

# Mono County Board wants more involvement with MLTPA

By Stacey Powells  
Mammoth Times Staff Writer

"I don't see equal partners being represented at the table," Supervisor Hap Hazard said, during a presentation by Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) to the Mono County Board of Supervisors.

Hazard opined that the county should have a bigger role in the trails planning process.

"You are planning a lot of trail systems and launch points in Mono County and we need to incorporate those discussions here, too, at the county level," he said.

"I would encourage that all users be involved. We are going to need to integrate everything, not just a single component."

Steve Speidel, Mammoth Lakes Planner, along with Mammoth's Tourism and Recreation Director Danna Stroud, and MLTPA's John Wentworth presented their latest trails update to the Board of Supervisors at the Oct. 21 meeting in Bridgeport.

"The most important thing Danna Stroud was speaking to was the collaborative effort between the private sector and government agencies to make this process work and why we are proud of what the consultants have come up with," said Speidel when speaking to the supervisors about the progress the MLTPA has made so far.

Wentworth and Speidel showed the board where the trails were proposed in 1991 and then went to a more current map showing a short-term links trail



MAMMOTH TIMES PHOTOS/STACEY POWELLS

MLTPA's John Wentworth and Town Planner Steve Speidel update the Board with maps and pertinent information on the trails system.

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system.

With the data they presently have they are able to convey to the consultant what is currently on the ground and where they need to go. "We can dial in with the consultant and their GIS and then they can convey to the public where the opportunities are to enjoy the current system," Speidel said.

Speidel said they've also tried to communicate how different the trail systems are in summer as compared to winter.

"For example, there are some places where snowmobiles are permitted in the winter so we need to know what trails

need to be maintained for that activity as well as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing."

MLTPA will work with the Forest Service on what will happen to the Shady Rest Trails.

"We are looking forward to having full documentation next month," Speidel said.

"We had 70 individual entities that have made comments on the draft plan and about 900 items which need to be responded to."

Supervisor Hunt asked how the current plan ties in with the surrounding areas and other forest service plans.

"There are small efforts of planning being done between the Forest Service and the Town of Mammoth Lakes which

have given us an open door to start planning trails and engage the Forest Service for use on Forest Service land," Stroud said.

"We are taking this one opportunity at a time which seems to be agreeable to them rather than going for the entire plan at once."

Hazard voiced concerns that it was just non-motorized use of the trails that were being considered but Stroud assured him that motorized vehicles have been taken into consideration when putting together the plan.

"Motorized groups comes to the area to visit and our intentions are not to ignore them because they are an integral part of our economic sustainability," Stroud said.

"How do we start bridging the gap between our planning efforts and their planning efforts," asked Supervisor Vikki Bauer when referring to how the county and Mammoth Lakes can join together in the trails plan.

"There is a need for a joint planning effort which is jointly funded, as well, so we can start bridging these gaps. We need to start seeing Mammoth Lakes as one of the communities in the county that can bridge the gap."

The board directed county staff to find a way the county can talk about funding a joint effort with the Town of Mammoth Lakes for the trails system.

County Administrative Officer David Wilbrecht said he could give the Board a recommendation in two words: General Fund.

## News Briefs

### Work proceeds on Lake Mary Road

Crews have removed the old concrete foundations from the Lake Mary Tunnel/Bridge and are forming for the new foundation. There will be intermittent closures and/or delays of up to 2-hours between now and the time crews start erecting the new bridge. At that point, the road will be closed until the new bridge is completed.

### Wilderness Bill update

The Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Mountains Wild Heritage Act (S. 3069 and H.R. 6156) has been included in an omnibus lands package championed by Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico and Senator Ken Salazar of Colorado.

The bill was unanimously approved for inclusion in the larger package by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on Sept. 16, 2008. No further changes have been made to the bill since that time. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada has discussed the possibility of a lame duck session the week of Nov. 17, where the omnibus lands package could be brought to the Senate floor for a vote.

# Legal issue would render shared use at skate park a moot point

But T&R commissioners encourage bikers and skaters to sit down and hash it out

By Catherine Billey  
*Mammoth Times Staff Writer*

Although the bikers at the Oct. 1 town council meeting were at times overly impassioned in addressing user conflicts with skaters at Volcom Brothers Skate Park, their compartment at the Oct. 21 special meeting of the Tourism & Recreation Commission could not be characterized as anything other than articulate, calm and focused.

The skaters were no-shows, as was Jane Anderson Baer, brainchild of the skate park that bears her late son's name, because her husband was scheduled for hip replacement surgery that day.

The meeting was facilitated by T&R Department Director Danna Stroud at the U.S. Forest Service Auditorium. "We are not being asked to make a decision," Stroud clarified. "Just to take comments and evaluate, and provide some direction toward resolution."

Commissioners Dieter Fiebiger, Ruth Harrell, Bill Sauser, Teri Stehlik, and Tony Colasardo sat informally, legs dangling from the edge of the stage, creating a relaxed atmosphere for an audience of about two dozen teenagers, adults and local media. Although seven bikers were present, only Trevor Jacob identified himself as being both a skater and a cyclist.

