

ESSRP Meeting Notes | 11/6/2023

Participants: 37

Introductions

- Nichole Ander: Acting Superintendent for Manzanar NHS

Regional Updates

- John attended the Rural Communities for Conservation Coalition conference. In sum, rural communities are trying to connect with federal policies and benefits. The Federal Interagency Thriving Communities Network is trying to facilitate access. The rural economy remains “extractive.” Extraction doesn’t translate to community wealth. We want to become a stewardship economy.

Partner Updates

Town of Mammoth Lakes, Lawson Reif & Andrew Mulford

- It’s looking wintery in Mammoth.
- Gretchen and Andrew did some ground truthing on the Nordic routes last week.
- The OOR will bring forward a new e-bike ordinance for Town Council to consider.
- They replaced a bridge on the Mountain View Trail.
- They’re dropping trees in the Lakes Basin.
- They’re looking for a winter grooming staff person.
- They’re also recruiting winter trail hosts.

National Park Service

Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, Sintia Kawasaki-Yee

- They are hoping most of the road work on Mineral King Rd. will be complete this winter.

Rivers Trails Conservation Assistance, Patrick Johnston

- John and Patrick will check in on the ESSRP MOU.

Mono County, Bob Gardner

- There will be a full agenda tomorrow, featuring housing and other issues.

Inyo National Forest

AK

- Inyo National Forest is hiring temporary recreation staff on USA Jobs now.

Tyler Lee

- The Inyo NF and BLM are issuing a 30-day scoping period about horses in the Montgomery Pass area.

- There is a hiring open house today at the Mammoth auditorium. There will be a second hiring event on November 7 in Lee Vining.
- The Buttermilks toilet was installed.
- Mammoth Ski Area opens on Friday.
- Philip DeSenze plans to return to the White Mountain District in January.

Fred Wong

- The construction of Reds Meadow Rd is going well. The road may close on the weekends soon.

Inyo County, Jeff Griffiths

- Major damage at Whitney Portal Rd is coming in at \$14-16 million dollars. Federal Highways Administration is assisting with cashflow. It may reopen around June of next year.

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Brian Hansen

- All of the campgrounds are closed.
- The only bathrooms that are open are at snow parks.

Aaron Coogan

- Aaron is the new district ranger in Bridgeport. He was the rangelands manager in Bridgeport previously.
- The H-T is working on its forest closure order.

City of Bishop, Karen Schwartz

- They are about to hire a consultant to do a study on how to convert city-owned property into housing.

Caltrans, Andrew Besold

- The Olancha-Cartago 4-lane project is moving along.
- Sonora Pass is under a temporary closure. They will plow it after this storm.
- There will be a complete streets toolbox training on January 25.
- andrew.besold@dot.ca.gov
Andrew Besold, Active Transportation and Complete Streets, Caltrans D9

BLM, Philip Gross

- Crowley Lake and Horn Creek CG are closed for the winter.
- The Craggin' Classic is going on in Bishop this weekend. BLM Bishop will host a trail stewardship day in the Happy Boulders on Sunday.

Alpine County

JT Chevallier

- There's a temporary closure on Ebbetts Pass.

- Bear Valley Ski Resort has a new president, who previously operated Kirkwood. They are looking into a lift that would take people from town to the ski area.

David Griffith

- David would propose refocusing our efforts on sustainable recreation in the Eastern Sierra.

Federal & National News

- The federal government may shutdown with uphold a “laddered” continuing resolution that would extend funding for different agencies for different lengths of time.

Regional News

- The seasonal precipitation outlook is looking warmer and wetter.

CERF, Stacy Corless and Danna Stroud

- Stacy will bring some of the content from the last High Road Transition Council to the next ESSRP meeting for this group to weigh in on.
- Sierra Business Council is collecting project ideas anywhere on the spectrum of project readiness. These can be recreation projects, since that is an important sector in our region.
- CERF has been rebranded as “California Jobs First”. The three pillars of the effort are: equity, climate, and job creation. Please engage with this effort.
- Here is the Community-Based Organization survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8YK6Q8H>

California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, John Wentworth

- John gave a presentation on the intersection of wildfire and recreation.

Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative, Tim Bevins

- There was good consensus on challenges and constraints in the Buttermilk area.

Towns to Trails Meeting, Tim Bevins

- They are working behind the scenes to develop an interactive map where people can comment on alignments.

Campground Improvements, John Wentworth

- MLTPA and the Inyo National Forest are bringing in surveyors and architects to make engineering designs.

Visitor Connection Package, John Wentworth

- The flight to Hawai'i has a video about responsible visitation in Hawai'i.

Other SRTI Projects, John Wentworth

- There are three projects we haven't moved forward with yet.

ESCOG Updates, Elaine Kabala

- The regional air service subcommittee will continue to provide regular updates.
- There is an EDA funding opportunity: <https://www.eda.gov/funding/funding-opportunities/fiscal-year-2023-public-works-and-economic-adjustment-assistance>
- The Buttermilk toilet is being used frequently already.
 - <https://escog.ca.gov/buttermilk>

ESCCRP, Rick Kattelmann

- Thanks to SCE for helping remove firewood and bring it to the tribes.
- FHWA is proposing a complete shutdown of Red's Meadow Rd for 2024. This would be a significant impediment to removing fuels.
- By removing small trees and retaining large trees, they can retain much of the forest's carbon.
- Whitebark is finalizing an important Environmental Assessment.