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## MLTPA update

By Kim Stravers  
Project Director

It's funny how you can live in a place for a year, a decade, even a lifetime, and never really see it in its entirety. People are creatures of habit and tend to go about their usual business the usual way—driving the same route to work, heading to their favorite restaurant for dinner each Saturday night and skiing the same, well-loved runs down their local mountain when the snow flies. Yet while there's something



PHOTO BY JOHN WENTWORTH

Take off the blinders and explore new horizons with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access. Pictured here is the Twin Lakes Trail.

to be said for settling into a routine, for being totally comfortable in the town in which you've chosen to hang your hat, it's difficult not to feel as though you're missing out if you don't take the time to explore that mysterious side street you pass on your way to the market, or hike that trail you've been hearing about that's right in your backyard.

We're surprised when we meet folks from New York who have never been to the top of the Empire State Building, or Arizona natives who have yet to peer over the rim of the Grand Canyon. Yet how many of us who make our homes in this part of the beautiful Eastern Sierra have yet to see our neighborhoods from the top of Mammoth Rock, or spend a quiet afternoon fishing from a boat on Lake George? The nature of this area invites us, quietly and every day, to get outside and ride its trails, ski its peaks and swim in its lakes. Though most of the people who live in Mammoth are here because of those very opportunities, and take full and regular advantage of the vast playground that surrounds us, many of us still fall victim to the curse of the familiar.

To be honest, I've been part of MLTPA since its inception, but I've only lived in town since last December. So when we started this inventory project, I was excited, but also a bit apprehensive: How could someone who hadn't left a footprint on more than a few acres of this place help to protect it all? The answer came quickly and simply in the form of the many different locals who have come to volunteer. I've met hikers, backcountry skiers, Frisbee golfers, snowshoers, climbers and 4WD enthusiasts, and they have all come prepared not only to fill out field sheets and shoot photos, but also to explain, with a passion that literally lights up their faces, why they love this place.

I've watched people look over our huge aerial maps, dotted with points and pushpins, and seen their fingers fly directly to a spot they visit every season, eager to tell us all about their favorite memory of

a place, how they found it and how they bring their friends, their neighbors, and their families there time and again. I've also watched them raise their eyebrows in surprise, never having realized how big the Mammoth area really is, or never having known how many other places their fellow residents consider *their* outside version of home. Often, volunteers will ask to be assigned to a site they have yet to explore on their own—and come back smiling, telling us they've found a new favorite trail.

What that all boils down to is this: curiosity, pure and simple. By tossing off old blinders and seeing Mammoth as though for the first time, without the landmarks and signposts of our daily lives, we're able to figuratively move here all over again and experience the happiness of discovering something new. The more we see, the better we understand its value and why so many thousands of tourists roll into town each season to spend a few precious days in places some of us didn't even know existed.

With 100 points of access already catalogued, the enormous scope of what Mammoth has to offer comes into focus. For every wonderful spot you've added to your personal list, there are five more waiting for you to visit. We invite you to stop on by, take a gander at the maps, and find a place you've always wanted to check out, but haven't yet—or to give us the scoop on a point we might have overlooked. Send us e-mail at [volunteer@mltpa.org](mailto:volunteer@mltpa.org), or call (760) 934-3154.

Curiosity might have killed the proverbial cat, but it might be just what we need to save our trails.

*This is the second installment of the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) biweekly update to keep you informed about the projects MLTPA is working on, events they've got planned and progress they've been making.*

Watch Channel 72  
The Mammoth Channel



## Save the Date: Festival of Trees Celebration! Saturday, December 9, 2006

- \* Trees will be showcased December 2 - December 8 at the Mammoth Ski Museum for the entire community to enjoy! New Location!
- \* Gala party at Cerro Coso Community College on December 9.
- \* Live auction of spectacular themed trees with exciting holiday presents
- \* Gifts galore for silent auction
- \* Dancing
- \* Trip for Two Raffle
- \* Proceeds will help support a Full Field Digital Mammography System for Mammoth Hospital

For more information, please contact Lori Ciccarelli, Community Relations Director, at (760) 924-4015 or email [lori.ciccarelli@mammothhospital.com](mailto:lori.ciccarelli@mammothhospital.com)

