitat resilience of forest

ESRC Value = Access for All

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
1. Improve accessibility in all INF areas (disabled access)	A reasonable percentage of front country recreation areas are developed or improved to provide safe and enjoyable experiences for users with disabilities	Accessible infrastructure must be tailored to accommodate physical, visual, and cognitive disabilities	The appropriate percentage of accessible opportunities should be determined with consideration for local conditions by zone
2. Rebuild/ restore washed out bridges (e.g. the one above Convict Lake)	Restore and maintain bridges to allow for full use of existing trails -Inventory potential projects -Complete stated percentage of projects each year	-Completed project/ structure should last for (___?) years -Take into account increased severe weather events	-Structure should conform aesthetically to surrounding area -Maybe structure can be partially dismantled (floods, etc.) -When appropriate use non-forest service professionals & volunteers -Willing to explore new techniques
3. Encourage INF support regarding motorized recreation	-Open all original OHV parking by 2020 and 50% more trailheads for snowmobiles, dirt bikes, mountain bikes and keep them open -Allow for more motorized and wheeled access on Inyo trailheads	Open 90% of roads and trails every year up to and including 2020	Consider modifications to other standards to accommodate opening trails
4. More separation of motorized and self-powered – more separation of hikers and bicycles to protect natural soundscapes	Identify and prioritize trail conflicts; Use community input to develop multi-use and dedicated use trail designations (e.g. Lower Rock Creek Trail)	-Follow accepted policy and procedures -Separation of uses especially noise from solitude	Consider desires of all users; resolve conflicts to the highest satisfaction possible
5. More programs for children	Within the next few years increase collaboration with organizations (schools, non-profits, churches,	Maintain current budget allocated to “children’s programs” but refocus funding toward awareness	-Promote year round (not just summer/ spring) activities and use within budget constraints

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
	etc.) to disseminate more information concerning recreation opportunities in our national forests including hiking, fishing, camping, climbing, etc.	campaigns to reach more diverse groups of children vs. typical users	-Make the opportunities known
6. Improve multi-modal connections between and within the gateway communities and public lands a. Integrated non-motorized trails system	-Establish inventory of existing conditions for multi-modal connections -Establish inventory of identified needs for connectivity between gateway communities and associated public lands -Build multi-modal trails identified through the inventory of existing conditions and identified needs	-Multi-modal trails shall be usable in all seasons and conditions -Trails must conform with USFS standards for ROS and scenic character	-System of connectivity should be as efficient as possible -System of connectivity should be branded and identified as a "system" unto itself -Leverage capacity of gateway communities to identify existing conditions and opportunities
7. Improve winter snow use of trail system	-Identify recreation activities that will benefit from use of system trails in winter conditions -Identify system trails and facilities that could be used during winter -Assign and prioritize appropriate winter uses to their identified winter condition trails	-Activities must be derived from an upgraded ROS -Trail and road opportunities must be derived from the information of INF system roads and trails	Maximize the usability of INF system trails and roads across the widest variety of recreation opportunities and seasons
8. Re-evaluate closed areas to see if they can be used at a different intensity	-Better manage and educate about closures -Open new safe equivalent areas to replace lost opportunities from closures -Allow varying levels of use that are safe instead of closing off	-Ensure adequate safety and education at re-opened sites -Re-evaluate seasonal closures especially road and campground closures due to climate conditions -Re-evaluate existing signage after closures	-Educate users on the reasons for closures -Educate users on safer alternatives

