

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Town of Mammoth Lakes priorities for the FY25/26 Inyo National Forest Program of Work

Meeting Date: September 3, 2025

Prepared by: Lawson Reif, Outdoor Recreation Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) priorities for the FY25/26 Inyo National Forest Program of Work.

BACKGROUND:

In preparation for the new Federal Fiscal Year beginning October 1st, 2025, TOML prepares a list of priority projects for review by Inyo leadership. The criteria to include projects on the list are those that require higher level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and specialist input. Submitting TOML priorities at this time allows for review prior to the start of the new federal fiscal year, when forest leadership are developing their work program.

It is not anticipated that all projects listed would be included in the Inyo National Forest Program of Work, however the full list of priorities is recommended so Inyo leadership is aware of the Town's priorities in general. The priorities you will see in the proposed letter are merely recommendations from the Outdoor Recreation Manager and may not cover all Town Council priorities. The letter can be adjusted to include those additional items, if any, or to modify the order of importance of the items listed.

ANALYSIS:

Below is a brief description of each project listed in the Town's priorities for the FY25/26 Inyo National Forest Program of Work.

- 1) Since its incorporation & until recently, TOML has utilized the Snow Storage Area located at the Forest Service (USFS) Helipad located slightly east of the USFS compound along Highway 203. The USFS has not provided a definitive answer regarding future use of this site and considering the importance of snow storage within the Town, further engagement appears prudent.
- 2) Sherwin Area Recreation Plan (SHARP) continues to move forward as we are now in implementation for SHARP 3. SHARP 4 is the final environmental analysis needed in the *Snowcreek Meadow Area* and *Panorama Dome* that would complete this project.

- 3) Fuels Management and increasing resiliency in our community are paramount, with the recent events in Los Angeles highlighting this further. Fuels Management work on federal lands will require NEPA and specialist engagement. Without NEPA and subsequent authorization the Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District (MLFPD), TOML, & others will not be able to treat or assist with treatment of USFS lands.
- 4) Shady Rest Inyo Craters was a planning effort funded by the State Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program to look at potential new motorized routes between Mammoth & June Lake. The advent of e-Bikes has made this proposal even more relevant, and the Office of Outdoor Recreation would like to get the next recreation project in the queue with Inyo staff sooner rather than later. More information can be found here: <https://www.mammothlakesrecreation.org/shady-rest-inyo-craters>
- 5) Acquisition of Inyo lands around the Airport has been on the Inyo Program of Work Council approved document since 2022. This request makes sense to provide Mammoth-Yosemite Airport with the autonomy it needs to provide the best product possible.
- 6) The Town currently has an active special use permit for Mammoth Creek Park East, and a Bike Skills Area seems like a quality amenity to put on this piece of federal land immediately adjacent to Town. Bike Skills Areas exist currently on both USFS and other Federal Lands (specifically the Bureau of Reclamation).
- 7) The 2018 Farm Bill has been reauthorized and allows for housing to be built on USFS Administrative Sites. In Mammoth Lakes, that area is currently occupied by the USFS housing compound. The Mammoth District Ranger seems amenable to moving forward with proposals and having administrative housing on this site, usable by partner agencies, would have immense benefit to various organizations willing to participate.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

TOML currently has a Town Council approved Collection Agreement with the Inyo National Forest for \$70,000.00 to facilitate NEPA related to TOML prioritized project work. This *should* allow for a more efficient NEPA process once projects are approved.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

All projects requested by TOML for the FY25/26 Inyo Program of Work would require NEPA analysis.