



COUNTY OF MONO

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Leslie L. Chapman
County Administrative Officer

Tony Dublino
Assistant County Administrative Officer

Date: September 5, 2017
To: Honorable Board of Supervisors and Town Council
From: Tony Dublino, Assistant CAO
Subject: Mono County Recreation workshop and Task Force Recommendation

Recommended Action(s):

Receive presentation regarding recreation issues and opportunities within Mono County, including current investments in recreation. Receive recommendation of Mono County Recreation Task Force.

Fiscal Impact:

None. Informational only.

Discussion:

At the July 18 Town/County Joint meeting, the Board created the Mono County Recreation Task Force, with the general direction for the group to develop a recommendation to the County Board on how the County might best improve and enhance recreation experiences in the future.

The group has met 3 times, on July 27, August 4th and August 28th. These meetings have focused on developing a recommendation for Board consideration, and the emerging recommendation is included with this item.

Today's item is meant to inform the Board of the Task Force's recommendation and intent, and to provide additional information/context regarding the County's current approach to recreation so the Board is prepared to duly consider the Task Force recommendation.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact me at (760) 932-5415.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tony Dublino".

Tony Dublino
Assistant CAO

RECOMMENDATION OF THE MONO COUNTY RECREATION TASK FORCE TO THE MONO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Background:

The recreation task force, as formed on July 18, included members of the Board of Supervisors, Mammoth Lakes Town Council, and Danna Stroud of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Participation in task force meetings included representatives from the Inyo National Forest, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Bishop Bureau of Land Management Field Office, Caltrans, Mammoth Lakes Recreation, and town and county staff members. Together, the group identified a set of values to guide the discussion, and to help determine key findings.

Values:

- Take a collaborative approach, leverage resources (no one can afford to do it alone), work regionally from an Eastern Sierra perspective
- Think beyond current budget, administrative boundaries
- Engage with the recreation economy, and the state and national outdoor recreation movement
- Use model of town working with Inyo National Forest
- Protect natural resources
- Enhance and improve recreation assets and experiences
- Work should be sustainable for generations to come
- Build on what we have—connect and coordinate existing facilities
- Seek public engagement, stewardship, education, investment, volunteerism (work to unite)

Key Task Force Findings:

- The county should invest in recreation, including recreation on public lands in our county, and develop programs and capacity for the county to engage in outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Destination and experience-based recreation represents a major, expanding, and sustainable sector of the economy of Mono County.
- Recreation assets are wide-ranging. Assets include trails, lakes, rivers and creeks, parks and playgrounds, tennis courts and ballfields. In addition to physical assets there are non-physical assets such as experiences and destinations.
- The vast majority of recreation assets and opportunities within the region are located on public lands managed mostly by federal and local agencies and districts, and there is a need for continued and enhanced coordination and collaboration, which is a highly complicated task.
- As participants in task force meetings, agency representatives confirmed the need for assistance from local government with the maintenance and operation of existing recreation infrastructure.
- Agency representatives also identified a need for increased connectivity between existing assets, communities and transportation corridors.
- Mono County has invested significant resources in the development of recreation assets including community planning and visioning, transportation and connectivity planning, marketing, information sharing and the funding of trails maintenance and construction via nonprofit organizations and partner agencies.

- Investment in recreation has community health benefits beyond economic development.
- There are opportunities to enhance and/or expand the existing recreation assets to provide for future economic and community growth.
- There are opportunities for additional coordination of volunteer stewardship efforts and grant funding that could enhance trails-based recreation with reduced financial impact to the County.
- Other local agencies, such as the Town of Mammoth Lakes, have successfully funded recreation-based services through local tax measures that have produced increased capacity for recreation and there is an opportunity for Mono County to pursue the same.