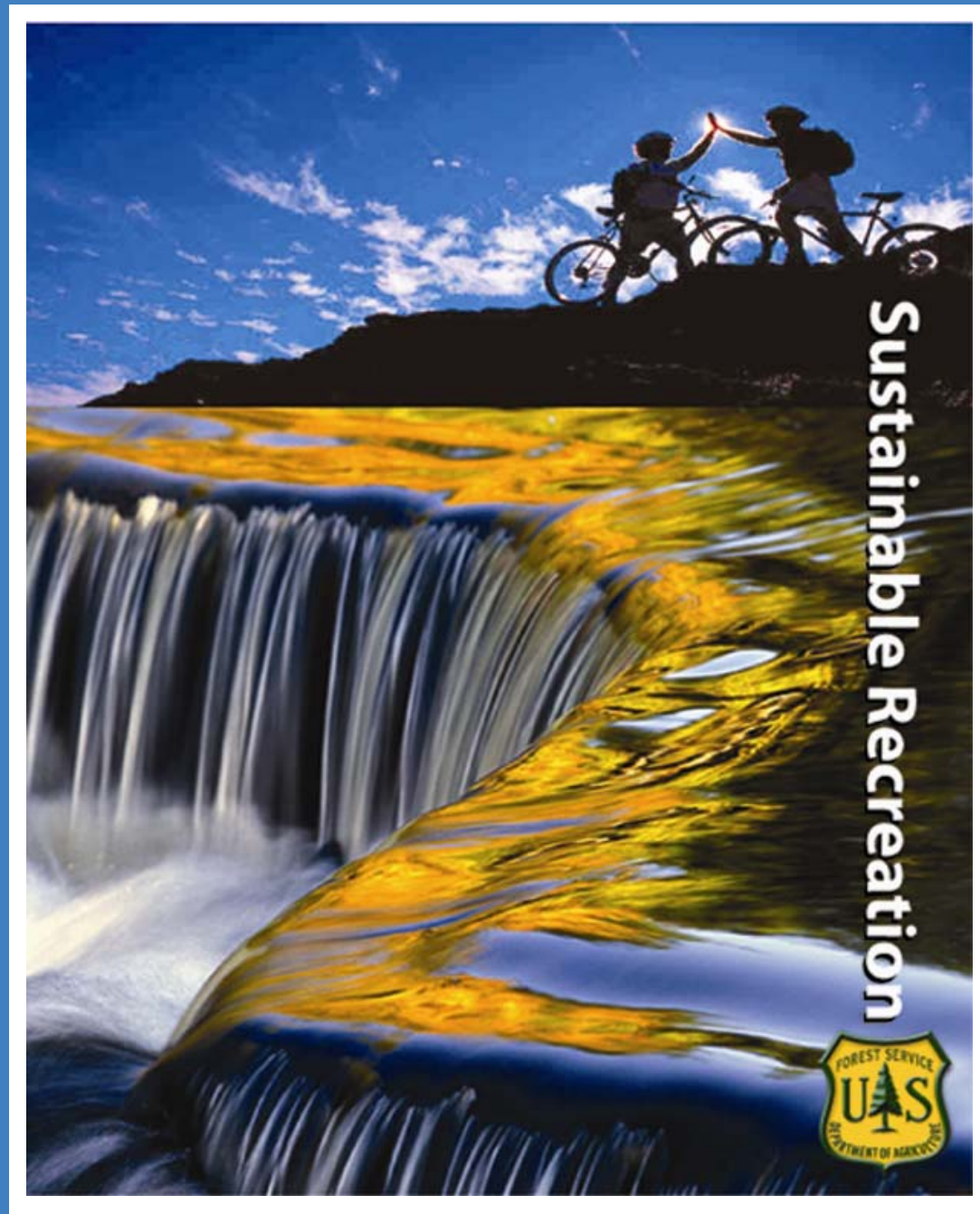
Project Level Input Received From Stakeholders

Desired Conditions	Objectives	Standards	Guidelines
Allow concerts, special events, festivals at Shady Rest Park	By 2020 Shady Rest Park will be Mammoth’s premiere year-round venue for outdoor special events, festivals, concerts, and sporting tourneys. It has lights, improved infrastructure, parking and numerous signed access points allowing everyone to enter the forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize Shady Rest Park as a one of a kind urban park set on Federal land and move willingly into the future -Mitigate the increased use -Partner with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and update MOU’s to help manage this park “for the greater good” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be a good neighbor (invite campers to enjoy the park with lights) -Brag to the rest of the country how Mammoth has a skate park on Federal land -Impose reasonable “lights out” standards during busy summer evenings -Restrict more above grade geothermal pipes
Work with the June Lake trails committee to make existing “non-legal” trails that connect the community to USFS trails Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -By 2017 identify trail routes for OHV/OSV and hiking to connect June Lake community to existing trail system on INF -Trails completed by 2019 	Use best available practice for trail construction and alignment	Consider multi-use trails when necessary or appropriate
Keep all uses open in Glass Mountains	Inventory all uses	Protect all resources and species	Follow other USFS guidelines for protection of species and resources

