

## TOURISM ELEMENT

### I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Tourism, based upon recreational opportunities, provides the foundation of June Lake's economy. As June Lake evolves, the major task will be maintaining and creating new recreational opportunities while protecting and enhancing the Loop's unique character. Residents want to increase tourist traffic and, in turn, expand the local economy by creating new recreational opportunities. Expansion must be carefully planned so that new development, to the extent feasible, does not change June Lake's ambience and appeal.

### II. ISSUES

1) The June Lake Loop's economy is based upon its tourist industry orientation. According to the U.S. Forest Service's 1988 Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the June Lake Loop supports approximately 1 million recreational visitor days per year.<sup>1</sup> Summer usage for activities such as fishing, camping, hiking and sightseeing presently draws the majority of the Loop's visitors.

June Lake supports about 1 million visitor days per year.

2) June Lake's quaint, small-town atmosphere, scenic beauty and numerous recreational opportunities are its primary tourist attractions. Intensifying the use of natural resources through community expansion and the development of additional recreational opportunities may negatively affect these conditions.

June Lake's small-town atmosphere, scenic beauty and recreational opportunities are its primary attractions.

3) June Lake, as a small mountain resort community, exhibits a highly cyclical economy characterized by: periods of intensive use and periods of inactivity; an economy heavily dependent on tourist dollars; and lower-paying service sector jobs. As a result, according to 1987 household income estimates contained in Phase I of the June Lake Redevelopment Feasibility Study, approximately 72 percent of June Lake households fall into the very low- or low-income categories (State Housing and Community Development criteria).

June Lake has a highly cyclical economy.

4) Enhancing the Loop's economic foundation will depend on expanding and improving tourist-oriented recreational facilities and accommodations. Public and private campgrounds during the summer months operate at near-full capacity, while in the winter, overnight accommodations fall short of demand by approximately 600 beds per night.

5) Proposed development in the West Village/Rodeo Grounds and June Lake Village is expected to house and entertain additional visitors.

<sup>1</sup> A recreational Visitor Day is defined by the USFS as the equivalent of one person spending a 12-hour period in a predetermined location. It can also be any combination of people and hours spent; e.g., three people for four hours each.

6) The summer season currently is the dominant component of the June Lake Loop economy. Recent and future improvements to the June Mountain Ski Area and proposed development in the West Village/Rodeo Grounds area are expected to improve the winter economy. While June Lake has no staffed Visitor Center, a Scenic By-way Kiosk has been constructed at the south June Lake Junction adjacent to the gas station and general store. This kiosk provides information to the visitor about the area. The Scenic Area Visitor Center adjacent to Mono Lake has become a reality, and can and should provide information on the June Lake area.

The summer season is the dominant component of June Lake's economy.

7) The June Lake Visitor Survey (1986) revealed a strong split between tourists who favor additional development and those who like the Loop's current state. Additional visitor-oriented facilities desired included: public showers, hiking trails, bicycle/cross country skiing trails, expanded alpine skiing facilities, snowplay areas, indoor recreational facilities for tennis/racquetball, shops, and restaurants. Summer visitors also wanted campfire activities, interpretive nature tours and nighttime entertainment. A visitor and resident survey should be updated periodically to reflect current trends.

8) Restricted or limited access along shorelines and stream banks prevents fishermen from fully utilizing the Loop's four roadside lakes and two streams. Ramps at lakes have been upgraded to create better access, and the USFS has installed disabled-accessible ramps at Gull Lake and Silver Lake.

9) The Loop lacks safe, convenient roadside turnouts at selected scenic lookout points. The County should pursue possible funding for construction of turnouts and interpretive sites.

10) Water diverted for domestic uses from Grant Lake, tributaries to Reversed Creek, Walker Creek, Parker Creek and Lower Rush Creek diminishes their recreational, scenic and wildlife habitat values. Hydroelectric power generation in the Upper Rush Creek watershed causes similar impacts. Any changes in water usage should be addressed by the appropriate regulatory agency.

June Lake's recreational, scenic and wildlife habitat values are diminished by water exports.

11) The Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan designates the June Lake Loop as a concentrated recreational area. This designation calls for developing recreational opportunities that can accommodate large numbers of visitors without severely impacting the environment.

12) The opportunity exists for the June Lake community to work with the USFS in developing a comprehensive recreation plan. This plan will inventory, coordinate and program the full summer and winter recreational development potential in the June Lake Loop.

