

Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Sector — Project Interview Summary
Sierra Region – Trail System

Representative Interviewed: **Dillon Osleger**
 Interviewed by: **John Wentworth**

1 Assets

Think about the natural assets — public lands, parks, trails, or other features — and the community assets — community facilities, airports, train stations, unique areas, and/or cultural events — that draw visitors to the region, and how the project connects to them. Then consider what kinds of investments, whether in staff capacity, coordination, or regional information sharing, the project would most benefit from to move forward.

Consider:

- What natural assets attract people to the region, and how does the project connect to them?
- What community assets attract and bring people to the region, and how does the project connect to them?
- What investments would most help the project advance?

Discussion Points

Opportunities:

- Natural Assets
 - Stanislaus, Inyo, Sierra, Sequoia national forests
 - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
 - Yosemite National Park
 - Natural assets fall into two complementary categories: **intrinsic value** (ecosystem services, wild environments) and **utilitarian value** (recreation opportunities) – the trail project draws on both
 - Recreation users seek **long, uninterrupted outdoor experiences** away from urban infrastructure
 - **The landscape itself is the equity**, with economic activity reverse-engineered from existing assets
- Community Assets and Regional Access
 - Rural Sierra communities represent a rare and largely undiscovered preservation of **folk art, Americana, and distinct local cultures**

Challenges:

- Historic maps of the Sierra Nevada and agreement documents stored at the USFS Region 5 facility in Vallejo are critical to Towns to Trails projects and are **at risk of disposal** following federal office closures; their loss would be irreplaceable



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Presenter

- Dillon Osleger

Jobs First Region

- Sierra Region

Catalyst

- Catalyst

Project Status

- Implementation Ready



Assets - Opportunities

- The landscape is the equity
- 5 U.S. Forests; 1 National Park
- Long, uninterrupted outdoor experiences
- Intrinsic Values & Utilitarian Values
- Sierra communities are the preservation of folk art, Americana, and distinct cultures

Policy & Regulations - *Opportunities*

- Explore Act and BOLT Act
- Proposition 4 and the California Trails Act
- Outdoors For All
- NEPA
- Recent Federal and State initiatives

Policy & Regulations - Challenges

- Advocacy support: Logging Executive Order
- California Wildlife Areas and bikes
- Tribes and “Fortress Conservation Models”
- Local topography and community context
- Prioritize Equity over Equality

Funding - Opportunities

- Upfront government investment shortens the timeline to private foundation funding
- Proposition 4 climate funding

Funding - Challenges

- Sustained operational funding
- Grants: \$5,000 to \$15,000 with deliverables
- Federal funding: BOLT Act designation
- Management funding: five-to-six-figures
- Digitize Forest Service maps and agreements

Data - Opportunities

- California leads the nation in rec output*
- Visitation data exists for forests and parks
- Good data available on rural communities outside forests and parks

Data - Challenges

- User behavior data is severely lacking: NVUM
- Collecting data on federal land = permits
- Paper records are vulnerable to loss
- Indigenous tribes lack capacity to share
- National Forest economic impact data stopped collection in early 2000's

Climate Change - *Opportunities*

- Urgency-driven demand

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Climate Change – Challenges

- Average temperatures have risen
- Storm patterns have become erratic
- Unpredictability disrupts visitor planning
- Affecting purchasing behavior
- Reduced visitor confidence
- Climate funding favors higher populations

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Workforce - Opportunities

- A sustained bell curve of economic activity
- The Sierra Nevada has trail builders
- Economic activity that stays in communities

Workforce - Challenges

- Capacity as a constraint for grant admin
- Land tenure complicates economic activity
- Large capital incursions are uncommon

Collaboratives - Opportunities

- Tribal relationships are cultural foundations
- Relationships consistently accelerate projects
- Early and ongoing inclusion is essential
- Collaboratives must receive funding
- Working groups are essential infrastructure for advancing projects

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Collaboratives - Challenges

- The complex land tenure web
- Federal, State, Sovereign Nations, Private
- Different timelines, priorities, and decision-making processes

Branding & Marketing - *Opportunities*

- The project tells a cohesive story
- The trail teaches geology, history, cultural history, and contemporary community life
- Visitors leave with stories more compelling and durable than the infrastructure alone
- Attach investments to a compelling story

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Branding & Marketing - *Challenges*

- No significant branding challenges identified

Thank You!

“Arts Nature Trails Constellation Project”

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