ESRC Recreation Values, Principles, and Guidelines

WHAT RECREATION VALUES, PRINCIPLES, OR GUIDELINES DO WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED IN THE INYO NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION?					
STEWARDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP	DIVERSE USE AND EXPERIENCES	RESOURCE PROTECTION	COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE	HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE	ACCESS FOR ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture Of Partnership and Citizen Stewardship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain Positive Passion of Users <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Stewardship of the Forest (and Vice Versa) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilitate Opportunities for Stewardship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designated Role for Communities and Groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Limited by Agency (USFS) Lack of Resources <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instill a Land Ethic to Engender Ownership and Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allowance for Broad Recreation Users & Types <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide for a Diversity of Experiences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respecting Others' Values & Differences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide for Primitive Recreation Opportunities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Balanced, Sustainable Opportunities for High Quality Recreation Experiences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Better Management of Wilderness and Front Country Alike <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protection of rare and Sensitive Plant and Animal Species & Habitat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manage the Forest to Avoid Catastrophic Wildfire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Common Sense Site Specific Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limit Night Lighting – Forests Should Be Dark <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recognize Natural Soundscapes as a Resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education on the Trail and Clear Signage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate Signage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maps Based on Type of Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Welcoming, Functioning, Well-Maintained Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caring, Ample, Professional USFS Staff That Fosters Problem Solving Through Creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy & Contiguous Habitat for Wildlife Dispersal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Negative Impact to Environment or Resources <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain and Preserve Health of Land, Plants, & Animals Through Sustainable Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Balance Recreation with Preservation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diverse, Accessible, Welcoming Language & Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "This Land Is Our Land" <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More Kids in the Forest

*Connecting People with America's Great Outdoors:
A Framework for Sustainable Recreation*



*United States Forest Service, USDA
Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources*

June 25, 2010

Connecting People with America's Great Outdoors: A Framework for Sustainable Recreation

"Renewing Body and Spirit, Inspiring Passion for the Land"

"Perhaps the rebuilding of the body and spirit is the greatest service derivable from our forests, for what worth are material things if we lose the character and quality of people that are the soul of America."

Arthur Carhart

The National Forests and Grasslands provide the greatest diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities in the world, connecting people with nature in an unmatched variety of settings, activities and traditional beliefs. People hike, bike, ride horses, and drive off-highway vehicles. They picnic, camp, hunt, fish, enjoy recreational shooting and navigate waterways. They view wildlife and scenery, and explore historic places. They glide through powder at world class alpine resorts and challenge themselves on primitive cross-country ski or snowmobile routes.

Outdoor recreation is fun -- and so much more. It provides physical challenge, requires development of life-long skills, provokes interest and inquiry, and inspires wonder, respect and awe of the natural world. Recreation thereby contributes greatly to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of individuals, bonds family and friends, instills pride in their heritage, and provides economic benefits to communities, regions, and the nation. Indeed, outdoor recreation has become an essential part of American culture.

Outdoor recreation activities occur in many places across the American landscape, outside of the National Forest System. They take place in neighborhoods, undeveloped woodlots and streams, city parks, county open spaces, state lands, Indian Country and a vast array of federal lands. For many, unstructured play in such places is their introduction to the natural world, a beginning point for engaging in a healthy outdoor lifestyle.

In the same way, participation in recreational activities is the way that most Americans come to know their National Forests and Grasslands, making it an important portal for understanding their meaning, history, and relevance, and that of public lands as a whole.

A History of Innovation and Growth

In 1919, the Forest Service employed its first recreation professional, Arthur Carhart, a landscape architect. He was a true pioneer, contributing greatly to the development of the concepts or idea of wilderness and developing the first planned recreation facility through a partnership with the City of Pueblo, Colorado.

Since that time, Forest Service employees, guided by recreation professionals and researchers, have continued to advance the science and practice of outdoor recreation and land management with such innovations as the Scenery Management System, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, the National Forest Scenic Byway system, and the Limits of Acceptable Change management system.

Recently, the agency has developed more refined business practices to promote accountability and the optimal use of operations funding, capital investment, and partners' contributions. These have included Infra, Meaningful Measures, the National Visitor Use Monitoring system, and Recreation Facility Analysis. Additionally, the Built Environment Image Guide, accessibility guides, and new travel management regulations have been developed to improve the quality of settings and the range of opportunities for all Americans, and to respond to the threat of unmanaged recreation.

