

# Updated Sustainable Recreation – Inyo National Forest Plan Components

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## Forest-wide Direction (excludes designated wilderness)

### Desired Conditions

- 01 The diverse landscapes of the forest offer a variety of recreation settings for a broad range of year-round, nature-based recreation opportunities. Management focuses on settings that enhance the forest recreation program niche.
- 02 The condition, function and accessibility of recreation facilities accommodate the diversity of cultures and populations with appropriate activities available to the public.
- 03 Recreation opportunities provide a high level of visitor satisfaction. The range of recreation activities provide social and economic sustainability.
- 04 Areas on the forest provide for a variety of activities with minimal impact on sensitive environments and resources.
- 05 Visitors can connect with nature, culture and history through a range of sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 06 The management and operation of facilities are place based, integrated, and responsive to changes that may limit or alter access.
- 07 New developed recreation infrastructure is located in ecologically resilient landscapes, while being financially sustainable, and responsive to public needs.
- 08 Dispersed recreation occurs in areas outside of high visitation, developed facilities or communities, and does not adversely impact natural or cultural resources.
- 09 Permitted recreation uses, such as recreation special events or guided activities, are consistent with recreation settings, protect natural and cultural resources, and contribute to the economic sustainability of local communities.
- 10 Forest recreation information is up-to-date, connecting people to the forest through contemporary means including social media and available technology. Efforts are increased to reach diverse communities.
- 11 Provide a range of year-round developed and dispersed recreation opportunities including designing and maintaining a designated system of roads, trails, and areas that provide a variety of motorized and nonmotorized recreation experiences.
- 12 Trails access destinations, provide for opportunities that connect to a larger trail system, provide linkage from local communities to the forest, and are compatible with other resources.

## Objectives

- 01 Within 10 years of plan approval, complete fuel treatment restoration activities on 200 acres at recreation sites that are in areas with a high risk of large, high intensity wildfire.
- 02 Within 20 years of plan approval, convert 5 percent of existing recreation sites to group sites.
- 03 Within 10 years of plan approval, 75 percent of the forest designated trail system is maintained to standard.
- 04 Within 10 years of plan approval establish community based partnership programs to address up to 25 percent of the deferred maintenance for core infrastructure needs such as water, sewer, roads and trails.

## Goals

- 01 Seek to increase transportation systems to connect people to nature, improve personal health, and increase access for underserved communities, minorities and urban youth.
- 02 Promote effective communication with "gateway communities" helps foster partnerships, inspire volunteers, educates the public and supports stewardship including funding, implementation of projects and long-term maintenance of facilities.
- 03 Improve facilities through the establishment of "adopt a facility" programs. Encourage individual and community stewardship to enhance experiences and connect people to the landscape.
- 04 Collaborate with a variety of partners to provide stewardship and interpretive services that enhance responsible recreation and increase knowledge of related socioeconomic and environmental issues.
- 05 Enhance stewardship and monitoring through increased volunteer program activities and partner contributions.
- 06 Provide accessible trails for individuals with mobility impairments.

## Guidelines

- 01 Use the recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) (Exhibit A) to inform projects, activities, and permitted uses. Recreation uses should be managed adaptively to prevent impacts to other resources and recreation settings.
- 02 Redesign, restore, or rehabilitate recreation sites where recreation activities have caused unacceptable natural or cultural resource damage.
- 03 Decommission recreation facilities when: use no longer supports the activity, there is decreased use by the public, or the maintenance demands of the facility exceeds the use of the facility.
- 04 Simplify infrastructure to reduce potential for annual and deferred maintenance.
- 05 New recreation facilities should be located away from environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.
- 06 Infrastructure should mimic the natural textures and colors of the surrounding landscape.
- 07 Utilize management methods, such as seasonal road or trail closures, when appropriate to manage and protect resources and infrastructure.

