

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Scoping for Reds Meadow Valley Recreation Renovation Project – Public Comment

Meeting Date: June 5, 2024

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RECOMMENDATION:

Provide public comment related to the Reds Meadow Campground Improvements Proposal.

BACKGROUND:

The Inyo National Forest (INF), Mammoth Ranger District seeks to improve the user experience at campgrounds in the Reds Meadow Valley. The proposal includes renovations and ecological restoration at seven recreation sites in the Reds Meadow Valley: Upper Soda Springs Campground; Pumice Flat Campground, Group Campground and Amphitheater; Minaret Falls Campground; Reds Meadow Campground; and Agnew Meadows Parking Area.

ANALYSIS:

The Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR) has reviewed the project documents and is excited to see these proposed improvements at these “well loved” campgrounds in the Reds Meadow Valley. The OOR fully supports the INF proposal but also recommends the following be included in the Renovation Project.

- The addition of shower facilities in at least one (1) of the Reds Meadow Valley Campgrounds.
 - Due to the high volume of thru-hikers having shower facilities (which used to exist in Reds Meadow Campground and have subsequently been decommissioned) would be an added benefit to users.
 - While shower facilities do exist at Reds Meadow Resort, the OOR feels it would be a benefit to all users to have a shower facility in one of the campgrounds.
- The paving of campground roads and spurs and the two Agnew Meadows Trailheads.
 - While paving can cause mixed emotions, the OOR feels that paving campground roads and the two (2) Agnew Meadows trailheads would create both a better user experience and protect resources.
 - Paving in campgrounds will serve to mitigate dust impacts as it is very dusty in the valley.

- Due to limited enforcement, paving the Campground roads and Agnew Trailheads will allow for the INF to institute a “park on pavement only” policy allowing for an easier understanding by visitors as to where they can and cannot park. This also allows for easier enforcement by creating clear lines of delineation.
- Create connections between existing Minaret Vista and Reds Meadow Valley Soft Surface Trails.
 - Create connections between non-motorized soft surface trails in the Reds Meadow Valley for bikers, hikers, and other non-motorized users.
 - Currently there is a patchwork of valley trails that are not connected via approved system trails, specifically between Pumice Flat & Minaret Falls.
- Create a multi-use pathway (MUP) connecting valley campgrounds and eventually Minaret Vista.
 - Due to costs, bike lanes will not be a part of the Reds Meadow Road Reconstruction Project.
 - Creating a MUP connecting the Campgrounds in the valley will allow for e-bike users, people with disabilities, and other users to have an ADA/ABA accessible pathway connecting the campgrounds, allowing for new and improved ways to experience the Reds Meadow Valley.
 - The proliferation of e-Bikes, combined with the fact they are not allowed on soft-surface trails, creates a need for additional infrastructure to manage this use. Due to no bike lanes on the Reds Meadow Road, combined with all the bus, car, and RV traffic, an unsafe condition often exists. A MUP would address these challenges.