



# **Mammoth Winter Recreation Summit**

## **Saturday March 19, 2016**

**Track:** Winter Recreation at Shady Rest

**Presenter:** Haislip Hayes- Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML)

### **Presentation Notes**

1. 12.5 acres of Shady Rest Park that are not on maps or advertised in the winter
2. No pedestrian access to Shady Rest Park
3. First Nordic Ski experience for Presenter at Shady Rest Park
  - a. Gathered gear in truck
  - b. Drove to Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center (MLWC)
  - c. Got map
  - d. Couldn't figure out where to park
    - i. Not signed where to park
    - ii. Not signed where to start
4. Previous winters with no snow, this winter there is snow
  - a. Cars not parked at staging areas
  - b. Cars parked in front of "No Parking" signs
5. TOML realizes and has discussed deficiencies in parking lot at Shady Rest Park
  - a. Wants public input on how to improve
6. Goals of this Track
  - a. Public input to improve operations
  - b. Identify how people are recreating and what support TOML can offer
    - i. Fat Biking an obvious recreation trend

### **Discussion Notes**

1. Question posed to group: "What can we do to fix the lack of signage for parking and starting point(s)?"
  - a. Wayfinding sign at MLWC
    - i. Should be very clear in winter
    - ii. Direct people to park in lower lot?
    - iii. United States Forest Service (USFS) wants to keep lower lot secure
      1. Community should dictate what lot is best to park in
    - iv. A "hang-on" sign directing people where to start
    - v. Update map
2. Question posed to group: "How do you feel about the trail system as a whole?"

- a. Once on trail, the signs make sense.
  - b. Finding the entrance is not easy.
  - c. Grooming is inconsistent around the auditorium
    - i. Clarify everything
      - 1. If it's on map, it should be groomed
      - 2. Have a map and a "Start Here" sign
  - d. I parked at the Skate Park, headed into the woods, and found the trail.
    - i. Eventually went to MLWC
  - e. USFS designated staging area is not the best
    - i. Super thick snow most of the time
    - ii. Tight turn for grooming equipment
  - f. Trail system could be signed from lower lot; it has more snow.
    - i. Lower lot is USFS parking; they do not want to encourage parking there
  - g. Map doesn't indicate you have to take skis off to get to "Old Shady Rest Loop"
    - i. No crosswalk or signage
  - h. Before the road (Sawmill Cutoff) was plowed:
    - i. Snowshoers and dog walkers used Old Shady Rest
    - ii. New Shady Rest was groomed for Nordic skiing
  - i. Could move trailhead to old location with adequate signage for motorized, Nordic, and other uses
    - i. Easier to park at the old trailhead
    - ii. No one parks in designated area due to parking incorrectly
    - iii. Old trailhead does not work for trailers
    - iv. New trailhead
      - 1. Needs to be expanded to provide drive-in/drive-out access
      - 2. Gets most use from visitors
      - 3. Big trailers and RV's
      - 4. ORMAT needs road plowed to access wells
        - a. Opens up many opportunities for recreation
          - i. TOML billing ORMAT for plow service
          - ii. Clearly stated in EIR for CD-4
3. Provide signage to educate people how to park
  - a. Expand turn around area
  - b. Monitor and enforce parking regulations
  - c. BIG sign to educate
    - i. Have to train the public
    - ii. Part of the process
4. TOML looking for direction on preferred parking and staging areas
  - a. Not reinventing the wheel
  - b. Trying to make the current options better
5. Add a winter edition (sign) to:
  - a. Monument sign
  - b. Main St. /Highway 395

- c. Over Snow Vehicle (OSV)
- 6. Fat Biking
  - a. Can get through dirt, snow, asphalt
    - i. Dirt doesn't matter to tourists
  - b. Sign to designate trailhead, trail
    - i. Bike signs on trees
      - 1. Don't differentiate loops
      - 2. Don't have distances
    - ii. Hard to tell people where to go in summer on dirt roads
      - 1. Need better signage and trail markings
      - 2. Need way to direct tourists
  - c. Potential parking at the MLWC (upper lot)
    - i. Not many visitors
      - 1. 200 in winter versus 1200 in summer (daily)
  - d. Mammoth Lakes Trail System (MLTS) provisionally approved to add seven (7) "Fat Biking" experiences and maps to MLTS website, MammothTrails.org
  - e. Opportunity to engage tourists
    - i. Difficult when not able to send them somewhere specific
  - f. Should Fat Bikes use the same staging area as OSV's?
  - g. What damage does a Fat Bike do to the trail?
  - h. Separate Fat Bikes from Nordic users?
    - i. Obsidian Dome would be ok to have both Fat Bikes and Nordic Skiers
    - ii. Areas where striding lanes are set, Fat Bikes and Nordic Skiing seem incompatible
      - 1. Just need to educate not to use striding lanes for biking
      - 2. Audience member rode Fat Bike 10 laps on course
        - a. No impact until end
    - iii. Some Nordic resorts are allowing Fat Bikes
      - 1. Found to have very little impact on "pristine experience", no matter what conditions are
      - 2. Walkers (post-holers) and snowshoers have more of an impact
      - 3. Fat Bikes are slow and have a brake
      - 4. Etiquette rules associated
  - i. E-bikes with a fat tire seen as part of future
    - i. Mechanized versus motorized
  - j. Potential for Fat Bikes on Nordic and OSV trails
    - i. OSV users open to pilot program
      - 1. 90 miles of trail to explore, disperse use on
      - 2. Easier to stage from OSV area
        - a. For all uses
          - i. Creates congestion in OSV area
  - k. Rentals will be majority of Fat Bike industry (in Mammoth Lakes)
  - l. Have resources to connect Mammoth Lakes and June Lake

