

MLTPA GIS CONTRACT - Narrative

Background

Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) was informally initiated in December 2005 by John Wentworth, a member of the Mammoth Lakes community, in response to a concern about skier/snowboarder egress from the Sherwin Range back to the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) across the town's southern boundary. The Town of Mammoth Lakes Sensitive Lands, Open Space and Recreation (SLOSR) working group, of which Wentworth was a member, subsequently identified public access to surrounding public lands as a top priority for the Draft Physical Development and Mobility Plan (PDMP). Building on his initial efforts with the Sherwins egress issue and his participation in the SLOSR working group, Wentworth and a handful of community volunteers compiled a "Mobility Plan Resources Report" (MPRR) in the summer of 2006, and presented the report's findings and research to a joint meeting of the TOML Planning Commission, Tourism and Recreation Commission, and Public Arts Commission on July 26, 2006, that was held to consider the Draft PDMP. The Town of Mammoth Lakes subsequently awarded MLTPA a contract to more fully and exhaustively survey an approximately 100-square-mile area in the immediate region and produce an inventory that the Town could incorporate into its existing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database. The data collected in the inventory process will be useful to the Town as it moves forward with its Draft PDMP, General Plan Update (GPU), and other planning efforts. This report is a collection of the analog field sheets created for each identified point of public access (PPA), describing the location, outdoor recreation activities accessed from the PPA, special circumstances, and facilities, with photos of each site's condition, location, and signage, prior to the transcription of the collected data into a digital database. For an explanation of terms used in this report, please see the final pages of the document.

Mobility Plan Resources Report (MPRR)

In its initial efforts to bring to light the many and varied outdoor recreation amenities available to residents and visitors in Mammoth Lakes and the immediate Eastern Sierra region, MLTPA staff and a small number of community volunteers drafted a list of 100 trails, PPAs, and recreation areas into the MPRR (July 2006). They were assessed and catalogued as follows:

Creation of MPRR Field Sheet

In order to obtain and post consistent information about each site, MLTPA drafted a working MPRR field sheet for its staff and volunteers to fill out while in the field. (See tab “MPRR Sheets”)

Inclusion of Trails

As the MPRR was meant not to comprehensively and wholly accurately catalog every trail and outdoor recreation amenity, but to simply illustrate the wealth of such opportunities in the area and request that they be included in the TOML planning efforts, sites were not limited to merely PPAs, but extended to specific trails, trail systems, outdoor recreation areas, staging areas, trailheads, and public access/egress points.

Identification of Activities and Other Field Names in Sheet

A small list of some of the most popular outdoor recreation activities that take place from or at the identified points or areas was used to generate the bulk of the field names on the MPRR field sheet, as information about which activities occurred on or from each site would demonstrate the range of user groups invested in the trails and outdoor recreation system. In addition to activities, information on existing facilities, such as parking and public transportation, were included, as well as assumed jurisdictional agency and seasonal use.

Photo Guidelines

Volunteers were asked to shoot one photo only of each site, to describe its location. These photos were placed at the top of each MPRR field sheet in the final presentation.

Volunteer Process

A small handful of community volunteers were involved in the collection of field data for the MPRR, solicited through word of mouth and an article in the *Mammoth Times* (June 22–28, 2006 edition).

Names of Volunteers

The following individuals volunteered their time and effort in assisting MLTPA staff with its Summer 2006 MPRR data collection: Jo Bacon, Silver Chesak, Aris Cox, Shalle Genevieve, Brian Knox, Hans Ludwig, and Mary Kay Prentice.

Reliability of MPRR Data Collected

The data collected by MLTPA and its volunteers during the MPRR process was verified only internally, and relied upon the volunteers' knowledge of the area and existing signage to infer allowable and occurring usage. The data was not verified by the TOML, the USFS, or any other governmental or jurisdictional agency.

Compilation/Presentation of MPRR to the TOML

Brief Synopsis of Presentation and Reception of MPRR

On July 26, 2006, MLTPA presented the MPRR to the TOML at the Joint Public Workshop for the Draft PDMP. The MPRR was circulated among the TOML Planning, Public Arts, and Tourism and Recreation commissions. It was subsequently shared with TOML Staff members, the Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the USFS, the community-based Stakeholders Group, and media outlets (*The Sheet* and the *Mammoth Times*).

In addition to the analog field sheets for the 100 identified trails, outdoor recreation areas, and PPAs, the MPRR also included a selection of highlighted peer communities with currently operative non-profits and/or local government divisions that source funding and stewardship for their outdoor recreation amenities, outlining their operations, funding, relationships, and missions. Also included were a project mission statement, maps marked with the identified PPAs, photo galleries of signage and wayfinding in peer communities, and a supplemental DVD with more than 110 relevant web pages, maps, planning documents, and reports.

