



U.S. Forest Service
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Whitney Portal Road Reconstruction Nearly Completed *Plan for Minor Delays*

The Whitney Portal Road Reconstruction Project, which began in March of 2016, is nearly completed. The project was accomplished under a funding request from Inyo County. The project included re-paving, significant improvements to drainage and culverts, and other repairs for safety.

Visitors to the area should still expect minor delays while the finishing work is completed.

"We would like to thank our visitors for their incredible patience during this project," said Nora Gamino, Acting Forest Engineer. "Achieving a project of this scale requires coordination on the part of Inyo County, the Federal Highways Administration, Hat Creek Construction, and the forest. Our visitors were part of that equation and worked with our construction schedule and parking plans. They were part of the successful completion of this project."

Whitney Portal is the most popular trailhead on the forest; with hikers applying, by lottery, to ascend the tallest mountain in the contiguous United States. Mt Whitney is also the southern terminus of the John Muir Trail (JMT).

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The mission of the U.S. Forest Service, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.