



Energy for What's AheadSM

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Filed electronically

April 30, 2025

Debbie-Anne A. Reese
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

**Subject: Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 1388;
Recreation Use Assessment (REC-1) Final Technical Report**

Dear Secretary Reese:

On January 29, 2025, Southern California Edison Company (SCE) filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) a Final License Application (FLA) for New License for the Lee Vining Project (FERC Project No. 1388).

SCE included the Draft Recreation Use Assessment (REC-1) Technical Report with the FLA noting that the Final technical report would be filed with FERC following stakeholder review. Stakeholders were given a 60-day review period ending on March 21, 2025.

Where appropriate, comments were incorporated, and the REC-1 Technical Report was revised. The Final REC-1 Technical Report is hereby submitted with this filing. A summary of the consultation conducted for this study and report development is included in Section 6.0 of the technical report.

If you have any questions regarding this filing please contact Matthew Woodhall, SCE Relicensing Project Manager, by phone at (909) 362-1764 or via e-mail at matthew.woodhall@sce.com.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

106CF18A73D445F...

Wayne P. Allen
Principal Manager

Enclosure:

- Final Recreation Use Assessment (REC-1) Technical Report

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 1388)



RECREATION USE ASSESSMENT (REC-1) FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT



APRIL 2025

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON

Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 1388)

RECREATION USE ASSESSMENT (REC-1) FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

Southern California Edison
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

April 2025

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CPUE	catch per unit effort
DC	desired conditions
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
GDL	guidelines
GOAL	goals
MA-DRA	management area-destination recreation area
MA-GRA	management area-general recreation area
OBJ	objectives
Project	Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 1388)
QA	quality assurance
QC	quality control
REC-FW	Recreation-forest wide
SCE	Southern California Edison
STD	standards
TWG	Technical Working Group
USFS	U.S. Forest Service

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This technical report presents the data of the Recreation Use Assessment (REC-1) Study conducted in 2022 and 2024 surrounding the Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project (Project). The REC-1 Technical Study Plan detailed Southern California Edison's (SCE) proposal for study objectives, study area, methods, and schedule for the effort. The Final Technical Study Plan was filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on April 25, 2022 (SCE, 2022).

This REC-1 Study characterizes existing recreation use and access within and surrounding the Project and aims to assess future recreation needs that may be associated with the Project.

All recreation facilities in the upper Lee Vining Canyon are currently owned and operated by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and not associated with the FERC Project license. However, many of these sites are located adjacent to the existing FERC Project Boundary. The first study season (Phase 1) of the REC-1 Study evaluated which Inyo National Forest recreation facilities or activities have a potential connection to the Project and thus warranted inclusion in the broader study proposed for the second study season (Phase 2).

2.0 STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of Phase 1 in 2022 was to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation facilities or activities have a potential connection to the Project and may warrant inclusion in the broader studies proposed for Phase 2 conducted in 2024.

The objectives of Phase 2 in 2024 included:

- Characterization of existing recreation opportunities and visitation.
- Characterization of existing recreation visitor characteristics, needs, and preferences.
- Estimates of current recreational fishing effort in Project creeks and reservoirs.
- Estimates of future recreational demand and needs, including the need for additional recreation facility and access enhancements or enforcement actions.
- Assessment of the consistency of current recreation opportunities with the desired conditions, goals, standards, and guidelines described in the *Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest* (USFS, 2019).

2.1. STUDY AREA

The REC-1 Study area is shown on Figure 2.1-1 and specific study sites based on methodology are listed in Table 2.1-1. For Phase 1, the REC-1 Study area was divided into two geographies: upper Lee Vining Canyon and lower Lee Vining Canyon. Based on

the results of Phase 1, only those sites in the upper Lee Vining Canyon identified as having a potential nexus to the Project were included in Phase 2 of REC-1 Study.

Table 2.1-1. Study Sites and Survey Method

Geographic Area	Site Number	Site Name	User Surveys (2022)	User Surveys (2024)	Creel Surveys	Spot Counts	Counters
Upper Lee Vining Canyon	1	Saddlebag Lake Campground ^a	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	2	Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area ^b	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	3	Saddlebag Lake Trailhead ^c	☒	☒	No	☒	☒
	4	Sawmill Walk-in Campground	☒	☒	☒	☒	No
	5	Carnegie Station Trailhead	☒	No	No	No	No
	6	Gardisky Lake Trailhead	☒	No	No	No	No
	7	Junction Campground	☒	☒	☒	☒	No
	8	Bennettville Trailhead	☒	☒	No	☒	No
	9	Tioga Lake Overlook Info Site	☒	☒	No	☒	No
	10	Glacier Canyon Trailhead	☒	☒	No	☒	No
	11	Nunatak-Tioga Tarns Trailhead	☒	No	No	No	No
	12	Tioga Lake Campground ^d	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	13	Nunatak Nature Trail	☒	No	No	No	No
	14	Ellery Lake Campground ^e	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	15	Warren Fork Trailhead	☒	No	No	No	No
	22	Informal Fishing Access ^f	No	No	☒	No	No
	23	Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout ^g	No	☒	No	☒	☒

Geographic Area	Site Number	Site Name	User Surveys (2022)	User Surveys (2024)	Creel Surveys	Spot Counts	Counters
Lower Lee Vining Canyon	16	Big Bend Campground	☒	No	No	No	No
	17	Aspen Grove Campground	☒	No	No	No	No
	18	Boulder Day Use Area	☒	No	No	No	No
	19	Moraine Campground	☒	No	No	No	No
	20	Lower Lee Vining Campground	☒	No	No	No	No
	21	Cattleguard Campground ^h	☒	No	No	No	No

Caltrans = California Department of Transportation

^a Traffic counter placed on Saddlebag Lake Road to capture all traffic to Saddlebag Lake.

^b Two trail counters were placed on the Saddlebag Lake loop trail to the east of the trailhead within the Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area.

^c One trail counter was placed on the Saddlebag Lake loop trail to the west of the trailhead.

^d One trail counter was placed on a dispersed use trail that originates at a pullout on Tioga Pass Road, south of Tioga Lake Campground.

^e One trail counter was placed on a dispersed use trail that originates at a pullout on Tioga Pass Road, approximately 560 feet up canyon from Ellery Lake Campground.

^f California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) requested that creel surveys be conducted at this informal site. Flyers were placed at the site requesting users to fill out the survey online, no in-person surveys were conducted.

^g Requests from Mono Lake Committee and Access Fund were received to include the formal Caltrans pullout site in the study. This site was included in the list of sites to have user surveys and spot counts completed. Additionally, a trail counter was placed along the uphill path to the Rhinedollar Dam climbing area.

^h Cattleguard Campground consists of an administrative building and is not open to the public.

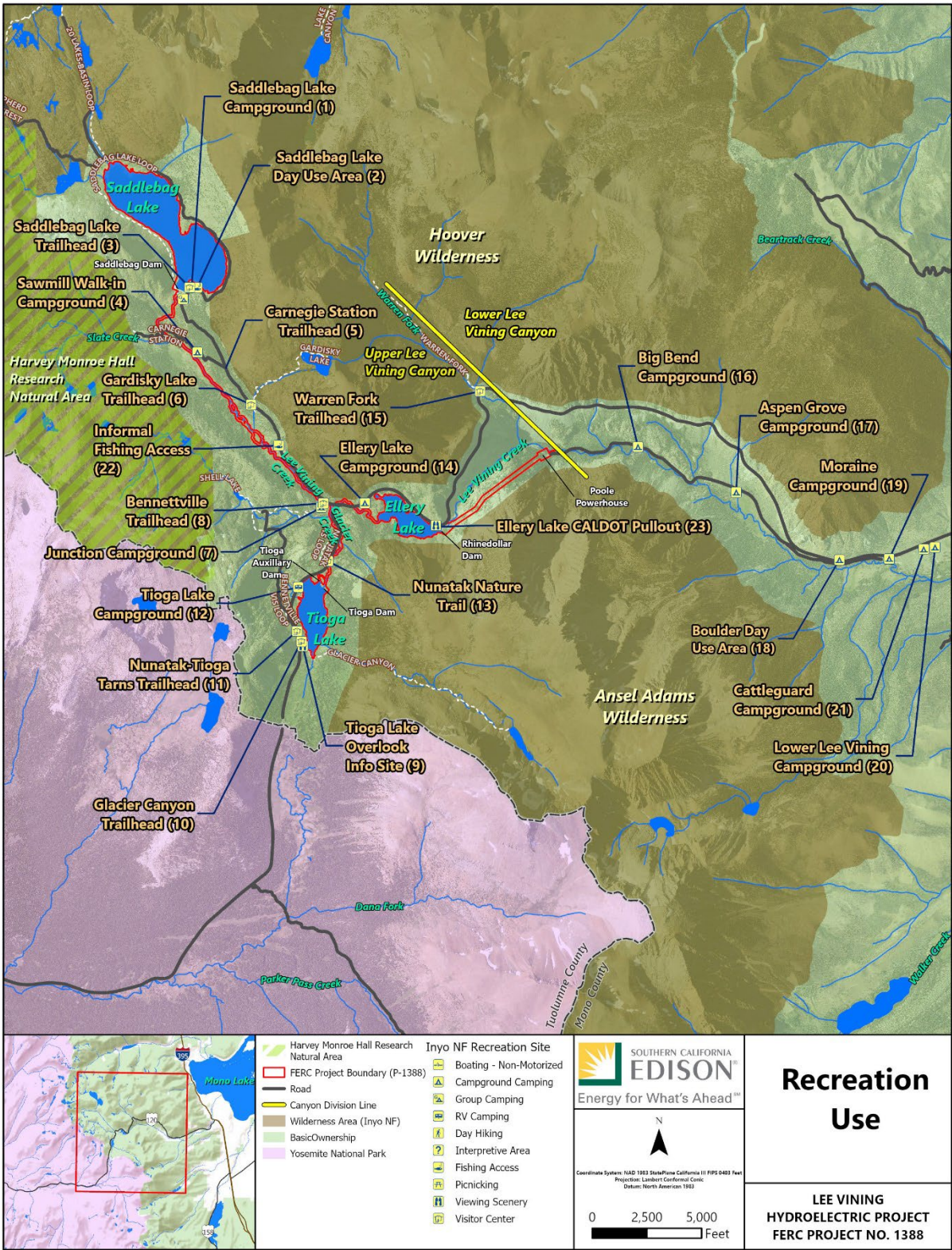


Figure 2.1-1. Recreation Facilities in Project Vicinity.

3.0 METHODS

To accomplish the goals and objectives of the REC-1 Study, SCE used a variety of data collection techniques to compile both historical and current recreation use and needs patterns for the Project Area. Historical use patterns were determined by analyzing the studies, reports, and management plans listed in the Revised Technical Study Plan (SCE, 2022). Current use and needs information were collected through user surveys, creel surveys, spot counts, and traffic and trail counters. A description of each collection technique is provided below.

3.1. USER SURVEYS (2022 AND 2024)

3.1.1. PHASE 1 SURVEYS (2022)

During the 2022 study season, user surveys were conducted on-site using a survey form at the sites identified in Table 2.1-1. These Phase 1 surveys were intended to identify the primary reason for each recreator's visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project and thus may warrant inclusion in Phase 2 of the study. SCE worked with the Recreation and Land Use Resources Technical Working Group (TWG) to develop parameters for determining nexus and final survey forms prior to conducting the Phase 1 surveys (Appendix A).

Phase 1 user surveys were conducted on the dates listed in Table 3.1-1. One user survey circuit included conducting surveys at the sites identified in Table 2.1-1. There were three 4-hour shifts: Shift 1 (7 a.m. to 11 a.m.), Shift 2 (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.), and Shift 3 (3 p.m. to 7 p.m.). On each of the 11 days, two survey circuits were completed within a 4-hour shift. SCE anticipated each circuit would take approximately 2 hours. Within each shift, once the first circuit was completed, the second circuit commenced. The user surveys were conducted following a bus route method (e.g., Pollock et al., 1994); the shift, the starting recreation site for each circuit, and the direction of travel (i.e., clockwise or counterclockwise) were selected randomly on the days the surveys were conducted.

Table 3.1-1. 2022 Phase 1 User Survey Schedule

Date	Type	Start Time	Direction	Starting Site
Sunday, June 12, 2022	Non-peak Weekend	11:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CCW/CW	1/11
Wednesday, June 22, 2022	Weekday	7:00 a.m./11:00 a.m.	CCW/CW	13/3
Sunday, June 26, 2022	Non-peak Weekend	11:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CW/CCW	6/8
Friday, July 1, 2022	Weekday	7:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CW/CW	3/14
Saturday, July 2, 2022	Peak Weekend	11:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CCW/CCW	13/11
Saturday, August 13, 2022	Non-peak Weekend	7:00 a.m./11:00 a.m.	CCW/CCW	4/14

Date	Type	Start Time	Direction	Starting Site
Tuesday, August 16, 2022	Weekday	7:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CW/CW	1/8
Wednesday, August 31, 2022	Weekday	7:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CW/CW	6/9
Thursday, September 1, 2022	Weekday	11:00 a.m./3:00 p.m.	CW/CCW	1/13
Saturday, September 10, 2022	Non-peak Weekend	7:00 a.m./11:00 a.m.	CW/CCW	9/14
Sunday, September 25, 2022	Non-peak Weekend	7:00 a.m./11:00 a.m.	CW/CCW	10/6

CW = clockwise; CCW = counterclockwise

3.1.2. PHASE 2 SURVEYS (2024)

As discussed in Section 4.1, *Phase 1 User Surveys (2022)*, SCE performed a statistical analysis of the Phase 1 survey data to identify sites with a potential Project nexus to be moved forward to Phase 2 surveys. For those selected sites, Phase 2 user surveys were conducted with a survey form (available in both English and Spanish; Appendix B) to collect recreation user characteristics and demographics (e.g., origin, age, and group size); satisfaction; type of activities; length of stay; and perception of crowdedness, site conditions, fees, and site needs. The data collected were used to provide a general pattern of recreation use (e.g., type, amount, and day) and assist in the development of recreation use estimates for the Project Area. The data included recreation user inputs on “crowdedness” and perceived facility needs. Final survey forms, methods, and study locations were developed in collaboration with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG prior to field implementation.

Phase 2 user surveys were conducted on the dates listed in Table 3.1-2, for a total of 11 field survey days. One survey circuit included user surveys at the sites identified in Table 2.1-1. On each day, field staff visited each site for 1 hour conducting user surveys following a bus route method (Pollock et al., 1994); the shift, the starting recreation site, and the direction of travel (clockwise or counterclockwise) were selected randomly on the days the surveys were conducted.

As a means of quality control (QC), all survey clerks for Phase 1 surveys, Phase 2 surveys, and creel surveys (discussed in Section 3.2, *Creel Surveys (2024)*, below) were trained thoroughly. Field staff were provided with detailed information on the study schedule, equipment and materials to aid in data collection, and direction on appropriate interviewing techniques and attire.

Table 3.1-2. 2024 Phase 2 User Survey and Spot Count Schedule

Date	Type	Start Time	Direction	Starting Site Number (Team 1)	Starting Site Number (Team 2)
Saturday, June 15, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	4	14

Date	Type	Start Time	Direction	Starting Site Number (Team 1)	Starting Site Number (Team 2)
Wednesday, June 19, 2024	Peak Holiday	8:00 a.m.	CCW	23	7
Wednesday, June 26, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	1	8
Saturday, July 13, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CCW	7	23
Tuesday, July 23, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CW	9	2
Saturday, August 3, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CW	23	7
Friday, August 16, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CW	23	7
Friday, September 6, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	14	4
Sunday, September 8, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	8	1
Sunday, October 13, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CCW	2	9
Wednesday, November 6, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	12	--

CW = clockwise; CCW = counterclockwise

3.2. CREEL SURVEYS (2024)

Creel surveys were conducted according to the standard protocols published in *Fisheries Techniques, Third Addition* (Zale et al., 2013). Surveys used a field data sheet at the sites identified in Table 2.1-1 to collect angler characteristics; determine current angler timing, effort, harvest, composition, and success; and estimate catch per unit effort (CPUE) by species. Creel surveys were conducted during the 2024 fishing season (June 15, 2024, through September 2, 2024), which equated to a period of 80 days. During consultation, TWG members requested that creel surveys be conducted at an informal pullout location off of Saddlebag Lake Road. Due to the informal nature of this location, SCE committed to posting a flyer with a link to the survey online to address this request.

SCE conducted creel surveys for approximately 30 percent of the fishing season (24 days), including 1 representative day from each of the major holiday weekends (Juneteenth: June 19, 2024, and June 22 to June 23, 2024; Independence Day: July 5 to July 7, 2024; and Labor Day: August 31 to September 2, 2024), and the remainder of survey days were split between 10 weekdays and 11 non-peak weekend days. The survey schedule is shown in Table 3.2-1. One creel survey circuit was completed on each sampling day and included conducting creel surveys at the sites identified in Table 2.1-1 for 1 hour each survey day, following a bus route method (Pollock et al., 1994); the shift, the starting recreation site, and the direction of travel (clockwise or counterclockwise) were selected randomly on the days the surveys were conducted.

