

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION & TOURISM INITIATIVE

PORTFOLIO OF PROJECTS

WITH ESSRP PROSPECTUS FOR FUTURE INVESTMENTS

**EASTERN
SIERRA
REGION**

Sustainable
Recreation Projects
on Behalf of the
Eastern Sierra Sustainable
Recreation Partnership

20/21



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Public lands in the United States hold the creation stories, burial grounds, and ceremonies of Indigenous people who were killed or forcibly removed from their ancestral homes during territorial acquisition.

Many tribes, comprised of different bands, continue to live in the Eastern Sierra region, caring for their native lands as they coexist with the ongoing impacts of colonization. Past or present tribes and bands associated with the region that this effort is aware of include, but are not limited to, the Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika'a, Mono/Monache, Nüümü (Paiute), Newe (Shoshone), Timbi-Sha, Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute, and Washoe.

Two Nüümü terms describe the region and provide important context to ideas offered in this Initiative. The first is Pamidu Toiyabe (Western Mountains), and the other, more widely known, place name is Payahuunadü (The Place Where Water Flows).

This acknowledgement is an invitation to all organizations, residents, and visitors to recognize the way this history has shaped the present as all parties work together in anticipation of a better future.

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION & TOURISM INITIATIVE

In spring 2019, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Governing Board demonstrated a pioneering commitment to rural California's outdoor recreation economy and natural resources by authorizing Proposition 68 funding for the Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative (SRTI), a project to benefit the Conservancy's Eastern sub-region, including Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties.



The Initiative supports the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership in its goals to, "... design, plan, implement, and report out projects to improve and maintain recreational opportunities as well as restore ecosystems to their natural resiliency and functions." The Initiative is composed of four tracks, or areas of focus, with specific deliverables: Regional Recreation Stakeholder Engagement; Climate Adaptation & Resilience Assessment; Connection to the Eastern Sierra Visitor Audience; and Project Development & Prioritization for Funding.

For more information: <https://mltpa.org/essrp/sustainable-recreation-and-tourism-project>

EASTERN SIERRA SUSTAINABLE RECREATION PARTNERSHIP

The Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) is a unique public/public partnership among local Eastern Sierra governments, state agencies, and federal agencies. Participating agencies include Alpine County, City of Bishop, Bureau of Land Management, CALTRANS District 9, Inyo County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, National Park Service, Inyo National Forest, Pacific Southwest Region (USFS Region 5), and the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Intermountain Region (USFS Region 4).



In 2021, through the efforts of the SRTI, the Partners identified common goals and established sustainable recreation funding strategies that will guide them for the next decade. The result of this work—the guiding document—is the "ESSRP Prospectus for Future Investments." (See page 6)

THE EASTERN SIERRA REGION

The Eastern Sierra is a high-desert landscape in California that shares a common border with the state of Nevada. Composed of three California counties (Alpine, Mono, and Inyo), the region is defined by the Sierra Nevada mountain range, the western terminus of the Northern Basin and Range.

More than 90% of the region's 17,148 square miles is managed by federal government agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. The principal owner of the region's private property, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, acquired more than 450 square miles of farm and ranchland in the early years of the 20th century to secure water rights for the City of Los Angeles. The remaining private property and gateway communities are dispersed across the region, home to a permanent population of about 35,000 residents.

Unparalleled opportunities for outdoor recreation have compelled visitation for many generations. The Eastern Sierra hosts both the highest peak and lowest valley in the 48 contiguous United States, as well as the oldest living thing on Earth. Annual visitor estimates range between 4 and 7 million, principally from Southern California, but from across the country and from around the globe as well. Visitation drives the region's recreation-based tourism economy and represents the primary challenge as well as the essential opportunity for achieving regional economic, social, and environmental sustainability.



ESSRP PROSPECTUS FOR FUTURE INVESTMENTS

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THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

In March 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act established the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to support major investments in recreation infrastructure, public lands access, and land and water conservation. Eastern Sierra federal land managers have already submitted many projects, several of which have been funded, for the first 3 years (2021-2023). Moving forward, federal partners will continue to submit projects for GAOA funding for the remaining years of the authorization. Generally, GAOA is the best "path" for SRTI project ideas to improve federally owned recreation infrastructure in the Eastern Sierra.

