



## Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access

Summit and Strategic Conference Packet (excerpts)

Strategic Conference Participants

Strategic Conference Agenda

Goals and Objectives

Non Profit Primer

February 2, 2007



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## MLTPA STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*(confidential draft, for discussion only)*

**PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT:** The community of Mammoth Lakes will become a premiere portal to the Eastern Sierra Nevada region.

**PROPOSED MLTPA MISSION STATEMENT:** To work in partnership with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the community of Mammoth Lakes, the United States Forest Service, Mono County, and other jurisdictional agencies to identify, steward, interpret, and promote all outdoor recreation amenities in the Mammoth Lakes region for the benefit of the Mammoth Lakes community and its visitors and guests from the region, the nation, and around the world.

- **Strategy:** Incorporate a non-profit entity in collaboration with those institutions with jurisdiction within the “planning area” as defined in the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan.
- **Strategy:** Create and include “Mammoth Trails,” a confederation of user groups, within the non-profit entity. Clarify the relationship between the non-profit entity and Mammoth Trails to emphasize the long-term, master-planning, and solidly institutional nature of the non-profit entity and the individualistic, autonomous, participatory, and informative nature of Mammoth Trails.
- **Strategy:** In collaboration with jurisdictional entities, generate a trails and public-access master plan for the area roughly defined as the “planning area” as documented in the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan.
- **Strategy:** In collaboration with jurisdictional entities, generate a master plan for signage, wayfinding, and interpretive signage as part of the trails and public-access master plan.
- **Strategy:** Generate reliable and timely information on outdoor recreation amenities through the autonomous user-group members of Mammoth Trails.
- **Strategy:** Extend stewardship to outdoor recreation amenities through the autonomous user-group members of Mammoth Trails.
- **Strategy:** Promote year-round outdoor recreation through the non-profit entity and through the autonomous user-group members of Mammoth Trails.
- **Strategy:** In cooperation with the community, work to create a porous boundary between the town of Mammoth Lakes and surrounding public lands.
- **Strategy:** Advocate the implementation of a trails and public-access master plan.
- **Strategy:** Advocate the implementation of a signage, wayfinding, and interpretive signage master plan.



## **STRATEGIC CONFERENCE AGENDA**

### **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3: Little Eagle Lodge**

**6:30–7:30 p.m.:** Cocktail reception for Strategic Conference participants

### **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4: Juniper Springs Conference Room**

**9–10 a.m.:** Buffet Breakfast

**10 a.m. to 12 p.m.:** Morning Session

- **5 min.:** Welcome and Introductions
- **10 min.:** Opening Remarks (Izzy Martin)
- **10 min.:** Action Plan Overview (Jeff Olson)
- **20 min.:** Roundtable
- **15 min.:** Break
- **45 min.:** Defining a Vision: Imagine the trails system
- **15 min.:** Group Reports

**12–1 p.m.:** Lunch in room

**1–2 p.m.:** Afternoon Session

- **30 min.:** Priorities: What comes next? (Jeff Olson)
- **30 min.:** Responsibilities: Who does what? (Izzy Martin)

**2–2:15 p.m.:** Break

**2:15–3:15 p.m.:** Afternoon Session, continued

- **45 min.:** Draft Action Plan/Finances (Izzy Martin and Jeff Olson)
- **5 min.:** Handshake Agreement
- **10 min.:** Wrap-Up and Next Steps

**3:15–5 p.m.:** Hike

### **SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 4: Little Eagle Lodge**

**6:30–7:30 p.m.:** Public Preview of MLTPA Materials

**7:30–8:30 p.m.:** “A Vision for Trails and Public Access in Mammoth Lakes” (Jeff Olson)

**8:30–10 p.m.:** Public Discussion on trails and public-access issues

## **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5: Juniper Springs Conference Room**

**8–9 a.m.:** Morning Hike

**9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.:** Wrap-Up and Conclusions (**brunch served**)

- Review Decisions from Saturday
  - Founding mission statement
  - First-year goals
  - Basic organizational structure
  - Finances and development issues
- Implementation Issues
  - Board: nomination committee?
  - Size of board?
  - How governed?
- Fundraising Targets
  - Assignments for action
  - Timelines and deadlines

**12:30 p.m.: Conference Ends**



## **STRATEGIC CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS**

*(participants listed alphabetically by organization)*

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**Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access  
Strategic Conference  
November 3–5, 2006  
Juniper Springs Lodge  
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area**

**NON-PROFIT PRIMER**  
*discussion paper*

The Sierra Fund has produced this Non-Profit Primer summary specifically for this Strategic Conference, working with the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) community organization. The information here is designed to provide a platform of information for summit participants helping to shape an organizational strategic plan that focuses on defined goals, objectives, and implementation activities.

This Non-Profit Primer reviews:

- Foundational Organization Issues
- Finances and Fundraising
- Structure and Accountability
- Community Relations and Publicity

**Foundational Organization Issues**

Once a decision is made to establish a non-profit organization, there are several key decisions to make. Organizations can take many different forms and provide a broad range of services.

**Incorporation as a non-profit organization:** Most groups choose to incorporate as a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Service and applicable state agencies. This simple act provides immediate relief from liability to Board members for the legal actions of the organization, and creates an accountable and transparent group. If the group seeks tax-exempt status, then all gifts to the organization become tax-deductible.

Incorporating a non-profit, tax-exempt group is relatively easy, and involves filing forms with appropriate government agencies. This takes a little time, plus a filing fee. There are lots of resources available to help applicants get through the process.