**TABLE 12: INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES****SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

<b>Camping in the Loop</b>	<u>Owner/ Operator</u>	<u>Developed Campsites</u>	<u>Activities</u>
Oh! Ridge Campground	USFS	144	Swimming, camping
Pine Cliff Trailer Park	Private	200	Camping, trailer spaces
June Lake Campground	USFS	22	Camping, fishing, boating
Gull Lake Campground	USFS	17	Camping, fishing
Reversed Creek Campground	USFS	18	Camping, fishing
Silver Lake Campground	USFS	65	Camping, fishing
Grant Lake Campground	Private	<u>70</u>	Camping, fishing, boating
TOTAL		536	

**Camping in the Vicinity**

Hartley Springs Campground	USFS	20	Camping
Glass Creek	USFS	30	Camping, fishing

**Boating**

	<u>Operator</u>	<u>Activities</u>
June Lake Marina	Private	Boat rental (powered, row); Launch ramp
Big Rock Resort (June Lake)	Private	Boat rental (powered, row); Launch ramp
Gull Lake Marina	Private	Boat rental (powered, row, paddle); Launch ramp
Silver Lake Resort	Private	Boat rental (powered, row, canoe); Launch ramp
Grant Lake Marina	Private	Boat rental (powered, row); Launch ramp

**Fishing in June Lake Loop**

	<u>Surface Area (acres)</u>	<u>Types of Fishing</u>	<u>Commonly Caught Fish</u>
June Lake	298	Shore; Boat; Still; Trolling	Rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook trout
Gull Lake	67	Shore; Boat; Still; Trolling	Rainbow and brown trout
Silver Lake	112	Shore, Boat, Still, Trolling	Brook trout
Grant Lake	1,085*	Shore, Bait, Still, Trolling	Brook trout
Reversed Creek	--	Bank; wading	Rainbow and brown trout
Rush Creek	--	Bank; wading	Rainbow, brown and brook trout

\* assumes maximum water level.

**Fishing in Backcountry**

Agnew Lake	Shore	Brook trout
Gem Lake	Shore	Brook trout
Waugh Lake	Shore	Brook trout
Walker Lake	Shore; Boat	Rainbow and brown trout
Parker Lake	Shore	Brook and brown trout

**TABLE 12: INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (Cont.)**

**SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

**Horseback Riding**

Frontier Pack Station	<u>Services</u> Day Trips Extended Guided Trips Pack Animal services
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**Hiking Trails/Trail Heads**

	<u>Destination</u>	<u>Miles of Trail</u>	<u>Difficulty</u>
Fern Creek/	Fern Lake	1.5	Strenuous
Yost Meadow	Yost Lake	3.0	Strenuous
Silver Lake	Agnew Lake	2.5	Intermediate
	Gem Lake	3.5	Strenuous
	Clark Lakes	5.5	Strenuous
	Alger Lakes	9.0	Strenuous
Parker Creek	Parker Lake	2.0	Intermediate
Sawmill Canyon	Walker Lake	1.0	Intermediate
	Mono Pass	5.0	Strenuous

**WINTER ACTIVITIES**

**Downhill Skiing**

	<u>Lifts</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Percentage of Difficulty</u>
June Mountain Ski Area	6 chair lifts	2250 SAOT	18% Beginner 55% Intermediate 27% Advanced

**Cross Country Skiing**

	<u>Operator</u>	<u>Miles of Groomed Trails</u>
Obsidian Dome Trail	USFS	~ 6.25
South June Lake Junction	USFS	~ 3 to 4

**Snowmobiling Areas**

	<u>Operator</u>	<u>Miles of Trail</u>
Obsidian Dome (East of 395)	USFS	~ 8

### III. POLICIES

#### GOAL

Expand and strengthen June Lake's tourist-orientation economy by stimulating the development of year-round recreational facilities and attracting and retaining a diversity of businesses, while protecting June Lake's scenic and natural resource values.

Strengthen the local economy while protecting the Loop's natural resources.

#### OBJECTIVE A

Expand and diversify June Lake's tourist base to provide for the year-round needs of multiple user groups, while maintaining the Loop's character and protecting its scenic resources (1,2,3,4,8,12).

Policy 1: Outdoor recreation/education programs should utilize the June Lake Loop's natural and scenic resources by focusing on, to the extent practical, the Loop's unique attributes such as its lakes and streams, hiking trails, scenic beauty, and skiing opportunities, among others. New recreational activities should provide experiences not found in metropolitan areas (2,4,6,12).