- i. Open up to all uses
    - m. Create a grooming schedule
      - i. Tahoe Rim Trail
        - 1. Multi-use
        - 2. Designated users on designated days for high-traffic areas
          - a. All users should be able to get along
          - b. What if you traveled from Southern California, and it wasn't your day?
      - ii. Need access to real-time grooming information
        - 1. Doesn't allow for advance planning
      - iii. Responsible Fat Biking requires grooming and firm snow
        - 1. Need to plan when to ride if grooming is taking place on "X" day at "X" time
      - iv. Weather will ultimately dictate when grooming gets done
7. Question posed to group: "Information and the disconnect of information is a tie among all these locations. Where do you get your information?"
  - a. Google – "grooming at Mammoth Lakes"
  - b. MLWC
    - i. Maps
    - ii. Obsidian Dome grooming
  - c. Facebook
    - i. Friends of the Inyo
  - d. MLTS web-site (MammothTrails.org)
    - i. Put necessary information here
    - ii. Other web-pages link to it
  - e. Need partnership among all information centers
    - i. USFS can link with MLTS
    - ii. Red tape hindering process
    - iii. TOML has process for partnership
  - f. Locals will go outside and just do it
  - g. Need a consistent message to tourists
  - h. Use Wi-Fi
    - i. It's everywhere
    - ii. Have information on web-site
    - iii. All QR codes go to MLTS web-site
    - iv. People also go to TOML and Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT) web-sites
  - i. Vast majority of tourists use service industry
    - i. Not going on-line
  - j. Need centralized web-site for everyone to check
    - i. Lodging and tourism need to echo this information
8. Question posed to group: "What else is going on in Shady Rest Park?"
  - a. Visitors will stay on trails because they are afraid of the forest
    - i. Specifically, classic skiers
  - b. Dog walking

- c. Skijouring
    - i. Traditional
    - ii. With snowmobile
  - d. Jogging
  - e. Grooming is creating new sports and uses in the park
  - f. Snowplay
    - i. Steep hill is accessible
  - g. Disc golf potentially in winter
  - h. Snowboarding behind snowmobile
9. Question posed to group: "What are your thoughts on getting to June Lake and inter-region connectivity?"
- a. Connectivity is an issue we need to focus on
  - b. Eastern Sierra is open to travel for us
  - c. Not enough signage for tourist to follow
    - i. June Lake and Mammoth Lakes used to be far better connected that it is today
      - 1. Could ride snowmobile from Mammoth Lakes to establishments in June Lake
        - a. Trail was decommissioned with no alternative created
        - b. Trail can be recreated
      - ii. Anyone could get lost due to lack of signage
  - d. Snow to access the region can be a problem
  - e. Sonora Pass gets feet of snow and is open to snowmobiles
    - i. Not well known
    - ii. Good type of experience to provide information for
  - f. Connect region with public transit
    - i. Great for locals and public
10. Closing thoughts:
- a. Dog Park
    - i. Winter area
      - 1. Legal to have dogs on or off leash
        - a. TOML would need to change leash regulations at Shady Rest Park through process
  - b. NEPA/CEQA process
    - i. Most items discussed need to go through this process
    - ii. How can community help?
      - 1. Public comment is recorded (from today's Track at the Summit)
      - 2. Go forward based on that
  - c. Overlap of topics in each Track
    - i. Information will come together
    - ii. All interlaced
  - d. Access to Highway 203 for OSV's
    - i. Tunnel under Highway 203

1. Connect Sherwin side (south) with Shady Rest side (north)
    2. Positive for all users
    3. Area not utilized by many people
  - ii. TOML wanted to collect data and perform test grooming
    1. Conditions and time did not allow
- e. Moving projects past the USFS
  - i. Alleviate conflict to overcome
    1. Motorized and non-motorized communities come together
    2. Winter Recreation Summit invaluable to this goal
    3. All come together with USFS