Creel survey forms, methods, and study locations were developed in collaboration with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG and are included in Appendix C.

Table 3.2-1. Creel Survey Schedule

Date	Type	Start Time	Direction	Starting Site
Tuesday, June 18, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CW	2
Sunday, June 23, 2024	Peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	2
Monday, June 24, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CCW	4
Saturday, June 29, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	1
Sunday, June 30, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CCW	1
Tuesday, July 2, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CCW	7
Sunday, July 7, 2024	Peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CCW	7
Sunday, July 14, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	14
Tuesday, July 16, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	1
Thursday, July 18, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CW	1
Saturday, July 20, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CW	14
Sunday, July 21, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	1
Friday, July 26, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	2
Sunday, July 28, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CCW	1
Sunday, August 4, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CCW	12
Friday, August 9, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CW	14
Sunday, August 11, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	12
Monday, August 12, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	12
Friday, August 16, 2024	Weekday	12:00 p.m.	CCW	12
Saturday, August 17, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CW	1
Sunday, August 18, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CW	7
Friday, August 23, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	1
Monday, August 26, 2024	Non-peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CW	12
Sunday, September 1, 2024	Peak Weekend	12:00 p.m.	CCW	4

CW = clockwise; CCW = counterclockwise

3.3. TRAFFIC COUNTERS (2024)

SCE installed one traffic counter just before the Saddlebag Lake Trailhead on Saddlebag Lake Road (Figure 3.3-1) to document the number of vehicles accessing the Saddlebag Lake area recreation sites on an hourly basis. The daily total number of vehicles was calculated from the hourly counts and used in the analysis. The traffic counter was installed on June 13, 2024, and recovered on October 29, 2024. Due to equipment malfunction, data collection began on June 29, 2024.¹ Data collected from June 29 to

¹ The Juneteenth holiday was not captured due to the equipment malfunction.

October 28 are included in the analysis. Calibration counts were conducted three times throughout the field season, and data were downloaded biweekly in June and July and once per month in August, September, and October (Appendix D). Table 3.3-1 lists the dates calibration counts were conducted.

SCE met with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG on February 8, 2024, to finalize the calibration count form, traffic counter location, and schedule for the 2024 field season; the calibration count form is included in Appendix D.

Table 3.3-1. Calibration Schedule for Traffic and Trail Counters

Date	Type	Start Time	Direction	Starting Site (Team 1)	Starting Site (Team 2)
Friday, June 28, 2024	Weekend	8:00 a.m.	CCW	Ellery-Rhinedollar Trail*	Saddlebag Trail East 2
Wednesday, August 21, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CCW	Ellery-Rhinedollar Trail	Tioga Pullout Access Trail
Tuesday, October 8, 2024	Weekday	8:00 a.m.	CW	Tioga Pullout Access Trail	Saddlebag Trail East 1

CW = clockwise; CCW = counterclockwise
*This is a dispersed use trail that crosses the dam and follows above the buried penstock.

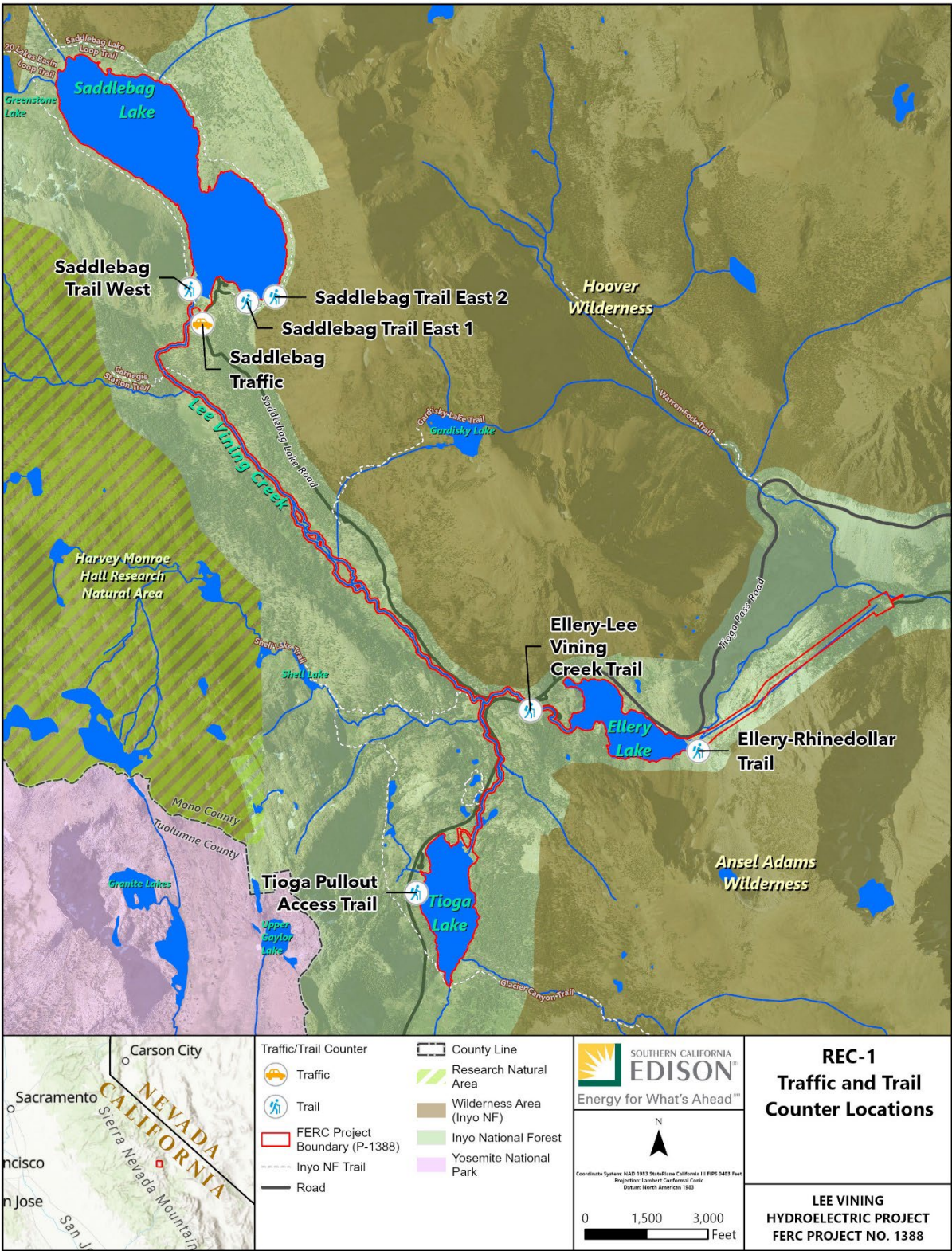


Figure 3.3-1. Traffic and Trail Counter Locations.

3.4. TRAIL COUNTERS (2024)

Based on data collected as part of the REC-2 Study, Dispersed Use Assessment, and discussions with Recreation and Land Use TWG members, SCE installed six trail counters at the recreation sites identified in Table 2.1-1 (Figure 3.3-1). Trail counters recorded the number of recreationists using the trails on an hourly basis; the daily total number of people was calculated from the hourly counts. Trail counters were installed as soon as the survey team had access to the recreation facilities, on June 13, 2024, and were recovered on October 29, 2024. Data collected between June 15² and October 28 are included in the analysis. Calibration counts were conducted three times throughout the field season, and data were downloaded biweekly in June and July and once per month in August, September, and October. Calibration count data from Saddlebag Trail East 1, Saddlebag Trail East 2, and Ellery-Rhinedollar Trail on August 21, 2024, were lost due to staff operator error. Table 3.3-1 lists the dates calibration counts were conducted.

SCE met with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG on February 8, 2024, to finalize the calibration count form, the number and location of trail counters, and schedule for the 2024 field season; the calibration count form is included in Appendix D.

3.5. SPOT COUNTS (2024)

Spot counts were conducted at each recreation site identified in Table 2.1-1 in conjunction with Phase 2 user surveys outlined above. At recreation sites with parking areas (Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area [Site 2], Saddlebag Lake Trailhead [Site 3], Bennettville Trailhead [Site 8], Tioga Lake Overlook / Glacier Canyon Trailhead [Site 9/10], and Ellery Lake California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] Pullout [Site 23]), the spot counts documented the number of vehicles at each parking area as a means of estimating the number of users currently at the site. Additionally, the weather, time, and number of people observed participating in recreation activities were recorded. SCE conducted spot counts on the days shown in Table 3.1-2.

At the campgrounds, the number of occupied camp sites was also recorded during each spot count. Occupation of the group campsite at the Saddlebag Lake Trailhead and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) compliant campsites at Junction Campground and Tioga Lake Campground was recorded. Saddlebag Lake Campground was closed during the three spot counts conducted in June. All campgrounds were closed during the October 13 and November 6 spot counts.

SCE met with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG on February 8, 2024, to finalize the spot count locations and schedule for the 2024 field season; the spot count form is included in Appendix E.

3.6. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL MEASURES

All field data (spot count, calibration count, traffic counter, and trail counter data) and survey data (user surveys and creel surveys) collected as part of this REC-1 Study are

² Training took place on June 13 and 14. Actual surveys and counts started on June 15.

subject to a rigorous multi-step quality assurance (QA) and QC protocol to validate the dataset used in the recreation use analyses.

The QA/QC protocol involved a multi-stage approach to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data as follows:

- QC1 focused on verifying that all field data were properly recorded.
- QC2 included a detailed examination of the data to identify and address outliers or suspect values. Data were examined to identify erroneously repeated data, data with questionable validity, or data that contained suspect information otherwise not captured.
- QC3 entailed standardizing data formats and units, as well as more in-depth checks for erroneous data, spelling errors, etc. The QC3 process continued throughout the analysis.

3.7. CURRENT RECREATION USE AND UTILIZATION ESTIMATES

For the day use sites, recreation days were estimated using a combination of data from the user surveys and spot counts, and calculated as follows (Pollock et al., 1994):

Average Vehicle Count (by month and day type from spot count data)

× **Median People per Vehicle** (from user survey data)

× **Recreation Day³ Length** (12 hours assumed for day use)

× **Total Number of Days** (by month and day type)

÷ **Median Trip Length** (from user survey data)

= **Estimated Number of Recreation Days** (by month and day type)

For the purposes of this study, the median people per vehicle was assumed to be the median group size collected from the user surveys. The estimates are presented as total recreation days by month, day type, and site.

The parking capacity was assessed at day use sites only. Parking capacity for a recreation site was defined as the number of vehicles that can be parked at a recreation site at one time based on the number of available parking⁴ spaces associated with that site. Parking capacities for each site with a parking area were described in the *Existing*

³ As defined by FERC, a recreation day is each visit by a person to the study site for recreational purposes during any portion of a 24-hour period.

⁴ In parking areas where spaces were not clearly defined (i.e., gravel parking areas), the average size of a standard car parking space was estimated to be 16 to 18 feet long and 8 to 9 feet wide (~130 to 160 square feet). For the purpose of this study, the upper range was used to determine total parking availability. At paved parking areas, the number of delineated spaces were counted and documented.

Recreation Facilities Condition Assessment (REC-2) Final Technical Report (SCE, 2024). To determine the parking utilization, the average number of vehicles observed on holiday and non-holiday weekends was calculated from the spot counts. This was divided by the available parking capacity. The Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout was not inventoried during the REC-2 Study; thus, an estimate of the parking capacity was made based on a review of aerial imagery and the estimated dimensions of the parking area. An estimated parking capacity of 30 spaces was used in the parking utilization analysis for the Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout. The formula for determining parking utilization is shown below.

$$\text{Parking utilization} = \left(\frac{\text{Average Vehicles}}{\text{Parking Capacity}} \right) \times 100$$

The campground capacity was defined as the number of available campsites associated with that site. Campground capacities for each site with a campground were described in the REC-2 Final Technical Report (SCE, 2024). For the sites with single campgrounds (Saddlebag Lake Campground, Ellery Lake Campground, Junction Campground, Sawmill Walk-in Campground, and Tioga Lake Campground), the formula for estimating campground utilization on holiday and non-holiday weekends is shown below.

$$\text{Campground utilization} = \left(\frac{\text{Average Campsites Occupied}}{\text{Campground Capacity}} \right) \times 100$$

3.8. FUTURE RECREATION USE ESTIMATES

Population estimates from 2013 to 2022 were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau for the state of California, and for the six individual counties where more than 3 percent of survey respondents reported residing (Table 4.2-1; U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). From the 2013 to 2022 population data, the 10-year average rate of change in the population for the state and the subset of six counties was estimated using log-linear population models. The average rate of change for the subset of six counties was weighted based on the proportion of visitors reporting residing in these counties. This rate of change was used to estimate the population projections for 2025, 2030, 2035, 2040, 2045, 2050, 2055, 2060, 2065, 2070, and 2075 for the state of California and the subset of the six counties.

3.9. RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The need for new recreation opportunities, new site development, or modification of existing recreation resources was assessed based on the results of facility condition assessments, site capacity estimates, and user surveys that provided user preferences and opinions on needs and crowding at each site and the Project Area as a whole. Based on these results, recommendations were proposed to address effects of future Project facilities and operations, consistent with the desired conditions, goals, standards, and guidelines described in the *Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest* (USFS, 2019), to then be discussed with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG.

3.10. MODIFICATIONS TO METHODS

During Phase 1 surveys, four modifications to the methods were made: (1) survey dates were shifted due to campground and road opening dates early in the recreation season; (2) an unrelated field staff injury resulted in moving one survey day from July into September; (3) surveys were conducted only in English rather than English and Spanish as originally proposed; and (4) Cattleguard Campground consists of an administrative building and is not open to public use and, therefore, was not surveyed.

Phase 2 surveys were originally planned to be conducted in 2023. Due to heavy snowfall leading to a wet water year, study sites were not accessible until the middle of July 2023. SCE consulted with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG members throughout that spring and ultimately, on July 17, 2023, the decision was made to postpone the REC-1 Study to the 2024 study season. Consensus with the TWG was reached via email on July 17, 2023. Additionally, due to a brief closure of State Route 120 (also called Tioga Pass Road) due to a storm, the October 31, 2024, survey day was canceled and rescheduled for November 6, 2024.

The flyer for the online creel survey at the Informal Fishing Access Turnout along Saddlebag Lake Road was not installed at the start of the creel survey season. Consultation between SCE and the USFS was conducted to determine potential impacts to cultural resources due to ground disturbance with a t-post being installed for the online creel survey flyer to attach. The t-post with the flyer was installed on August 15, 2024. Due to the delay in installation, the flyer remained on-site through October 31, 2024, past the original end date for creel surveys.

4.0 STUDY RESULTS

4.1. PHASE 1 USER SURVEYS (2022)

Recreation survey data from the Phase 1 user surveys are summarized in Table 4.1-1 and Table 4.1-2. Data are presented by the number of surveys conducted during the recreation season and then further broken out to show the answer to the main survey question: "What is the primary purpose of your trip to Lee Vining Canyon?" The responses have been broken out by the location where the survey was conducted.

