

## TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES STAFF REPORT

Title: Outdoor Recreation Manager Update

Meeting Date: August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Prepared by: Lawson Reif, Outdoor Recreation Manager

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The Outdoor Recreation Manager of the Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR) will present a report highlighting the following:

- 23/24 Measure R budget review.
- Engagement on the annual Inyo Program of Work Request.
- Input regarding staffing needs in order to properly manage the Inyo National Forest OSV program.
- Discussion on e-bikes and bike safety.
- Input regarding 'foundation site' recreational development.
- Input regarding potential future purchase of a Trail Dozer.
- Engagement regarding future efforts related to Trail System Interpretive Sign QR Codes.

### **2023/2024 Budget Review**

- 2023/2024 once again saw the office of Outdoor Recreation work within established budgets. But with that said, work to improve the accuracy of each budget category is ongoing and a work in progress. The OOR will always strive to provide the most accurate budget possible to TOML finance staff at the beginning of each fiscal year,
- 2023/2024 saw the OOR aggressively seek alternative funding sources. This includes Local Transportation Commission (LTC) dollars and FEMA emergency dollars. By seeking, and eventually receiving this alternative funding, the OOR is able to complete as much, if not more work than previous years, while not drawing down as much funding from Measure R.

### **Annual Program of Work Request (POW)**

- Each fiscal year the OOR facilitates the Town wide requests that will result in more in-depth NEPA with the US Forest Service; and submit those requests to Inyo National Forest leadership.
- The OOR will be both presenting & seeking recommendations for FY24/25 POW requests and will engage Town Council on this topic in Late-August or Early-September.

### **OSV Program Management & Staffing**

- As the OOR continues to pursue the takeover of the Inyo National Forest OSV Program, discussions of funding and capacity will need to occur in order to make the program a success.
- The OOR is seeking committee recommendations related to staffing and will present a recommendation of their own.
- Upon research and deliberation, the OOR will recommend hiring a permanent position who's primary winter function will be winter grooming, and who will serve as a trails lead in summer. A discussion of the positives and negative of a permanent vs. seasonal position will also occur.

### **Bike Management**

- The OOR would like to present a review of the steps taken to date, and upcoming additional steps, to manage the various uses on the Multi-Use Pathways, specifically Bikes.
- See letter attached to this staff report which highlights these steps and is being disseminated by Mammoth PD to concerned citizens who reach out on this topic.

### **‘Foundation Site’ Development**

- The OOR is seeking MTC input regarding potential recreational development of the ‘Foundation Site’.
- The OOR will provide their recommendations for site development.

### **Trail Dozer Purchase**

- The OOR, most likely in October, will be seeking approval to purchase a trail dozer using both Measure R and Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) funding.
- The SHARP project, assuming approval, will require 20+ miles of trail construction and additional mileage of trail decommissioning. In order to, construct with the best efficiency, and lowest footprint, possible the OOR recommends the purchase of an \$80,000.00 trail dozer.
- Another additional benefit is to provide capacity to other nearby entities who may perform trail work or trail construction, including, but not limited to, Mono CO, Inyo N.F., BLM Bishop Field Office, Inyo County, and other entities who may propose or construct trail, such as the Crowley CSA.

### **Interpretive Sign QR Codes**

- Based on the low levels of engagement, the OOR is seeking MTC input on the future level of effort the OOR should be putting into QR code and backend webpage development.

## **MLPD Bike Safety Letter**

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding e-bike usage in the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The Town acknowledges your concerns regarding the increasing presence of e-bikes not only on pedestrian walkways and multi-use paths (MUPs) but throughout the community of Mammoth Lakes and surrounding areas. Ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents and visitors in Mammoth Lakes is a high priority for the Town and we appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Prior to summer, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department partnered with the Town's Office of Outdoor Recreation to author a new ordinance that limits bicycle speed in the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Chapter 10.24 of the Town's Municipal Code (Vehicles on Trails, Multi-Use Pathways (MUPS) and Sidewalks) establishes regulations and guidelines for the use of alternative transportation devices on trails within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. This will allow our law enforcement officers to cite violators for speeding or users who exhibit reckless behavior on bicycles that will hopefully reduce the e-bike speed issues we are seeing throughout Town.

