

MLTPA CAMP: WINTER

Getting out there in nature



MAMMOTH TIMES PHOTOS/SUSAN MORNING
MLTPA live wires John Wentworth and Kim Stravers crossed paths during the opening reception last Thursday evening at Main Lodge. A lively group gathered, examined maps and display boards, while enjoying excellent food and wine provided by the Mountain.

A talk by Joey Klein of Trail Solutions

By Mammoth Times Staff

Joey Klein's presentation Friday evening up at Main Lodge was among other things a carrot for wanderlust. Titled "Four-season trails: how communities around the world get it done," the slide show took the audience for a ride on trails around five continents, from the Dolomites to Singapore, and from Tasmania to Idaho. It was almost an IMAX experience, as the cameras showed many ways to "get out there and see nature," Klein said, as he introduced the program.

In the Dolomites walking malls wind through picturesque ski towns where cars are not allowed. Cars are not needed, either, on the 42 kilometer interconnected trail system between the towns of Dobbiaco and Cortina. The Dolomiti SuperSki connects 12 ski areas over 762 miles of trails.

England's system of bridleways provides free public access over private lands.

In Tasmania, where the country is highly conscious of preserving the wild, there are more miles of hiking trails than paved roads.

Klein's favorite hike is on the McKenzie River Trail in Oregon, east of Eugene. "You get blasted with nature," Klein said. Its Web site, which calls the trail a sweet single track, says, "The first 10 miles go thru a lava field making it the toughest part. Beyond there is a picnic area with water and smoother riding and easier. The whole ride is in old growth forest and the water is crystal blue. Waterfalls, pools and log bridges (walk across) and the forest make this the most fun and most beautiful ride...."

Klein is a consultant with Trail Solutions, a natural-surface trail consulting program with a mission to create and enhance trail opportunities and access around the world. He has consulted in Tasmania, where he works on creating trails that step on nature as little and as cleanly as possible. He is also working with Singapore in Southeast Asia. Regardless of the densely built-up island, a trail system



Participants of the walking tour met up with Brian Knox of Mammoth Nordic to learn about what efforts local user groups are already making to improve upon Mammoth's winter trails.



MAMMOTH TIMES PHOTOS/LARA KIRKNER
Walking tours were a highlight of last weekend's CAMP: WINTER, put on by Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access. Peter Axelson, who was part of CAMP: SUMMER, joined Friday's walking tour in order to examine what Mammoth's trails are like in regard to universal access. Axelson is joined by Jeff Olson of Alta Design and MLTPA Board member Jo Bacon.

is planned to reduce reliance on auto transportation and pollution.

When roads are the more efficient means of transportation, Klein said, people will use them, in cars and buses. The more a community can create trails for walking and bicycling the more people will use them, thus reducing pollution and increasing pleasure.

Aspects of attractiveness in building trails add up to what will actually keep someone on a trail. Is it efficient, safe, playful? Is it in harmony with nature? Is there diversity, a sense of progression? By way of example, Klein showed the Three Mile Smile trail in Las Vegas. People, perhaps tired of being car-bound or trying to find respite from the megalopolis, can pull right off the highway and head up the trail. Looking ahead, the trail winds away from the hiker, seeming to pull him forward.

Klein's pet project could well be the Tamarack Resort in Donnelly, Idaho, 11 miles south of McCall. Tamarack is the first newly permitted four-season resort in North America in more than 20 years. It is an integrated "trailhead to adventure," encompassing mountains, meadows and lake. Klein showed slides of a bike trail in progress that wanders the perimeter of the golf course, of lifts that carry hikers and bikers aloft, of Tamarack's zipride through the trees.

Klein demonstrated diverse communities and their various ways of dealing with unique geographies. Many of the trails are entirely volunteer maintained and were engineered

and built by committed citizen groups. In closing, he asked for applause for MLTPA's Executive Director and Acting President John Wentworth. "He's so professional; we are going to make these things happen."

Klein demonstrated the rest, now let's make Mammoth the best

CAMP: WINTER was deemed a second success for Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access, following their CAMP: SUMMER last November.