Table 4.1-1. Surveys Conducted During the 2022 Recreation Season by Site

Location of Survey (Site Number)	Surveys Accepted	Surveys Declined	Total Surveys
Saddlebag Lake Rec Areas (1, 2, 3)	50	9	59
Sawmill Walk-in Campground (4)	20	2	22
Carnegie Station Trailhead (5)	5	1	6
Gardisky Lake Trailhead (6)	8	3	11
Junction Campground, Bennettville Trailhead (7, 8)	42	10	52
Tioga Lake Overlook Info Site, Glacier Canyon Trailhead (9, 10)	31	11	42
Nunatak-Tioga Tarns Trailhead (11)	1	0	1
Tioga Lake Campground (12)	22	9	31
Nunatak Nature Trail (13)	5	1	6
Ellery Lake Campground (14)	19	4	23
Warren Fork Trailhead (15)	1	1	2
Big Bend Campground (16)	27	8	35
Aspen Grove Campground (17)	38	8	46
Boulder Day Use Area (18)	1	0	1
Moraine Campground (19)	24	4	28
Lower Lee Vining Campground (20)	36	11	47
Totals	330	82	412

Table 4.1-2. Phase 1 Survey Responses to Main Survey Question by Site

Main Survey Question Response	Passing through on my way to Yosemite National Park	Passing through on my way to Eastern Sierras (Mono Lake, June Lake, Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, etc.)	Recreate in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Saddlebag Lake, Lee Vining Creek, Tioga Lake, Glacier Creek, Ellery Lake, etc.)	Recreate in the Lower Lee Vining Canyon (Campgrounds and Lee Vining Creek access below Poole Powerhouse)	Other	User Surveys (2024)	Spot Counts (2024)	Counters (2024)
Location of Survey (Site Number) Upper Lee Vining Canyon								
Saddlebag Lake Rec Areas (1, 2, 3)	7	3	40	0	0	☒	☒	☒
Sawmill Walk-in Campground (4)	2	0	18	0	0	☒	☒	☒
Carnegie Station Trailhead (5) ^a	0	1	4	0	0	No	No	No
Gardisky Lake Trailhead (6) ^a	1	2	4	0	1 – Locals from Mono fire and Forest Service hiking Gardisky	No	No	No
Junction Campground, Bennettville Trailhead (7, 8)	7	1	34	0	0	☒	☒	☒
Tioga Lake Overlook Info Site, Glacier Canyon Trailhead (9, 10)	11	11	7	1	1 – Motorcycle ride	☒ ^b	☒	No
Nunatak-Tioga Tarns Trailhead (11) ^a	0	0	1	0	0	No	No	No
Tioga Lake Campground (12)	3	1	18	0	0	☒	☒	☒
Nunatak Nature Trail (13) ^a	4	0	1	0	0	No	No	No
Ellery Lake Campground (14)	3	0	16	0	0	☒	☒	☒
Warren Fork Trailhead (15) ^a	0	0	1	0	0	No	No	No
Location of Survey (Site Number) Lower Lee Vining Canyon								
Big Bend Campground (16) ^a	0	2	2	22	1 – Going to Bridgeport area	No	No	No
Aspen Grove Campground (17) ^a	4	0	6	28	0	No	No	No
Boulder Day Use Area (18) ^a	0	0	0	1	0	No	No	No
Moraine Campground (19) ^a	3	0	7	14	0	No	No	No
Lower Lee Vining Campground (20) ^a	1	1	8	24	2 – Driving through to Orange County Passing through to Washington	No	No	No
Totals	46	22	167	90	5			

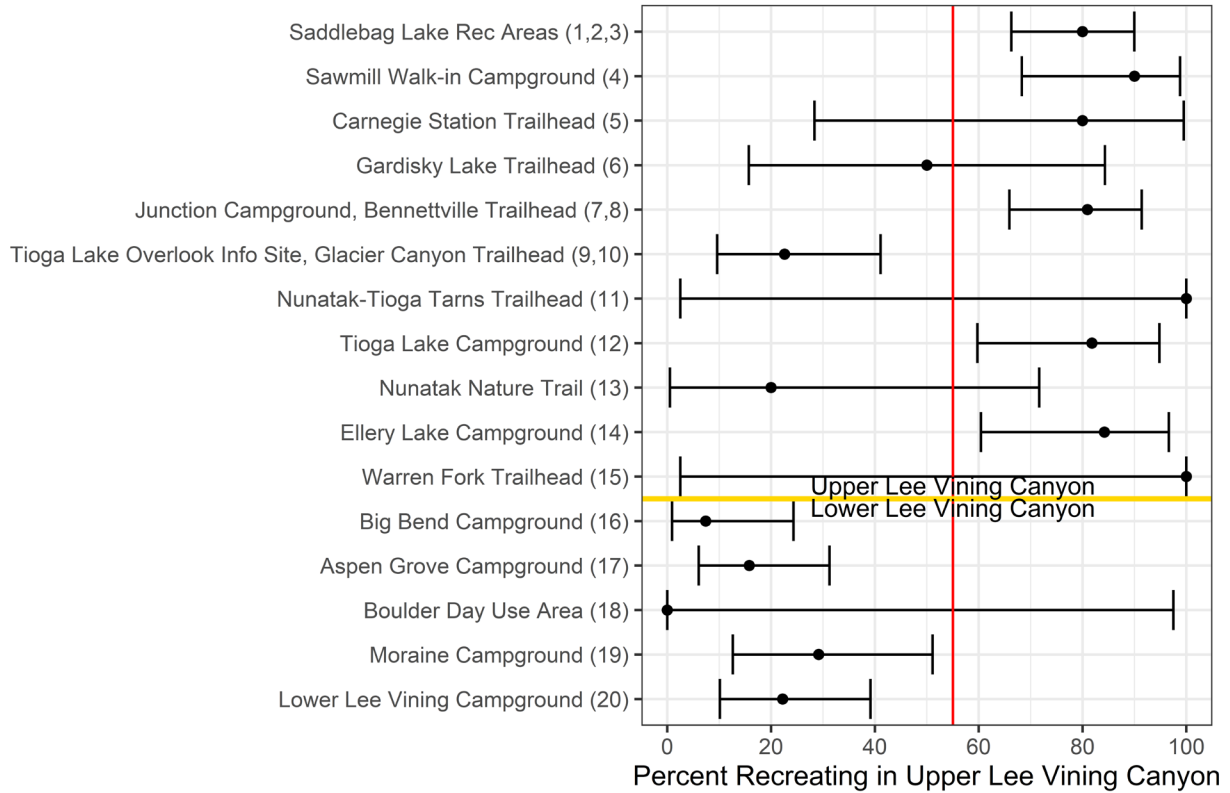
^a These sites did not meet the potential Project nexus threshold criteria to be considered for further study (as discussed below).

^b Data for the Tioga Lake Overlook Site and Glacier Canyon Trailhead did not meet the potential Project nexus threshold criteria (as discussed below); however, SCE committed to moving these sites forward to the 2024 study season in the original Study Plan.

In addition to the data provided above, SCE performed statistical analysis on the data to determine the sites that may have a potential Project nexus to be moved forward to Phase 2 surveys. As captured in Table 4.1-3, the number of visitors encountered at each site during the Phase 1 surveys varied from 1 to 59, with 50 to 100 percent of those encountered at all sites accepting the survey. The percent of surveyed visitors at each site reporting a primary purpose of recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon ranged from zero to 100 percent (Table 4.1-3). If the survey represents a random sample of site visitors, the precision of these proportion estimates can be estimated as a function of the number of surveys at each site, as displayed in Figure 4.1-1.

The true proportion of overall visitors with primary purpose of recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon is unknown, but the 95-percent binomial confidence intervals indicate the range of values that are most likely to include the true proportion based on the sample. There were six recreation sites with highly uncertain results, indicated by confidence intervals greater than 50 percent. These sites had few visitors during the survey period (less than 15), and therefore, had fewer survey responses (less than 10), which resulted in a high level of uncertainty. Although some of the estimated proportions for these six sites are greater than 55 percent, these results are not reliable because there were too few surveys conducted. The reason for this uncertainty is that these sites did not receive many visitors during the survey period.

When the results for these less-used sites are excluded, there is a clear division between the remaining recreation sites in which five have more than 55 percent (red vertical line in Figure 4.1-1) of visitors primarily recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon, and five that clearly have less than 55 percent of visitors recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon. The five sites with more than 20 visitors encountered and with 95-percent confidence that more than 55 percent of visitors were recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon have a higher potential nexus to the Project. These sites are highlighted with bold font in Table 4.1-3.



Note: This figure illustrates the estimated percentage of visitors at each site that were primarily recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon. Error bars have varying widths based on sample size and represent 95% confidence intervals on the estimated percentages. The red vertical line is at 55%.

Figure 4.1-1. Estimated Percent of Visitors Recreating in Upper Lee Vining Canyon.

Table 4.1-3. Estimated Percent of Site Visitors Using Recreation Sites

Location (Site Number)	Number of Visitors Encountered	Number of Surveys Accepted	Number Recreating in Upper Lee Vining Canyon	Percent Recreating in Upper Lee Vining Canyon	Lower 95% CL	Upper 95% CL
Upper Lee Vining Canyon						
Saddlebag Lake Rec Areas (1,2,3)	59	50	40	80%	66%	90%
Sawmill Walk-in Campground (4)	22	20	18	90%	68%	99%
Carnegie Station Trailhead (5)	6	5	4	80%	28%	99%
Gardisky Lake Trailhead (6)	11	8	4	50%	16%	84%
Junction Campground Bennettville Trailhead (7, 8)	52	42	34	81%	66%	91%
Tioga Lake Overlook Info Site, Glacier Canyon Trailhead (9, 10)	42	31	7	23%	10%	41%
Nunatak-Tioga Tarns Trailhead (11)	1	1	1	100%	2.5%	100%
Tioga Lake Campground (12)	31	22	18	82%	60%	95%
Nunatak Nature Trail (13)	6	5	1	20%	0.5%	72%
Ellery Lake Campground (14)	23	19	16	84%	60%	97%
Warren Fork Trailhead (15)	2	1	1	100%	2.5%	100%
Lower Lee Vining Canyon						
Big Bend Campground (16)	35	27	2	7%	0.9%	24%
Aspen Grove Campground (17)	46	38	6	16%	6.0%	31%
Boulder Day Use Area (18)	1	1	0	0%	0%	98%
Moraine Campground (19)	28	24	7	29%	13%	51%
Lower Lee Vining Campground (20)	47	36	8	22%	10%	39%

CL = Confidence Limit

Sites shown in bold are considered to have a higher potential nexus to the Project due to their higher traffic and 95% confidence that more than 55% of visitors were recreating in upper Lee Vining Canyon.

4.2. PHASE 2 USER SURVEYS (2024)

The user surveys conducted during Phase 2 provided a variety of information for the study sites, including demographics, user experience, and user feedback. Between June 15, 2024, and November 6, 2024, a total of 349 user surveys were attempted. Of those, 109 visitors declined to participate in the survey, leading to a user survey participation rate of approximately 68.8 percent, and a verified total of 240 completed surveys were used for data analysis.

In some instances, respondents did not provide responses to each question; therefore, the total responses for each question may be less than the total number of completed surveys. The number of survey respondents that did not respond to a question and the number of responses received are provided for each question, where appropriate. The numbers provided in the total rows and the associated percentages in the tables in this section do not include the counts from survey respondents that did not answer a question.

4.2.1. VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Surveyed groups were mainly residents of California (66.8 percent), with more than one-third of surveyed groups from six California counties (Los Angeles, Alameda, Orange, Mono, San Diego, and Inyo Counties). Nevada was the second-most common state of surveyed groups (6.9 percent), and there was a similar number of international visiting groups (6.7 percent) (Table 4.2-1).

Table 4.2-1. Respondents County and State of Residence (Q1)

State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
California	Los Angeles County	21	8.8
California	Alameda County	14	5.8
California	Orange County	14	5.8
California	Mono County	13	5.4
California	San Diego County	11	4.6
California	Inyo County	9	3.8
California	San Bernardino County	7	2.9
California	Mariposa County	6	2.5
California	Riverside County	5	2.1
California	Santa Clara County	5	2.1
California	Kern County	4	1.7
California	Sacramento County	4	1.7
California	San Francisco County	4	1.7
California	Santa Cruz County	4	1.7

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State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
California	Stanislaus County	4	1.7
California	Yolo County	4	1.7
California	Contra Costa County	3	1.2
California	Fresno County	3	1.2
California	Nevada County	3	1.2
California	Placer County	3	1.2
California	San Mateo County	3	1.2
California	Sonoma County	3	1.2
California	Ventura County	3	1.2
California	Santa Barbara County	2	0.8
California	Tulare County	2	0.8
California	El Dorado County	1	0.4
California	Humboldt County	1	0.4
California	Marin County	1	0.4
California	Mendocino County	1	0.4
California	San Luis Obispo County	1	0.4
California	Shasta County	1	0.4
California	Tuolumne County	1	0.4
California Total		161	66.8
Nevada	Clark County	5	2.1
Nevada	Carson City	3	1.2
Nevada	Douglas County	3	1.2
Nevada	Lyon County	2	0.8
Nevada	Washoe County	2	0.8
Nevada	Nye County	1	0.4
Nevada	Pershing County	1	0.4
Nevada Total		17	6.9
Arizona	Maricopa County	2	0.8
Arizona	Yavapai County	1	0.4
Arizona Total		3	1.2
Florida	Broward County	1	0.4
Florida	Hillsborough County	1	0.4
Florida	Leon County	1	0.4

State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Florida Total		3	1.2
Oregon	Deschutes County	1	0.4
Oregon	Josephine County	1	0.4
Oregon	Klamath County	1	0.4
Oregon Total		3	1.2
Colorado	Boulder County	1	0.4
Colorado	Jefferson County	1	0.4
Colorado Total		2	0.8
Illinois	Douglas County	1	0.4
Illinois	Lake County	1	0.4
Illinois Total		2	0.8
Ohio	Franklin County	1	0.4
Ohio	Henry County	1	0.4
Ohio Total		2	0.8
Washington	King County	1	0.4
Washington	Whatcom County	1	0.4
Washington Total		2	0.8
Idaho	Cassia County	1	0.4
Idaho Total		1	0.4
Michigan	Wayne County	1	0.4
Michigan Total		1	0.4
Mississippi	Rankin County	1	0.4
Mississippi Total		1	0.4
Montana	Lincoln County	1	0.4
Montana Total		1	0.4
New York	New York County	1	0.4
New York Total		1	0.4
Pennsylvania	Washington County	1	0.4
Pennsylvania Total		1	0.4
Texas	Harris County	1	0.4
Texas	Smith County	1	0.4

State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Texas Total		2	0.8
Virginia	Norfolk County	1	0.4
Virginia Total		1	0.4
Wisconsin	Dane County	1	0.4
Wisconsin Total		1	0.4
Wyoming	Teton County	1	0.4
Wyoming Total		1	0.4
International		16	6.7
Invalid ZIP Code		4	1.7
No Response		14	5.8
Total		240	100

The average group size across all sites was three people, and the median was two. The average group sizes were largest at the Saddlebag Lake Trailhead (4.1) and the Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout (3.8). The largest single groups (22 to 24) were observed at the Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area and Trailhead. Overall, the surveyed visitors (n=240) represented 715 total visitors (Table 4.2-2).

Table 4.2-2. Summary of Respondents Group Size (Q2)

Site Number	Count	Group Size (people)				Total People
		Minimum	Average	Median	Maximum	
1	26	1	2.8	2	11	74
2	47	1	3	2	22	140
3	36	1	4.1	2	24	147
4	14	1	2.6	2	11	37
7	28	1	2.4	2	10	66
8	5	2	2.6	2	4	13
9/10	30	1	2.2	2	8	66
12	19	1	2.9	2	12	56
14	19	1	2.9	2	7	55
23	16	1	3.8	4	7	61
Totals	240	1	3	2	24	715

Of the 213 visitors providing group ages, 19.6 percent were greater than 65 years old, with the second largest category represented by 25 to 34 years old (17.4 percent). Children less than 18 years old were the smallest demographic at 8.7 percent (Figure 4.2-1).

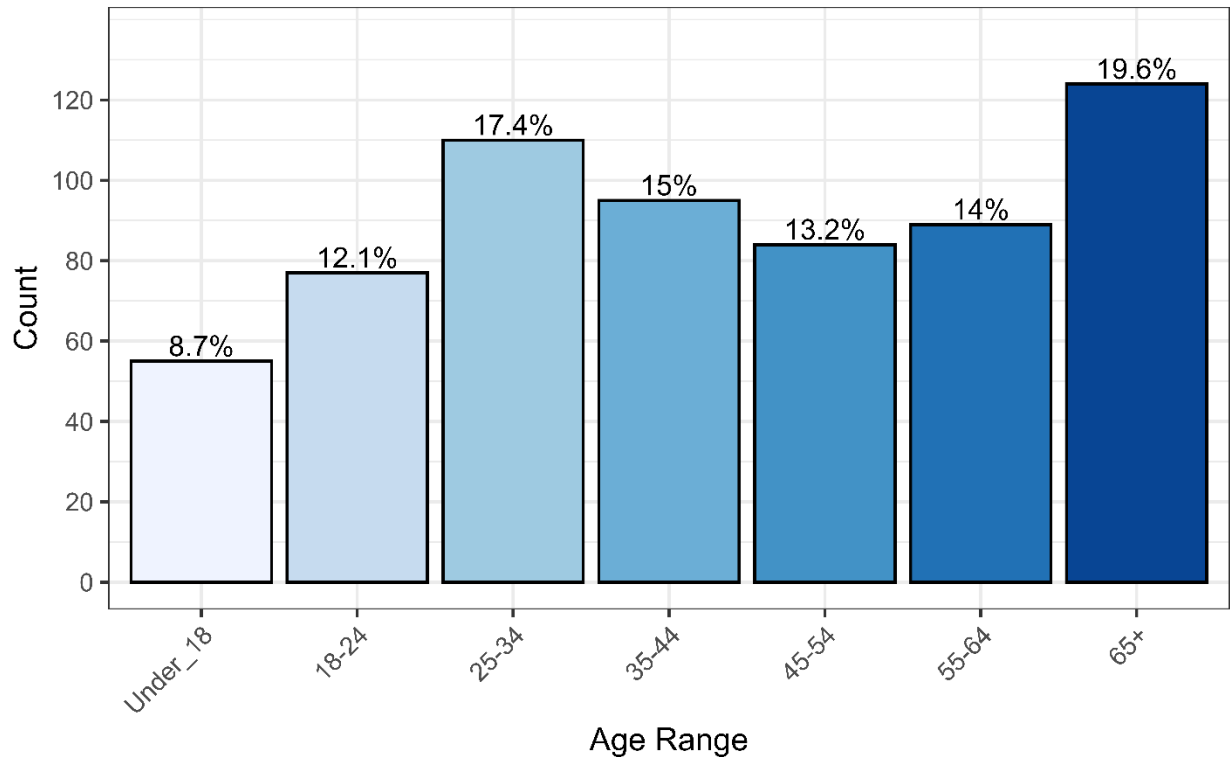


Figure 4.2-1. Age Range of Visitors.