As stated in Chapter 10.24 of the Municipal Code (Reckless Operation of Alternative Transportation Devices on Trails): *"No person shall operate any alternative transportation device on Town-owned or operated trails in a reckless manner. For purposes of this section, "reckless" shall mean operation of a device in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property, the natural environment."* In addition, *"The speed limit for any device shall not exceed **15 miles per hour**, but in no instance shall the speed allowed be greater than is reasonable and prudent under the existing conditions having due regard for terrain, weather, visibility, including time of day, pedestrian, and vehicular traffic on or crossing the trail, and condition of the device."*

In the State of California, as per the California Vehicle Code (section 760), a motorized vehicle is a vehicle that is propelled moved, or drawn upon a highway, excepting a device moved exclusively by human power. Examples of this would be a car/truck, lawnmower, go-cart, motorcycle, electric motorcycles (ie: Surrón, which looks like a bicycle without pedals), etc.

### **E-bikes, if they have pedals, are considered bicycles regardless of what class they fall under.**

Operators of a bicycle can be arrested/cited for operating a bicycle under the influence of alcohol or drugs per California Vehicle Code Section (CVC) 21200.5: *"Notwithstanding Section 21200, it is unlawful for any person to ride a bicycle upon a highway while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug, or under the combined influence of an alcoholic beverage and any drug. Any person arrested for a violation of this section may request to have a chemical test made of the person's blood, breath, or urine for the purpose of determining the alcoholic or drug content of that person's blood pursuant to Section 23612, and, if so requested, the arresting officer shall have the test performed. A conviction of a violation of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250). Violations of this section are subject to Section 13202.5."*

Bicyclists can also be held liable for a hit and run under California Vehicle Code Section 21200(2): *"A person operating a bicycle on a Class I bikeway, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 890.4 of the Streets and Highways Code, has all the rights and is subject to all the provisions applicable to the driver of a vehicle pursuant to Section 20001, except those provisions which by their very nature can have no application."*

In response to your concerns, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department and Office of Outdoor Recreation has taken the following action and introduced several initiatives to address e-bike safety throughout the community of Mammoth Lakes.

- We have actively participated in community events such as Kidapalooza, SEMBA bike events, and Town Clean-Up Day to promote bicycle safety. At these events, we distributed bike safety items including lights, bells, and helmets.
- Our traffic messaging trailer has been deployed in high-incident areas to convey bike safety messages, urging cyclists to slow down and exercise caution.
- Officers have been assigned overtime shifts specifically targeting e-bike and pedestrian safety, ensuring enhanced patrol, education and enforcement.
- We are collaborating with the Office of Outdoor Recreation to develop and deploy bike safety signage along the Town-wide Multi-Use Path System (MUPS).
- Our officers patrol the MUPS on e-bikes, which enables us to directly engage with cyclists in areas that are not accessible by police cars.
- We are participating in and continuously explore further opportunities for community bike rides.
- Our department is preparing bike safety presentations for schools scheduled to commence in August.
- The department sends and shares multiple e-bike education posts on our social media channels.
- We are also exploring the introduction of a bicycle safety class for violators issued citations for infractions, aiming to educate and promote responsible cycling behavior.
- Utilizing a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety, we purchased bike bells and are in the process of developing sandwich board type signage to deploy in high-incident areas along the Town-wide MUPS.
- The Office of Outdoor Recreation painted appropriate e-bike safety messaging on the MUPS. These stencils include messaging to “Slow Down” & “Share the Trail”.
- Where possible, Town-wide MUPS are being widened to the maximum width of 12 feet. Any existing 8-foot wide sections of MUPS are being widened to at least 10 feet.
- To increase awareness of an e-bikers speed, three flashing slow signs have been installed between the Mammoth Pack Station and the junction of Minaret Road on the Lake Mary Road MUP. In addition, six new radar speed monitors with electronic messaging have been ordered and will be placed along high-speed/incident areas.
- To maintain visibility, new regulatory signage is being ordered to replace any faded signage along the MUPS.
- To increase e-bike user interactions and rider education, the Office of Outdoor Recreation is expanding the Host program to include e-bike hosts who will patrol the MUPS and provide appropriate-use and wayfinding services to visitors.
- To improve e-bike safety and increase awareness of regulatory information, a new summer recreation map was recently completed and will be widely distributed throughout the Town and to local bike shops.

I hope you find this information helpful. We very much appreciate your advocacy on this critical issue and greatly value community input. Please be assured that the safety and well-being of all residents and visitors in Mammoth Lakes is a high priority for the Town as we continue to actively work with all partners, local businesses and stakeholders to create a safe e-bike experience for all users.