Awarding of GIS Inventory Contract (GIC) to MLTPA

As a result of the MPRR, TOML Tourism and Recreation Director Danna Stroud drafted an Agenda Bill requesting that the TOML Town Council vote to approve a contract for MLTPA to conduct a more thorough, extensive survey of the PPAs in the region. "A comprehensive map and inventory of trails and points of access will be a valuable resource for staff in the ongoing development of the Town's mobility plan and trails system," wrote Stroud in the Vision Considerations section of the August 16, 2006, Agenda Bill. "As the Town continues to strive to be a desirable place to live and visit, access to the surrounding public lands provides a unique recreational experience for our residents and visitors and is the cornerstone of our economic sustainability." Recommended Option 1 was passed unanimously by the Town Council, the text of which follows: "Approve funding \$10,808.00 from the General Fund for a project contract

with the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access team for the completion of a comprehensive map and inventory of all trails and points of public access between the Town's urban limit, the Town boundary and the surrounding public lands.”

Creation of the GIC Document Set

Point Identification

A PPA (point of public access) is very much like a traditional trailhead: It is a point at which a recreationalist “parks the car” or disembarks from other transportation and initiates his or her activity. A PPA often encompasses many different outdoor recreation amenities, including hiking trails, climbing routes, backcountry ski runs, equestrian trails, etc.

Practical Implications of a PPA System

Though most PPAs in this data set fall under the above definition, some sites were identified for special reasons.

Sites #0102 and #103, for example—the northbound and southbound exits onto Hwy. 203 from Hwy. 395, respectively—are not traditional PPAs, but, as the major entrances to Mammoth Lakes, serve as “gateway” points from which all outdoor recreation amenities may be accessed. Points beyond these two entrances are described by activities that become more specific as one gets farther into town and the surrounding public lands.

MLTPA found it helpful to identify the points at which a TOML road or street, or the MLTS, crossed over or is terminated at the UGB. These PPAs, being paved, can be an easy way to cross into public lands from town, though not all PPAs that are “urban limit points” are frequently used to access these lands for outdoor recreation. Sites #0141, Red Fir East at Old Mammoth Rd., and #0029, MLTS terminus at Juniper Springs Rd., are examples of such PPAs.

Finally, though most PPAs are sites where one “gets out of the car,” a few PPAs can be more traditionally described as staging areas from which one specific outdoor recreation activity takes place. Site #0098, Sierra Meadows Ranch, is one such example (equestrian staging area only), as is Site #0100, Red's Meadow Kiosk (automobile fee-pay entrance only).

Point Identification Seasonal Considerations

Due to the enormous snowfall Mammoth Lakes and the Eastern Sierra region receives each winter, many throughways to outdoor recreation amenities that are open in the summer are closed to winter transportation by gate or other obstacle. For example, Kerry Meadow and the Hidden Lake/Sherwins area can be accessed by multiple PPAs in the summer months, but, due to winter road closures and snowfall in areas such as Sherwin Creek Road, many of those PPAs are inaccessible in the winter. Therefore, each PPA presented in this data set has a field indicating whether it is for summer use, winter use, or both.

Scope of Work Area

The area assessed by MLTPA in this report is approximately 100 square miles, and is subcategorized into the three boundary areas described below. This area is best characterized as “Mammoth Lakes and a portion of the surrounding Eastern Sierra region,” and although many PPAs fall outside the TOML’s jurisdiction (i.e., outside the UGB), they are considered part of the community’s outdoor recreation amenities and are part of a larger network of trails and recreation areas utilized by both residents and visitors.

UGB: The drawn geographic boundary that demarcates “Town concrete” from surrounding lands. The UGB is a subset of the Town Boundary where the Town has established policy that most forms of development must be within that boundary. (4.5 sq. mi.)

Town Boundary: The drawn geographic boundary that demarcates the municipal area that the TOML has various service, land use, and other regulatory powers over from surrounding public lands. In general, the Town does not have the same jurisdiction over lands within the Town Boundary that are owned by a “higher governmental authority”; this includes the USFS, County, and state-authorized bodies such as school districts. (24.7 sq. mi., plus 0.3 sq. mi. that comprises the Mammoth Lakes Airport)

Planning Area, 1987 General Plan: Including all PPAs within the boundary described as the “planning area” in the 1987 TOML General Plan (approx. 100 sq. mi.)

Working Procedures for the GIC

Creation of Working Analog Maps

Two maps were used by MLTPA as reference during its data collection process. Stick-on dots, labeled with PPA numbers, were attached to the maps in the proper locations of the PPAs, and color-coded to show status: yellow for surveyed sites, red for unsurveyed sites.

Planning Area/Regional Map: John Wentworth obtained an aerial photograph of the region from the Mammoth Community Water District, added in the Town Boundary as an overlay, and had the image printed as a large-scale map by Aaron Horowitz of Blue Bird Imaging. This map was used to mark PPAs outside the UGB.

