



The Inyo National Forest takes its name from a Native American word meaning, “Dwelling Place of the Great Spirit.” Located in California’s beautiful Eastern Sierra, the Forest offers clean air, crystal blue skies, mountain lakes and streams, challenging trails, high mountain peaks, and beautiful views.

With over two million acres (about three times the size of Rhode Island), the Inyo is also home to many natural wonders, including Mt. Whitney, Mono Lake, Mammoth Lakes Basin, and the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, as well as nine congressionally-designated Wildernesses, comprising over 800,000 acres of permanently protected wildlands.

BACKGROUND: THE SIERRA CLUB’S WORK TO PROTECT THE INYO NATIONAL FOREST

The US Forest Service is currently devising the future management plan for the Inyo National Forest. The Sierra Club is pushing the agency to protect important wildlands, wildlife and recreation opportunities through better management of cow grazing, off-road vehicles, foot traffic, horse traffic and more.

TOP MESSAGE POINTS:

1. The Inyo National Forest is an amazing place; an important natural area that benefits millions of Americans with clean water and healthful recreation. The Forest Service should do all it can to safeguard it from harm so it is protected and healthy for all to enjoy.

2. The Inyo National Forest is a great place for outdoor recreation for all ages. There’s so much to do and so many fascinating plants and animals to see and enjoy. The Forest Service has an important job to do to keep our nation’s national forests healthy into the future so more youth and families can visit it.

History: The Inyo National Forest was established by proclamation on May 25, 1907 by President Teddy Roosevelt. Since then Congress has expanded the forest and the associated Wilderness areas several times.

Diverse Benefits for Many: The lands of the Inyo National Forest supply clean water to over 3.8 million people and the peace of the out of doors for nearly four million people visiting annually. In fact, the Inyo National Forest is the most visited national forest in California, America’s most populous state.

Wonderful Wildlife and Plants: The forest is home to many beautiful, important and fascinating wildlife species including mule deer, black bear, sage grouse, road runners, and golden eagles. The Inyo is also home to some of the world’s rarest wildlife—known as endemic species—critters

such as the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep grace no other granite ridges in the world but those of the Sierra Nevada. Deep Springs Valley and the Southern White Mountains are the only places to hear the piping of the unique black toad. Golden trout, California's state fish, ply no other waters than those of the Inyo National Forest's Golden Trout Wilderness. In the spring, Inyo National Forest is also home to an astounding variety of beautiful wildflowers.

Great Recreation: Recreational opportunities include camping, picnicking, hiking, backpacking, equestrian use, and off-highway vehicle use. Ski resorts offer alpine skiing and snowboarding; over 100 miles of trails groomed for multiple purpose winter use (snowmobile, skiing, and hiking), and approximately 45 miles of trails groomed for cross-country skiing. The Forest has over 1,200 miles of

hiking trails, two alpine ski areas, one Nordic ski center and 70 campgrounds for visitors to use and enjoy.

Prehistoric Rock Art: The Inyo has wonderful examples of ancient Native American rock art, created by cultures dating back many thousands of years. Although we are not sure why, people etched designs into the area's dark, exposed rocks. Petroglyphs differ from pictographs in that they are chipped with a harder stone into the dark surfaces of rock, as opposed to being painted on. The meaning of the symbols is not absolutely clear. Individually, some objects are recognizable as deer, bighorn sheep, human figures, and birds. Other symbols include lines, grids, and concentric circles in different configurations. The art likely had a number of purposes: religious/ceremonial, practical, functional, and even whimsical.

SPECIAL PLACES ON THE INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest: Standing as ancient sentinels high atop the White Mountains of the Inyo National Forest, bristlecone pines rank as the oldest trees in the world and have achieved immense scientific, cultural and scenic importance. In fact, the world's oldest tree—Methuselah, an over 4,700 year old Bristlecone Pine—grows in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest.

Long Valley Caldera: During a gigantic eruption about 760,000 years ago, a volcanic area bordered by what is now Mammoth Mountain, the Glass Mountains and Crowley Lake (approximately 12 miles wide by 18 miles long), collapsed to form the Long Valley Caldera. The eruption produced the Bishop Tuff, a pinkish-red rock that can be seen along US 395 on the Sherwin Grade. Three hundred and fifty square miles were buried beneath 500 feet of Bishop Tuff. Ash from the eruption has been found as far east as Nebraska. Later, other volcanoes erupted along the rim of this gigantic Caldera, one of which was Mammoth Mountain, which grew on the rim of the Caldera over 50,000 years ago.

Mono Lake: In the heart of Mono Basin lies the strange and majestic Mono Lake, a vast inland sea nestled amidst the 13,000 foot peaks of the High Sierra to the west, ancient volcanic hills to the north, rolling oceans of sagebrush to the east and the towering cinder cones of the young

Mono Crater volcanoes to the south. Mono Lake is the second oldest lake in North America. Here, the high desert environment harbors a thriving but fragile ecosystem of interdependent plant and animal species—some found nowhere else in the world but Mono Lake. From waters saltier than the oceans and as alkaline as household ammonia have evolved unique species of life and unearthly limestone spires of tufa.

Mount Whitney: This majestic mountain holds the highest summit in the contiguous United States with an elevation of 14,505 feet and is the most frequently climbed mountain peak in the Sierra Nevada, if not in the U.S. The west slope of the mountain is in Sequoia National Park and the east slope is in the Inyo National Forest. Mt. Whitney forms part of the walls of the world's deepest valley, the over 10,000 feet deep Owens Valley.

Mammoth Mountain: With a top elevation of 11,053 feet, 300 days of sunshine per year and over 3,500 skiable acres, Mammoth Mountain draws visitors from across the country and internationally. Mammoth Mountain offers a variety of Winter Activities including: skiing and riding, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, snowcat tours, scenic gondola rides, pipes and parks, and a ski and snowboard school. In the summer, bicycling is a major activity.