The last 90 years have prepared us well to respond to the challenges of today and the future ... but only if we continue the tradition of adapting, changing, and innovating. The coming decade leading to the centennial of Arthur Carhart's employment gives us an opportunity to build on that legacy as a foundation for the next century of excellence in Forest Service recreation management. We must now begin with a strong sense of urgency and a single minded determination to embrace the needed changes to achieve our mission.

Recreation Challenges Today

The **benefits** to American society that outdoor recreation provides **are needed more today than ever** before:

- America spends \$2 trillion dollars on crisis medical health care. Overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity are major risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. ***Physical activity is an integral part of a healthy lifestyle, and outdoor recreation is the natural solution – a disease prevention solution – and part of the nation's existing wellness infrastructure.***
- The economic base of many communities is shifting as industries consolidate and relocate, and service and experience businesses rely on outdoor recreation for their customers and as quality of life attractions for employees.
- Population growth and land development demand more environmental services from a decreasing and fragmented land base, yet people become less familiar with, and respectful of, natural landscapes and historic sites every year.
- The increasingly urbanized and technology focused American population, including children, is losing touch with the contributions of public lands to the basic resources that affect their lives. Americans sense of place and national identity can be enhanced by experiencing historic sites and landscapes that represent the abundant natural and cultural heritage of the nation.

At the same time, there are **unprecedented challenges** to providing quality recreation:

- Demographic shifts and lifestyle changes have greatly affected demand for recreation on National Forests and Grasslands. With 80% of our population living in cities, our country is the most urban it has ever been. For many, the only exposure to the natural environment is what they see on television and computer screens. Others find our existing recreation facilities and programs not in line with their cultural traditions.
- Growth of retiree communities and other population shifts have created population centers close to many public lands. This has resulted in many of our forests being

enjoyed as regional and municipal parks adding additional strain on visitor facilities, services, and natural settings.

- The condition of our recreation and heritage assets has steadily diminished, resulting in a ballooning backlog of maintenance needs for recreation facilities, trails, and roads.
- Unmanaged recreation has contributed to degraded recreation settings, damaged heritage sites, unacceptable resource impacts, and conflicts between users.
- National economic conditions and mounting financial demands underscore the inadequacy of traditional funding sources to meet growing needs, yet user fees and private sector involvement to deliver services remain controversial to some.

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## **A Framework for Sustainable Recreation**

The growing challenge of sustaining outdoor recreation opportunities requires a clear national vision and a bold strategy to meet the environmental, social, and economic needs of present and future generations. We can no longer manage as we have in the past. Any course we choose cannot depend solely on appropriated funding to meet our constituents' needs.

The strategy presented below will help us unite diverse interests, create and strengthen partnerships, focus scarce resources on mission-driven priorities, connect recreation benefits to communities, provide for changing urban populations, and most importantly, sustain and expand the benefits to America that quality recreation opportunities provide.

**The USDA Forest Service Mission:** *“To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”*

The agency mission, one of sustainability, provides the foundation for the Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer programs.

**Our Vision ... “Renewing Body and Spirit, Inspiring Passion for the Land”**

*We provide recreation on treasured lands that brings health and vitality to individuals and communities and showcases our country’s natural abundance. Recreation on the National Forests and Grasslands invokes feelings of connection to the natural world and inspires responsibility to care for it.*

**Guiding Principles for our mission and vision:**

- **Connecting people with their natural and cultural heritage** is a vital thread in the fabric of society. It contributes to the American identity and reminds people of the resources that sustain life – water, soil, food, and fiber. Moreover, **recreation is the portal** for understanding and caring for natural resources and public lands. It provides opportunities and motivation to advance from fun and attraction, through awareness, education and understanding, to a role of citizen stewardship – one of “giving back” and supporting sustained management of natural resources.

- **Recreational activity in the great outdoors promotes healthy lifestyles.** Combined with good nutrition, it contributes to improved physical, mental, and spiritual health, and a shift away from treating illness toward creating wellness.
- **Sustainability underlies all program decisions.** In order to sustain the benefits of outdoor recreation for present and future generations, the recreation program must address and work toward a sustainable balance among the three spheres of environmental, social, and economic conditions.
- **Community engagement is essential** for creating a sustainable recreation program. Our role is to serve as planners, facilitators, conveners, and collaborators, tapping the enormous energy and creativity of people in communities that care for and benefit from public lands, including both the private and public sectors.
- **National Forests and Grasslands are part of a larger landscape** that includes: other public lands; open spaces at the local, state, and federal level; tribal lands; working farms and ranches, and; towns and cities. Respecting and cultivating the relationships across all lands and communities is necessary to strengthen the health and vitality of each.
- **The Recreation program is integrated into the larger agency mission.** By working together with other program areas to integrate program goals and service delivery, we maximize our contribution by connecting programs, people, and landscapes. .