Draft Mobility Plan/UGB Map: As part of the GIC Agenda Bill drafted by Tourism and Recreation Director Danna Stroud, and passed unanimously by the TOML Town Council, the TOML was to supply “100 hours of staff time for coordination and GIS mapping activities” to assist MLTPA in its efforts. To that end, Pete Roman, Engineering Assistant to the TOML Public Works Department, printed for MLTPA a full-size copy of the June 26, 2006, Draft PDMP map, which includes existing and proposed named roads, dirt trails, the paved, multi-use Mammoth Lakes Trail System, parking areas, sidewalks, trailheads, and staging areas, all circumscribed by the UGB. This map was used to mark points within and on the UGB.

GIC PPA Identification Process

When MLTPA began work on the GIC in August 2006, the MPRR PPA information was used as a baseline. After refining the controls for the data collection, 19 points were retired from the original 100, leaving a baseline of 81 PPAs.

How MPRR Database Was Edited

Before beginning fieldwork on this data set, MLTPA refined their definitions and controls to most effectively gather, interpret, and utilize information about PPAs in the region. As it is most important to protect the access and egress to and from all of the region’s outdoor recreation amenities, and as the TOML currently does not have any legislation or plans on record concerning this, MLTPA decided to identify and catalogue not every single trail and recreation area—which, given the time frame and resources, would

be impossible for such a small organization to accomplish—but rather to identify and catalogue the points of public access to all of the trails and recreation areas. This will enable the TOML to recognize, protect, and hopefully to improve the access/egress to and from the outdoor recreation amenities, and thereby the amenities themselves, in the context of planning and development. Furthermore, not all outdoor recreation amenities can be described as “trails”—the snowplay area on the southwest corner of Minaret and Main Street (PPA #0041) is one such example; therefore, limiting this survey to “trails” alone would by nature of its definition exclude many recreation opportunities in the region.

Relocation of MPRR Site Numbers to “Point of Access” Rather than “Trailhead”/Removal of Site Numbers

Site numbers originally assigned in the MPRR were, in some cases, reassigned on the working maps to fit the GIC PPA definition, or retired. For example, the start of the Dragon’s Back Trail at the top of MMSA, which runs down to the Twin Lakes area, was retired, as the PPA for the summit end of that trail is the top of the MMSA Panorama Gondola, itself a separate PPA (#0062).

How GIC Database Was Increased/Enriched with New Points

89 new PPAs were added, over the course of the collection of this data set, to the baseline of 81 original sites. Of the 89 new PPAs, 11 were retired before submission of this data set, bringing the total number of PPAs described in this data set to 159.

Community/User-Group Input

MLTPA reached out to the community multiple times, to both individuals and established user groups, in an effort to gather input on which outdoor recreation amenities are accessed from which PPAs and by which users. (See *tab “Outreach”*)

Inclusion of Public Lands/UGB Interface

To more fully describe the issue of access/egress to and from surrounding public lands from within the UGB, MLTPA has identified points at which streets and roads, as well as the Mammoth Lakes Trail System (MLTS), dead-end at or cross over the UGB from town. Though many of these points do not serve as traditional PPAs, they are important in the scope of keeping the UGB/public lands interface seamless and invisible.

Field Sheets and Photographs

See tab "Field Kit."

Identification of Outdoor Recreation Amenities and Activities

MLTPA, before beginning fieldwork, revised and enhanced its data fields as present in the MPRR field sheets. Twenty outdoor recreation activities were added to the original list of 12, to foster a "big tent," fully inclusive view of the outdoor recreation amenities of the area, as they are used by a wide spectrum of both motorized and non-motorized groups. Activities were also broken down into more specific subcategories when appropriate—for example, Nordic skiing has fields for "Groomed, Fee Area," "Groomed, Public," and "Ungroomed, Public"—and also, in some cases, combined—the distinct "Walking" and "Hiking" fields in the original data set were combined in the new field sheet as "Hiking/Walking"—to better describe the outdoor recreation amenities accessed by the PPAs. The current data set shows 32 activities with their related subcategories, plus three other non-activity specific amenity descriptions: "Workforce," "General Backcountry Access Point," and access/egress to and from MMSA from town.

Definitions by Activity

See tab "Field Kit"

Numbering

The numbering of this data set is based on the numbering system in the MPRR, with slight modifications.

Original Numbering

The numbering used for the sites described in the MPRR was assigned arbitrarily, with no perceived order by region or zone, in one- to three-digit sequences from 1 to 100.

Second-Round Numbering

The numbering used for PPAs in the second round of fieldwork, for fulfillment of the GIC, was based on the original numbering. Sites that were retired had their numerical assignment retired as well, and new sites were numbered beginning at 101. Additionally, a four-digit system was used to renumber the PPAs to

account for potential future additions, from 0001 to 0189.