- 08 Consider improving recreation opportunities at existing facilities prior to developing new ones.
- 09 Informational signs should be installed that inform the public on trail etiquette and other responsible behaviors.
- 10 Trails are maintained to meet trail management objectives based on trail class and designed use.
- 11 Use integrated resource planning during projects to respond to changing conditions in recreation settings.
- 12 The Forest Service should coordinate with local and national partners early in project development to elicit collaborative input on sustainable recreation opportunities, needs, and potential conflicts.
- 13 Manage dispersed recreation activities when evidence of impacts to natural resources emerge or are causing damage.

## Potential Management Approaches

- 01 Consider local organizations, nongovernmental organizations and partners who interact with the public to provide interpretive services in addition to maintenance and administrative duties.
- 02 Work with local organizations to develop a robust trail ambassador corps, a sustainable adopt-a-trail program, and other on-the-ground stewardship and interpretive programs.
- 03 Work with local partners and municipalities to achieve timely opening and closing of access and facilities based on snowpack and other seasonal considerations rather than a fixed administrative calendar.
- 04 Use available technology, interpretive messages and interactions, and partnerships to educate Forest users and develop sustainable recreation opportunities that are focused on the long-term sustainability of the land, animals, fish, and plant species that support a healthy forest ecosystem.
- 05 Develop a clear and concise process for partnership development and implementation. Communicate the Forest's needs in a succinct, easy to understand, and readily available summary. Include the types of agreements, contracts, and mechanisms the Forest will use to work with future partners.
- 06 Consider a "Recreation Users Council" made up of representatives of the various user groups to monitor/ mitigate and resolve any user conflicts if they arise.
- 07 Utilize trail head hosts or volunteer patrollers to educate and interact with the public to promote responsible and sustainable public use practices.

## Destination Recreation Areas

**Management Concept:** This management area provides the most intensive recreation development within the natural setting of the forest. Iconic destinations and well know attractions create a high demand for recreation experiences at specific locations (areas such as Mono Lake, Mammoth Lakes Basin, the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest and Whitney Portal). These places, along with the close proximity to other attractions make these destinations highly desirable to many visitors from all over the world and are often the singular focus of their visit to the Inyo National Forest. The public should expect areas of high-density recreation activity, with high use levels. Recreationists are attracted to this setting because of the variety of opportunities. Motorized access and support facilities (i.e., roads, parking lots, water access, amenities, campgrounds, resorts) are emphasized. Conservation education and interpretation focus on

developing a land ethic as part of the recreation experience. The recreation opportunity spectrum setting is primarily roaded natural with some semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive nonmotorized contained within the area (Table 1).

## Desired Conditions

- 01 The developed area footprint within destination recreation areas is visually appealing and, and well maintained.
- 02 A natural appearing landscape will be retained outside the development footprint.
- 03 Recreation facilities may be highly developed and may be in close proximity to each other.
- 04 Developed sites meet national quality standards.
- 05 Forest roads and trails provide for relatively easy access for users.
- 06 This setting provides amenities and sustainable infrastructure to support a wide variety of recreational activities in close proximity to each other.
- 07 Available infrastructure and amenities are adequate for capacity.
- 08 High levels of encounters with other people can be expected, including large groups.
- 09 Interpretation and education activities are given emphasis.
- 10 Traffic and parking issues will be actively managed.

## Guidelines

- 01 Changes in visitor use levels, patterns of use, or the necessity to protect resources may result in more infrastructure, heavier maintenance, or more controls such as setting capacity limits.

## Potential Management Approaches

- 01 Consider the future implications of additional infrastructure or development accommodating recreation use in areas adjacent or within the developed area.
- 02 Consider accommodating additional recreation special use authorizations or partnership agreements to support goal of providing quality recreation experiences, visitor services and interpretation/education.