4.2.2. CURRENT TRIP INFORMATION

Most surveyed visitors had visited upper Lee Vining Canyon previously (69.2 percent). The highest proportion of new visitors occurred at the Tioga Lake Overlook / Glacier Canyon Trailhead site (17/30 = 56.6 percent) and Ellery Lake Campground (9/19 = 47.4 percent) (Table 4.2-3).

Table 4.2-3. Summary of Responses for First-time Visitors to Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q4)

Response	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent
No	21	34	24	12	24	4	13	15	10	9	166	69.2
Yes	5	13	11	2	4	1	17	4	9	7	73	30.4
No Answer	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
Total	26	47	36	14	28	5	30	19	19	16	240	100

Figure 4.2-2 shows the day type in which respondents arrived at the recreation sites. Most visitors reported arriving at Lee Vining Canyon on a non-holiday weekday (60 percent).

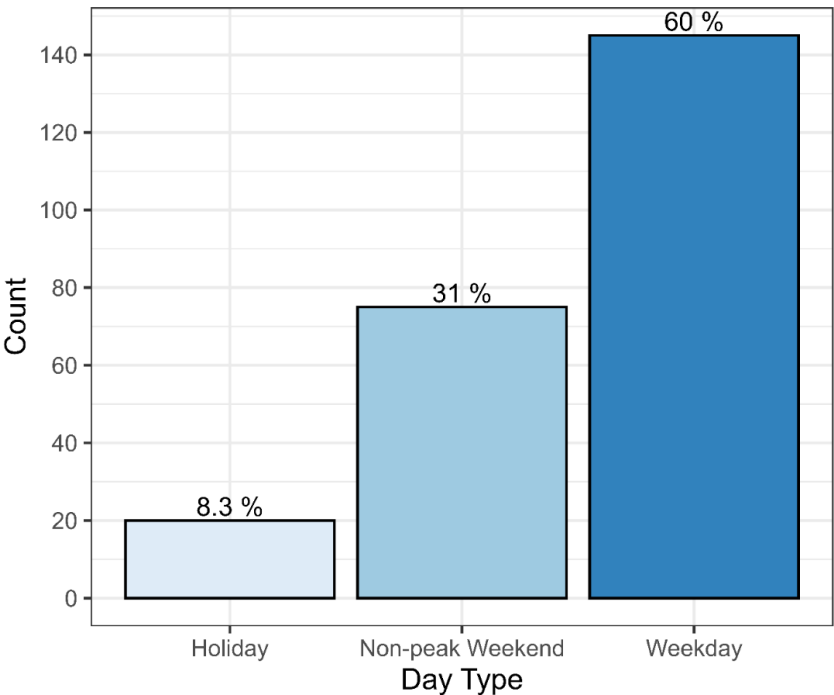


Figure 4.2-2. Type of Day Respondents Arrived in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q5).

The average length of stay reported by respondents at the Bennettville Trailhead, the Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout, and the Tioga Lake Overlook / Glacier Canyon Trailhead was similar, with mean and median visits between 1 and 4 hours. Visitors at the Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area reported longer visits, with a median time of 5 hours, indicating that visitors are participating in fishing, water use, or day hiking. The Saddlebag Lake Trailhead site had average and median times of about 2 days, indicating that visitors using this parking area were camping and/or backpacking (Table 4.2-4).

Table 4.2-4. Summary of Reported Length of Stay (Hours) by Site (Q6/Q7)

Response	Length of Stay by Day Use Site or Trailhead					Total
	Site 2	Site 3	Site 8	Site 9/10	Site 23	
# Responses	47	36	5	30	16	134
Minimum Hours	1	1	1	1	1	1
Average Hours	7.2	47	3	4	2.3	17
Median Hours	5	48	3	1.5	2	5
Maximum Hours	23	127	6	24	7	127

The average length of stay reported by respondents at campgrounds was 4.4 days (median 3 days). Longer stays were reported at Saddlebag Lake Campground, and shorter stays at Sawmill Walk-in Campground. Some visitors at campgrounds reported total stay length less than 1 day, and 1 visitor reported a stay of 35 days (Table 4.2-5).

Table 4.2-5. Summary of Reported Length of Stay (Days) by Site (Q6/Q7)

Response	Length of Stay by Campground Site					Total
	Site 1	Site 4	Site 7	Site 12	Site 14	
# Responses	26	14	28	19	19	106
Minimum Days	0.08	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.04	0.04
Average Days	5	2.9	4.2	6.2	3.1	4.4
Median Days	4.2	2.2	3	3	3	3
Maximum Days	14	7	14	35	7	35

A total of 40 percent of survey respondents reported staying overnight in Lee Vining area campgrounds or recreation sites. In addition, 58 percent (n=44) of the 76 respondents noting “other” accommodations indicated they were camping at locations outside of the recreation sites included in this study (Table 4.2-6).

Table 4.2-6. Use of Overnight Accommodations (Q8)

Accommodation	Count	Percent
Campground	96	40
Rental	26	10.8
Own Property	20	8.3
Other	76	31.7
No Answer	28	11.7

Hiking (79 percent) and camping (51 percent) were the most common activities reported by survey respondents (Table 4.2-7). These were also the top primary activities, followed by fishing and relaxing (Table 4.2-8). “Other” activities cited included swimming, jogging or trail running, disc golf, meditating, or just passing through.

Table 4.2-7. Respondents Recreation Activities (Q10)

Activities	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent ^a
Hiking	17	41	30	14	22	5	21	15	14	11	190	79

Activities	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent ^a
Camping	16	18	10	9	20	3	14	11	17	4	122	51
Relaxing	6	15	20	7	13	3	18	7	8	5	102	42
Viewing Scenery	8	14	12	6	8	3	16	7	6	6	86	36
Scenic Driving	8	13	8	4	6	2	20	3	7	8	79	33
Viewing Wildlife	5	14	12	5	9	2	10	2	5	4	68	28
Fishing (Lake)	9	16	7	2	5	1	5	8	3	5	61	25
Photography/Painting	3	6	9	5	4	1	16	3	4	5	56	23
Fishing (Creek)	5	10	2	1	9	1	3	2	6	2	41	17
Picnicking	2	6	4	2	5	1	6	5	3	1	35	15
Climbing	1	3	8	1	4	0	5	2	2	1	27	11
Overnight Backpacking	2	4	7	2	3	0	1	0	0	1	20	8.3
Biking	0	2	3	0	1	0	3	0	2	2	13	5.4
Watercraft	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	7	2.9
OHV Use	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	1.2
Snowmobiling	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.42
Snowboarding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.42
Snowshoeing	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.42
Skiing (Back Country)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skiing (Cross Country)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	2	4	5	3	5	0	2	2	0	2	25	10
No Answer	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	9	3.8

OHV = off highway vehicle

^a Respondents were able to select more than one response; therefore, the percentage does not total 100.**Table 4.2-8. Respondents Primary Recreation Activity (Q9)**

Primary Activity	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent
Hiking	7	26	21	9	15	4	7	10	6	7	112	46.7
Camping	7	5	1	2	3	1	5	2	6	0	32	13.3
Fishing (Lake)	4	7	3	0	1	0	1	4	0	3	23	9.6
Relaxing	2	1	1	0	4	0	2	2	1	0	13	5.4
Fishing (Creek)	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	1	11	4.6
Climbing	1	2	3	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	11	4.6

Primary Activity	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent
Overnight Backpacking	2	1	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	10	4.2
Viewing Scenery	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	7	2.9
Photography/Painting	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	5	2.1
Scenic Driving	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	4	1.7
Biking	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.8
Viewing Wildlife	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.4
Other	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	3.3
No Answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.4
Total	26	47	36	14	28	5	30	19	19	16	240	100

Only 11.2 percent of survey respondents identified other recreation facility or activity needs at Lee Vining Canyon (Table 4.2-9), with most listing more camping or overnight parking, more biking trails and facilities, or need for resort-like facilities (e.g., boat rentals, ice machines, zip lining).

Table 4.2-9. Respondents Needs for Additional Recreation Activities or Facilities at the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q11a)

Response	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent
No	23	38	25	12	20	4	26	17	16	13	194	80.8
Yes	2	6	8	1	4	0	2	1	2	1	27	11.2
No Answer	1	3	3	1	4	1	2	1	1	2	19	7.9
Total	26	47	36	14	28	5	30	19	19	16	240	99.9

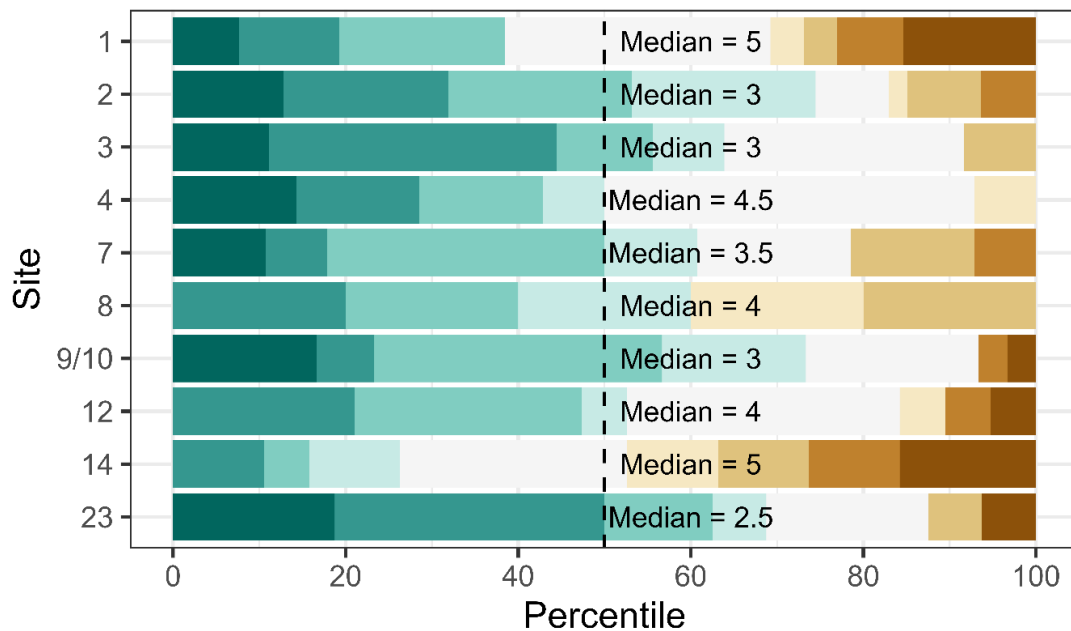
Most of the sites were reported as not crowded or only slightly crowded by most visitors. Ellery Lake Campground and Saddlebag Lake Campground had a median of 5, meaning that 50 percent of the respondents found crowding to be at neutral levels, and 23 to 27 percent of respondents at these sites reported that conditions were overcrowded (8 or 9 rating) (Table 4.2-10) (Figure 4.2-3).

Table 4.2-10. Percent of Responses: Rating of Crowdedness (Q12a)

Site Number	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
			Not Crowded		Slightly Crowded			Moderately Crowded		Extremely Crowded		
1	26	5	7.7	12	19	0	31	3.8	3.8	7.7	15	0
2	47	3	13	19	21	21	8.5	2.1	8.5	6.4	0	0
3	36	3	11	33	11	8.3	28	0	8.3	0	0	0
4	14	4.5	14	14	14	7.1	43	7.1	0	0	0	0
7	28	3.5	11	7.1	32	11	18	0	14	7.1	0	0
8	5	4	0	20	20	20	0	20	20	0	0	0
9/10	30	3	17	6.7	33	17	20	0	0	3.3	3.3	0
12	19	4	0	21	26	5.3	32	5.3	0	5.3	5.3	0
14	19	5	0	11	5.3	11	26	11	11	11	16	0
23	16	2.5	19	31	12	6.2	19	0	6.2	0	6.2	0

N/A = not applicable

Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding. Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, all provided a response to this question.



Note: See Table 4.2-10 for color legend.

Figure 4.2-3. Perception of Crowdedness.

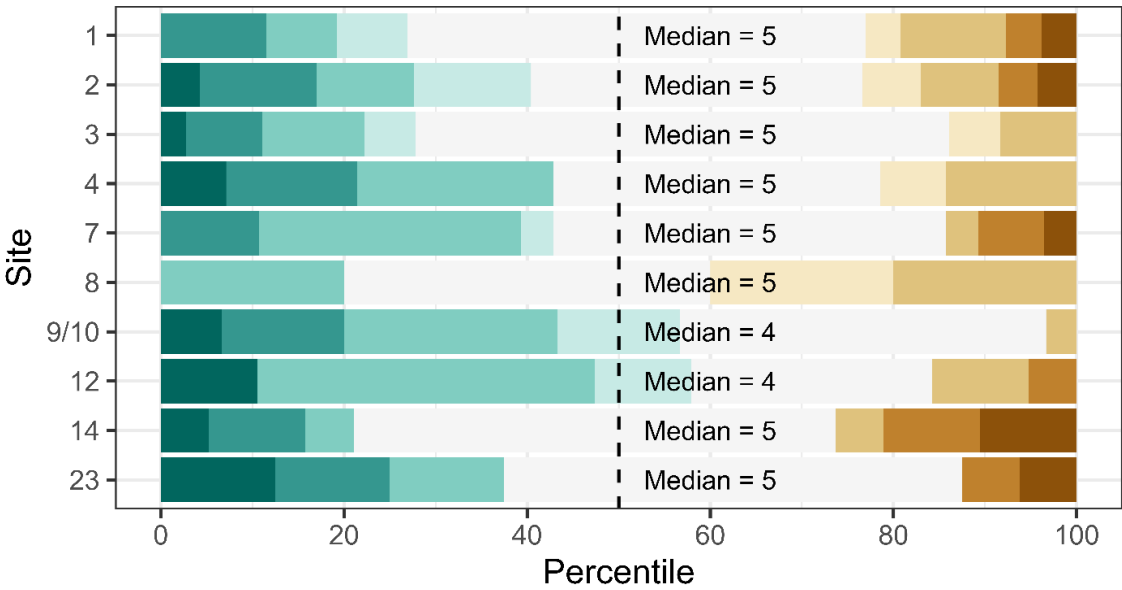
At most sites, visitors were fairly evenly divided on whether crowds were more or less than expected (median = 5 = same as expected). Respondents at the Tioga Lake sites more often found less crowding than expected (median = 4). Reports of crowding much higher than expected (rating of 8 or 9) were most often found at Ellery Lake Campground (Table 4.2-11) (Figure 4.2-4).

Table 4.2-11. Respondents Rating on Expectations of Crowdedness (Q12b)

Site Number	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
			Much Less Crowded				Same			Much More Crowded		
1	26	5	0	12	7.7	7.7	50	3.8	12	3.8	3.8	0
2	47	5	4.3	13	11	13	36	6.4	8.5	4.3	4.3	0
3	36	5	2.8	8.3	11	5.6	58	5.6	8.3	0	0	0
4	14	5	7.1	14	21	0	36	7.1	14	0	0	0
7	28	5	0	11	29	3.6	43	0	3.6	7.1	3.6	0
8	5	5	0	0	20	0	40	20	20	0	0	0
9/10	30	4	6.7	13	23	13	40	0	3.3	0	0	0
12	19	4	11	0	37	11	26	0	11	5.3	0	0
14	19	5	5.3	11	5.3	0	53	0	5.3	11	11	0
23	16	5	12	12	12	0	50	0	0	6.2	6.2	0

N/A = not applicable

Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding. Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, all provided a response to this question.



Note: See Table 4.2-11 for color legend.

Figure 4.2-4. Expectation of Crowdedness.

Approximately 58 percent of the respondents indicated they did not change their use of the upper Lee Vining Canyon due to crowding. Approximately 25 percent of respondents reported that they changed their visiting strategy to avoid crowding (Table 4.2-12); most of these respondents changed strategies to visit during weekday and/or non-holidays (Table 4.2-13).

Table 4.2-12. Respondents Indicating a Change in Visiting Strategy for the Upper Lee Vining Canyon Due to Crowding (Q13a)

Response	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent
No	15	27	27	6	13	2	18	14	9	9	140	58.3
Yes	7	15	4	6	12	2	2	4	5	2	59	24.6
No Answer	4	5	5	2	3	1	10	1	5	5	41	17.1
Total	26	47	36	14	28	5	30	19	19	16	240	100

Table 4.2-13. Respondents Change of Visiting Strategy Due to Crowding at the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q13b)

Response	Number of Responses per Site										Total Responses	
	1	2	3	4	7	8	9/10	12	14	23	Count	Percent
Visit during weekdays	3	6	2	5	7	2	2	3	4	1	35	25.2
Visit during non-holidays	5	8	3	2	8	2	2	1	3	1	35	25.2
Visit during off season	0	5	2	4	5	2	2	1	2	1	24	17.3
Visit a different part of the Lee Vining Area	3	4	1	1	3	2	2	2	3	1	22	15.8
Visit early in the morning	0	7	1	2	3	1	0	0	3	0	17	12.2
Other	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	6	4.3
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	33	9	14	27	9	8	7	15	5	139	100

4.2.2.1. Upper Lee Vining Canyon Feedback

Of those respondents providing a 1-9 rating response, most (51 to 83 percent) indicated the number of facilities to be just right (median=5 for all facilities). The facilities most frequently given a “too few” rating (i.e., 1-3) were fish cleaning facilities (37 percent, 19/51 responses) and campsites (21 percent, 38/185 responses) (Table 4.2-14).