Recommendation:

The Mono County Recreation Task Force respectfully recommends to the Board of Supervisors consider the following:

- ***County Recreation Position: In order to most effectively coordinate and address these needs, the MCRTF recommends to the Board of Supervisors the County establish a position and hire a single point of contact to coordinate all the County's recreation efforts, with emphasis on the following two recommendations:***
 - ***Focus on Existing Needs: The County should consider how to best support needs within the existing recreation assets, including helping public lands management agencies with operations and maintenance.***
 - ***Revenue Expansion: The County should consider efforts at generating and/or securing revenue for the purposes of supporting sustainable recreation assets within the County. This revenue may come from existing revenue sources, grants, or local tax measures.***
 - ***Coordinate marketing and communication with partners.***



Sustainable Recreation in Mono County

History, Current State,
Future Opportunities

Recreation History in Mono County

- Early 1900's – Call to the Eastern Sierra (Mono Inn, Mark Twain Days).
- Fishing and hunting lodges (Paradise, Rock Creek, Virginia Lakes...).
- It is important to understand the relationship between these two economic sectors within
- the Mono County economy. **The anchor is tourism, which attracts visitors and visitor spending.** This spending spurs employment and helps to generate real estate sales, which in
- turn generates professional services employment.
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Outdoor Recreation Today in Mono County

Outdoor Recreation for Visitors and Residents

- Hiking
- Fishing
- Photography
- Camping
- Downhill Skiing
- Bird Watching
- Boating
- Hot Springs
- Snowboarding
- Rock Climbing
- Cross Country Skiing
- Kayaking
- Golf
- Sledding
- Rock Hounding
- Horseback Riding
- Off-Road Motor Sports
- Snow Shoeing
- Geo-Caching
- Ice Climbing



Mono County's Current Investments in Recreation

- Outside Funding Sources
 - Local Transportation Commission
 - *Flows through Planning Department for planning and project development*
 - *FY 16/17 : \$25,000 trails; \$5,000 wayfinding*
- General Fund
 - Economic Development Department
 - *Print, social media*
 - *Mapping, building shoulder seasons, dispersal of information*
 - Community Development Department
 - *RPACs, community planning and organization of trails planning efforts*
- Public Works
 - *Maintenance of parks, marinas, ball fields, tennis courts, roads, etc.*
 - *\$168,000 in FY 16/17*
 - *Public Works Department of Parks and Recreation*
 - *No Longer exists in this capacity*
- Fish Stocking
 - *\$125,000 per year*
- Other GF commitments
 - *Trails Maintenance -- \$8,500*
 - *Youth Sports -- \$8,000*
 - *Public Lands, Trails and Recreation Planning -- \$7,500*



Recreation, as found in Mono County's Strategic Planning

- Economic Development Strategy

1.6 Use recommendations from existing community-based plans to begin implementing prioritized projects that enhance and expand the recreation product that drives the tourism economy throughout Mono County. This includes working across jurisdictional boundaries to develop connected, year-round accessible trail systems, expanded staging and parking areas, branded signage, and wayfinding systems throughout the respective communities.

- County Strategic Plan Focus Areas

- Workforce Wellness
- Support Healthy People in Healthy Communities
- Promote a Strong and Diverse Economy
- Strengthen economy through trail development and expanding recreation opportunities with public and private partners (2016/2017 focus area)



Current Issues and Needs

- Maintaining and enhancing current infrastructure
 - Trail and Facilities Maintenance
 - Trailhead Parking areas, bathrooms, trash, etc.
 - Signage and Wayfinding
 - Impacts to Visitor Experiences
- Fish Stocking
- Connectivity with Transportation
- Marketing and Communication Consistency



Is now the time?

- Federal agencies facing severe cutbacks to budget and staff
- Sustainable Recreation Element / Inyo National Forest Plan Revision (October 2017)
- Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Assessment phase starting 2019
- Partnership opportunities with Town, State/Federal Agencies
- Funding Potential in the near future
 - CA Cap and Trade / Climate Change
 - CA Parks Bond