Field Volunteer Efforts

Instructions to Volunteers

To ensure consistency in data, a detailed set of instructions on how to fill out the field sheets and how to take photographs of the area was drafted by MLTPA and made available to every volunteer, as well as to interested parties via our website, www.mltpa.org.

Sheet Instructions

See tab "Field Kit"

Photo Guidelines

See tab "Field Kit"

Volunteer Accountability

In addition to enhancing the type of data collected by volunteers in the GIC round of fieldwork, MLTPA added fields for the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the volunteers who conducted the fieldwork for each PPA, as well as a date field, to ensure accountability and timeliness of information.

How Field Volunteers Were Solicited

MLTPA conducted a widespread and focused volunteer solicitation effort within the Mammoth Lakes community, through a variety of vehicles.

Classified ad in The Sheet: This ad ran for approximately five weeks. (*See tab "Outreach"*)

Flyer distribution: Flyers were put up in businesses around town, with the owner/manager's consent, and were removed at the owner/manager's discretion. (*See tab "Outreach"*)

Website: MLTPA launched its website, www.mltpa.org, on October 10, 2006, and dedicated a page to explanation of the GIC/volunteer solicitation. (*See tab "Outreach"*)

Word of mouth

Field Volunteer Responsibilities

When a volunteer came to the MLTPA offices for fieldwork, he or she was asked to study the analog working maps to determine which area(s) he or she would like to survey. If no preference was indicated, MLTPA staff would identify one or more points in geographically close proximity to one another, print a zoom map if requested, and physically describe the point(s) to the volunteer before he or she left the office with a field kit and digital camera.

Oftentimes, a volunteer who was also a passionate recreationalist would identify points or areas not present on the analog working maps. MLTPA staff would note the additions, number them, create field sheets for them, and add dots to the maps before the volunteer went out to survey the points. In a case where the volunteer who suggested the point did not survey it, he or she left detailed descriptions of the PPA/area with MLTPA so that MLTPA could send out a different volunteer.

As the volunteers conducted fieldwork, they often approached or were approached by members of the community or visitors to Mammoth Lakes who were in or using the area being assessed. Any comments or suggestions made were recorded in the field sheets by the volunteers, and any questions about the effort were directed to MLTPA at our office number or website.

The volunteers for the GIC fieldwork were diverse and numerous, ranging from second homeowners to local sport-shop employees to longtime residents. While a couple of volunteers donated their time and effort only once, the majority returned a number of times to help MLTPA continue its efforts. (See *tab "Field Kit"*)

Cross-Reference of Collected GIC Data

User-Group Identification

In order to ensure that as many PPAs were gathered as possible, and that the PPAs represented the broad range of activities practiced by Mammoth Lakes residents and visitors, MLTPA researched user-group organizations, such as local clubs.

Visitors Bureau community organizations list: The TOML Visitors Bureau provided MLTPA with a list of community organizations and contacts. (See *tab "Outreach"*)

Internal research (community, web): MLTPA researched user groups not found on the Visitors Bureau list via the Internet, as well as by talking with local community members. (See tab “Outreach”)

User-Group Outreach

MLTPA staff met or conversed with a number of individuals representing formal clubs/organizations, or representing a specific type of recreationalist, to gather input for the GIC fieldwork. Encouraging, positive meetings were had with all, and PPA information was gathered and added to the MLTPA GIS database. (See tab “Outreach”)

Meetings with groups: MLTPA also met with one specific user group that is formally organized as a club, speaking about the GIC efforts and asking for their involvement. The Eastern Sierra 4WD Club, at the request of Secretary/Public Relations officer Kathy Watkins and President Karl Schnadt, invited us to one of their regular meetings, and club members offered their input and assistance.

Guidebook Cross-Reference

In addition to on-the-ground fieldwork, MLTPA consulted a number of sport-specific guidebooks, listed below:

Eastern Sierra Ice, by Robert “SP” Parker, no copyright date

Mammoth Area Rock Climbs, 3rd edition, by Marty Lewis and John Moynier, Maximus Press, 2004

Scenic Day Hikes in the Mammoth Lakes Area, by John Moynier, Martin Lewis Publishing, 1999

Mammoth from the Inside: The Honest Guide to Mammoth & the Eastern Sierra, by Colleen Dunn Bates, Prospect Park Publishing, 2004

Mountain Biking Mammoth, by David & Allison Diller, Extremeline Productions LLC, 2005

Inyo-Mono SUV Trails: A Guide to 40 Interesting and Scenic Four-Wheeling Excursions in Inyo & Mono Counties, by Roger Mitchell, Track & Trail Publications, 2003

Map Cross-Reference

In addition to on-the-ground fieldwork, MLTPA consulted a number of maps, listed below:

“Mammoth Lakes Winter Recreation Map: From Hot Creek to Saddlebag Lake, Devils Postpile National Monument to Bald Mountain,” TOML/USFS, 2004