Table 4.2-14. Respondents Rating on the Number of Existing Recreation Facilities in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q14)

Facility	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
			Too Few				About Right				Too Many	
Publicly Available Recreation Sites	230	5	3.9	2.2	5.7	2.6	72	5.2	3.9	2.6	1.7	10
Restrooms	232	5	5.2	3	3	3.9	75	3	2.6	0.86	3.9	8
Parking	235	5	2.1	1.7	4.7	7.7	72	3	5.1	0.85	2.6	5
Picnic or Day Use Areas	185	5	2.2	2.2	4.9	0.54	81	2.2	2.7	2.2	2.7	55
Boat Launches	50	5	2	4	0	0	74	4	10	0	6	190
Public Docks	41	5	2.4	4.9	9.8	2.4	56	7.3	12	0	4.9	199
Hiking Trails	218	5	0	0.46	1.8	2.3	83	2.8	5.5	2.3	2.3	22
Swim Areas	125	5	2.4	1.6	4	4.8	78	0.8	6.4	0	2.4	115
Campsites	185	5	8.1	2.2	10	6.5	58	1.6	5.9	3.2	4.3	55
Signage	227	5	4.8	0.88	7.9	6.6	71	0.88	2.6	2.2	2.6	13
Fish Cleaning Stations	51	5	14	9.8	14	2	51	2	5.9	0	2	189

N/A = not applicable

Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding. Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, all provided a response to this question.

Of those respondents providing a response, most were satisfied with the conditions of recreation facilities. Hiking trails (52 percent), campsites (40 percent), picnic areas (36 percent), and restrooms (35 percent) were most often given a ranking of 9, indicating very satisfied. Fish cleaning stations (8 percent), boat launches (7 percent), restrooms (5 percent), and public docks (5 percent) were most often given a 1 or 2 rating, indicating very dissatisfied (Table 4.2-15); however, the median response for these facilities was 5 for fish cleaning stations and 7 for boat launches, restrooms, and public docks.

Boat rental and campground fees were most often reported to be about right, but 24 percent thought boat fees were too high (i.e., rating 1 to 4), and 28 percent thought campground fees were too high (i.e., rating 1 to 4) (Table 4.2-16).

Table 4.2-15. Respondents Rating of the Condition of Existing Recreation Facilities in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q15)

Facility	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
			Very Dissatisfied				Neutral				Very Satisfied	
Publicly Available Recreation Sites	228	7	0.44	0	1.3	0.44	23	7.9	19	17	31	12
Restrooms	227	7	3.1	2.2	5.3	3.1	14	4.8	20	13	35	13
Parking	233	7	0.86	0.43	3	2.1	21	6	22	12	32	7
Picnic or Day Use Areas	180	8	1.1	0	2.2	0	20	5.6	17	18	36	60
Boat Launches	43	7	2.3	4.7	0	0	35	7	16	14	21	197
Public Docks	40	7	2.5	2.5	2.5	0	32	7.5	20	12	20	200
Hiking Trails	214	9	0.47	0.47	1.9	0	11	4.2	16	14	52	26
Swim Areas	119	8	0	1.7	0.84	0.84	25	3.4	17	17	34	121
Campsites	173	8	1.2	0.58	2.9	2.9	16	2.3	13	21	40	67
Signage	225	7	1.3	1.3	7.1	4	19	4	19	19	26	15
Fish Cleaning Stations	48	5	8.3	0	17	4.2	27	4.2	10	10	19	192

N/A = not applicable

Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding. Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, all provided a response to this question.

Table 4.2-16. Respondents Rating of the Fees Associated with Boat Rentals and Campgrounds in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q16)

Fee Types	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
			Too High				About Right				Too Low	
Boat Rentals	25	5	0	0	16	8	76	0	0	0	0	215
Campground Fees	155	5	7.1	6.5	11	3.2	66	3.2	0.65	0.65	1.9	85

N/A = not applicable
Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding. Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, all provided a response to this question.

When asked what they liked most about their visit to the upper Lee Vining Canyon, 183 respondents provided an answer (Table 4.2-17). The most common themes identified were nature/scenery, peace/quiet, and facilities/amenities. For a complete list of responses, see Appendix F.

Table 4.2-17. What Respondents Liked the Most About Their Visit to the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q17)

	Count	Percent of Those Responding
Nature/Scenery	127	69.4
Peace/Quite	20	10.9
Facilities/Activities	13	7.1
Hiking	9	4.9
Fishing	5	2.7
Weather	5	2.7
Other	3	1.6
Everything is Good	1	0.5
Total	183	100.0

Note: Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, 57 did not provide a response to this question.

When asked what they liked least about their visit to the upper Lee Vining Canyon, 148 respondents provided an answer (Table 4.2-18). The most common themes identified were around crowding, bugs, and roads. For a complete list of responses, see Appendix F.

Table 4.2-18. What Respondents Liked the Least About Their Visit to the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q18)

	Count	Percent of Those Responding
Nothing	24	16.2
Crowding	21	14.2
Bugs	16	10.8
Other	14	9.5
Roads	14	9.5
People	13	8.8
Campsite availability	7	4.7
Weather	5	3.4
Bathrooms	5	3.4

	Count	Percent of Those Responding
Dogs	4	2.7
Facilities	4	2.7
Travel time	3	2.0
Reservations	3	2.0
Fee	3	2.0
Parking	2	1.4
Signage	2	1.4
Wildfires	2	1.4
Traffic	2	1.4
Trash	1	0.7
Water	1	0.7
Fish cleaning station	1	0.7
Trail use	1	0.7
Total	148	100

Note: Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, 92 did not provide a response to this question.

When asked to provide additional comments, 67 respondents did so (Table 4.2-19). The most common themes identified in the additional responses were around signage, reservation systems, and campground fees. For a complete list of responses, see Appendix F.

Table 4.2-19. Respondents Additional Comments (Q19)

	Count	Percent of Those Responding
Signage	12	17.9
Other	9	13.4
Reservations	8	11.9
Everything Good	6	9.0
Fees	5	7.5
More Campsites	5	7.5
Less Development	4	6.0
Drinking Water	3	4.5
Fish Stocking	2	3.0
Website	2	3.0

	Count	Percent of Those Responding
Water Taxi	2	3.0
Showers	2	3.0
Roads	2	3.0
Parking	1	1.5
Trails	1	1.5
Low Water	1	1.5
RV Spots	1	1.5
Restrooms	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

RV= recreational vehicle

Note: Of the 240 recreationists surveyed, 173 said no, they do not have any additional comments.

4.3. CREEL SURVEYS (2024)

Fish stocking is an annual occurrence in the upper Lee Vining Canyon. Based on data received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), fish were stocked as listed in Table 4.3-1 within the study area from 2019 to 2024.

Table 4.3-1. Fish Stocking by California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon 2019 to 2024

Waterbody	Pounds of Fish Stocked					
	2019	2020 ^a	2021	2022 ^b	2023	2024
Ellery Lake	2,100	0	1,200	0	2,000	1,600
Lee Vining Creek	450	0	0	0	0	300
Saddlebag Lake	2,000	0	0	0	2,000	3,900
Tioga Lake	2,000	0	600	0	1,500	3,900
Total upper Lee Vining Canyon	6,550	0	1,800	0	5,500	9,700

Source: Personal communication, Graham Meese, Senior Environmental Scientist, CDFW, November 15, 2024

^a No fish stocked due to COVID-19 pandemic

^b No fish stocked due to a bacterial outbreak within hatchery facility

Creel surveys were initiated at the study sites identified in Table 2.1-1 beginning June 15, 2024. The data discussed below compiles all creel surveys from June 15, 2024, through September 2, 2024, for a total of 24 survey days.⁵ During this time, 191 in-person creel

⁵ Surveys were delayed in starting due to road access to the sites. Once roads were cleared, a new sampling schedule was created to capture 30 percent of days available from June 15, 2024, through September 2, 2024.

surveys were completed. The tables and figures below provide a summary of data reported by anglers to the creel survey team during the field season. Of the 191 surveys conducted, the average number of anglers in each group was 2.3. Number of surveys conducted, average group size, and average anglers per group by location are provided in Table 4.3-2.

Table 4.3-2. Survey by Location, Average Group Size, and Average Anglers per Group

Waterbody	Site	Surveys Conducted	Average Group Size	Average Anglers Per Group
Ellery Lake	Ellery Lake Campground	25	2.5	1.7
Lee Vining Creek	Junction Campground	22	2.6	1.9
	Sawmill Walk-in Campground	9	2.9	2.0
Saddlebag Lake	Saddlebag Lake Campground	33	2.7	1.8
	Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area	72	3.6	2.8
Tioga Lake	Tioga Lake Campground	30	2.9	2.1
Total		191	3	2.3

The count and percent of first time versus repeat visitors at each site is displayed in Table 4.3-3. The distribution of visits per year across all sites is displayed in Figure 4.3-1. Most surveyed anglers at each site (range of 58 to 73 percent; average of 63 percent for all sites) had visited the site before. Of the repeat visitors, most reported visiting once per year or 2 to 5 times per year, with 1 angler reporting more than 10 visits per year.

Table 4.3-3. Angler Visit Frequency by Site

Waterbody	Site	First Time	Count	Percent
Ellery Lake	Ellery Lake Campground	No	17	68
		Yes	8	32
Lee Vining Creek	Junction Campground	No	16	73
		Yes	6	27
	Sawmill Walk-in Campground	No	6	67
		Yes	3	33
Saddlebag Lake	Saddlebag Lake Campground	No	21	64
		Yes	12	36
	Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area	No	42	58
		Yes	30	42
Tioga Lake	Tioga Lake Campground	No	19	63

Waterbody	Site	First Time	Count	Percent
		Yes	11	37

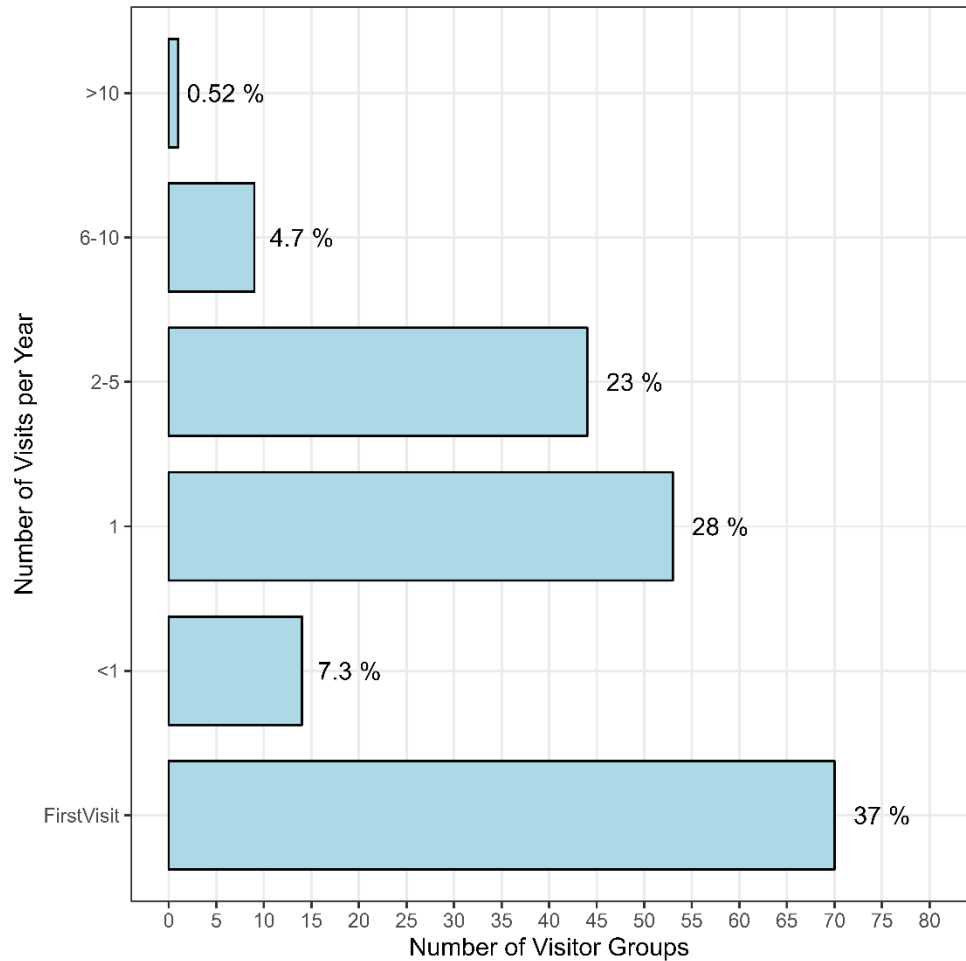


Figure 4.3-1. Annual Frequency of Anglers Fishing in the Area.

Table 4.3-4 lists counts and percents of anglers by county and state. Fifteen of 191 anglers surveyed did not provide a valid zip code, and 3 anglers indicated they lived outside the United States. California residents comprised 86 percent of the surveyed anglers, with 18.3 percent of total anglers from Los Angeles County, and more than 5 percent from each of San Diego, Riverside, and Orange Counties.

Table 4.3-4. Anglers County and State of Residence

State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
California	Los Angeles County	35	18.3
California	San Diego County	17	8.9

State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
California	Riverside County	16	8.4
California	Orange County	15	7.9
California	San Bernardino County	9	4.7
California	Marin County	7	3.7
California	Ventura County	7	3.7
California	Contra Costa County	5	2.6
California	Inyo County	5	2.6
California	Mariposa County	4	2.1
California	Mono County	4	2.1
California	Nevada County	4	2.1
California	Placer County	4	2.1
California	Alameda County	3	1.6
California	Sacramento County	3	1.6
California	Santa Barbara County	3	1.6
California	Stanislaus County	3	1.6
California	El Dorado County	2	1
California	Kern County	2	1
California	Madera County	2	1
California	San Francisco County	2	1
California	Santa Clara County	2	1
California	Yolo County	2	1
California	Calaveras County	1	0.5
California	Fresno County	1	0.5
California	Merced County	1	0.5
California	San Joaquin County	1	0.5
California	San Luis Obispo County	1	0.5
California	Santa Cruz County	1	0.5
California	Tulare County	1	0.5
California	Tuolumne County	1	0.5
California Total		164	86
Arizona	Maricopa County	2	1
Arizona Total		2	1
Kansas	Butler County	1	0.5

State	County	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Kansas Total		1	0.5
North Carolina	Henderson County	1	0.5
North Carolina Total		1	0.5
Nevada	Clark County	3	1.6
Nevada	Douglas County	1	0.5
Nevada Total		4	2.1
Oregon	Josephine County	1	0.5
Oregon Total		1	0.5
International	International	3	1.6
International Total		3	1.6
Invalid ZIP	Invalid ZIP	4	2.1
Invalid ZIP Total		4	2.1
No Response	No Response	11	5.8
Total		191	100

The majority of anglers surveyed reported targeting rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) 65 percent cited as primary target and 40 percent cited as secondary target), and brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) was the second-most-targeted species (17 percent primary, 25 percent secondary) (Table 4.3-5 and Table 4.3-6).

Table 4.3-5. Target Species by Site

Target Species	Ellery Lake	Lee Vining Creek		Saddlebag Lake		Tioga Lake	Total Count	Total Percent
	Camp ground	Junction Camp ground	Sawmill Walk-in Campground	Camp ground	Day Use Area	Camp ground		
Rainbow trout	16	10	4	22	52	21	125	65
Brook trout	4	6	2	5	10	6	33	17
Brown trout	3	5	2	2	3	3	18	10
Golden trout	0	0	0	3	5	0	8	4
All species	2	1	1	1	2	0	7	4

Table 4.3-6. Secondary Species by Site

Target Species	Elery Lake	Lee Vining Creek		Saddlebag		Tioga Lake	Total Count	Total Percent
	Camp ground	Junction Camp ground	Sawmill Walk-in Camp ground	Camp ground	Day Use Area	Camp ground		
Rainbow trout	6	12	3	12	32	11	76	40
Brook trout	5	3	3	10	19	8	48	25
Brown trout	10	2	1	5	13	6	37	19
Golden trout	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	2
All species	4	5	1	6	6	5	27	14

Anglers reported catching rainbow trout, brook trout, and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) at all waterbodies, with the exception of Saddlebag Lake where no brown trout were caught (Table 4.3-7). No catches of Lahontan redbreast (*Richardsonius egregius*) were reported at any of the waterbodies. In general, the total catch decreased with size, with most of the fish caught measuring less than or equal to 12 inches; however, 10 percent of the fishes landed were greater than 12 inches long.

