

DECISION MEMO
SHERWIN AREA TRAIL
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES
MAMMOTH RANGER DISTRICT
MONO COUNTY, CA

DECISION

I have decided to approve the construction of two new trails by restoring unsustainable user created trails to be included in the Inyo National Forest Trail System. These trails will be constructed and maintained by the Town of Mammoth Lakes under a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. This trail project is intended to provide multiple recreation opportunities that are close to town and provide non-Wilderness recreation experiences. The following description of trail work is located off of Sherwin Creek road (R28E., T4S, S1,2) (Appendix A). Trails will be built with a sustainable design that helps reduce maintenance costs and reduce sediment runoff. These trails will be built with hand tools, a Sutter 300 mini dozer, and power wheel barrows to move native soil to no more than a 46 inch wide trail. The following trails are approved for construction.

SHARP ID #18

This 2 mile trail will be a soft-surface, non-motorized, multi-use single track connector from Mammoth Rock Trail to Forest Service road 27E201, please refer to attached map. This proposed trail is designed to be a rolling contour trail with an average grade of 5% or less. It is intended to replace an existing user created trail that is very steep, rutted, and is difficult and expensive to maintain. The improved design will enable uphill and downhill use by all non-motorized users. Additionally, this trail will help mountain bikers avoid the less desirable and sandy eastern section of the Mammoth Rock Trail.

SHARP ID #13

SHARP ID # 13 will be a one mile, soft-surface, non-motorized, multi-use single track connector originating from the south side of the Sherwin's Trail Head leading up to the Mammoth Rock Trail, please refer to attached map. SHARP # 13 is intended to replace the existing degraded user created trail. Trail design will provide a better user experience and reduce maintenance costs. This proposed trail is designed as a rolling contour trail with an average grade of 5% or less. The design will enable easy uphill and downhill use.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as construction and reconstruction of trails 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1). This category of action(s) is applicable because the decision is to improve existing social trail and connects to already maintained trails.

REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE DECISION

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – The project area was assessed for the presence of threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species as well as Forest Service sensitive animals. Based on a review of corporate data, imagery and several site visits, I determined that the immediate project area does not provide habitat for any of these species. American martens (FS sensitive) have been detected to the south of the project area at higher elevations in Sherwin Bowl. However, it is unlikely that non-motorized use of the proposed trails would negatively impact this species. It is therefore my determination that the SHARP Phase 1 project will not affect any species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended), and would have no impact on any Forest Service sensitive species.
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – Flood plains, or wetlands do not occur in the project area. Mammoth Creek is considered a Municipal Watershed, however this project does not have connectivity to Mammoth Creek therefore there is no effect. (Appendix B)
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – The project area is not located in or near Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or National Recreation Areas, therefore there is no effect.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – This is not an Inventoried Roadless Area or Potential Wilderness Area.
- Research natural areas – This is not a Research Natural Area
- Heritage Resources – Archaeological field reviews of the proposed trail 13 and 18 have been completed (R2013050401815; Wolfe and Zolnoski 2013, Beidl 2016). Archaeological monitoring will occur during trail construction to ensure the protection of known and unanticipated cultural resource discoveries (Appendix C). The project is being implemented in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in accordance with the terms of the *Programmatic Agreement among the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5), the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Processes for Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Management of Historic Properties by the National Forest of the Pacific Southwest Region (Regional PA 2012)*.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Inyo National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions on 7/7/2016 and updated periodically during the analysis. There has also been extensive



discussions with the Town of Mammoth Lakes staff and public regarding expanding the trail system in this area.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The authorization of the use of National Forest System land are consistent with the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The project is located near the Sherwin Mountains and managed within the Concentrated Recreation Area Prescription, as described in the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Executive Order 12898 relating to Environmental Justice requires an assessment of whether implementation of this decision will disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations. This project will not disproportionately affect any minority or low-income populations.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (OBJECTION) OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to objections pursuant to 36 CFR 218.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

There is no delay or waiting period necessary for after the decision is granted. Proponent will be in contact with project manager prior to implementing project.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Molly Burns, District Recreation Officer, Mammoth and Mono Lake Ranger Districts, mollyburns@fs.fed.us.