“Mammoth Lakes Off-Highway Vehicle and Mountain Biking Map: Mammoth Lakes, Crowley Lake, Hot Creek, Convict Lake, June Lake,” TOML/USFS, 2006

“Mammoth Snowmobile Adventures Route Map,” Mammoth Snowmobile Adventures, no copyright date

“Mammoth Adventure Map,” Sierra Maps, 2003

“Eastern Sierra Birding Trail Map,” Eastern Sierra Audubon/Mono Lake Committee/Owens Valley Committee, no copyright date

Jurisdictional Cross-Reference

Meetings/Communications with USFS

MLTPA staff met or conversed via telephone and e-mail with a number of Inyo National Forest USFS employees, in order to inform them of our efforts and ask them for whatever GIS data they could provide to enhance/verify our GIC efforts. These employees included: Daniel C. Yarborough, GIS Coordinator; Martin Hornick, Trail Program Coordinator/Route Designation Project Leader; Mike Schlafmann, Acting Deputy District Ranger/Winter Sports Specialist; and Rick Laborde, Acting Assistant Recreation Officer. All members of the USFS with whom MLTPA made contact made special reference to the ongoing USFS Route Designation Process in Inyo National Forest, stating that the data they currently have for OSV/OHV use is out of date, and that the new data being collected will be not officially ready for a couple of years; therefore, there is no reliable, up-to-date GIS information available from the USFS for the MLTPA GIC at this time.

Meetings/Communications with California Department of Fish & Game

Bow hunting is one of the identified activities represented on the MLTPA field sheet for this data set. In the process of

surveying PPAs for activity-related information, MLTPA sought a map that would outline the areas in which bow hunting was allowed. A poorly rendered map, distributed by the Mammoth Lakes Police Department and part of Ordinance 86-25 (December 17, 1986) passed by Town Council, was unclear in its boundaries, so MLTPA approached Diane Hermans, a game warden with the California Department of Fish & Game, for assistance in deciphering the map. With the help of Fish & Game GIS Analyst Lora Konde, a more clearly defined boundary was traced over the original map, with Township Range and Section data collected from the original ordinance, which MLTPA then took to Nate Greenberg, TOML Joint GIS Coordinator, to have added to the TOML GIS database. Though not all boundaries on the original map are clear, Fish & Game helped provide a better understanding of the allowable hunting in our area.

Internal Cross-Check (MLTPA Staff)

MLTPA staff has reviewed, internally, this data set for accuracy, to the best of its ability. Due to the ongoing USFS Route Designation Process, much of the existing OHV/OSV information could not be verified internally, as resources from the USFS are unavailable. Due to the issues described above with the hunting boundaries, bow-hunting information is also largely unverifiable.

MLTPA Public Meeting – Public Comment Opportunity

On November 4, 2006, MLTPA hosted a Public Meeting at MMSA's Little Eagle Lodge, sponsored in part by the TOML and MMSA, to present materials gathered/developed for the GIC to date, and to solicit public input on the PPAs so far identified and catalogued.

Description of Materials on Display

In addition to other display materials, the public was presented with four large maps of Mammoth Lakes and the immediate Eastern Sierra region: a map of the Planning Area and surrounding public lands (nearly identical to the MLTPA analog working map); a map of the UGB (nearly identical to the MLTPA analog working map); a map of outdoor recreation amenities by region; and a map of jurisdictions overlaid on the Planning Area and surrounding public lands. Also available for comment were two abridged sets of the analog field sheets, complete with photos, and a

binder full of blank paper within which the public could make comments and suggestions.

Results/Feedback from Community

More than 200 people attended the Public Meeting. Only one comment was made in the comments binder, however, and that was to include tennis as one of the outdoor recreation amenities. No comments were made, either vocally or on paper, about the maps, field sheets, or any other element of the GIC.

How to Interpret This Data Set

Usage by Activity

Y/N/? for each activity based on what volunteer knew of area, present signage, and cross-reference with above-mentioned parties: As evident on the field sheets, each outdoor recreation activity listed could be described in terms of occurrence and permission as “yes,” “no,” or “I’m not sure”. MLTPA relied on volunteers’ knowledge of the area, and their ability to identify usage signs nearby each PPA, to determine the activities that are participated in from each PPA. Local maps and meetings with the jurisdictional agencies described above were used to cross-check that information, but it is important to state that, due to the USFS Route Designation Process, current information about usage on their lands (which comprise the bulk of the scope of work) is simply unavailable at this time. The information gathered and presented in this report has not yet been verified by the USFS, and is to be considered from the perspective of “evidence of use.”