## Our Goals

Building on the foundation of the Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles, we will strive to:

- **Provide** a diverse range of quality natural and cultural resource based recreation opportunities in partnership with people and communities.
- **Protect** the natural, cultural, and scenic environment for present and future generations to enjoy.
- **Partner** with public and private recreation benefit providers that together we meet public needs and expectations.
- **Perform** and plan by implementing systems and processes to ensure: effective decisions, sound investments, and accountability; collaborative approaches to integrated solutions across the landscape; and enhanced professionalism of our workforce.

## Our Areas of Focus

***“The vast possibilities of our great future will become realities only if we make ourselves responsible for that future.” Gifford Pinchot***

By **focusing on the three spheres that frame sustainability** - environmental, social, and economic – the recreation program can significantly contribute to the agency’s overall mission. **In the most profound sense, we will not achieve the agency’s mission without sustainable recreation and tourism.** The following ten focus areas comprise high leverage actions that will help us achieve sustainable recreation programs on every national forest and grassland by 2019, the centennial of managed recreation in the Forest Service.

## **I. Restore and Adapt Recreation Settings**

- Through integrated research, analysis, planning, and quality design, we will restore the condition and function of our recreation facilities and settings, expanding and adapting them to reflect the diversity of cultures, abilities, family structure, and activities in our ever-changing society.
- Recreation settings that have been impacted by declining ecosystem health, wildfire, and inappropriate use will be restored to improve the quality of outdoor experiences. Unmanaged recreation will be resolved through a planned and properly designed network of roads, trails, and facilities, combined with educated citizen stewardship and partnerships, as well as field presence to provide quality recreation experiences while reducing the impacts of visitor use on the landscape.
- Focused acquisition of rights-of-way and conservation easements will enhance access to recreation settings while protecting the scenery and sense of place that make each recreation setting special.

## **II. Implement “Green” Operations**

- The recreation and tourism program will reduce its environmental footprint and serve as a model for our visitors and other providers by incorporating sustainable travel industry best practices; “green technology” for facility and trail construction; and environmental management systems in all aspects of our operations.
- We will interpret the connection between our agency mission and our green operations, as well as citizens’ roles in sustainability.
- We will share knowledge, skills, and best management practices among a broad network of practitioners, educators, and partners.

## **III. Enhance Communities**

We will develop and implement, a place-based recreation planning model using collaborative processes to work with communities and other outdoor recreation and tourism providers within our regional destination areas.

- Together with our communities and stakeholders, we will develop a common vision and define potential roles to sustain the economic and quality of life benefits of recreation and tourism assets within these destinations.
- Included will be shared infrastructure development, delivery of information, and provision of recreation services that addresses connections of urban areas and rural communities to the scenic attractions, historic places, and recreation opportunities of the National Forests and Grasslands.
- Community and state parks, other federal and tribal lands, and local open space lands will be evaluated for connections with National Forest System lands as well as for their own contributions, existing and potential, for meeting the outdoor recreation and tourism demands for the area.

Along with the communities and stakeholders, we will jointly identify economic development and investment options to carry out the common vision.

## **IV. Invest in Special Places**

The National Forest System designations include: 6 National Monuments, 19 National Recreation Areas, 11 National Scenic Areas, 6 National Scenic and Historic Trails, Grey Towers National Historic Site, and 22 National Historic Landmarks. These areas were designated by Congress to recognize their unique natural, scenic, or cultural resources and their outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation.

- We will make strategic investments and leverage existing and future external partnerships for additional resources and funding to help sustain and feature these high value treasured landscapes and sites.
- We will showcase these special places in multiple media (including our national reservation service) by emphasizing their recreational, educational, and tourism benefits to demonstrate premier natural resource based tourism and recreation management.
- We will evaluate other areas within the National Forest System that have outstanding recreational, scenic, historic, or other values of high attractiveness for designation and management as special areas.

## **V. Forge Strategic Partnerships**

Strategic partnerships are vital to providing sustainable recreation experiences.