SRTI PORTFOLIO OF PROJECTS

The Sustainable Recreation & Tourism Initiative Portfolio of Projects is a diversified collection of eight developed and funding-ready projects identified through a collaborative approach and is representative of the ESSRP's first investments in a truly regional sustainable recreation strategy based on the "ESSRP Prospectus For Future Investments".

The final projects in the portfolio were prioritized and identified by the ESSRP with considerations for the following: feasibility of developed project implementation from the hundreds of ideas submitted by recreation stakeholders; the highest probability for funding success based on currently available funding opportunities (Summer and Fall of 2021); regional benefits; consistency with advancing climate resilience and adaptation as identified by "A Changing Climate: Vulnerability in California's Eastern Sierra" (<https://mltpa.org/essrp/sustainable-recreation-and-tourism-project/climate-resilience>); willingness of ESSRP partners to sponsor funding applications; and overall consistency with the "ESSRP Prospectus for Future Investment."

Publicly submitted project ideas and the public's subsequent scoring of these same ideas for "Stewardship", "Access", and "Benefits," were carefully reviewed and in many cases combined into one of the final developed projects. Stakeholders who submitted ideas will likely recognize elements of their original submissions in more than one of the final eight developed projects.

The full list of Recreation Stakeholder Project Ideas will continue to inform regional project development: <https://mltpa.org/essrp/sustainable-recreation-and-tourism-project/rec-stakeholders>

PROSPECTUS

FOR FUTURE INVESTMENTS 2021-2031



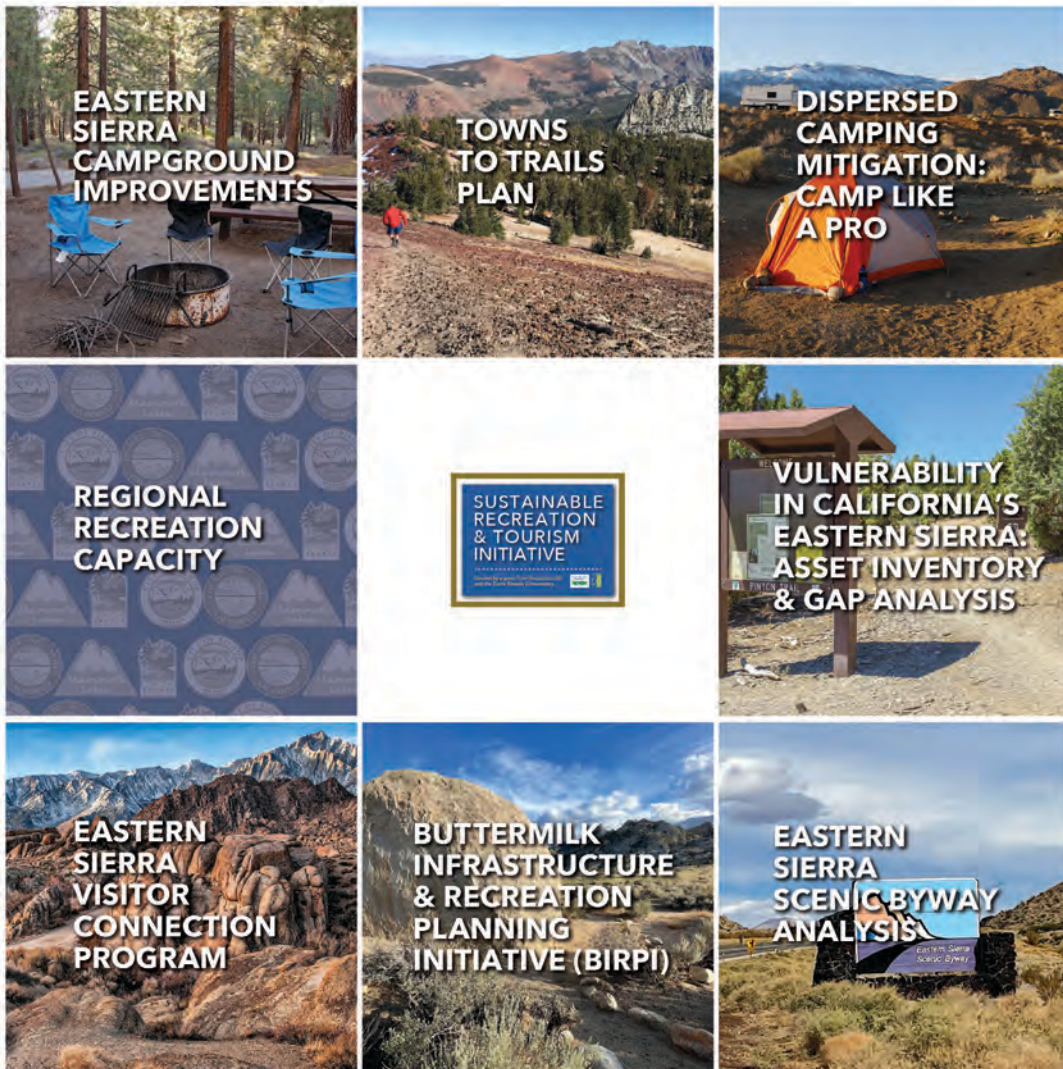
PROJECT SELECTION & IMPLEMENTATION GUIDES