Bikers argue that they should be able to ride their bikes in the skate park, but a sign explicitly indicates no bikes are allowed. It has been erroneously reported that the 10-year contract with Volcom calls for exclusive skater use.

bring it back to the commission after talking with Steve Klassen [owner of Wave Rave who has willingly inherited the oversight of the skate park since Baer will be moving south], that would be better "than having us referee a dog fight."

Although Baer has in the past suggested that bikers get together to build a BMX park, the Oct. 21 audience was clearly geared up for shared use at Volcom. T&R commissioners were overwhelmingly in favor of getting Baer, Klassen, and designated representatives for both skaters and bikers to the table to discuss shared use.

"Figure out how you can co-exist," Commissioner Tony Colasardo suggested. "If you guys can do that, then we can implement an ordinance." He noted that snowboarders and skiers co-exist on the Mountain. "They figure it out."

Colasardo offered his office at Footloose as a place where a preliminary meeting could take place with Klassen (representing the skate park) and Jerry Jacob (as a representative of the bikers).

It's a small town, Sauser advised. "Don't put your hotheads on it. Don't put people with too much passion on it."

Cummings, who spoke ardently at the beginning of the meeting, weighed in again at the end. "We're more than willing to work with them." But he noted that they're up against negative peer pressure that trickles down.

Indeed, the willingness of both sides to sit down at the table has yet to be determined, Stroud concluded. But Colasardo said he thought they would know within an hour of meeting in his office whether there's flexibility.

"You guys all have really good, valid points. But we need small groups to talk and get it going. That's a million dollar facility that can facilitate all user groups." As suggested, he met late last week with Klassen and Jacob to talk about shared use.



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orderly. They wait until the person in front of them finishes their run, and then they drop in." He added that there were "virtually no issues" until early September, when someone who helped build the park came up on their annual vacation and started trouble. "If not for two isolated incidents, we wouldn't be here today."

His son concurred. Incidents occur with people who don't live in Mammoth. "And they stir up other locals who usually don't care," he said.

Mark Hendrickson reminded everyone that the point of shared uses is moot if there's a legal issue involved. "The gift that was given has some legal stipulations in it—that we need to look into," he said. Baer should be asked for information in that regard.

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allegedly make to the coping around the edges of the park, he and other bikers present said that bikes don't cause damage if the pegs and other metal parts have been removed. "Most damage occurs in the beginning when the concrete is still curing," he averred.

Although Baer has suggested that bikers create a separate park, Cummings and others are aware of the town's stretched finances. Shared use makes more sense, they argue. "Shared uses is becoming the norm for skate parks," Cummings stated.

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# hash it out

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Bikers argue that they should be able to ride their bikes in the skate park, but a sign explicitly indicates no bikes are allowed. It has been erroneously reported that the 10-year contract with Volcom calls for exclusive skater use.

"There is a promotional agreement with Volcom for a five year term with a five year option to extend it," Stroud clarified.

The real issue is etiquette, said Roscoe Cummings, a youth who spoke on behalf of the bikers. "Who's using it? Are they cutting in front of people?"

Cummings said that many parks share uses, and the incidence of accidents does not increase in those cases. "Users learn to share," he said. "Many parks mitigate by having separate hours."

As for the damage that bikes



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"If it's not about damage or safety, then why are roller bladers allowed in the park?" he added in conclusion to a smattering of applause.

Since Jacob represented both user groups, Stroud asked him to explain how a skateboarder might feel about encountering a biker in the park. "I think we're trying to understand the resistance," she said. Jacob replied that users basically watch out for each other. "We can see each other," he said.

Jacob's father, Jerry, weighed in, as well. "I've seen the kids. They're very

- Skateboarding and in-line skating are hazardous activities.
- Helmets, knee pads, and elbow pads required in the skate park.
- Skate at your own risk. Skateboards and in-line skates only.
- No smoking, alcohol, tobacco, or drug use.
- Skate park hours are sunrise to sunset.
- No skateboarding or in-line skating on wet, icy, or snow covered surfaces.
- Failure to wear helmets, kneepads, and elbow pads in the designated skate park area will subject persons to citation (TOML ord. 12.20.500)
- Skating on park curbs, parking lot, and entrance sidewalk is prohibited.
- No graffiti or tagging.
- Dispose of trash in trash cans/ recycle cans.
- No intimidation, hazing, or fighting.
- No spectators are permitted in the designated skate park area.

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"If we can get past that, then we can co-exist together." "I'm not convinced that our hands are tied legally to not allow biking," said Commissioner Harrell. But a lot of money and passion went into the fund raising for the skate park, she said. "Organize yourselves and get together with the skateboarders."

Commissioner Bill Sauser noted that "Nothing is ever written in stone, even if it's a contract." If the two groups can reach an agreement — "get everyone in the room and hash something out" — and

better "than having us referee a dog fight."

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Even though the park was designed and built for skate use only, there is no ordinance excluding bikes. The possibility exists to remove pegs and put on plastic pedals to ameliorate a primary bone of contention — damage to the skate park.

Following the meeting, Colasardo was optimistic about the prospects of shared use.

"If we are open to some kind of solution," Colasardo said, "we can work things out."

The next step is for Klassen and Jacob to meet with the two user groups.