Table 4.3-7. Total Counts of Fish Reported by Length

Waterbody	Species	Length (inches)													Total Fish Caught
		<8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	>18	
Ellery Lake	Brook trout	8	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
	Brown trout	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Lahontan redbside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rainbow trout	2	1	2	3	2	9	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	22
Lee Vining Creek	Brook trout	19	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
	Brown trout	7	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
	Lahontan redbside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Rainbow trout	3	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	14
Saddlebag Lake	Brook trout	15	5	5	3	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	34
	Brown trout	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lahontan redbside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Rainbow trout	12	10	30	13	5	6	3	5	0	1	0	1	2	88
Tioga Lake	Brook trout	17	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
	Brown trout	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Lahontan redbside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rainbow trout	11	4	1	7	11	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	43
Total		101	27	44	32	23	25	5	11	1	4	1	5	2	281
Percent		36	10	16	11	8	9	2	4	0	1	0	2	1	100

^a Lengths are self-reported by anglers in the field. Assumption for this data is total length of fish.

Figure 4.3-2, Figure 4.3-3, and Figure 4.3-4 display catch by site and size for rainbow, brook, and brown trout.

Rainbow trout were the most frequently reported species of fish, over half of which were caught at Saddlebag Lake (88 fish). The size distributions of rainbow trout differed by site. At Saddlebag Lake, 34 percent (30 out of 88) were 9 inches long. At Ellery Lake, 41 percent (9 out of 22) were 12 inches long. Only 2 fish greater than 18 inches in length were reported during creel surveys, and these were both rainbow trout captured at Saddlebag Lake.

Approximately 66 percent (59 out of 90) of captured brook trout were less than 8 inches long. All of the brook trout caught at Lee Vining Creek measured 8 inches long or less, while 1 angler reported an 18-inch brook trout caught at Saddlebag Lake.

Brown trout were primarily caught at Lee Vining Creek (70 percent or 12 out of 17), and 65 percent (11 out of 17) of captured brown trout across all sites measured less than 8 inches long. No brown trout were reported at Saddlebag Lake over the course of this study.

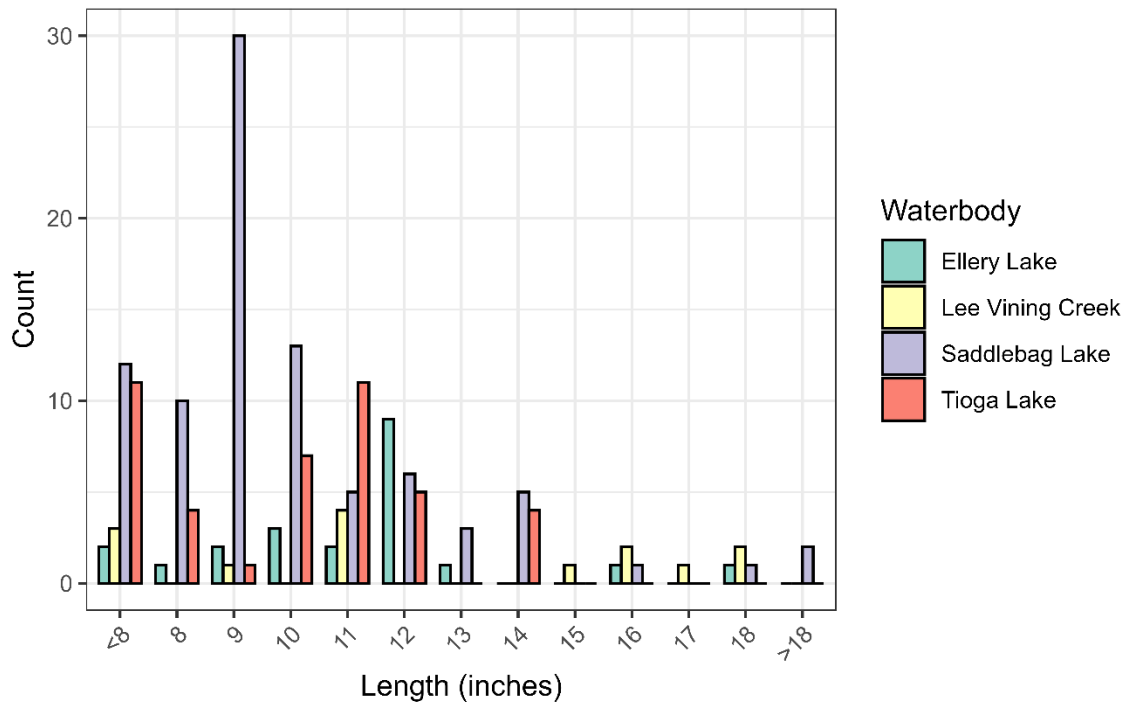


Figure 4.3-2. Catch Count by Size for Rainbow Trout.

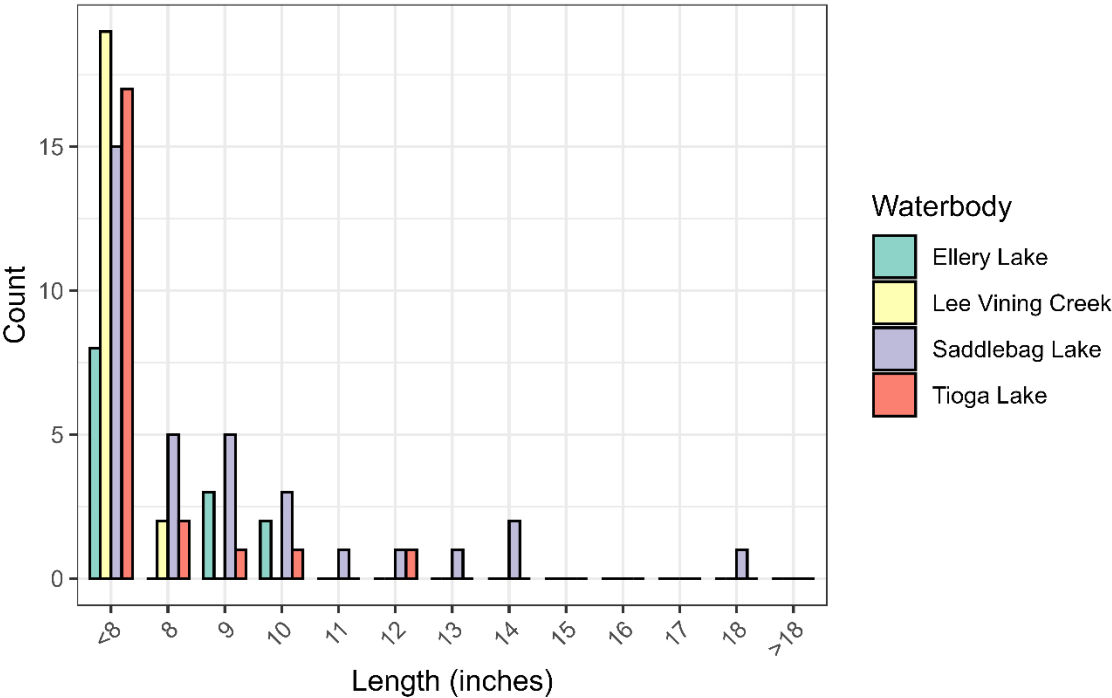


Figure 4.3-3. Catch Count by Size for Brook Trout.

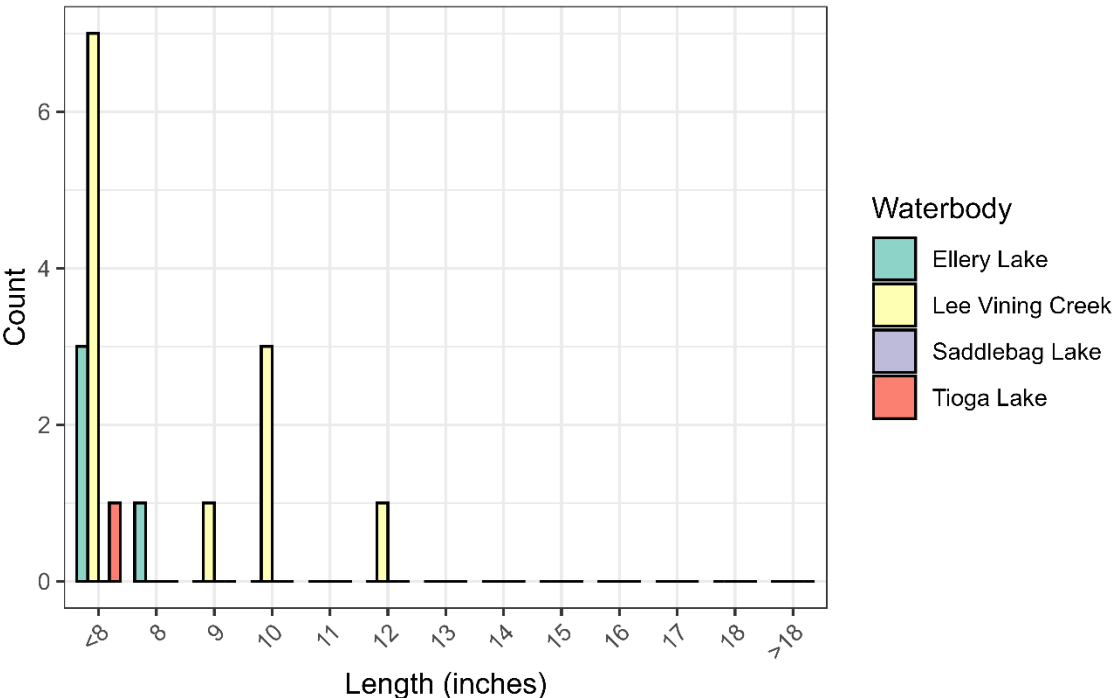


Figure 4.3-4. Catch Count by Size for Brown Trout.

The majority of anglers, the most hours spent fishing, and the greatest number of fish caught were reported at Saddlebag Lake (Table 4.3-8). The CPUE was highest at Tioga Lake (0.79 fish per hour) and similar in Lee Vining Creek (0.78 fish per hour). CPUE was similar at Saddlebag Lake and Ellery Lake.

Table 4.3-8. Estimate of Fish per Effort-Hour

Location	Angler Count	Hours Spent Fishing ^a	Total Fish Caught	CPUE (Hour) ^b
Ellery Lake	21	55.1	36	0.65
Lee Vining Creek	27	62.5	49	0.78
Saddlebag Lake	87	163	104	0.64
Tioga Lake	23	60.7	48	0.79

CPUE = catch per unit effort

^a Represents self-reported time spent fishing by anglers interviewed.

^b Total fish caught per hour(s) spent fishing.

Table 4.3-9 presents responses from surveyed anglers regarding the quality of fishing (note that multiple selections were allowed). A total of 55 percent of anglers surveyed listed natural setting as a definition of fishing quality, and 43 percent cited catch rate. Eight surveyed anglers cited additional quality definitions not listed in the table (one each): consistency, elevation, fisher etiquette, location, management of fishing limits, optimal and sustainable, parking, and the friends we meet.

Table 4.3-9. Quality of Fishing

Site Name	Ellery Lake	Lee Vining Creek		Saddlebag Lake		Tioga Lake	Total Count	Percent
	Campground	Junction Campground	Sawmill Walk-in Campground	Campground	Day Use Area	Campground		
Natural Setting	14	14	6	18	36	17	105	55
Catch Rate	11	7	4	14	34	13	83	43
Solitude	13	10	6	13	24	7	73	38
Fish Species or Size	6	8	3	12	25	12	66	35
Water Access	13	10	5	9	13	14	64	34
Proximity	4	3	1	3	9	8	28	15
Park Amenities	6	3	0	1	6	5	21	11

Most anglers reported that fishing conditions were the same or better than other nearby locations (Table 4.3-10). However, 33.5 percent (7 out of 21) of Saddlebag Lake Campground and 25.3 percent (6 out of 24) of Tioga Lake Campground anglers surveyed reported slightly worse or worse conditions than nearby locations (Figure 4.3-5).

Table 4.3-10. Fishing Condition Compared to Other Nearby Locations

Survey Location	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
			Much Worse	Worse	Slightly Worse	Same	Slightly Better	Better	Much Better	
Ellery Lake Campground	17	6	0	0	0	35	12	41	12	8
Junction Campground	15	6	0	0	0	33	13	47	6.7	7
Saddlebag Lake Campground	21	4	0	9.5	24	24	24	14	4.8	12
Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area	55	4	0	1.8	15	38	9.1	27	9.1	17
Sawmill Walk-in Campground	6	5	0	0	17	17	33	17	17	3
Tioga Lake Campground	24	5.5	0	8.3	17	12	12	25	25	6
Total	138	5	0	3.6	13	30	14	28	12	53

N/A = not applicable

Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding.

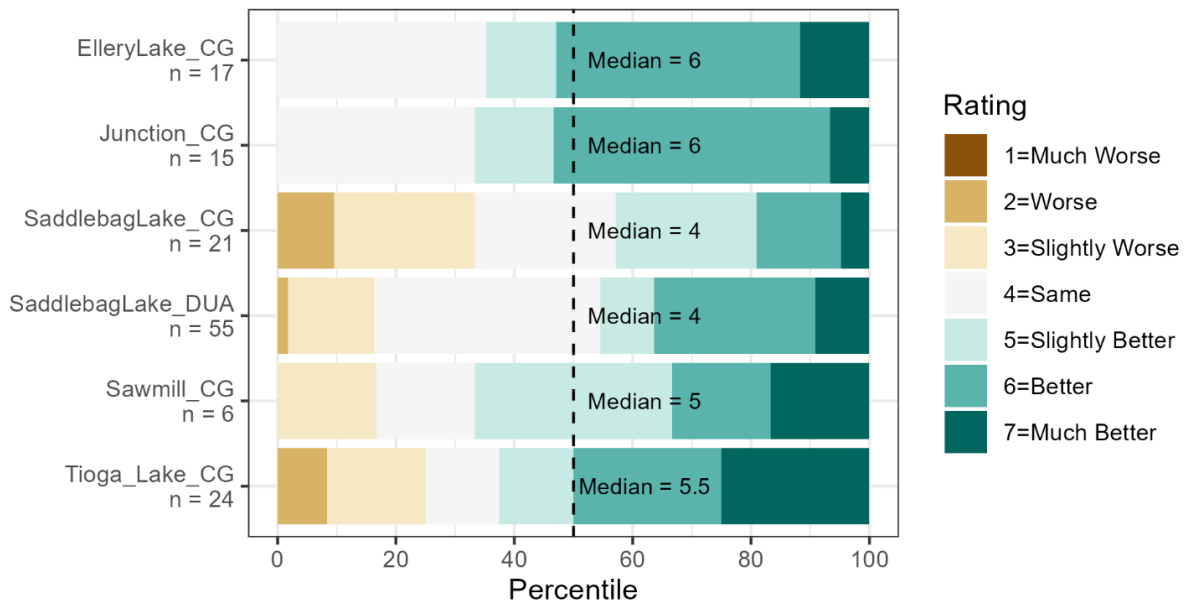


Figure 4.3-5. Ratings for Overall Fishing Quality Compared to Other Nearby Locations Fished (Q11).

Most anglers reported that fishing conditions were the same or better than previous conditions (Table 4.3-11), although a small percentage of respondents reported deteriorated conditions at all locations other than Sawmill Campground (Figure 4.3-6).

Table 4.3-11. Fishing Condition Compared to Previous Visits

Survey Location	Count	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
			Much Worse	Worse	Slightly Worse	Same	Slightly Better	Better	Much Better	
Ellery Lake Campground	13	4	7.7	7.7	0	38	7.7	15	23	12
Junction Campground	17	4	0	5.9	18	29	0	41	5.9	5
Saddlebag Lake Campground	19	5	5.3	11	21	5.3	26	26	5.3	14
Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area	47	4	2.1	2.1	13	43	8.5	23	8.5	25
Sawmill Walk-in Campground	6	4	0	0	0	67	17	17	0	3
Tioga Lake Campground	21	4	0	9.5	24	19	14	24	9.5	9
Total	123	4	2.4	5.7	15	32	11	25	8.9	68

N/A = not applicable

Note: Percentages across rows do not always total 100 due to rounding.

