

File Code: 1930

Date: December 10, 2021

RE: FY2022 Program of Work and Leader's Intent

Dear Inyo National Forest Employees:

As we prepare our program of work for FY2022, I want to share my leader's intent to help guide our thoughts and planning. As you all know, the Inyo National Forest is a diverse forest with a complex program of work magnified by the immense interest and involvement from our communities and partners. For FY22, the Inyo will continue to organize the majority of our program of work around four areas or four "R"s: **Regulatory Requirements, Resource Management, Recreation and Facilities, and Relationships/Work Environment.**

I recognize that much of our work can fall into this broad framework, so we need to make sure our expectations for the work we can accomplish are realistic given the available funding, time, and people. We also need to consider the work it takes to run our ongoing programs, such as maintaining relationships with our partners, project monitoring, and data reporting. I recognize that there are many more worthy projects out there than we have resources to support in any given year. The FLT has tried to be more deliberate in determining realistic program of work priorities with these sideboards in mind. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of everything we do on the Inyo, rather it highlights the areas where we need to place the most focus and communicates a common understanding of a few specific projects and deliverables where we have commitments to partners and/or made significant investment. You will notice that there are several major planning projects with expected deliverables of proposed action and scoping due by the end of the fiscal year. Staying focused on left-side planning throughout this year will result in a robust proposed action, which will set the forest up for success in FY23 when we need to undertake several NEPA analyses simultaneously.

Regulatory Requirements

We have a responsibility as the land managers for the Inyo National Forest to meet our regulatory statutes and engage with proponents on some projects as required by law or regulation. We also have responsibilities to administer existing permits and leases, which is not specifically captured in the list below. For FY22, we will move the following projects forward with timelines subject to proponent engagement:

- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Relicensing for Bishop Creek, Pine Creek, Bishop Tungstar, Lee Vining and Rush Creek
- Southern California Edison Master Special Use Permit Implementation- ongoing
- Geothermal
 - o Casa Diablo-IV- review of submitted monitoring plans for new development



- Plans of Operation: If POOs are submitted for Baby Doe Mine and May Lundy Mine, there may be a need to review by the end of the year

While not strictly regulatory in nature, we also have a responsibility to respond to the priority needs of permitted utility, transportation and communication companies/agencies and processing associated cost recovery agreements. In addition to ongoing permit administration, we will make forward progress on permits for the White Mountain Research Station and Southern California Edison Control Silver Peak as well as finalize the disposal of the Big Pine Administrative site.

Resource Management and Recovery

While we must maintain a posture of readiness to respond to fire suppression and initial attack needs, we know we must also balance that with a focus on projects to mitigate and reduce the risk of severe fires in the future. This work ties directly to the health of forests and watersheds, the protection of communities and visitors and the improvement of wildlife habitat. In FY22, we will focus on projects that involve collaboration and innovation with stakeholders, reduce fire hazards across private/public lands (shared stewardship) and where efficiencies can be gained through partnerships and stewardship. These projects include but are not limited to:

- Red's Meadow Road Tree Removal, Three Creeks Timber Sale and SCE Hazard Tree Removal, and fuelwood permit administration. Together these account for about 2600 MBF.
- 6600+ acres in various mechanical thinning and prescribed fire projects across the forest as staffing and fuel conditions allow.
- Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP aka Mammoth Donut)- Proposed action expected Q4
- Kern Plateau Meadow Restoration- Environment Assessment and Decision Notice completed by Q4
- Montgomery Pass Wild Horse Management Plan Amendment- Proposed Action by Q4

Recreation and Facilities

We know that recreation continues to increase at an unprecedented rate on the Inyo National Forest and that steps need to be taken to ensure that this valuable resource is both financially and ecologically sustainable now and into the future. Facilities are one of the most important avenues for providing a safe and robust visitor experience. For FY2022, we will focus on:

- Capitalizing on partnership projects that leverage funding, enhance communities and/or maintain benefits to the public. These projects include those funded by and supported by the regional office and partners to enhance sustainable recreation opportunities, trails planning, implementation and restoration, including:
 - o GAOA trailhead improvements, campground renovation, and Rock Creek Boat Launch – complete engineering & design Q4
 - o Ansel Adams Wilderness Restoration Project – Continued planning and implementation

- Subpart C of Travel Management (OSV routes) – Proposed action and scoping completed by Q4
 - Coyote OHV Planning – Proposed action and scoping completed by Q4
 - Buttermilks Toilets – Decision Memo completed by Q3
 - Wild & Scenic River CRMP- Environmental Assessment Decision Notice completed by Q3
 - Sherwin Trails Project – Proposed action developed by Q4
- Supporting and planning for recreation opportunities provided by our permittees. In addition to ongoing permit administration and monitoring for our concessionaires, resorts, O/Gs, filming, and recreation events, we will make progress on the following:
- Golden Trout Wilderness Camp- NEPA decision and permit issuance by Q4

Relationships and Work Environment

Finally, our relationships with our communities and partners and our relationships with each other form the foundation of our success in the areas above. To ensure a solid foundation for our work together, I would like us to focus on the following:

- Consider and prioritize opportunities to maintain our administrative facilities and infrastructure to provide a safe and healthy work environment for our employees and the public.
- Ensure employees have the equipment they need in order to perform their work safely. Ensure employees have training opportunities to both maintain and improve job and interpersonal skills. This includes trainings to maintain core competencies as well as trainings to enhance skills so employees are ready for the next job opportunity.
- Engage our underrepresented communities in forest work and management, especially tribes and youth.

As we look more and more to external partners to help us accomplish our work, I expect that we will be thoughtful and deliberate as we seek out opportunities to leverage additional resources that will enhance our existing priorities in the four emphasis areas.

I remain grateful as always for the dedicated workforce that we have on the Inyo National Forest. I appreciate each of you for all that you do to make this forest so extraordinary!

Sincerely,



LESLEY YEN
Forest Supervisor