FEASIBILITY FUNDING REQUIREMENTS	REGIONAL LEADERSHIP GUIDING PRINCIPLES	PILLARS "THAT WHICH WE SHALL ALWAYS DO"
<p>SELECTED PROJECTS SHOULD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing assets Reflect strategic alignment Ensure full cost recovery Support operational capacity Demonstrate public demand and support Address environmental / climate /economic sustainability 	<p>WE WILL COLLABORATIVELY PRIORITIZE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of what is there near and long term Shared goals across boundaries Shared responsibility for long term asset management Financial or match contribution from all partner agencies Meeting local needs in a regional context Protection of the region's natural and cultural resources Best investment(s) for equity, inclusivity, diversity 	<p>PROJECT SELECTION MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate within a cohesive local need and regional benefit approach Be driven by effective collaboration to achieve measurable results Manage visitor capacity to support responsible recreation Protect/Preserve public lands, including biological, and cultural resources

* Graphics elements courtesy of the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative Framework for Resilience

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION & TOURISM INITIATIVE

PORTFOLIO OF PROJECTS





EASTERN SIERRA CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Inyo National Forest was awarded Great American Outdoors Act funding to complete the technical drawings necessary for improvements to 22 campgrounds throughout the forest. To finance the improvements, Inyo NF and its partners developed a nationally directed, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-partnered business plan, with the support of an Innovative Finance for National Forests (IFNF) program grant and a second round of IFNF funding awarded in September of 2021 to create financing solutions. The business plan identified a range of costs for improvements between \$19 million and \$36 million, which could be filled by non-federal capital resources. As a regional authority, the ESCOG may be a key partner in the effort to finance campground improvements. However, the ESCOG will require the necessary resources to engage and represent regional interests in the financing effort, including the ability to provide independent financial analysis, the production of graphic renderings for engagement with infrastructure beneficiaries, and coordination of partnered efforts among beneficiaries.

FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments



ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO COMMUNITIES

INFRASTRUCTURE NEW/IMPROVEMENTS

REGIONAL RECREATION CAPACITY





TOWNS TO TRAILS PLAN

The Eastern Sierra Towns To Trails Plan will identify opportunities to connect Eastern Sierra communities to each other and to federal public lands throughout the region, from northern Alpine County to southern Inyo County. The planning process will engage the recreation capacities of Alpine, Inyo, and Mono counties, as well as land management partners in the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership, residents, and recreation stakeholders.

Modeled on the successful "Trails Master Plan for the Lost Sierra Region," developed by Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, the Towns To Trails Plan will inventory existing trail and trail support infrastructure, identify connectivity challenges, and produce a trails plan with recommended projects for environmental analysis and implementation along with plans for sustainability and maintenance. Eastern Sierra communities will benefit from additional recreation and alternative transportation opportunities.

FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments



ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO COMMUNITIES

INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

INFRASTRUCTURE NEW/IMPROVEMENTS





DISPERSED CAMPING MITIGATION: CAMP LIKE A PRO

In response to an unprecedented influx of dispersed camping activity in the summer of 2020 driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, and associated risks of human-caused wildfire, concerned citizens, land managers, business owners and elected officials came together to develop and implement "Camp Like A Pro" programs focused on education, enforcement, stewardship, and infrastructure. Funding for this project will build upon programs implemented in the summer of 2021:

- Expanded digital and analog outreach to dispersed camping enthusiasts;
- Expanded temporary and permanent waste management, including public restrooms and trash collection;
- Improved wayfinding and educational signage and kiosks;
- Reduced instances of human-caused wildfires by sharing fire-prevention information and enforcement;
- Continued investment in and building of a culture of stewardship and sustainable recreation in the dispersed camping community.



**ECOSYSTEM
STEWARDSHIP**

**VISITOR CONNECTION
& MANAGEMENT**

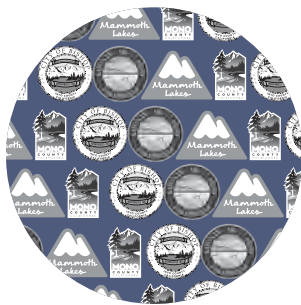
**INFRASTRUCTURE
MAINTENANCE**



FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

Mono County





REGIONAL RECREATION CAPACITY

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority (ESCOG) approved the ESCOG Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program (SREMP) in January of 2021. Through the SREMP and related regional agreements, the ESCOG intends to support the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP), submit funding applications on behalf of the region, and "...leverage its position as a regional entity to pursue funding opportunities that may not be accessible to other parties whose jurisdiction is limited to one specific national park, national forest, county, city, town, etc."* With recent announcements of unprecedented funding opportunities from the federal and state governments, this project will provide organizational capacity and institutional support to the ESCOG to seek and administer awarded funding opportunities for the Eastern Sierra while delivering tangible benefits to local communities.