- We will cultivate coalitions of recreation interest groups that will help provide recreational experiences, service activities, and environmental education for youth and adults that promote fitness, appreciation of nature and history, and citizen stewardship.
- We will seek opportunities to expand the demographic diversity of our recreation visitors by strengthening relationships with new partners and non-traditional users.
- We will streamline our partnership processes and increase our capacity to engage and support partners. These actions will contribute to the long term sustainability and relevance to society of natural and cultural landscapes.

## **VI. Promote Citizen Stewardship**

With over 173.4 million visitors to National Forests and Grasslands each year and an additional 300 million driving through, recreation provides an exceptional conduit not just for connecting people to nature – but for enhancing their understanding of their natural and cultural environment and catalyzing their participation in caring for it.

- We will cultivate the energy, enthusiasm, and skills of private and nonprofit sector partners and volunteers to provide services and connect people to the land.

We will inspire passion for the land and develop a lifelong commitment to caring for it through interpretive services programs and exhibits, conservation education, and outdoor ethics programs that strive to make personal connections to our resources resulting in stewardship.

## **VII. Know Our Visitors, Community Stakeholders, and Other Recreation Providers**

Increased recreation use and interest in history and the natural world demand that managers know their current and potential visitors to anticipate demand, foresee impacts, and take proactive management actions that create inviting recreation environments that instill respect for natural and cultural resources. To effectively position our recreation program within our market destination areas, we will need to utilize market research, visitor use information from a variety of sources, and continuous engagement of community stakeholders and regional recreation providers.

- We will continuously adapt our visitor use monitoring system and work closely with Research and Development to stay current with demographic shifts, changing values and demands, data sources, new technologies, and management tools.
- We will continuously seek to improve our community participation and collaboration skills using the latest research to build long lasting partnerships and working relationships to move together toward sustainable conditions.

### **VIII. Provide the Right Information**

Today, people expect credible, accurate, and effective information in seconds.

- We will invest in consolidating and improving our external recreation information systems with an emphasis on quality, consistency, accessibility and convenience.
- We will improve our capacity to use emerging social media technology to better connect with diverse users and cultures.
- An internal recreation managers' web toolbox will be developed and maintained as a first level resource for policy and process guidance. This toolbox will be designed for the employee to get current and specific information about all recreation programs to assist in day-to-day work.

### **IX. Develop a Sustainable Financial Foundation**

The Recreation program cannot deliver sustainable environmental, social, and economic conditions if it is not built upon a sustainable financial foundation. It is unlikely that appropriated funds will ever meet the total program need for providing excellent recreation opportunities while protecting the land. Program delivery will be balanced on a base of appropriated funds through expanded capacity by utilizing user fees, volunteers, private providers, and partners in the nonprofit sector.

- We will develop a holistic program analysis model to evaluate our infrastructure investments and program costs. Those costs will be considered alongside available resources such as appropriations, fee revenue, partnerships, volunteers, and other service provider options to seek a sustainable and integrated base for the program.
- Proposed new development investments and program improvements will be evaluated along with the capacity to sustain existing ones. The gap between program needs and available resources will be identified along with options for closing the gap.
- We will seek opportunities for further integration of programs, databases, processes, and funding with other associated resource staff areas such as: Heritage; Wilderness

and Wild & Scenic Rivers; Watershed, Fish, & Wildlife; Engineering; Conservation Education; and information management; among others.

## **X. Develop Our Workforce**

Our current organization, both in numbers and in expertise, is not well positioned to address this strategy. Capacity to respond to numerous partnership opportunities is limited, and field presence is minimal.

- In addition to the need to replenish, train, and develop the existing array of skills in our workforce, employee skills are needed to engage in collaborative planning processes with communities as well as to better build and administer partnerships and business relationships.
- We will recruit, retain, train, and develop needed skills and leverage our talented employees across the organization, transcending program and geographic boundaries.
- Our workforce will better represent the populations we serve.

## **Conclusion**

Despite changes in population and fluctuations in visitor patterns, it is obvious that outdoor recreation on the National Forests and Grasslands is a traditional part of the American way of life, and will remain so in the years ahead. There are numerous challenges to providing quality recreation experiences and tourism opportunities while protecting the land. But, through the strength of our partnerships and increased performance of all our employees and systems, we can meet these challenges of a sustainable future for the benefit of American society. The actions spelled out here will move us toward that meaningful goal, so please join us in:

***“Renewing Body & Spirit, Inspiring Passion for the Land”***