**Table 1: Acres of land within each recreation opportunity spectrum class in the Destination Recreation Area**

Destination Recreation Areas	Acres
Primitive	955
Semi-primitive nonmotorized	9,485
Semi primitive motorized	5,558
Roaded Natural	1,565
Roaded Modified	23,459
Rural	11,397

## General Recreation Area

**Management Concept:** This management area is where multiple use is most evident. It is the working landscape where fuelwood gathering, vegetation management, livestock grazing, electrical transmission infrastructure, geothermal, and mining may occur. The public should expect to see a variety of ecosystem-conservation management activities and some lands have been and will be modified to meet multiple use objectives. A broad spectrum of landscapes, activities and uses are included, ranging from relatively unaltered lands to areas of active management for purposes of meeting a variety of social, economic and ecological objectives. Small pockets of concentrated use may exist, but these do not dominate the landscape. The recreation opportunity section settings are primarily rural, with a mix of semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes designed to support recreation pursuits within a working-landscape context (Table 2).

### Desired Conditions

- 01 In this management area there are limited amenities, fewer signs, and minor development.
- 02 Scenic integrity is generally moderate and high. Where developed facilities are present, they are aesthetically incorporated into the landscape. Forest management activities are carried out in ways that maintain or enhance scenic integrity.
- 03 Places for people seeking natural scenery and solitude are available in some areas. In other areas, motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities are easily accessed by the roads found on these lands, and visitors can expect encounters with others.
- 04 Developed recreation sites provide opportunities on the more roaded natural, semi-primitive motorized, and semi-primitive nonmotorized opportunity spectrum with moderately modified natural settings.
- 05 A mosaic of vegetation conditions is often present, with some areas showing the effects of past management activities, and other areas appearing predominantly natural.
- 06 These areas may be occasionally influenced by management activities to support forest health, improve habitat, and reduce fuels.
- 07 This area offers opportunities for expansion of recreational opportunities.
- 08 Manage uses to minimize or avoid user conflicts.
- 09 As new forms of recreation emerge, management will ensure the recreation settings retain their natural character.

### Objectives

- 01 Within 10 years of plan approval add up to five new recreation sites in the general recreation area to provide access to dispersed recreational activities (e.g. hiking, biking, stock, off-highway vehicles and over-snow vehicles) if partnerships are available to assist with the maintenance and management of new facilities.

### Goal

- 01 Highlight quality experiences in this area so visitors are aware of the recreational opportunities in this area.

## Guidelines

- 01 Recreation-site development scale is 3 (moderate site modifications) to 2 (minimal site modifications).
- 02 Utilize direct management techniques to reduce impacts on resources.

## Potential Management Approaches

- 01 Priority will be given to manage user conflicts by separating the development of infrastructure to support various uses in this area. OR design infrastructure and development to maintain separation of uses, where needed.
- 02 Consider accommodating recreation special use authorizations to the extent that the natural and cultural resource can sustain the activity.

**Table 2: Acres of land within each recreation opportunity spectrum class in the general recreation area**

General Recreation Areas	Acres
Primitive	24,047
Semi primitive nonmotorized	65,967
Semi primitive motorized	84,806
Roaded Natural	167,467
Roaded Modified	19,195
Rural	7,762

## Challenging Backroad Recreation Area

**Management Concept:** This management area provides an expanse of largely undeveloped landscapes suited for dispersed recreation use. These areas include the more remote parts of the forest and access can be challenging. The public should expect to see natural landscapes, with few amenities, limited management, low visitor use levels and a low density of visitor use and limited Forest Service presence. Motorized and nonmotorized recreation is often challenging due to terrain and low density of roads and trails. The recreation opportunity spectrum settings in these areas (Table 3) include semi-primitive motorized, semi-primitive nonmotorized, and roaded natural classes designed to support remote recreation pursuits that require less dependence on development.

## Desired Conditions

- 01 These landscapes provide opportunities for challenging and remote recreation experiences.
- 02 These areas contribute to ecosystem and species diversity and sustainability, serve as habitat for fauna and flora, and offer wildlife corridors. These areas provide a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and support species dependent of large, undisturbed areas of land.
- 03 Management activities that support recreation activities are minimal.
- 04 Retain a low density of infrastructure and designated roads and trails.
- 05 Conflicts between different recreation uses are infrequent.
- 06 There are vast areas for nonmotorized cross-country travel, offering visitors opportunities for exploration and challenge.