*ESSRP Memorandum of Understanding



**ECONOMIC BENEFIT
TO COMMUNITIES**

**INFRASTRUCTURE
NEW/IMPROVEMENTS**

**REGIONAL
RECREATION CAPACITY**



FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

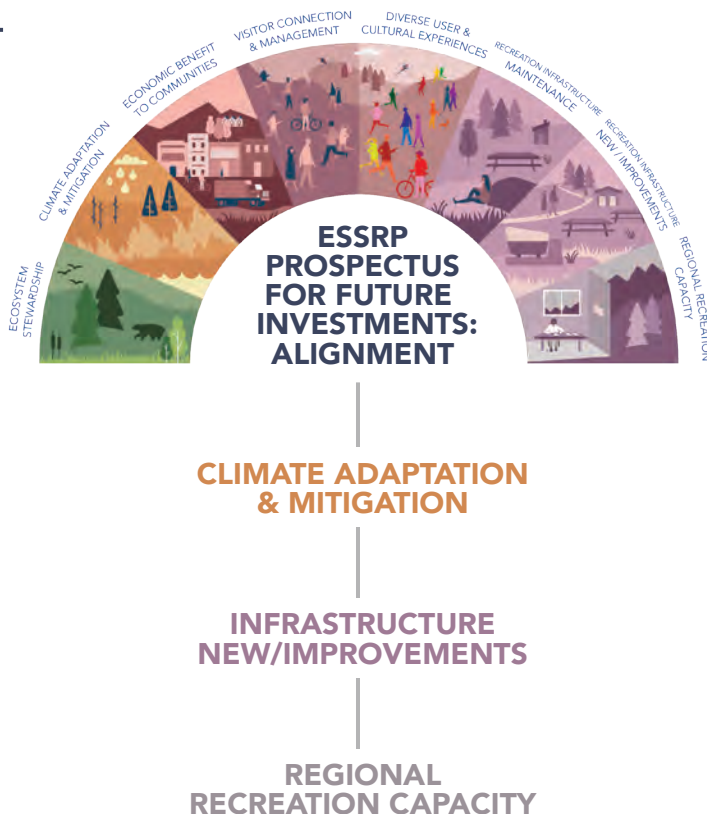
Eastern Sierra Council of Governments





VULNERABILITY IN CALIFORNIA'S EASTERN SIERRA: ASSET INVENTORY & GAP ANALYSIS

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments seeks to implement two recommended actions from the region's recently completed climate adaptation and resilience assessment, "A Changing Climate: Vulnerability in California's Eastern Sierra." Through a GIS-based asset inventory, the region will identify infrastructure in all jurisdictions that supports the region's recreation economy, such as visitor centers, campgrounds, water systems, and bathrooms. While all regional jurisdictions maintain GIS databases, data quality varies wildly, making it difficult to look at the region's recreation amenities systemically. With the infrastructure inventory complete, a gap analysis will identify on-the-ground infrastructure needs to meet the future demands of sustainable recreation given the anticipated effects of climate change and visitor audience growth.



FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments





VISITOR CONNECTION PROGRAM

The SRTI's Visitor Connection Working Group developed a strategy to connect with Eastern Sierra visitors throughout the region using messages of sustainable recreation and stewardship. The resulting Visitor Connection Program is a system for communicating with visitors and residents in-person, digitally, and with signage and kiosks. The program will:

- Identify and coordinate regional face-to-face communication opportunities;
- Build, develop, and maintain a regional website;
- Create turnkey content for digital outreach with social media assets, newsletters, and emails;
- Create a regional handbook with a training program for frontline employees;
- Coordinate signage and pop-up information kiosks;
- Develop a strategic messaging plan; and
- Research the visitation audience to maximize messaging efficacy.



ECOSYSTEM STEWARDSHIP

VISITOR CONNECTION & MANAGEMENT

REGIONAL RECREATION CAPACITY

FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments





BUTTERMILK INFRASTRUCTURE & RECREATION PLANNING INITIATIVE (BIRPI)

The Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative (BIRPI) will improve existing recreation infrastructure, create a focused recreation plan for the Buttermilk Bouldering Area, and develop a long-term conceptual recreation plan for the Buttermilk Project Area. The infrastructure and planning efforts will enhance the resilience of recreation amenities and natural resources in the Owens watershed.

In the Buttermilk Bouldering Area, the BIRPI will replace and/or install toilets to address the immediate needs of human sanitation. The collaborative planning effort will identify opportunities to develop a formalized system of trails, signage, kiosks, and durable soft surface parking.

In the Buttermilk Project Area, the long-term recreation planning effort will work with stakeholders to identify needs for future recreation improvements.

FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

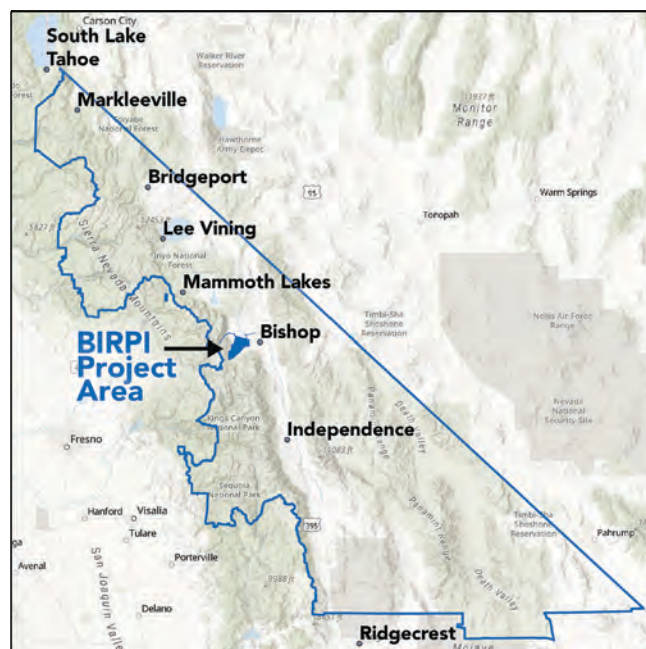
Eastern Sierra Council of Governments



**ECOSYSTEM
STEWARDSHIP**

**VISITOR CONNECTION
& MANAGEMENT**

**INFRASTRUCTURE
NEW/IMPROVEMENTS**





EASTERN SIERRA SCENIC BYWAY ANALYSIS

In the late 1990's, regional agencies and sponsors created the Eastern Sierra Scenic Byway, with interpretive signage along Highway 395 from Fossil Falls to Topaz Lake. Originally intended to have a lifespan of 25 years, the signs have become dated and damaged, and the accompanying brochure is no longer in distribution.