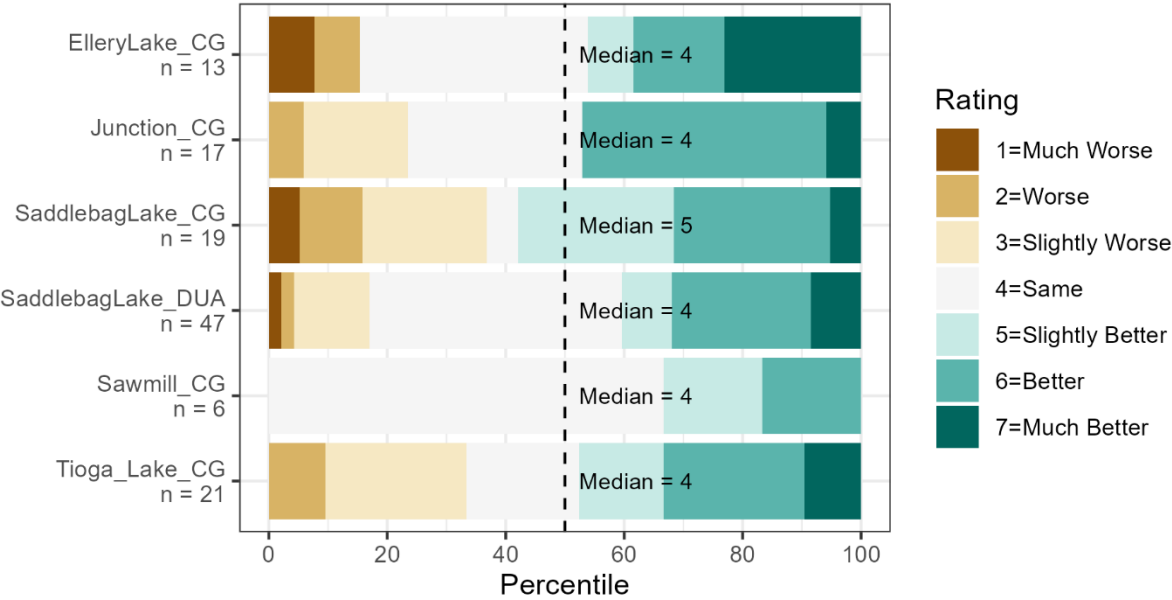


Figure 4.3-6. Rating for Overall Fishing Quality Compared to Past Visits (Q12).

4.4. TRAFFIC AND TRAIL COUNTERS (2024)

Beginning June 15, 2024, traffic and trail counters were installed at sites shown on Figure 3.3-1. The traffic counter data is summarized below for use by day type from June 28, 2024, through October 28, 2024.

4.4.1. TRAFFIC COUNTER

Statistics for the daily total number of vehicles recorded by the traffic counter on the Saddlebag Lake Road (Figure 4.4-1) from June 29, 2024, through October 28, 2024, are presented in Table 4.4-1. During this time, there was an average of 97 vehicles visiting the Saddlebag Lake area on weekdays, 129 vehicles on weekend days, and 256 vehicles on holiday weekend days (Independence Day: July 5 to July 7, 2024; and Labor Day: August 31 to September 2, 2024) (Table 4.4-1). There were more vehicles visiting the area in July and August than in September and October (Figure 4.4-1). The only holiday weekend day in August was the Saturday of Labor Day weekend.

Table 4.4-1. Saddlebag Lake Road Traffic Counter Data

Month	Day Type ^a	Total Days	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekend	2	106	138	138	170	276
July	Weekday	22	94	130	133	205	2,924
	Weekend	6	135	166	165	197	992
	Holiday	3	177	246	225	250	674
August	Weekday	22	74	127	126	192	2,777

Month	Day Type ^a	Total Days	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
	Weekend	8	83	178	164	207	1,316
	Holiday	1	413	413	413	413	413
September	Weekday	20	15	75	75	134	1,496
	Weekend	8	89	115	117	154	933
	Holiday	2	147	225	225	302	450
October	Weekday	20	0	45	46	98	912
	Weekend	8	30	76	75	120	600
Full Season	Weekday	84	0	100	97	205	8,108
	Weekend	32	30	129	129	207	4,116
	Holiday	6	147	248	256	413	1,536

^a Holiday dates include Independence Day (July 5 to July 7, 2024) and Labor Day (August 31 to September 2, 2024).

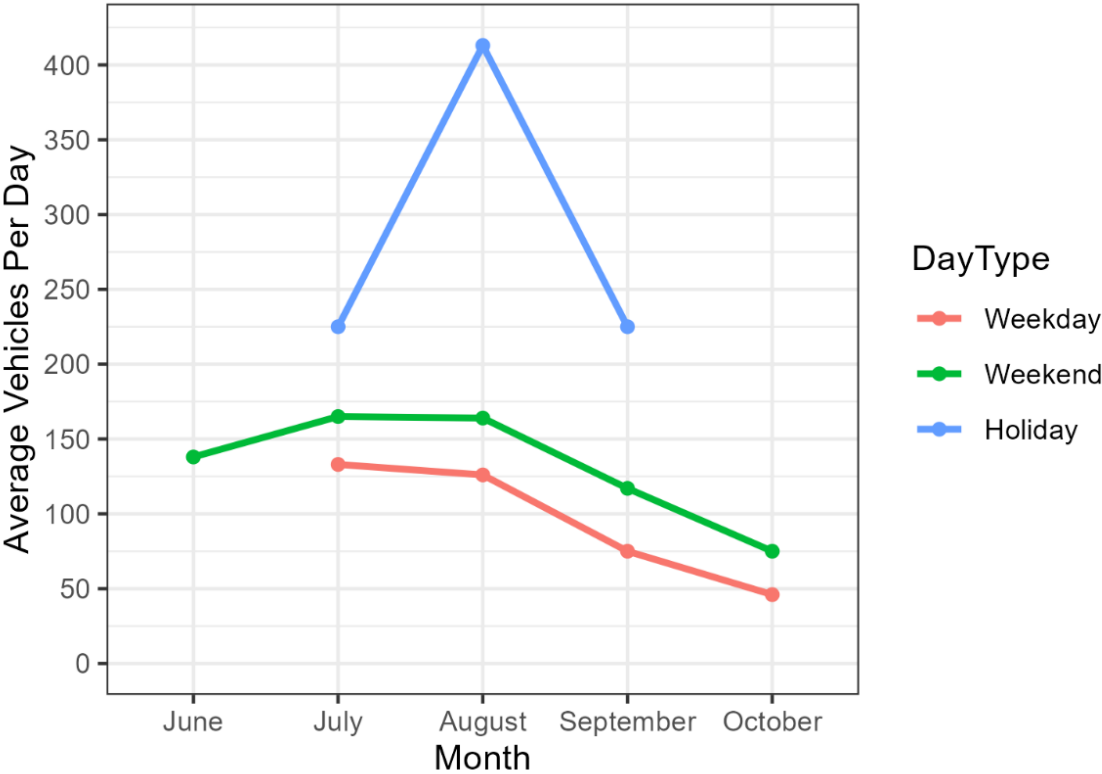


Figure 4.4-1. Average Vehicles per Day at Saddlebag Recreation Area by Month and Day Type from June 29 to October 28, 2024.

4.4.2. TRAIL COUNTERS

Statistics for the daily total number of people recorded by the trail counters are summarized by day type and month for each site in Table 4.4-2, Table 4.4-3, Table 4.4-4, Table 4.4-5, Table 4.4-6, Table 4.4-7, and Figure 4.4-2, from June 15, 2024 to October 28, 2024, after consideration of anomalous data. The day type estimated total was calculated by multiplying the average number of people by the total days for that month/day type so that the day type estimated total is not impacted by days that were removed due to apparently erroneous data.

Table 4.4-2. Saddlebag Lake Trail West Trail Counter Data

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekday	9	9	32	51	53.9	87	485
	Weekend	4	4	58	94	106	179	424
	Holiday	3	3	59	101	100	140	300
July	Weekday	22	22	67	121	124.5	282	2,739
	Weekend	6	6	141	220	218.5	303	1,311
	Holiday	3	3	215	279	262.7	294	788
August	Weekday	22	22	40	98	101.5	180	2,233
	Weekend	8	8	52	210	197.9	300	1,583
	Holiday	1	1	524	524	524.5	524	524
September	Weekday	20	20	3	66	65.6	106	1,312
	Weekend	8	8	114	140	149.5	196	1,196
	Holiday	2	2	231	308	308	385	616
October	Weekday	20	20	0	36	36.8	94	736
	Weekend	8	8	42	67	77.1	147	617
Full Season	Weekday	93	93	0	78.7	80.7	282	7,505
	Weekend	34	34	42	148	150.9	303	5,131
	Holiday	9	9	59	253.3	247.6	524	2,228

Table 4.4-3. Saddlebag Lake Trail East 1 Trail Counter Data

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days ^a	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekday	9	9	72	87	107.9	224	971
	Weekend	4	4	62	102	128.8	250	515
	Holiday	3	3	123	137	149.7	189	449
July	Weekday	22	22	51	131	135.5	204	2,981
	Weekend	6	6	84	164	157.7	215	946
	Holiday	3	3	136	221	202.7	251	608
August	Weekday	22	16	60	115	115.6	215	2,543
	Weekend	8	5	47	138	113.8	161	910
	Holiday	1	1	264	264	264	264	264
September	Weekday	20	20	0	70	61	104	1,220
	Weekend	8	8	74	110	110.1	162	881
	Holiday	2	2	103	170	170	237	340
October	Weekday	20	20	0	31	33	84	660
	Weekend	8	8	18	42	60.8	128	486
Full Season	Weekday	93	87	0	88.3	90.1	224	8,375
	Weekend	34	31	18	109.2	110	250	3,738
	Holiday	9	9	103	186.4	184.6	264	1,661

^a Observed days are less than total days because data identified as anomalous during the QC2 process have not been included in this analysis.

Table 4.4-4. Saddlebag Lake Trail East 2 Trail Counter Data

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days ^a	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekday	9	9	52	70	74.1	102	667
	Weekend	4	4	45	60	93	208	372
	Holiday	3	3	95	106	113	138	339
July	Weekday	22	17	49	98	104.8	194	2,306
	Weekend	6	5	93	117	126.4	169	758
	Holiday	3	2	179	212	212.5	246	638
August	Weekday	22	22	45	71	78.9	176	1,736
	Weekend	8	8	32	122	110.6	153	885
	Holiday	1	1	211	211	211	211	211
September	Weekday	20	20	1	63	55.8	88	1,116

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days ^a	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
	Weekend	8	8	77	91	107.1	163	857
	Holiday	2	2	86	150	150	214	300
October	Weekday	20	19	4	29	42.2	145	844
	Weekend	8	8	25	66	87.6	237	701
Full Season	Weekday	93	87	1	66.5	71.7	194	6,669
	Weekend	34	33	25	93.4	105.1	237	3,573
	Holiday	9	8	86	162.8	165.3	246	1,488

^a Observed days are less than total days because data identified as anomalous during the QC2 process have not been included in this analysis.

Table 4.4-5. Tioga Pullout Access Trail Counter Data

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekday	9	9	1	6	9.4	41	85
	Weekend	4	4	11	13	68.9	239	276
	Holiday	3	3	1	4	6.8	16	20
July	Weekday	22	22	0	18	34.6	175	761
	Weekend	6	6	2	7	13.6	48	82
	Holiday	3	3	26	66	61.3	92	184
August	Weekday	22	22	0	7	7.7	26	169
	Weekend	8	8	0	4	5.9	16	47
	Holiday	1	1	17	17	17	17	17
September	Weekday	20	20	0	5	5.1	11	102
	Weekend	8	8	4	6	8.6	16	69
	Holiday	2	2	12	13	12.8	14	26
October	Weekday	20	20	0	0	2.1	19	42
	Weekend	8	8	0	1	1.6	4	13
Full Season	Weekday	93	93	0	7.6	12.5	175	1,159
	Weekend	34	34	0	5.4	14.3	239	487
	Holiday	9	9	1	28.1	27.4	92	247

Table 4.4-6. Ellery-Lee Vining Creek Trail Counter Data

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days ^a	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekday	9	9	0	3	4.2	16	38
	Weekend	4	4	2	10	9.7	16	39
	Holiday	3	3	0	2	5.2	14	16
July	Weekday	22	19	0	13	23.2	142	510
	Weekend	6	6	3	6	26.3	121	158
	Holiday	3	3	5	9	8.4	12	25
August	Weekday	22	17	0	4	13.2	80	290
	Weekend	8	6	0	7	7.4	20	59
	Holiday	1	1	6	6	6.5	6	6
September	Weekday	20	19	0	2	14.8	129	296
	Weekend	8	8	1	3	46	202	368
	Holiday	2	2	100	106	105.5	112	211
October	Weekday	20	20	0	0	3.1	28	62
	Weekend	8	8	0	4	18.4	106	147
Full Season	Weekday	93	84	0	4.7	12.9	142	1,196
	Weekend	34	32	0	5.5	22.7	202	771
	Holiday	9	9	0	27.9	28.7	112	258

^a Observed days are less than total days because data identified as anomalous during the QC2 process have not been included in this analysis.

Table 4.4-7. Ellery-Rhinedollar Trail Counter Data

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
June	Weekday	9	9	1	4	3.4	6	31
	Weekend	4	4	0	2	2.8	6	11
	Holiday	3	3	4	5	14.3	34	43
July	Weekday	22	22	0	2	2.5	13	55
	Weekend	6	6	0	1	1.2	2	7
	Holiday	3	3	0	0	2	5	6
August	Weekday	22	22	0	52	47.5	116	1,045
	Weekend	8	8	0	23	45	116	360
	Holiday	1	1	14	14	14.5	14	14
September	Weekday	20	20	0	2	15.3	80	306

Month	Day Type	Total Days	Observed Days	Minimum	Median	Average	Maximum	Total
	Weekend	8	8	0	0	6.9	36	55
	Holiday	2	2	12	29	28.8	46	58
October	Weekday	20	20	0	0	2.2	31	44
	Weekend	8	8	0	1	0.8	2	6
Full Season	Weekday	93	93	0	13.6	15.9	116	1,481
	Weekend	34	34	0	6.1	12.9	116	439
	Holiday	9	9	0	9.7	13.4	46	121

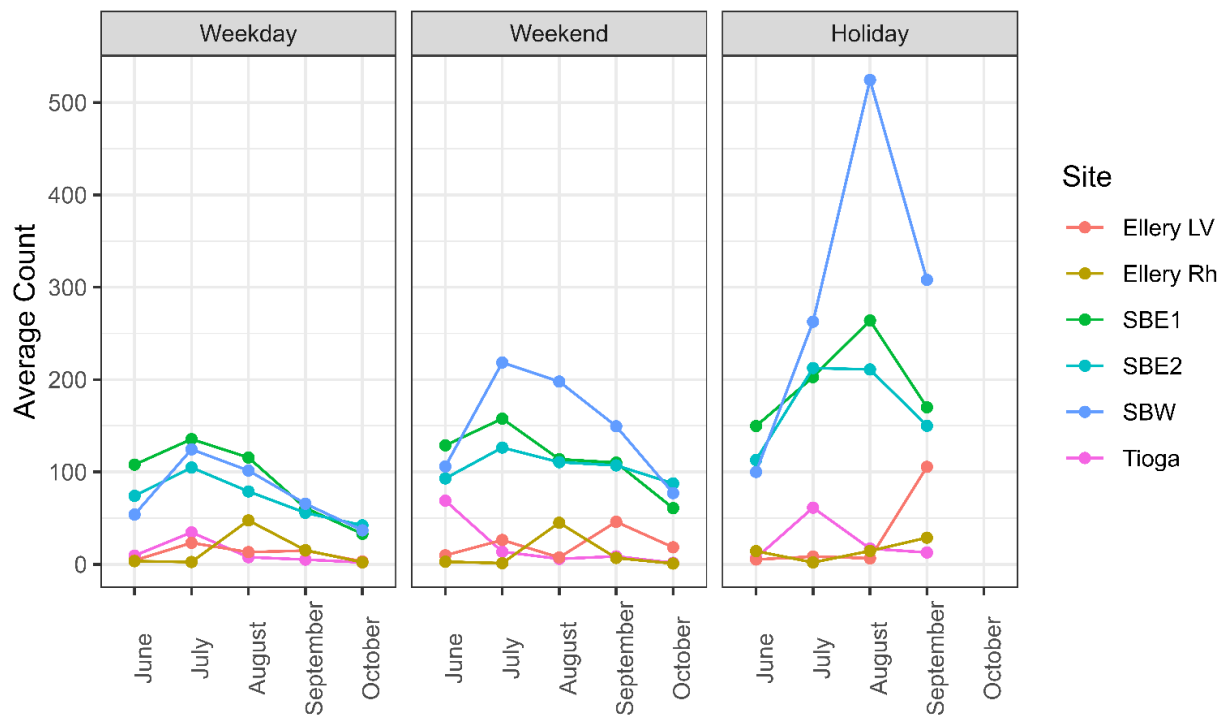


Figure 4.4-2. Average Trail Users Based on Trail Counters at Six Sites over the Period June 15 to October 28, 2024.

4.5. SPOT COUNTS

Table 4.5-1 lists the total number of vehicles at each of the day use sites during the 11 spot counts and lists the corresponding day of the week. Between June 15, 2024, and November 6, 2024, 532 vehicles were counted during the 11 spot counts. Overall, Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area (Site 2) and the Saddlebag Lake Trailhead (Site 3) had the highest total counts of vehicles.

