

Inyo National Forest Sherwins Area Trails Collaboration

January 2009 – November 2009

Location: Mammoth Lakes, California

Background:

The Sherwins Area located just south of Mammoth Lakes, CA, is a picturesque area of public land managed by the Inyo National Forest (INF) and is a popular recreation spot year-round. Many people enjoy the area for hiking, snowmobiling, back country skiing, etc., which has caused conflicts among users as well as with people interested in conserving the area. In order to address this, the INF, in partnership with the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, engaged the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to convene a collaborative process to involve stakeholders to work together to develop a Recreation Plan for summer and winter use.

Austin McInerney, of the Center for Collaborative Policy, facilitated the process for the U.S. Institute, which included the development of the Sherwins Working Group (SWG) composed of 71 participants, with a core of 25 to 30 participants attending sessions consistently. The goal of the SWG was to develop a preferred alternative for public access for the Sherwins Area that provided for safe and environmentally responsible use of the Sherwins Area.

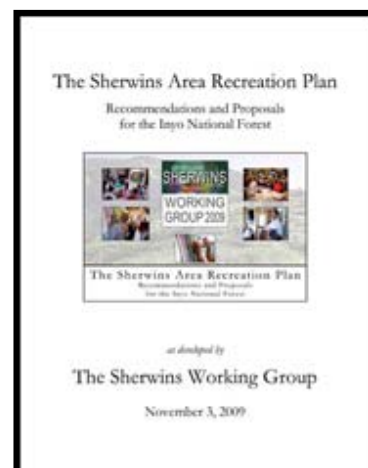
After seven months of dedicated effort and broad collaboration, the SWG came to full consensus and produced the Sherwins Area Recreation Plan, or SHARP, for INF analysis and implementation.



Photo courtesy of John Wentworth. MLTPA

Highlights/Innovations

- The SWG undertook an extensive public outreach effort throughout the process. The Group maintained a blog and website that aided in communication within the group and kept the process transparent to the public.
- The SWG was committed to keeping the public involved throughout the collaborative process. Once the group developed the draft report, it was posted to the MLTPA website where members of the public could give feedback: <http://www.mltpa.org/>



Results and Accomplishments

- The SWG participated in numerous field trips as a group to ground truth the conditions of the area and discuss options, which greatly assisted them in coming to consensus.
- According to the U.S. Institute evaluation, 100% of respondents felt that trust was increased among stakeholders as a result of this process.

Credits

Partners from National Roster of ECR Practitioners
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