

Inyo National Forest

Recreation Fee Program Accomplishment Highlights 2021

“Very Old Man” Mountain



Lone Pine Lake on the Mt. Whitney Trail

At 14,505 feet in elevation, Mt. Whitney is the highest point in the lower 48 states. The mountain is called Tumanguya, meaning “very old man” in the Newe (Shoshone) language.

Each year, over 65,000 people enter the lottery to obtain a permit to hike the Mt. Whitney trail to the summit. Up to 100-day hikers and 60 backpackers may travel the trail per day between May 1 and November 1. The permit system and human waste pack-out requirement help protect the fragile alpine environment and provide a positive experience for the public. To help steward this special place, wilderness rangers hike the Whitney Trail providing education, enforcing the permit requirement, and managing the Waste Alleviation and Gelling (WAG) Bag human waste pack out system. Staff at the Interagency Visitor Center in Lone Pine and the Wilderness Permit Office in Bishop, manage the permit system and respond to thousands of questions about climbing Mt. Whitney. This annual operation is entirely funded by permit fees including \$35,000 for WAG bags and \$200,000 for rangers and visitor center staff.

Recreation Fee Dollars

Recreation fee dollars are an investment in outdoor recreation. They support and enhance:

- Public safety
- Recreation site maintenance and improvements
- Educational experiences
- Informational wayside exhibits
- Youth programs and partnerships
- Interpretive programs

Current and future generations benefit as 80-95% of the funds are reinvested in the facilities and services that visitors enjoy, use, and value.

Campground Improvements

Forest staff upgraded facilities at Cottonwood Pass and Cottonwood Lakes campgrounds in popular Horseshoe Meadow to improve the camping experience. A crew from the Eastern Sierra Conservation Corps installed new bear boxes, replaced broken picnic tables, added updated signage, and provided accessible fire rings in the campgrounds. As a result, campers are better able to protect bears from human food and trash, fire rings and tables are easier to use, and the overall camping experience is more enjoyable. The project was accomplished with \$40,000 in fee revenue.



Much Needed Trail Work



Trail work at Golden Trout Wilderness

The forest includes 1,200 miles of non-motorized trails, primarily in wilderness areas. Many of these trails are very popular with hikers, equestrians, anglers, and backpackers. Trails must be regularly maintained in order to prevent

erosion, water quality impacts, damage to meadows, and safety hazards. A well-maintained trail is a pleasure to walk or ride. In 2021, two crews from the Eastern Sierra Conservation Corps and the California Conservation Corps spent the summer maintaining trails throughout the forest including the John Muir Trail in the Ansel Adams Wilderness, Shadow Creek Trail, Cottonwood Lakes trails, and trails in the Golden Trout Wilderness. The two crews completed over 40 miles of maintenance. The work was funded with \$80,000 in fee revenue and \$280,000 from the Great American Outdoors Act.

Other Accomplishments

- 863 volunteers and partner staff contributed 85,630 hours to clean recreation sites, maintain trails and provide information to visitors.
- Operated and maintained campgrounds in Horseshoe Meadow and Lee Vining Canyon and various day use sites across the forest, including daily toilet cleaning, trash removal, cleaning campfire rings, refurbishing and replacing signs and pumping toilets.
- Installed accessible grills and picnic tables as needed at various developed recreation sites.
- During the pandemic, provided staff to answer phone calls and respond to email messages for the Lone Pine Interagency Visitor Center, the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center, White Mountain Ranger Station, and the Mono Basin Visitor Center.
- Provided outdoor interpretive presentations to the public at South Tufa and Schulman Grove Day Use Sites.
- Provided staff for the Minaret Vista Kiosk and managed the Reds Meadow limited entry system.



South Tufa Day Use and Interpretive Site on Mono Lake in the Mono Basin Scenic Area

Contacts

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Regional Map



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Revenue & Expenditures

Revenue*	Forest	Region
Recreation Fees	\$966,636	\$8,921,596
Special Uses	\$130,030	\$977,102
Interagency Passes	\$13,360	\$102,752
Total	\$1,110,026	\$10,001,450
Expenditures	Forest	Region
Repair & Maintenance	\$165,156	\$3,499,145
Visitor Services	\$260,828	\$2,921,425
Law Enforcement	\$8,000	\$272,025
Habitat Restoration	\$0	\$231,339
Fee Agreements	\$0	\$1,208
Collections/Overhead	\$14,000	\$382,632
Total	\$447,984	\$7,307,774

*Carryover funds will be used for large projects and upcoming startup costs.