“Evidence of Use”

What does that mean, in terms of permission? “Evidence of use” means simply that each volunteer surveying a PPA would look for or derive information about the activities occurring in that area based on existing signage, trail condition, user information, and general knowledge of the area. Whether or not certain activities are, indeed, allowed by the jurisdictional agency who has a particular PPA or its surrounding area in its purview is, in many cases, yet to be determined; for the purposes of this stage of the data set, volunteers were asked to catalogue, in the simplest terms, “what people are doing from where,” historically. A full review by the TOML and the USFS of this data set is necessary to accurately provide information about which outdoor recreation activities are permitted from which PPAs and in which areas.

Each point is under the jurisdiction of its particular governing/controlling agency, and it is up to such agencies to determine and enforce usage. In the course of collecting the data found in this set, MLTPA and its volunteers often encountered locals and visitors who voiced concerns over particular activities taking place from specific PPAs, or a set of PPAs within a specific area. MLTPA noted that we were collecting information based on evidence of use, and that we are in no way responsible for making decisions or recommendations about outdoor recreation activities and where they are allowed. Conflicts between, for example, homeowners and recreationalists were referred to the jurisdictional agency whose charge it is to determine, monitor, and enforce their usage policies on their land. MLTPA is not recommending or planning trailheads, staging areas, new trail sections, or other similar ideas based on this set; it is merely presenting what can be defined as “what’s on the ground,” given the controls and methods described herein.

Disclaimer

The ongoing and current USFS Route Designation Process has, to this point, prevented MLTPA from obtaining up-to-date information about allowed usage of USFS lands as it pertains to OHV and OSV use. Available information is unreliable, as it is not current, and the USFS is not permitted to release new data as it comes in, and will only be able to do so once the Route Designation Process is complete. In addition, the TOML General Plan Update is also in progress. These two updates shall serve as valuable resources for MLTPA in the context of any future planning efforts once they are complete and available. In the interim, MLTPA has had numerous meetings with the region’s related jurisdictional agencies, and looks forward providing this data set not only to the TOML, but also the USFS, private property owners, and other interested parties for their official review and approval.

Photographs

Each of the three types of photos for each PPA supplied as part of this data set serves a specific purpose, as outlined below.

Site: These photos represent the location of the PPA in the context of its surrounding area, and serve to make immediately identifiable each PPA geographically.

Condition: These photos represent the condition, or state, of each PPA and, in some cases, the trails and/or recreation areas it accesses, in regards to maintenance, passage, etc.

Signage: These photos represent the existing signage in the immediate area of each PPA, from “No Parking” signs to USFS signage, TOML signage, private landowner signage, and signage created by residents of the nearby area.

Seasonality: Each photo presented as part of this data set was captured during, in the vast majority of cases, the spring and summer months of 2006. MLTPA feels it would be useful to, at a later date, supplement this data set with winter and fall photographs that would more accurately describe the state of each PPA during our very snowy colder months, as these conditions often obstruct signage, make passage difficult in some areas, and change the nature of the activities conducted from each PPA.

Next-Step Verification of Data Set

Jurisdictional Agencies Vetting Process

Upon acceptance of this data set by its contractor, the TOML, MLTPA recommends a further vetting, or “sign-off,” process that would include each jurisdictional entity responsible for the lands on which the PPAs in this data set exist. Each agency, both public and private, will be asked to review the field sheets contained within this data set, make comments or suggestions regarding the veracity of the information presented, and then, once those changes have been incorporated into the data set, provide an official signature indicating that said agency has approved the data set. This will serve to make absolutely clear not only the jurisdictional agent of each PPA, but also to state, with no doubt, the activities allowed on the lands adjacent to each PPA. This will be especially helpful in interpreting and identifying the boundaries for OSV/OHV allowable usage. These entities may include the USFS, TOML, private landowners, and the DWP.

USFS Special Notes: Since MMSA is working under a lease agreement with the USFS for operation of the ski area, the USFS will have final approval of PPAs intersecting or appearing on or near MMSA. Further, in light of the ongoing Route Designation Process, MLTPA is aware that the information contained in this data set is subject to change once that process is complete.

Community Vetting Process

Explanation of Districts as Proposed/Identified by Mark Wardlaw, TOML
Community Development Director

Mark Wardlaw has, to date, identified 12 “districts” within the UGB that serve to mark neighborhoods in light of their unique characteristics. They are listed below. (See *tab “Outreach”*)

Main Street, Shady Rest, Old Mammoth Road, and Mammoth Creek Park

Gateway (and Civic Center)

North Village

Sierra Star

Snowcreek

West Ridge

Meridian

Knolls

Mammoth Slopes

Old Mammoth

Sierra Valley

The Pines

MLTPA has proposed, in informal discussions with Mark Wardlaw and Tourism and Recreation Director Danna Stroud, a “neighborhood by neighborhood” vetting process of this data set, in order to engage the community in a discussion of trails and public access as we move forward with the creation of any trails and public-access master plan. Though community members are not, except in special cases, jurisdictional agencies, and therefore do not have the authority to restrict or promote any activity that adjoins their private lots, their input in this process is invaluable, as the goal of any trails and public-access master planning is to create a system of trails and public access that works for the community as a whole. In fact, a number of community members have voiced their opinions to MLTPA and its volunteer staff over the last six months, and seem eager to continue to provide feedback and assistance with this project. Community members should have a chance to offer their comments and suggestions via “coffee table” meetings with MLTPA, public meetings, website “bulletin board” participation, or written feedback. MLTPA advises that the TOML conduct this portion of the vetting process based on the districts identified by Mark Wardlaw, so that comments are contained within neighborhoods; this will allow comments to be compared

and contrasted both within and against each neighborhood. No formal agreement to begin this process has been reached; it is still in the formative stages.

