



The JMT Wilderness Conservancy launches 4-year \$1.6 million restoration program in Ansel Adams Wilderness

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Menlo Park, California – It is undeniable that in the midst of increasing political and social turmoil over the past decade, people have flocked to the outdoors for a natural retreat and in the process have strained our wilderness under their feet. One cannot miss the incremental yet visible harm to fragile meadows, stream banks and remote peaks – high-elevation ecosystems already under stress from the extremes of weather, wildfire and temperature swings caused by climate change. Parking places at trailheads these days are few and far between. Alpine lake areas are now seeing 5 times the number of visitors they can sustain ... every night.

Against this backdrop, the JMT Wilderness Conservancy announces today a collaboration with the United States Forest Service, Inyo National Forest to restore one of the hardest-hit areas of the Ansel Adams Wilderness north of Mammoth Lakes. Following an 18-mile segment of the John Muir Trail, the first and oldest recreational hiking trail in America that was constructed through the high Sierra Nevada crest, the effort will begin this season with the labor-intensive work to repair damage to the meadows, lake banks, creek sides and ever-increasing “social trails” meandering off-trail across the landscapes. Home to the exquisite *Thousand Island Lake* of Ansel Adam’s historic photography, this region is readily accessible to the public and has experienced an unprecedented increase in recreational use, now in need of restoration.

The Conservancy drove the initiative by leveraging private donations with a grant from the State of California, Wildlife Conservation Board and federal funding from the Inyo National Forest, a total of \$1.6 million over the next four years. “We are so pleased to support our federal partners responsible for this critical landscape whose budgets and workforce have been overwhelmed by fire risks and a tsunami of recreational users,” said Marla Stark, the Conservancy’s President & Chair. “This large-scale effort required the investment of private donors with lead support from: the Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. who gave us the seed money to start; the William + Flora Hewlett Foundation that funded a major portion of this season’s field work; and the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation that funded our undergraduate research internship program to do the field monitoring and data collection across such a wide geographic region.”

This effort will be followed by a second major multi-year project in Kings Canyon along Evolution Valley south to Muir Pass that is in planning and compliance for launch in 2022.

The JMT Wilderness Conservancy is a public nonprofit charity that is federally-exempt pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Press inquiries: Toby Suckow, Director of Operations & Marketing toby@JMTwilderness.org