Jon C. Regelbrugge

 JON C. REGELBRUGGE

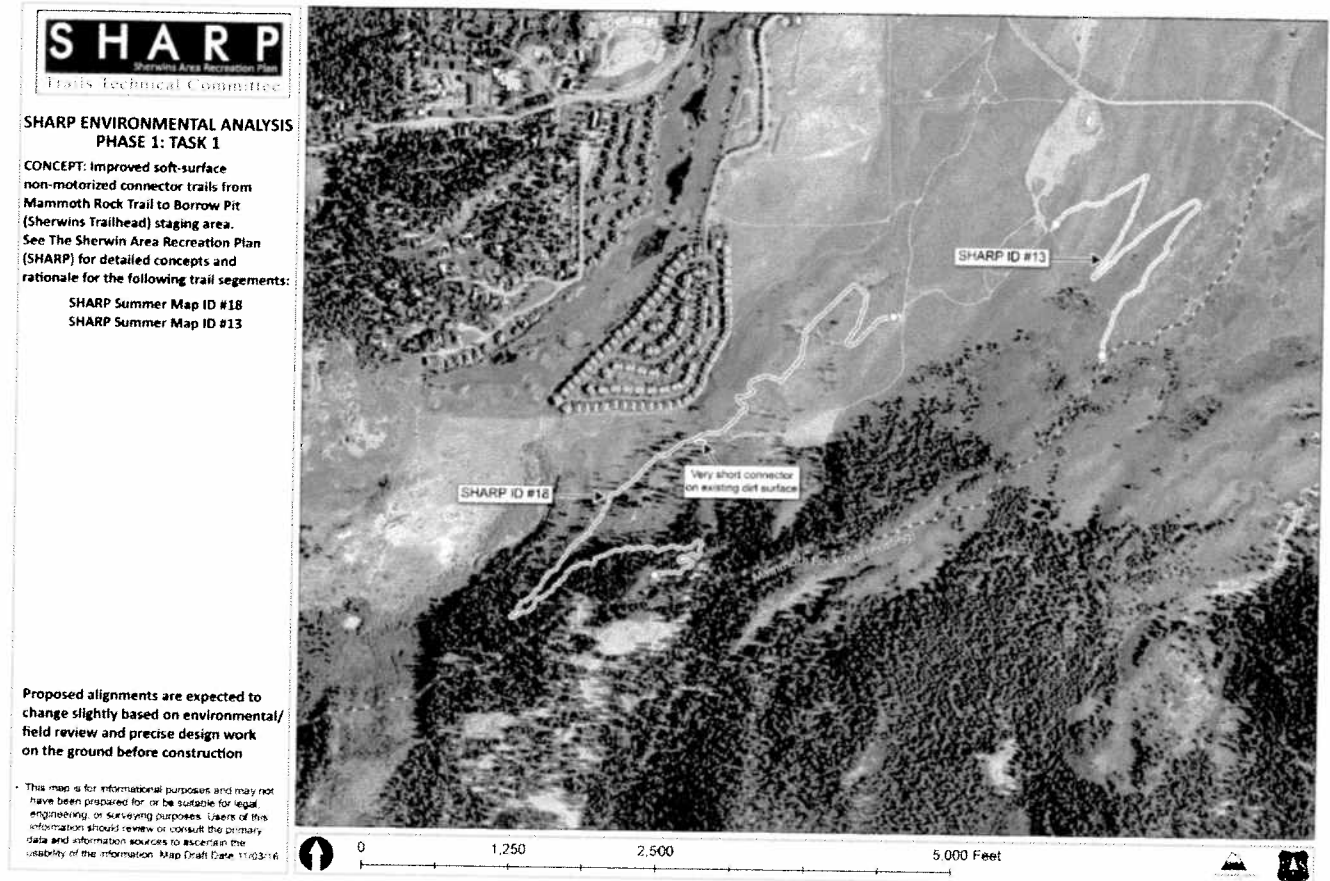
2/17/17

Date

District Ranger

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Appendix A



Appendix B

SHARP - Phase I
 Todd Ellsworth, Watershed Specialist, Inyo National Forest

The full text of Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be found in the National Core BMP Technical Guide FS-990a (April 2012).

Best Management Practice	General Description
National Core BMP FAC-2: Facility Construction and Stormwater Control	Erosion and stormwater runoff control measures are implemented to retain soil in place and to control delivery of suspended sediment and other pollutants to nearby surface water.
National Core BMP Rec-4 Motorized and Nonmotorized Trails	Erosion and stormwater runoff control measure are implemented to control water quality problems originating from construction, maintenance, and use of nonmotorized trails.
National Core BMP Road – 10 Equipment Refueling and Servicing	Petroleum and chemical products may pose a risk to contaminating soils, surface water, and groundwater during refueling and servicing the equipment. Develop or utilize an existing spill response plan for servicing sites and maintain an adequate supply of materials to fully contain and remove spills.

BMP FAC-2 and Rec-4: Specific to this project

- Establish and maintain construction area limits to the minimum area necessary for completing the project and confine disturbance to within this area.
- Install sediment and stormwater controls before initiating surface-disturbing activities. Forest Service will inspect placement before ground disturbance occurs.
 - Place silt fences and/or straw wattles below the area of disturbance to catch and control sediment and other pollutants.
- Apply soil protective cover on disturbed areas where natural revegetation is inadequate to prevent accelerated erosion during construction or before the next growing season.
 - Forest Service specialists will monitor and inspect the site before demobilization occurs and may recommend additional measures such as filter cloth or geotextiles to ensure soil cover is adequate to minimize erosion during and after construction and before the fall/winter rain/snow.
- Limit operation of equipment when ground conditions could result in excessive rutting, soil puddling or runoff of sediments directly into waterbodies.
 - If rainfall is imminent, ensure erosion control structures are in place and functioning. Ensure the trails are adequately dried out before resuming operations (generally 1 day or so).

Extraordinary Circumstances

I reviewed the SHARP Phase I project on the ground on October 12, 2016. I also reviewed maps of the projects and Google Earth to complete my analysis. Approximately 3.28 miles of trails are proposed for construction.

Floodplains: No floodplains exist in the project area.

Wetlands: No wetlands exist in the project area.

Municipal Watershed: Mammoth Creek is considered a Municipal Watershed, however this project does not have connectivity to Mammoth Creek therefore there is no effect.

Summary: This project will not impact any of the above listed extraordinary circumstances, therefore there is no effect.

Todd Ellsworth Watershed Program Manager
1/12/17

Appendix C

SHARP - Phase I Cultural Resource Protection Measures

The following cultural resource work will be completed by an archaeologist or archaeological technician before and/or during project implementation:

- Verify the location of potential historic ditch segment in project vicinity. Make recommendations for avoidance or protection if necessary.
- Monitor construction work on Trail 18.

If unanticipated evidence of significant cultural resources are encountered during the course of any trail construction, all work in the vicinity of the discovery will cease and the location protected until an archaeologist may assess the find.