- 07 Little evidence of cross-country travel.
- 08 As new forms of recreation emerge, management will ensure the recreation settings retain their natural character.

**Standards**

- 01 Authorize new land special use permits only where it is appropriate to the remote setting.
- 02 Recreation special use permits will be consistent with dispersed recreation in these remote settings.
- 03 Any new recreation development will be the minimum to accommodate the activity.

**Guidelines**

- 01 Consider decommissioning, or designating and maintaining to a standard, user-created trails that become evident due to resource damage.

**Table 3: Acres of land within each recreation opportunity spectrum class in the challenging backroad recreation area**

Challenging Backroad Recreation Areas	Acres
Primitive	65,511
Semi-primitive nonmotorized	122,114
Semi-primitive motorized	241,730
Roaded Natural	59,250
Roaded Modified	1,353

## Exhibit A: Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The recreation opportunity spectrum establishes expectations and informs the management of settings. This exhibit displays how the physical managerial and social settings varies by recreation opportunity spectrum class. Recreation opportunity spectrum does not eliminate or allow a specific activity in and of itself, but informs decisions on how the forest will manage overall settings and what a visitor might expect on the landscape. The acreage of forest within each class of the recreation opportunity spectrum, excluding designated wilderness, is displayed in Table 4.

### Summary of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Setting Characteristics

#### Primitive Class

Physical Setting	Managerial Setting	Social Setting
<p><b>Theme:</b> Remote, predominately unmodified, naturally evolving.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access – Nonmotorized trails are present.</li> <li>Fishing sites – Rivers and lakes.</li> <li>Camp/Picnic sites – Not developed or defined, leave no trace.</li> <li>Sanitation – No facilities, leave no trace.</li> <li>Water supply – Undeveloped natural.</li> <li>Signing – Minimal, constructed of rustic, natural materials.</li> <li>Interpretation - Through self-discovery and at trailheads.</li> <li>Water crossing – Minimal, some bridges made of natural materials (wood) may exist but are rare.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vegetation:</b> Natural, no treatments except for fire use.</p>	<p>Few signs, few encounters with rangers.</p>	<p>Very high probability of solitude; closeness to nature; self-reliance, high challenge and risk; little evidence of people.</p>

#### Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized Class

Physical Setting	Managerial Setting	Social Setting
<p><b>Theme:</b> Predominately natural/natural appearing; rustic improvements to protect resources.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access – Nonmotorized trails are present. Closed and temporary roads may be present but are not dominant on the landscape.</li> <li>Fishing sites – Rivers, lakes and reservoirs;</li> <li>Camp/Picnic sites – Not developed, Leave No Trace.</li> <li>Sanitation – No facilities, Leave No Trace.</li> <li>Water supply – Undeveloped natural.</li> <li>Signing – Rustic constructed of natural materials.</li> <li>Interpretation – Through self-discovery, at trailheads.</li> <li>Water crossing – Rustic structures or bridges made of natural materials.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vegetation:</b> Predominately natural, treatment areas exist to enhance forest health but are few and widely dispersed.</p>	<p>Minimum or subtle signing and regulations, some encounters with rangers.</p>	<p>High probability of solitude, closeness to nature, self-reliance high to moderate challenge and risk; some evidence of others.</p>



### Semi-Primitive Motorized Class

Physical Setting	Managerial Setting	Social Setting
<p><b>Theme:</b> Predominately natural, natural appearing.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access – Motorized trails exist.</li> <li>Fishing sites – Rivers, lakes, and reservoirs with some trails and primitive roads (motorized trails).</li> <li>Camp/Picnic sites – Not developed, leave no trace, some identified dispersed areas.</li> <li>Sanitation – Limited facilities, rustic, may have rustic outhouses available.</li> <li>Water supply – Undeveloped natural, rustic developments.</li> <li>Signing – Rustic, made of natural materials.</li> <li>Interpretation – Self-discovery, some located on site or at trailheads.</li> <li>Water crossing – Rustic structures or bridges made of natural material, some designed for motorized use.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vegetation:</b> Treatment areas are very small in number, widely disbursed, and consistent with natural vegetation patterns.</p>	<p>Minimum or subtle on-site controls with some restrictions.</p>	<p>Moderate probability of solitude, closeness to nature, high degree of challenge and risk using motorized equipment; motorized use visible and audible.</p>