Transferal of Verified Data Set from Analog Sheets to GIS

This step will fall outside the current scope of work. The results of the jurisdictional agency and private property verification, coupled with the outcomes of the community outreach component, will change the nature of the data in this set, thereby making the creation of a GIS database premature; additionally, the use of this data set in the context of a trails and public-access master planning process is critical, and all input gathered during this process should be included in the final, master revision of the data set prior to conversion to a digital database. This data set, though official in the sense that it satisfies the GIC, is still a draft set; the final data set, from which the GIS database will be created, will come after agency and public input, verification and approval.

GIS Database Creation and Verification

Creation of GIS Text Database

Per discussions with Nate Greenberg, MLTPA would construct an Excel spreadsheet that accounts for each PPA on one axis and the field names listed in the field sheet on the opposing axis. The information from each verified analog field sheet would be transferred to the spreadsheet.

Creation of GIS Digital Map

GPS equipment was not used in the collection of this data set, for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of availability and resources to train volunteers on such equipment, to the additional time such surveying would have added to MLTPA's efforts, to the potential conflicts such information might have with existing USFS information and the information being collected during the RDP. In lieu of gathering exact digital coordinates, and per discussion with Nate Greenberg and Mike Schlafmann, MLTPA will instead offer a Photoshop digital map image with each PPA overlaid onto the aerial regional image and flattened. The TOML has agreed to then translate those points from MLTPA's map image to its own GIS maps.

Creation of GIS Photo Database

The photos for each PPA will be named according to a predetermined hierarchy and burned to a supplemental DVD for uploading into the TOML GIS database along with the Excel

spreadsheet. Each photo name will then be represented in the Excel spreadsheet as a link in its own field, which, once all the data is uploaded into the TOML GIS database, will cause it to be displayed in GIS software programs whenever its matching PPA is requested.

Delivery of Database to TOML

Once complete, the GIS database, with its attendant photos, can be delivered to Nate Greenberg for inclusion in the TOML existing GIS database.

How This Data Set May Be Used

MLTPA Planning Proposal

MLTPA hopes to use and refine the information in this data set in the context of a trails and public-access master planning process that would, with the cooperation of all jurisdictional agencies involved, make our current and future trails and public-access system accessible, efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and a recognized world-class amenity.

Integration of In-Town and Public-Land Systems

Due to our unique geographic location, Mammoth Lakes is, literally, “a town within a park.” The town is surrounded on all sides by national forestland, and to ignore this interface with the trails and infrastructure would do a major disservice to the residents and tourists who rely upon accessibility for outdoor recreation. Mammoth Lakes is in a unique position to give locals and tourists the opportunity to move from the center of town to the middle of nowhere, all on the same trail system; given the data set provided here, planners may be able to more clearly identify where PPAs cross over the UGB and into forestland, and to improve this type of crossing so that it is seamless and efficient.

Planning

It is MLTPA’s hope that this data set—and the final set it engenders after the vetting process is complete and the information contained herein is incorporated into the TOML GIS database—becomes an important tool for TOML planners in the context of current and future development and improvement, both commercial and residential, within the UGB and without. What follows is a series of suggestions by MLTPA about how the information we have collected may be most effectively used.

Updated “Trails Master Plan”

The “Trails Master Plan,” a document created in 1991 to begin the visioning and construction of the paved, in-town, multi-use pathways referred to as the Mammoth Lakes Trails System, can be updated with the information in this data set, as not only do some of the identified PPAs form part of this trail system, but many of them intersect it in ways that can be improved for the public benefit (i.e., PPA #0006, the Cerro Coso Connector). Additionally, as MLTPA advanced with our efforts to look at the “larger picture” of the trails and public-access system in Mammoth Lakes, it became evident that many sections of the MLTS are discontinuous; being able to view the MLTS in relation to the other PPAs in the area should bring into sharper focus how continuity can best be brought to the system.

Identification of “Community Benefits”

By being able to look at all the region’s PPAs next to one another, on the same GIS layer—which is itself overlaid on existing GIS layers displaying parcels, jurisdiction, and ownership—the TOML may more easily be able to determine which PPAs are, at this point, most threatened by development and lack of planning—in short, which PPAs, if lost, would effectively lock residents and tourists out of an entire, major sector of the region (i.e., PPA #0027, Tamarack St.). This larger-view capability may assist TOML planners in identifying and creating action plans in coordination with MLTPA to preserve PPAs by way of purchase, negotiation, or easement protection.