In order to incorporate, the organization must declare its non-profit purpose, choose at least two officers, and adopt articles of incorporation and by-laws. Sample articles and by-laws are widely available.



**Mission:** The first and most important decision is the mission of the organization. Mission statements provide direction and thrust to an organization—an enduring statement of purpose. A mission statement acts as an invisible hand that guides the people in the organization. It explains the organization’s reason for being, and answers the question, “What business are we in?”

Mission statements are generally short—one sentence—and rather broad. For example, the mission of The Sierra Fund is: “To increase and organize public and private investment in protecting and restoring the natural resources and communities of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.”

Vision statements are somewhat different. A great example of a vision statement is: “A man, on the moon, by the end of the decade.”

Once the mission is defined, the non-profit organization will need to create a strategy for implementation. This generally includes:

- development of specific program goals or milestones
- identification and recruitment of people who support the mission
- development of a fundraising and business plan

One other important foundational decision is whether or not to have dues-paying members that elect the Board of Directors. Many organizations choose to have “supporters” rather than members, with the board choosing all the Board members.

### **Finances and Fundraising**

Once a plan is in place, a budget needs to be created that realistically assesses what it will take in terms of people, equipment, and time to achieve that plan. The budget could be developed with both very short-term as well as long-term financial assumptions.

Identification of funding sources will depend in large part on the plan as well. There are many kinds of funds available:

**State, Federal, and Regional Government Grant Programs:** These are generally competitive grant programs designed for specific purposes. For example, the state currently has \$32.5 million available from the Resources Agency for projects that: provide public access to lakes, streams, or rivers; provide compatible recreational opportunities, including trails for strolling, hiking, bicycling, and equestrian uses along rivers and streams; and/or protect, improve, or restore riverine or riparian habitat, including benefits to wildlife habitat and water quality.

**Private and Public Foundations:** Many foundations do provide grants for public access and recreation activities. Most foundations do not provide “core” support for ongoing management, instead preferring discrete projects. Funding is available for strategic planning, fund development, publications, events, land acquisition, trails development, and many other activities.

**Membership Dues:** If MLTPA becomes a membership-based organization, membership dues can be an important funding stream. MLTPA could consider various kinds of memberships, charging a different dues structure based on categories such as:

- business members
- non-profit members
- recreation group members
- individual members

**Donations from Individuals:** The group could develop a fundraising program that included asking individuals for funds. Fundraising can take many forms, including holding events or auctions, having a “jar” on the counter at key businesses, or developing donors through direct mailing and phoning people.

### **Structure and Accountability**

Non-profit organizations are led by a Board of Directors. By law, only two “corporate officers” are required for incorporation. The Board acts as the legal decision-making body for the corporation, and is responsible for administrative and fiduciary stewardship. They also oversee implementation of the group’s business and strategic plans.

There are many things to consider when choosing a Board, especially the founding Board for the organization. While their commitment to the overall mission is the guiding criteria for picking Board members, people can be chosen based on various skills, interests, and contacts:

- **Skills:** Attorneys, accountants, and experienced fundraisers are often helpful on Boards.
- **Interests:** For MLTPA it would be important to bring all of the community’s interests to the table, including: businesses (especially those with a nexus to tourism and recreation), recreation users (hiking, biking, skiing, camping, fishing, etc.), civic leaders, and community-group representatives. Getting a good representation across age, ethnicity, and neighborhood lines will strengthen the Board.

- **Contacts:** Board members bring contacts throughout the community that be used for fundraising, publicity, volunteers, and project leaders.

Size of the Board is also an issue. The board should be large enough to get the work done, but small enough to make the meeting size manageable. Many organizations settle for somewhere between five and eleven board members. Another option is to have a very large Board that meets annually, with a smaller “Executive Committee” that provides day-to-day decision-making.

**Nominations:** How should these Board members be chosen? Organizations use a variety of methods.

Many organizations choose a Nominations Committee. These individuals are usually from the existing Board, though in a membership group you could add a member or two who is not from the Board. This committee can’t be composed of anyone who is running for the Board in that election cycle. In most organizations, staff members are not eligible to serve on the Board, which is usually a volunteer position.

The Committee considers the kinds of skills, interests, or contacts that the Board needs to strengthen, and looks for individuals who want to serve. It is usually helpful to have a job description of what is expected from a prospective board member, and what the organization is giving in return.

**Elections:** Election protocol is spelled out in the organizations by-laws. This usually involves elections every few years, and usually only some of the seats are up for election at any one time, to avoid having the whole Board changing at the same time.

### **Community Relations and Publicity**

An important component of a community non-profit business plan will be publicity. Defining a clear message to the community, and understanding how to communicate with them, will be an early priority for the organization.

MLTPA will likely need several messages and modes of communicating based on the audience they are targeting:

- **Civic and government leaders** will want information on how to intersect with MLTPA projects.
- **Residents of Mammoth Lakes** will want to know both how to support MLTPA and how to access the recreation amenities that MLTPA is dedicated to stewarding and promoting.

- **Recreational tourists** will want to know how to access recreation amenities. This includes folks who already come to Mammoth as well as potential new tourists.

Reaching these various audiences will need a combination of traditional media (newspaper, magazines, radio, television) and creative outreach using websites, event sponsorship, and other venues.



***The Sierra Fund partners with private donors and public agencies to increase and organize investment in the land, air, water, and human resources of the Sierra Nevada.***

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