"People understood the process this time around and I think they were able to get more fully involved," Wentworth said.

The WINTER portion of the data-gathering CAMP (Concept and Master Planning) series wrapped up last Monday evening, Feb. 11 with a discussion of next steps. A chance to raise the question, "So where does Mammoth go from here?"

The CAMP consultants, including Alta Design and Trails Solutions, are headed back to their cubicles after spending a nice, active week in Mammoth, to begin putting the pieces together for a master plan. According to Jeff Olson of Alta Design, the draft plan will be submitted to the community in the spring for public comment, with the expectation of having the final plan adopted this summer.

In the meantime, user groups in Mammoth are charging forward as part of the new Mammoth Trails group. Mammoth Trails, accord-



MLTPA Board member Brooke Pace, Mammoth Mountain Government Relations Manager Rebecca Paronick and Mammoth resident Joyce Turner are ready for CAMP: WINTER.



The winter trails system is by far more of a challenge than the summer trails system because of the snow. Some trail pieces that are already in place, such as the Main Path shown here, take a user for a short walk and then end either in huge puddles like this, or some other awkward or dangerous manner, leaving users to wonder "Where do I go from here?"

ing to Wentworth, is a "confederation of user groups." Together these groups can leverage resources and information to figure out how to continually fund the maintenance of trails that they use. If MLTPA is the planner, then Mammoth Trails is the implementer.

Also in line to help with implementation is the Town of Mammoth Lakes and its Senior Planner Steve Speidel, who came to town with a large background in landscape design. Speidel will become the main focal point of the trails process once the implementation portion begins.

One of the most important next steps is earmarking potential implementation resources, which can come in the form of municipal revenues (aka, a tax increase), grants, and others. It is important to remember that the other towns and cities that Klein highlighted in his presentation have these great systems because they have invested in themselves; now it's Mammoth's turn to do the same. Check out the cover story or the Mammoth Times editorial this week regarding the possibility of raising Mammoth's sales tax from 7.25 percent to 7.75 percent in order to put the extra revenue toward the implementation of trails and parks plans.

Some examples of what the project implementation will entail include signage and wayfinding, finishing the Town's Main Path, portal development, ingress/egress, winter trails events, and the winter trails network. Olson pointed to both Mammoth Mountain

Ski Area, as well as the motorized trails system already in place as great examples of wayfinding that works. Now it's up to the Town and the community to step up and follow suit in order to transform Mammoth's trails from a here nor there situation to the "feet-first" system the community keeps proclaiming they want to be.

MLTPA in the media

Congratulations to MLTPA for making national headlines. The group was featured on the front page of the Environmental section of the Los Angeles Times last Sunday, Feb. 10. Title: Group blazes trails to unity as Mammoth grows. By Dean Kuipers, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer.

MLTPA will reach out through the media once again tomorrow, Feb. 15 on KUNR radio's High Desert Forum with Dan Erwine, a live call-in show from 4-5 p.m. Both Executive Director John Wentworth and Communications Manager Kim Stravers will be featured on the show to answer questions about all things MLTPA. Call in with questions at (775) 784-1867. Tune in to the show at 97.5 FM on your dial or listen to it stream live on the Internet by clicking on the "Listen Now!" icon on KUNR's Translators page.



Access to trails in the winter is one of Mammoth's biggest challenges due to all of the white stuff the town receives. Right now the tunnel under Hwy 203 is left to elements during the winter because of funding shortages. Jeff Olson of Alta Design reminds those who attend CAMP: WINTER that snow should be looked at as a gift and better plans should be made for working around it and in it so as to make the winter trails experience more satisfying.

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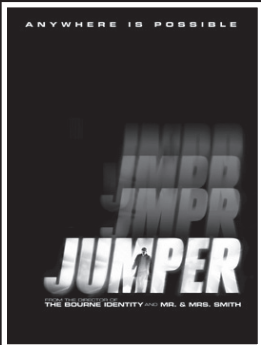


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