



**File Code:** 1900

**Date:** February 11, 2013

Dear Interested Party,

The Mammoth Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest is initiating the environmental analysis process for the redevelopment of two user-created Off-Highway Vehicle/Over Snow Vehicle (OHV/OSV) staging areas. This project will improve resource conditions and recreation opportunities at two locations adjacent to the "Scenic Loop" where OHV/OSV staging is currently taking place and resource impacts are occurring. The first location, commonly referred to as the "Lookout Loop Staging Area," is located at the intersection of route 3S06 and Highway 395. The second location is at the intersection of Route 3S22 and the Scenic Loop and will subsequently be referenced as the "3S22 Staging Area." Please see the attached map "Overview of Proposed Staging Areas" for detailed location information.

To fulfill the agency's responsibilities under the National Environmental Protection Act, the Mammoth Ranger District has made a preliminary determination that this proposal requires the completion of an Environmental Assessment (EA). An Initial Study will be completed to determine what level of analysis is required to fulfill the agency's responsibilities in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, as funding to construct these trailhead facilities is available from the California State Parks and Recreation, OHV Division.

### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action is to enhance and confine the existing staging areas to increase safety for recreational users, keep activities within properly designated Forest Service recreation areas, and to maintain and protect resources in the area. The proposed activities would affect approximately 6.2 acres.

The activities performed at both sites would include:

- 1) Establishing boundaries. The project will establish boundaries for the staging areas to ensure that recreational use does not interfere with resources in the area. This will take place before activities begin to determine what areas will be leveled and paved. Then, after paving is complete, these boundaries will be reinforced with rocks or logs to ensure that the adjacent resources are protected.
- 2) Leveling. The staging areas will be graded and/or filled as appropriate to create a level surface.



- 3) Paving. The areas will be properly paved to facilitate parking during the dry season and plowing when snow is present.
- 4) Install drainage. Proper drainage will be installed to direct runoff and facilitate erosion control.
- 5) Build loading ramps. The ramps would facilitate OHV/OSV use by providing a safe area for vehicles to be unloaded. The ramps will also encourage users to use the designated staging areas instead of unauthorized areas.
- 6) Install snow stakes. Snow stakes will facilitate snow plowing in the staging areas, by ensuring that plowing is only performed when sufficient snow has accumulated to avoid damaging the equipment or causing ground disturbance.
- 7) Install signage. The Forest Service would work with appropriate agencies (CalTrans and the Town of Mammoth Lakes) to install signs directing visitors to the staging areas.

Activities performed only at Site 1 (3S06 Junction with Highway 395, Lookout Staging Area):

- 1) Reduction of current footprint. The staging area has expanded over the last few years, encroaching on an existing easement and creating a risk of damaging nearby resources. The area will be reduced to accommodate these concerns.
- 2) Upgrade informational kiosk. A kiosk is already present on the site, but would be upgraded to include more and updated information. Kiosks will enhance the recreational experience by providing information about the area and can be used to educate users about the valuable resources in the area.
- 3) Close 3S38 and open U-03S204 route (east of staging area). This update to the travel management map will allow for safer usage of the staging area by avoiding having a road pass through the middle of the staging area. The adjustment will also help prevent impacts to resources adjacent to the staging area, and will reflect the current expectations of users.

Activities performed only at Site 2 (3S22 Staging Area):

- 1) Minor vegetation removal. There are some small trees and shrubs in the staging area that have grown back in from previous use and would need to be removed for leveling and paving.
- 2) Expansion of current footprint. The current area would be expanded to safely accommodate current and future traffic, and to take advantage of areas that would require less grading and leveling.
- 3) Install an informational kiosk. Kiosks would enhance the recreational experience by providing information about the area and can be used to educate users about the valuable resources in the area.
- 4) Snow grooming. To connect the staging area to existing groomed recreation areas, approximately 4050 feet of 3S22 (between the staging area and the 3S104 junction/"H" Trail) will be groomed.

- 5) Restoration of user created staging area. Existing staging area is resulting in minor erosion and occurs in an area where parking can interfere with adjacent road access. Area will be restored, erosion controlled and the route 3S22 better defined.

In order for these enhancements to retain their effectiveness over time, maintenance activities are anticipated every 3 to 5 years.

The proposed action can also be viewed on the Inyo National Forest website at

<http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=40838>

### **How to Comment and Timeframe**

With this scoping notice we would like to invite your comments regarding issues, opportunities, concerns, and suggestions for the proposed project.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted until March 15, 2013. Written comments must be submitted to: District Ranger Jon Regelbrugge c/o Jon Kazmierski, PO Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center, 8:00-5:00, 7 days/week, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an e-mail, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to [jkazmierski@fs.fed.us](mailto:jkazmierski@fs.fed.us).

Please contact Jon Kazmierski, Mammoth Ranger Station, phone number (760) 924-5503, or e-mail [jkazmierski@fs.fed.us](mailto:jkazmierski@fs.fed.us) for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Regelbrugge (for)", written in a cursive style.

JON C. REGELBRUGGE  
DISTRICT RANGER  
MAMMOTH AND MONO LAKE RANGER DISTRICTS