Action 1.1: The June Lake community should work with the USFS in a joint effort to operate a pilot Visitor Center. Depending on the success of the Visitor Center, the program can be expanded or discontinued. The center should serve as a Mecca for tourist activity and as a promotional center for the June Lake Loop. The USFS could provide interpretive tours and campfire activities, while June Lake merchants could use the center to distribute literature on the various recreational opportunities (7).

Action 1.2: Where feasible, local resident volunteers should be recruited to assist the USFS in staffing the existing Kiosk. Resident volunteers could also conduct interpretive tours (2,7).

Action 1.3: The community should work with the USFS to promote the June Lake Loop at the proposed Mono Basin Scenic Visitor Center in Lee Vining (7).

Policy 2: Encourage public recreational use of lakes and creeks that is compatible with the environmental capacity of those areas and the subregion's recreational needs. Monitor public usage if increased access causes undue environmental impacts (2,9).

Encourage recreational use of water bodies to a level consistent with environmental carrying capacities.

Action 2.1: Continue to improve shoreline and stream-bank access along roadside lakes and streams in the June Lake Loop. Access to water bodies should emphasize foot or non-motorized vehicle trails over direct automobile access. Parking areas should be provided near water bodies, but trails should provide shoreline access. Trails should also link with day parking facilities, campgrounds and other population centers to reduce the need for automobile usage (1,9).

Action 2.2: Encourage the DFG to survey the potential for fishing in backcountry lakes in the June Lake Loop vicinity. If the fisheries can support additional pressure, anglers should be encouraged to use these non-roadside facilities (1).

Action 2.3: Encourage the DFG to study the feasibility of establishing special catch restrictions for June Lake Loop waters that would improve the Loop's overall fishing potential. Measures could include: reduced bag limits, the planting of sub-catchable brown trout, seasonal closures on known spawning areas, and gear restrictions. The emphasis should focus on fully utilizing a water body's fishery potential rather than managing all June Lake Loop waters as "put-and-take" fisheries (1).

Action 2.4: Protect and enhance fish-spawning habitat within June Lake Loop waters (1).

Action 2.5: Cooperate with government and private agencies to inventory the Loop's potential for stream and lake rehabilitation projects. Potential areas could include Parker, Walker and Lower Rush creeks. Once identified, the County and June Lake Public Utility District in conjunction with local, state or national fishing organizations and/or other community groups should apply for grant moneys to carry out the projects (1). Mitigate siltation on Rush Creek into Silver Lake.

Action 2.6: Encourage the DFG to conduct studies on the susceptibility of trout-spawning grounds to human and livestock disturbances. Where feasible, adopt regulations that lessen disturbances or increase public education/awareness programs on issues such as the impacts of wading on trout-spawning beds (1).

Action 2.7: Encourage DFG and Mono County to increase stocking efforts in the June Lake Loop.

Policy 3: Provide a balance of recreational opportunities to ensure full utilization of the Loop's recreation resources, expanded user group participation, and a complementary mix of recreational activities (1,2).

Provide a balance of recreational opportunities.

Action 3.1: Augment fishing activities, the Loop's major summertime activity, by expanding activities such as hiking, backpacking, camping, swimming, picnicking, bicycling, family-

group hiking, interpretive nature study, and outdoor arts. The County, June Lake community and the USFS should cooperate in developing these activities (1,13).

Action 3.2: Work with the USFS to help identify suitable locations for future drive-in and walk-in campgrounds (3,12,13).

Action 3.3: Provide for increased water sports activities on Grant Lake (e.g., water-skiing) by amending the boating speed limit that prohibits water-skiing before 10 a.m. (1).

Policy 4: Provide full winter-time utilization of the June Lake Loop by providing adequate downhill skiing capacity, expanded cross country ski touring opportunities, ice skating and ice games, snowplay areas, and snowmobile staging areas (1,4,8).

Action 4.1: Support the Phase II expansion (7,000 SAOT) of the June Mountain Ski Area provided that appropriate parking and traffic mitigation measures are developed and implemented (1,8).

Action 4.2: Encourage the USFS to consider expanding the existing ski area into Hartley Springs, White Wing and/or San Joaquin Ridge provided that future environmental analysis does not identify unmitigatable significant impacts (1,8).

Action 4.3: Promote the development of snowmobiling and cross country ski trails in the June Lake Planning Area. Work with the USFS, Caltrans and the community to develop cross country skiing parking and staging facilities along S.R. 158 and U.S. 395 (1,8,13).

Action 4.4: Work with the USFS and other entities to establish suitable snowplay areas (1,8,13).

Action 4.5: Where feasible, design common open-space areas in new developments and neighborhood parks to accommodate snowplay and/or ice skating during winter months (1,8).