This project will review the complex jurisdictional and land tenure issues, inventory and photo document the current status of the existing signage, and identify which locations need structural improvements. The SRTI team will then present these findings, along with project options, to the ESSRP Partners to determine how best to address the future of the Eastern Sierra Scenic Byway.

FUNDING APPLICATION LEAD AGENCY:

TBD



**VISITOR CONNECTION
& MANAGEMENT**

**INFRASTRUCTURE
MAINTENANCE**

**INFRASTRUCTURE
NEW/IMPROVEMENTS**



SUSTAINABLE RECREATION & TOURISM INITIATIVE TEAM

HIGHBAR GLOBAL CONSULTING: RECREATION STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

HighBar Global is a consultancy specializing in Internationally Certified Mastery Professional Facilitation, Training, Leadership, Organizational, and Network Development since 1998. Michael Ward is Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer for HighBar Global providing comprehensive Project Leadership to diverse stakeholder, governance, and cross-sector networks. Through HighBar Global, Michael has completed more than 350 projects with an established reputation of accomplishments leading and facilitating complex regional, state, and national strategies addressing large scale public land use and recreational tourism, economic & workforce development, healthcare modernization, governance reform, and multi-sector network planning for sustainable communities. Michael has delivered professional services throughout the United States and in 29 countries globally while operating from South Lake Tahoe since 2002. Michael has provided leadership and professional services to the Eastern Sierra region focused on sustainable recreation since 2010.



PLACEWORKS: CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT



PlaceWorks is one of the West's preeminent planning, design, and environmental consulting firms, serving both public- and private-sector clients in the fields of climate action and resiliency, comprehensive planning, environmental review, urban design, landscape architecture, community outreach, and GIS. For more information about PlaceWorks, visit www.placeworks.com. PlaceWorks led the consultant team, preparation of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, development of climate adaptation and resilience projects, and report preparation.

ICF: CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

ICF Incorporated, LLC, a global consulting services company, is internationally recognized for expertise and leadership in economic impact analysis, benefit-cost analysis, and climate resilience planning. For more information about ICF, visit www.icf.com. The ICF project team led the Natural Capital Assessment and the Ecosystem Service Impacts components of the report.



ATLAS PLANNING SOLUTIONS: CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

Atlas Planning Solutions is a small, woman-owned, disabled veteran business enterprise that specializes in hazard mitigation, emergency management, and climate resilience for jurisdictions throughout California. For more information about Atlas Planning Solutions, visit www.atlasplanning.org. Atlas Planning Solutions supported the development of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and development of climate adaptation and resilience projects.



SMG CONSULTING: CONNECTION TO THE EASTERN SIERRA VISITOR

Carl Ribaudo is the President and Chief Strategist for SMG Consulting, a tourism and recreation consulting firm located in South Lake Tahoe. The firm specializes in cooperative approaches to tourism challenges and opportunities.

SMG provided a variety of services, including meeting content development, research, facilitation, and strategic direction.
www.smgonline.net



MAMMOTH LAKES TRAILS & PUBLIC ACCESS: SRTI IMPLEMENTATION SERVICES

The Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation, MLTPA, is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization incorporated in 2007 as a public benefit corporation in the State of California. MLTPA has been engaged with local and regional issues of sustainable recreation and collaboration in California's Eastern Sierra since its inception and provides technical support to a regional public/public recreation-based solution, the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership.



For this effort, MLTPA provided a variety of services, including grant and project management, project development, meeting content development, research, meeting convening, public and participant communications, and document production.

Visit mltpa.org for more information on our work: <https://mltpa.org>



Funding for this project has been provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, an agency of the State of California, under the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68) and in support of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

CALIFORNIA
USA