### Roaded Natural Class

Physical Setting	Managerial Setting	Social Setting
<p><b>Theme:</b> Natural appearing with nodes and corridors of development such as campgrounds, trailheads, boat launches, and rustic, small-scale resorts.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access – Classified Road System for highway vehicle use.</li> <li>Fishing sites – Rivers, lakes, reservoirs with some facilities.</li> <li>Camp/picnic sites – Identified dispersed and developed sites.</li> <li>Sanitation – Developed outhouses that blend with setting.</li> <li>Water supply – Often developed.</li> <li>Signing – Rustic with natural materials to more refined using a variety of materials such as fiberglass, metal, etc.</li> <li>Interpretation – Simple roadside signs, some interpretive displays.</li> <li>Water crossing – Bridges constructed of natural materials.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vegetation:</b> Changes (treatments) to the natural vegetation patterns are evident but in harmony with natural vegetation patterns.</p>	<p>Opportunity to be with other users in developed sites; some obvious signs (information and regulation) and low to moderate likelihood of meeting Forest Service rangers.</p>	<p>Moderate evidence of human sights and sounds; moderate concentration of users at campsites; little challenge or risk.</p>

## Roaded Modified Class

Physical Setting	Managerial Setting	Social Setting
<p><b>Theme:</b> Natural appearing with nodes and corridors of development such as campgrounds, trailheads, boat launches, and rustic, small-scale resorts.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access – Classified Road System for highway vehicle use.</li> <li>Fishing sites – Rivers, lakes, reservoirs with some facilities.</li> <li>Camp/picnic sites – Identified dispersed and developed sites.</li> <li>Sanitation – Developed outhouses that blend with setting.</li> <li>Water supply – Often developed.</li> <li>Signing – Rustic with natural materials to more refined using a variety of materials such as fiberglass, metal, etc.</li> <li>Interpretation – Simple roadside signs, some interpretive displays.</li> <li>Water crossing – Bridges constructed of natural materials.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vegetation:</b> Changes (treatments) to the natural vegetation patterns are evident but in harmony with natural vegetation patterns.</p>	<p>Opportunity to be with other users in developed sites; some obvious signs (information and regulation) and low to moderate likelihood of meeting Forest Service rangers.</p>	<p>Moderate evidence of human sights and sounds; moderate concentration of users at campsites; little challenge or risk.</p>

## Rural Class

Physical Setting	Managerial Setting	Social Setting
<p><b>Theme:</b> Altered landscapes with natural appearing backdrop. Ranches, administrative sites, and moderately developed resorts are sometimes in this recreation opportunity spectrum class.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access – Travel routes highly developed, classified roads trails are constructed for ease of movement. Majority of routes are concrete, paved or graveled.</li> <li>Camp/Picnic sites – Developed and designed for user comfort, variety of construction materials used that blend with setting. May have hookup amenities such as hot water, electricity, and sewage disposal.</li> <li>Sanitation – Developed and designed for user comfort.</li> <li>Water supply – Developed and designed for user comfort.</li> <li>Signing – Natural and synthetic materials appropriate.</li> <li>Interpretation – Roadside exhibits, interpretive programs, etc.</li> <li>Water – Crossing bridges constructed of a variety of materials, in harmony with landscape.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vegetation:</b> Dominate treatments that blend with landscape.</p>	<p>Obvious signing (regulation and information), education and law enforcement staff available.</p>	<p>High interaction among users is common. Little challenge or risk associated with being outdoors.</p>

**Table 4: Acres of forest by recreation opportunity spectrum class, excluding designated wilderness**

<b>Recreation Opportunity Spectrum</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Primitive	90,513
Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized	197,565
Semi-Primitive Motorized	332,094
Roaded Natural	228,282
Roaded Modified	44,008
Rural	19,159