Policy 5: Reduce the possibility of recreational user conflicts by dispersing competing recreational activities and, where prudent and feasible, expanding existing facilities or constructing new ones (1,4,8,13).

Reduce the possibility of recreational user conflicts.

Action 5.1: Provide for snowmobiling in areas outside the June Lake Loop and in areas not used for cross country skiing. The Obsidian Dome/Glass Creek area has been designated a cross country ski area and is groomed by the USFS. Directly across the highway, the Bald Mountain Lookout area is designated for snowmobiles (1,8).

Action 5.2: Limit equestrian trail use to the Rush Creek, Silver Lake and Grant Lake areas due to the incompatibility of

equestrian use with hiking and bicycle trails and the limited widths of available trails (1).

Action 5.3: Provide for Off-Highway Vehicle use in appropriate areas outside the June Lake Loop (1,8,13).

Policy 6: Coordinate recreational planning efforts with the USFS, the LADWP, and private landowners in the June Lake Planning Area to most efficiently utilize resources (2).

Action 6.1: Work with the USFS in developing future Land and Resource Management Plans for the Walker-Parker, the June Lake Loop, Upper Owens River, Glass Mountain, and Mammoth Escarpment sub-units (1,13).

Action 6.2: Support the continued efforts to enhance the existing usage of the USFS' "concentrated recreation area" designation in the Lower Rush Creek watershed between Grant and Mono lakes (1,12).

Action 6.3: Work with developers, through the Specific Plan process, to address the recreational needs of local residents and visitors (1,8).

Policy 7: Avoid conflicts between recreational activities and other competing uses (1,11).

Action 7.1: Work with the USFS, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and other private landowners through the USFS' Coordinated Resources Planning Process to help resolve conflicts between grazing and recreational activities (1,11).

Action 7.2: Establish minimum water level standards for lakes and minimum in-stream flows in creeks (1,11).

Action 7.3: Work with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to establish a minimum water level in Grant Lake to guarantee water sports activities such as fishing and water-skiing (11).



**OBJECTIVE B**

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Diversify and stabilize the local economy by attracting and retaining tourist- and community-oriented businesses, particularly those that provide new jobs for local residents (3).

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Diversify and stabilize the economy by attracting and retaining businesses.

Policy 1: Promote the development of an active program that attracts businesses or helps identify types of businesses that could be successful (3).

Action 1.1: Produce an economic development plan (3).

Action 1.2: As part of an economic development plan, develop a program that helps attract needed community-oriented businesses. Cooperatives and other ventures could be examined as potential solutions (3).

Action 1.3: Coordinate activities with government agencies and community groups to attract commercial/film companies into the June Lake Loop (3).

Policy 2: Develop programs that promote local business interests (3).

Action 2.1: Encourage employers to hire local residents (3).

Action 2.2: Develop and implement leasing policies for new commercial properties that give June Lake residents or present business owners in the Loop first opportunity to lease or purchase new commercial space (3).

**OBJECTIVE C**

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Enhance the tourist/recreational orientation of June Lake by developing entertainment/recreational facilities to complement existing daytime recreational uses and to entice visitors to stay longer in the Loop (1,4,7).

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Develop entertainment/recreational facilities to complement existing daytime recreational activities.

Policy 1: Promote the development of nighttime recreational opportunities such as restaurants and bars, dancing, movie or fine arts theaters in commercial areas located in the West Village/Rodeo Grounds and in June Lake Village (1,4,7).

Action 1.1: The County, through the Specific Plan and Planning Permit processes, should work with developers to locate nighttime recreational opportunities near visitor accommodations to discourage the use of automobiles and to reduce impacts on local residents (1,4,7).

Policy 2: Encourage larger-scale tourist/commercial development to provide for convention and meeting facilities (1,4,5).

Action 2.1: If feasible, promote the development of such facilities as a feature of any redevelopment plan for the Village area and as a component of the Specific Plan for West Village/Rodeo Grounds (1,4,5).

## **OBJECTIVE D**

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Encourage visitation to June Lake (2).

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Policy 1: Develop programs for tourists that focus on the community of June Lake and the many recreational and scenic attributes of the June Lake Loop (1,2,4).

Action 1.1: Pursue the adoption of S.R. 158, the June Lake Loop Road, into the state of California Scenic Highway Program. Follow through on the Caltrans Scenic Highway guidelines, which call for the creation and implementation of design guidelines for visually significant features along S.R. 158 (2).