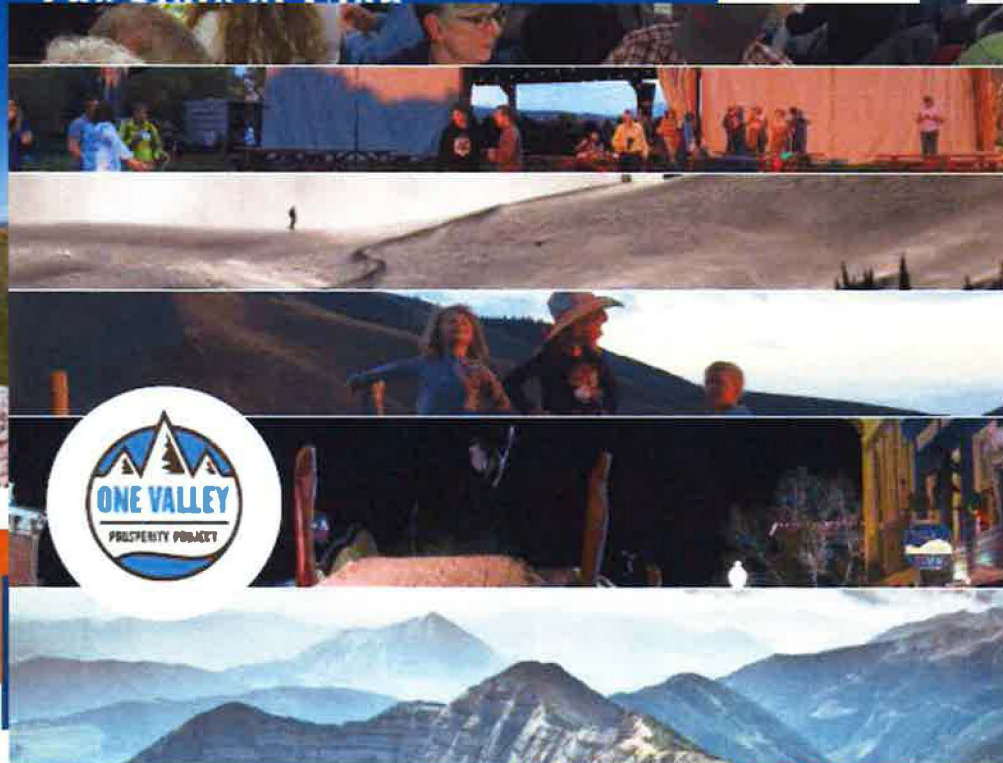
How are others approaching their issues and needs?

- Agencies like USFS and BLM have been studying trends and identifying the economic impacts of recreation on public lands.
- Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Vermont have statewide initiatives to enhance recreation.
- Regions like Lassen County, CA and Gunnison Valley, CO have developed economic development strategies with a focus on recreation.
- Towns like Fruita, CO and Limon CO have developed specific strategies for enhancing and utilizing recreation assets.



Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative

The State of Utah



January 2015

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Future Opportunities

- Coordinate current recreation efforts, create efficiencies
- Potential partnership with Town of Mammoth Lakes
- Organize community efforts and volunteer efforts
- Liaison with agencies to make things happen
- Identify and pursue funding



Mono County Recreation Task Force Recommendation

- ***County Recreation Position:*** *In order to most effectively coordinate and address these needs, the MCRTF recommends to the Board of Supervisors the County establish a position and hire a single point of contact to coordinate all the County's recreation efforts, with emphasis on the following three areas:*
 - ***Focus on Existing Needs:*** *The County should consider how to best support needs within the existing recreation assets, including helping public lands management agencies with operations and maintenance.*
 - ***Revenue Expansion:*** *The County should consider efforts at generating and/or securing revenue for the purposes of supporting sustainable recreation assets within the County. This revenue may come from existing revenue sources, grants, or local tax measures.*
 - ***Coordinate marketing and communication with partners.***



Fulfilling the Recommendation

- Multi-year commitment
- Establish clear deliverables
- Establish measurable outcomes
- Leverage Outside Resources
- Exploring New Partnerships



Next Steps

- Approve Budget/Allocate Financial Resources
- Staff to analyze implementation and recommended approach
- Board approval of Allocation List / Creation of Position or approach

