



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INYO NATIONAL FOREST, TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES, EASTERN SIERRA INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION AND MLTPA FOUNDATION UNVEIL MAMMOTH LAKES TRAIL SYSTEM

Mammoth Lakes, California - On Saturday, October 20, 2012 the public is invited to a special day of celebration marking the completion of a series of important federally, state, and locally funded trail projects, and the official Grand Opening of the Mammoth Lakes Trail System (MLTS) and the agency partnerships that support it. All activities are free and open to the public.

The Inyo National Forest (INF), Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML), Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association (ESIA), and the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) have teamed up to commemorate this occasion with MLTS tours, Summer of Stewardship volunteer trail projects, demonstrations of the new MLTS website (www.MammothTrails.org), and a 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. ribbon-cutting, and dedication ceremony at the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center (2510 Main Street.)

Several noteworthy long-term trails projects are to be honored on October 20, 2012. These include the completion of the Lakes Basin Path, and the wayfinding and interpretive signage installed along various Town paths including the Lakes Basin Path.

Lakes Basin Path

Conceived in the mid 90's with planning funds appropriated in 2000, the ambitious \$11 Million project to construct a 5.3 mile Class 1 bike path in the spectacular Lakes Basin began construction on Monday, August 27, 2007, and opened to the public four years later on Friday, August 26, 2011 as a much larger, partner-funded \$17 Million project.

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The Lakes Basin Path officially begins at the intersection of Main Street and Minaret Road and gains 950 ft. of breathtaking elevation over 5.3 miles of Inyo National Forest to Horseshoe Lake.

The Lake Mary Road Bike Path Project and Road Rehabilitation Project was funded through an impressive array of funds received from a variety of sources including Federal Transportation Enhancement Act, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), State Local Transportation, Recovery Act through the Forest Service, Local Development Impact Fees, and Measure R (Mammoth Lakes Recreation, Trails and Parks Investment Initiative.) The project also included realignment and reconstruction of approximately 2-miles of Lake Mary Road to make room for the Lakes Basin Path.

Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage

A total of 125 wayfinding signs were installed along various Town paths including the Lakes Basin Path. The fabrication and placement of wayfinding signs on national forest land were funded by Recovery Act funds, and jointly managed by Inyo National Forest and Town Public Works Department personnel through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement.

Wayfinding signs on Town land were funded by Measure R, and managed by the Public Works Department. Assistance was provided by MLTPA for wayfinding maps and sign content, as identified in the Trail System Master Plan. Adopted by the Mammoth Lakes Town Council on October 11, 2011 the Trail System Master Plan (TSMP) guides the development and implementation of all kinds of trails and recreational facilities that may be built, managed, operated, or programmed by the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

16 new interpretive exhibit panels have been designed, with 8 of them currently installed, that help travelers along the bike path to learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Mammoth Lakes area. These were funded by Recovery Act and Measure R funds.

Integral to this new signage are QR (quick response) codes that, when scanned with a smartphone, will connect visitors with additional information about the trail. This enhanced content is channeled through the brand-new MLTS website, www.MammothTrails.org - the first comprehensive digital resource for the Mammoth Lakes Trail System (MLTS). The website offers detailed trail, destination, activity, and experience information for the entire system, comprised of some 300-plus miles of trails and connecting users to nationally renowned parks, wilderness areas, and other outdoor attractions.

For additional information regarding the MLTS projects, and a schedule of the celebration events, please visit www.mltpa.org, or contact Nancy Upham, INF Public Affairs Officer, at (760) 873-2427 or nupham@fs.fed.us, or Stuart Brown, Town of Mammoth Lakes Public Information Officer at (760) 934-8989 ext. 210 or sbrown@ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us.

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Inyo National Forest: Located in California's beautiful Eastern Sierra, the Inyo National Forest offers clean air, crystal blue skies, mountain lakes and streams, challenging trails, high mountain peaks, and beautiful views. With over two million acres, the Inyo National Forest is home to many natural wonders, including Mt. Whitney, Mono Lake, Mammoth Lakes Basin, and the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, as well as nine Congressionally-designated Wildernesses.

Town of Mammoth Lakes: Incorporated in 1984, The Town of Mammoth Lakes is a region of only four square miles located in the Inyo National Forest of Mono County. A small but energetic population of just over 8,000 year-round residents chose to leave behind their urban lifestyles and experience the unique attributes of the Eastern Sierra. The town is surrounded by acres of forest, and is bordered by the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wilderness Areas. California's premier resort Mammoth Mountain Ski Area is located 4 miles from the center of Town.