Action 1.2: Work with Caltrans to develop roadside turnout/scenic lookout points along S.R. 158 (1,10).

Action 1.3: Promote the development of information centers at key locations, such as the north and south junctions of U.S. 395 and S.R. 158, and in the June Lake Village. Besides providing maps of areas of local interest, local business information, and local history, these locations could also function as rest stops, scenic lookouts and visitor centers (1,10).

Action 1.4: Provide self-guided interpretive tours of the June Lake Loop along S.R. 158. These tours would function as extensions of the existing scenic lookouts by providing information on local history, geology, archaeology, wildlife and their habitats, and landmarks (1,10).

Action 1.5: Promote the development of programs or activities that encourage visitors to leave U.S. 395 and stop in the June Lake Loop (1,2).

Policy 2: Enhance and promote the character of June Lake and its commercial establishments (4).

Action 2.1: Encourage the local Chamber of Commerce or other groups to develop and distribute information promoting June Lake (2,4).

Action 2.2: Encourage employers, the Chamber of Commerce or other groups, to develop and implement a public relations training program for employees (2,4).

Action 2.3: Encourage business and community cooperation in the development of attractive and visually compatible commercial districts (2,4).

**OBJECTIVE E**

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Develop multipurpose and multi-seasonal recreational facilities that meet the needs of a wide range of users and promote year-round usage (1,4).

Develop multipurpose and multi-seasonal recreational facilities.

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Policy 1: Recreational facilities that can serve numerous user groups or provide alternatives to automobile transportation should be provided, where feasible (4,8).

Action 1.0: Create a comprehensive trail system plan.

Action 1.1: A Loop-wide trail system for pedestrians or cyclists in the summer and cross country skiers in the winter should connect the various population centers and, where feasible, improve shoreline access to lakes and streams. Trails and paths should follow the guidelines included in Table 13, Design Guidelines for Paths and Trails (8).

Action 1.2: An interagency team should be established to design the trail system. Representatives could include the USFS, Caltrans, Mono County, Southern California Edison, and the community (8).

Action 1.3: The County should examine various funding options to construct this project. Funding could come from government agencies such as the Local Transportation Commission or Caltrans, exactions on new construction, Quimby Act moneys, bed taxes, sales taxes, redevelopment funds, bond issues or other alternatives (8).

**TABLE 13: DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PATHS AND TRAILS**

- 1) Paths and trails should, to the extent feasible, be separated from major arterial streets to increase safety and the enjoyment of the user.
- 2) Paths and trails through residential open space should be located to minimize intrusion upon the privacy of residents.
- 3) Trails and paths not adjacent to public streets should be clearly marked to encourage usage and to discourage wandering onto private lands.
- 4) Removable barriers and signs shall be designed and installed to discourage usage by unauthorized motor vehicles.
- 5) Trails and paths shall be designed to minimize impacts on vegetation, wildlife, waterways and scenic vistas. The maintenance requirements should also be considered in designing these facilities.
- 6) Trails and paths should be located to take advantage of scenic areas and vistas, to provide access to lakes and streams, and to connect population centers.

**OBJECTIVE F**

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Promote June Lake Loop's visual resources (2).

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Policy 1: Visual resources should be considered when developing recreational uses and design standards (2).

Action 1.1: Work with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the USFS to develop a management plan that controls water level fluctuations in Grant Lake during the summer months (2,11).

Action 1.2: Work with the USFS, Southern California Edison and other licensed public utility entities to manage reservoir levels in Agnew, Gem, and Waugh lakes to enhance recreation, visual and other natural resource values (1,11).

Policy 2: Avoid timber harvesting and mining on USFS land where scenic and recreational values would be impaired (1).

Action 2.1: Work with the USFS through the Land and Resource Management Plan update process to limit timber harvesting and mining to areas outside the June Lake Loop and designated ski areas (1).

Policy 3: Promote the recreational and scenic values of the June Lake Loop by encouraging photography, painting, creative landscaping and sculpture (1).

Action 3.1: Encourage the Mono County Arts Council to plan activities and conduct classes in June Lake (1).

Action 3.2: The County should encourage proponents of art galleries and studios to locate in the June Lake Loop (1).

Action 3.3: Work with Cerro Coso Community College or other entities to offer classes on art or photography in the June Lake Loop (1).

**REFERENCES**

Harvey, W. 1982. **June Lake Loop - A Review of Current Water Uses and Future Needs.** Inyo National Forest, Mono Lake Ranger District.

United States Forest Service. 1988. **Final Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.** Pacific Southwest Region.