TOML PDMP

With the goal of the PDMP being to improve the mobility of residents and tourists within the UGB, and the TOML’s emphasis on “feet first” transportation and dedication to keeping vehicular traffic at a minimum, looking at how the trails and PPAs presented in this data set interface with existing and proposed trails (both paved and unpaved), roads, public parking, public transportation, facilities (bathrooms, drinking water, bike racks, etc.), and disabled access can help planners determine the best way to incorporate these PPAs as elements of mobility—not simply as gateways to other outdoor recreation activities. Many of the trails and PPAs included in this data set have grown up “organically”; that is to say, they are often the result of years of people wearing the same “path of least resistance” into the earth. Considering these paths in the context of future construction and connectivity may assist planners in identifying the best, most efficient, and easiest ways to

encourage residents and tourists to utilize non-vehicular transportation.

Regional Integration

As Mammoth Lakes and the surrounding communities in the Eastern Sierra continue to grow, the potential to connect them together via a system of trails and recreation areas is enormous. Talk of a loop connecting Mammoth Lakes with June Lake has been circulating for some time, and road bike enthusiasts have been riding Hwy. 395 down to Tom's Place and beyond for many years. The opportunity to collect GIS information about Mammoth Lakes and its sister communities, then mesh those data sets together in planning connecting routes, is readily available, and the benefit, both recreationally and financially, has the potential to be just as large. Attempting to plan for connectors without having a reliable library of PPAs would be leaving out a crucial piece of the planning puzzle.

Overlay of PPA Points with Existing Planning Data

PPA information in GIS form, which can be viewed in the manner described above, can be applied to generating a Trails Standards Guide that planners and trail builders can reference when improving or constructing new trails, staging areas, access points, and recreation areas so that these amenities have the least environmental impact.

Explanation of Terms

Document Set: The hard-copy, analog PDFs representing information and photographs of each PPA identified by MLTPA during the GIC

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): A GIS is a computer system capable of capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information; that is, data identified according to location. Practitioners also define a GIS as including the procedures, operating personnel, and spatial data that go into the system. *(From the USGS GIS Information page)*

GIS Inventory Contract (GIC): A contract between MLTPA and the TOML instructing/authorizing MLTPA to identify and assess the PPAs within and, in some cases, outside the Urban Growth Boundary, Town Boundary, and Planning Area

Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA): A community-based public benefit corporation, producers of this data set

Mammoth Lakes Trail System (MLTS): A paved, multi-use pathway developed beginning in 1991 by the TOML as a mobility and recreation amenity

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA): The ski and summer mountain resort area leased for private use from the USFS

Mobility Plan Resources Report (MPRR): A report, written by MLTPA and presented to the TOML and community on July 26, 2006, that identified 100 trails and PPAs within and outside the UGB and Town Boundary, as well as provided additional resources in the form of reference to and information about peer communities, a gallery of signage and wayfinding graphics in peer communities, and a supplemental DVD with websites and other relevant documentation

Physical Development and Mobility Plan (PDMP): A draft plan, still being developed and refined by the TOML, that outlines modes of transportation within the UGB, including, but not limited to, proposed and existing dirt trails, trailheads, staging areas, paved multi-use pathways, sidewalks, parking areas, and centerlines. The draft version used by MLTPA was dated June 26, 2006.

Point of Public Access (PPA): A specifically located point of access to/egress from public lands and/or outdoor recreation areas/amenities, sometimes interfacing with legal boundaries (UGB, Town Boundary, Planning Area, etc.)

Town Boundary: The drawn geographic boundary that demarcates the municipal area that the TOML has various service, land-use, and other regulatory powers over from surrounding public lands. In general, the Town does not have the same jurisdiction over lands within the Town Boundary that are owned by a "higher governmental authority;" this includes the USFS, County, and state-authorized bodies such as school districts. (24.7 sq. mi., plus 0.3 sq. mi. that comprises the Mammoth Lakes airport)

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML): The staff, council, and commissions of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, including, but not limited to: the Town Council; Planning, Tourism and Recreation, and Public Arts commissions; Environmental and Advanced Planning Division; Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Administration; Finance Department; Tourism and Recreation Department; and the Visitors Bureau.

United States Forest Service (USFS): A division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that, among other duties, oversees and manages public lands, including lease areas. For the purposes of this

report, the USFS most commonly refers to the Inyo National Forest branch/Mammoth Lakes Ranger Station, unless otherwise specified.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB): The drawn geographic boundary that demarcates the TOML's physical presence from surrounding public lands. The UGB is a subset of the Town Boundary wherein the Town has established policy that most forms of development must be within that boundary. (4.5 sq. mi.)