Table 4.5-1. Summary of Vehicle Spot Counts

Date	Day of the Week	Site Number					Total
		2	3	8	9/10	23	
June 15, 2024	Saturday	13	18	4	18	1	54
June 19, 2024	Wednesday (Hol.)	25	6	6	12	3	52
June 26, 2024	Wednesday	6	8	3	6	1	24
July 13, 2024	Saturday	17	30	1	4	3	55
July 23, 2024	Tuesday	24	16	0	9	1	50
August 3, 2024	Saturday	21	32	7	16	2	78
August 16, 2024	Friday	39	43	8	12	1	103
September 6, 2024	Friday	25	14	6	4	0	49
September 8, 2024	Sunday	15	20	1	7	0	43
October 13, 2024	Sunday	14	3	0	3	1	21
November 6, 2024	Wednesday	0	0	2	1	0	3
Total		199	190	38	92	13	532

SCE also collected data on the number of people and the types of recreation activities observed during spot counts throughout the study season. During the 11 spot count days, 591 people were observed. Of those, the most popular activities observed were camping and walking/hiking. Other activities observed included biking, hanging out, playing board games, climbing, swimming, and backcountry skiing. Non-recreation activities included observations of SCE or other workers. Table 4.5-2 summarizes the number of people observed participating in recreation activities at each recreation site within the study area.

Table 4.5-2. Recreation Activities Observed During Spot Counts

Site Number	Activities								
	Boating	Fishing	Walking/ Hiking/Running	Picnicking	Camping	Sightseeing/ Birding/ Photography	Non-recreation	Other	Total
1	0	3	2	0	60	1	3	0	69
2	18	21	25	2	0	7	2	10	85
3	0	0	15	0	9	0	0	3	27
4	0	1	3	0	31	0	0	3	38
7	0	0	4	3	57	5	4	0	73
8	0	4	19	0	0	0	0	0	23
9/10	4	6	24	7	0	30	8	0	79
12	1	9	5	17	47	0	0	9	88
14	0	3	11	2	67	1	1	3	88
23	0	11	4	0	0	4	2	0	21
Total	23	58	112	31	271	48	20	28	591

4.6. CURRENT RECREATION USE AND DENSITY ESTIMATES

For the day use sites, recreation days and parking utilization were estimated using a combination of data from the user surveys and spot counts.

4.6.1. RECREATION USE

Recreation days were estimated for five sites: Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area (Site 2), Saddlebag Lake Trailhead (Site 3), Bennettville Trailhead (Site 8), Tioga Lake Overlook / Glacier Canyon Trail (Site 9/10), and Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout (Site 23). The calculations provide the recreation days from June 15, 2024, to October 31, 2024.

The estimated recreation days by month and day type (holiday, weekday, weekend), between June 15, 2024, and October 31, 2024, are provided in Table 4.6-1. During the study period, there was an estimated total of 39,250 recreation days. Of the five sites, estimates were highest at the Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area (14,250) and lowest at the Saddlebag Lake Trailhead (2,510).

Table 4.6-1. Estimated Recreation Visitation (Recreation Days) from June 15, 2024 to October 31, 2024

Day Type	Site Number					Total
	2	3	8	9/10	23	
June						
Total Holiday	320	64	110	480	150	1,124
Total Weekday	1,000	150	410	690	260	2,510
Total Weekend	270	85	62	510	93	1,020
Total June	1,590	299	582	1,680	503	4,654
July						
Total Holiday	320	64	110	480	150	1,124
Total Weekday	2,500	360	1,000	1,700	630	6,190
Total Weekend	400	130	94	770	140	1,534
Total July	3,220	554	1,204	2,950	920	8,848
August						
Total Holiday	110	21	36	160	50	377
Total Weekday	2,500	360	1,000	1,700	630	6,190
Total Weekend	540	170	120	1,000	190	2,020
Total August	3,150	551	1,156	2,860	870	8,587

Day Type	Site Number					Total
	2	3	8	9/10	23	
September						
Total Holiday	210	43	72	320	99	744
Total Weekday	2,300	320	910	1,500	580	5,610
Total Weekend	540	170	120	1,000	190	2,020
Total September	3,050	533	1,102	2,820	869	8,374
October						
Total Weekday	2,600	370	1,000	1,800	660	6,430
Total Weekend	540	170	120	1,000	190	2,020
Total October	3,140	540	1,120	2,800	850	8,450
Complete Study Season						
Total Holiday	950	190	320	1,400	450	3,310
Total Weekday	11,000	1,600	4,400	7,400	2,800	27,200
Total Weekend	2,300	720	530	4,400	790	8,740
Total Annual	14,250	2,510	5,250	13,200	4,040	39,250

4.6.2. PARKING AND CAMPGROUND UTILIZATION

Based on spot count estimates, Bennettville Trailhead reached 100 percent utilization on the holiday weekend (n=1) and averaged 43.3 percent utilization on weekend days (n=5) and 63.3 percent on weekdays (n=5). For the remaining sites, Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area saw the highest parking utilization on the holiday weekend (59.5 percent), as well as on weekend days (38.1 percent) and weekdays (44.8 percent). An estimated 30 parking spaces were available at Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout, but typically only a small number of cars parked there (maximum observed was 3) (Table 4.6-2). In parking areas where spaces were not clearly defined (i.e., gravel parking areas), the average size of a standard car parking space was estimated to be 16 to 18 feet long and 8 to 9 feet wide (~130 to 160 square feet). For the purpose of this study, the upper range was used to determine total parking availability. At paved parking areas, the number of delineated spaces were counted and documented.

Table 4.6-2. Estimated Parking Utilization within the Project Area from June 15, 2024 to October 31, 2024

Site Number	Site Name	Parking Capacity (Vehicle Spaces)	Holiday Weekend Parking Utilization (%)	Weekend Parking Utilization (%)	Weekday Parking Utilization (%)
2	Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area	42	59.5	38.1	44.8

Site Number	Site Name	Parking Capacity (Vehicle Spaces)	Holiday Weekend Parking Utilization (%)	Weekend Parking Utilization (%)	Weekday Parking Utilization (%)
3	Saddlebag Lake Trailhead	63	9.5	32.7	25.7
8	Bennettville Trailhead	6	100	43.3	63.3
9/10	Tioga Lake Overlook Info Site/ Glacier Canyon Trailhead	30	40	32	21.3
23	Ellery Lake Caltrans Pullout	30	10	4.7	2

Caltrans = California Department of Transportation

Table 4.6-3 provides the average single-site camping utilization by site and day type. Utilization tended to be higher on weekdays than weekends, with the exception of Saddlebag Lake Campground. The utilization on Juneteenth (Wednesday)—the only holiday with a spot count—was highest at Tioga Lake Campground.

Table 4.6-3. Estimated Campground Utilization within the Project Area from June 15, 2024 to October 31, 2024

Site Number	Site Name ^a	Campground Capacity (Camp Sites)	Weekend Campground Utilization (%)	Holiday Campground Utilization (%)	Weekday Campground Utilization (%)
1	Saddlebag Lake Campground	20	88.3	N/A ^a	76.7
4	Sawmill Walk-In Campground	11	36.4	9.1	45.5
7	Junction Campground	14	82.1	78.6	88.1
12	Tioga Lake Campground	13	61.5	84.6	73.1
14	Ellery Lake Campground	15	68.3	20	75

N/A = not applicable

^a Saddlebag Lake Campground data is based on July to September (closed June [including the Juneteenth Holiday Weekend], October, November). All campgrounds were closed during the October and November spot counts.

Throughout the season, the Saddlebag Lake Trailhead group site was occupied during 64 percent of spot count visits (7/11 spot counts). The ABA sites at Junction Campground were occupied during 62.5 percent of spot count visits (5/8 spot counts), while ABA sites at Tioga Lake Campground were occupied during 55.6 percent of spot count visits (5/9 spot counts).

4.7. INYO NATIONAL FOREST CAMPGROUND UTILIZATION

The Mono Lake Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest operates and maintains recreational facilities and opportunities within upper Lee Vining Canyon, providing approximately 6 public campgrounds with 79 camping units in the upper canyon, one of which is a group unit accommodating up to 25 guests, as summarized in Table 4.7-1

(USFS, 2020). The majority of these sites are adjacent to Project water features (Saddlebag Lake, Tioga Lake, Ellery Lake, Glacier Creek, and Lee Vining Creek), Saddlebag Lake Road, and State Route 120 (also called Tioga Pass Road).

Table 4.7-1. Inyo National Forest Camping Facilities in Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Listed Generally Upstream to Downstream)

Name	Amenities	Number of Sites	Open
Saddlebag Lake Campground	B/v/RV	19	July–September
Saddlebag Lake Trailhead Group Campground	B/R/v	1 (accommodates 25 people)	July–September
Sawmill Walk-in Campground	No RVs or trailers/B/v	12	July–September
Junction Campground	B/v	13	July–October
Tioga Lake Campground	B/v/RV	13	July–September
Ellery Lake Campground	B/v	21	July–October

Source: USFS, 2020

B = bear boxes; R = reservations; RV = small recreational vehicles or short trailers only, no RV hook up;
v = vault restroom

Per USFS data, the occupancy rates at the upper Lee Vining Canyon campgrounds were generally less in 2022 than in 2021 (Table 4.7-2). Campgrounds were open for a limited season in summer 2023 due to the heavy snowfall the previous winter. The two resorts in the area, Saddlebag Lake Resort and Tioga Pass Resort, did not operate in 2023.

Table 4.7-2. Upper Lee Vining Canyon Area Campground Occupancy Rates in 2021 and 2022

Campground	Occupancy Rate (%)			
	2021	2022	2023 ^a	2024 ^a
Saddlebag Lake Campground	81	69	Closed	N/A
Saddlebag Lake Trailhead Group Campground	76	59	N/A	N/A
Tioga Lake Campground	88	89	N/A	N/A
Ellery Lake Campground	92	85	N/A	N/A
Junction Campground	85	84	N/A	N/A
Sawmill Walk-in Campground	52	46	Closed	N/A

Source: Personal communication, Adam Barnett, Public Services Staff Officer, USFS, June 26, 2024

NA = data not available

^a Occupancy rate data for 2023 and 2024 from USFS will be included when available.

4.8. FUTURE RECREATION USE AND NEEDS ESTIMATES

Visitors to Lee Vining Canyon arrive from many counties across the United States, as well as from other countries. Based on the visitor survey results, about 67 percent travel from California, with more than half of these California visitors from 6 counties: Alameda, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, and San Diego. The 2013 to 2022 populations for these counties and the entire state of California are shown in Table 4.8-1.

Table 4.8-1. Population from 2013 through 2022

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020	2022
Alameda County	1,535,248	1,559,308	1,584,983	1,605,217	1,629,615	1,643,700	1,656,754	1,661,584	1,673,133	1,628,997
Inyo County	18,482	18,439	18,373	18,326	18,195	18,085	17,977	17,930	18,804	18,829
Los Angeles County	9,893,481	9,974,203	10,038,388	10,057,155	10,105,722	10,098,052	10,081,570	10,040,682	10,019,635	9,936,690
Mono County	14,217	14,193	14,146	14,051	14,058	14,174	14,310	14,395	13,291	13,219
Orange County	3,051,771	3,086,331	3,116,069	3,132,211	3,155,816	3,164,182	3,168,044	3,170,345	3,182,923	3,175,227
San Diego County	3,138,265	3,183,143	3,223,096	3,253,356	3,283,665	3,302,833	3,316,073	3,323,970	3,296,317	3,289,701
California	37,659,181	38,066,920	38,421,464	38,654,206	38,982,847	39,148,760	39,283,497	39,346,023	39,455,353	39,356,104

Log-linear population increase models were fit to the 2013 to 2022 populations for each of the six counties and the state of California. The rate of change in population in Orange, Alameda, and San Diego Counties and the state of California showed significant increases over the 2013 to 2022 period. Inyo, Los Angeles, and Mono Counties had increases and decreases, with no clear trend (trend was not significantly different from zero over the 2013 to 2022 period). The projected population increases for these counties and California are displayed in Table 4.8-2.

Table 4.8-2. Population Projections through 2065

Year	Alameda County	Inyo County	Los Angeles County	Mono County	Orange County	San Diego County	California
2030	1,805,000	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,306,900	3,507,300	41,348,400
2035	1,881,300	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,377,300	3,602,700	42,387,400
2040	1,960,800	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,449,300	3,700,800	43,452,600
2045	2,043,700	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,522,800	3,801,500	44,544,500
2050	2,130,000	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,597,900	3,904,900	45,663,900
2055	2,220,100	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,674,500	4,011,100	46,811,400
2060	2,313,900	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,752,800	4,120,300	47,987,800
2065	2,411,700	17,900	10,040,700	14,400	3,832,800	4,232,400	49,193,700

The weighted average of population growth estimates for the six California counties with the most visitors was used to estimate recreation days in the future. The average was weighted based on the percent of visitors that reported residing in each county. The current recreation use is estimated to be approximately 39,250 recreation days in 2024 for the Project Area. FERC may issue SCE a new license for the Project for a term of 40 years, during which annual recreation days could increase to approximately 44,100 in the Project Area by 2065. This is an increase of approximately 4,850 recreation days, or approximately 12.4 percent (Table 4.8-3).

Table 4.8-3. Estimated Future Recreation Days, 2030 to 2065

Year	Site Number					Total
	2	3	8	9/10	23	
2030	14,500	2,600	13,400	5,300	4,100	39,900
2035	14,700	2,600	13,600	5,400	4,200	40,500
2040	14,900	2,600	13,800	5,500	4,200	41,100
2045	15,100	2,700	14,000	5,600	4,300	41,700
2050	15,300	2,700	14,200	5,700	4,400	42,300
2055	15,600	2,700	14,400	5,700	4,400	42,900

Year	Site Number					Total
	2	3	8	9/10	23	
2060	15,800	2,800	14,600	5,800	4,500	43,500
2065	16,000	2,800	14,800	5,900	4,500	44,100

Future recreation needs within the Project Area can be assessed in part by comparing the recreation use estimates and parking utilization percentages determined for 2024 to the projected population growth rates of California and the subset of six counties from which the Project is most frequently visited. In addition, the future recreation needs are assessed by the preferences and perception of recreation in the area noted by visitors during the visitor intercept surveys. Based on qualitative data collected, visitors are satisfied with the area the way it is currently. When looking at the surrounding area of the Inyo National Forest, the National Visitor Use Monitoring reports show an ebb and flow of visitation over the years. From 2011 to 2016, the National Visitor Use Monitoring shows an increase of visits to day use developed sites of approximately 3.3 percent, while visits to developed overnight sites decreased by approximately 49.6 percent. However, from 2016 to 2021 a decrease in visitation occurred at day use developed sites of approximately 21.6 percent and at overnight developed sites of approximately 22.7 percent (USFS, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c). Based on these trends in visitation use, the future recreation estimates for the Project Area would be anticipated to increase slightly, which is in alignment with the population trend for California and the subset of six counties most frequenting the Project Area.

5.0 CONSISTENCY WITH THE INYO NATIONAL FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest* (USFS, 2019) was developed to provide direction and adaptive management for the resources in the Project Area. The following Inyo National Forest recreation-forest wide (REC-FW) desired conditions (DC), goals (GOAL), standards (STD), and guidelines (GDL) were found to be relevant to and consistent with this study:

- Sites provide a variety of nature-based recreation opportunities year-round (REC-FW-DC 01, 03, 12).
- Sites accommodate diverse cultures (REC-FW-DC 02).
- Sites provide recreation opportunities with minimal impacts on sensitive environments (REC-FW-DC 05).
- Trail systems provide recreational opportunities compatible with other resources (REC-FW-DC 07, 13).
- Dispersed sites exist in areas outside of high visitation, which does not adversely impact resources (REC-FW-DC 09).

- Infrastructure meets the minimum needs of potential uses and mimics the area's natural landscape (REC-FW-GDL 02).

The sites were found to align with the following Management Area, Destination Recreation Area (MA-DRA) desired conditions (DC), objectives (OBJ), goals (GOAL), and guidelines (GDL):

- Sites have a developed footprint that is appropriate to the setting, visually appealing, and well maintained (MA-DRA-DC 01).
- Sites provide scenic integrity with a natural-appearing landscape retained outside of the development footprint (MA-DRA-DC 02).
- Sites provide infrastructure and amenities that are consistent with user capacity (MA-DRA-DC 06).
- Sites provide traffic and parking that do not negatively impact the visitor experience (MA-DRA-DC 08).

Additionally, the sites were found to align with the following Management Area, General Recreation Area (MA-GRA) desired conditions (DC), objectives (OBJ), goals (GOAL), and guidelines (GDL):

- Sites have limited amenities and minor developments (MA-GRA-DC 01).
- Sites provide scenic integrity, including a mosaic of vegetation, while retaining the natural character of landscapes (MA-GRA-DC 02, 07).
- Recreation opportunities are compatible with other resources and result in infrequent conflicts between different uses (MA-GRA-DC 03, 06).
- Roads and trails at the sites support recreation activities (MA-GRA-DC 08).
- Recreation sites provide opportunities for those seeking solitude, as well as high-use areas (MA-GRA-DC 09).

6.0 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

In preparation to file the Pre-Application Document and Notice of Intent, SCE hosted Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG meetings on January 28, February 25, April 1, and May 27, 2021. These TWG meetings resulted in study requests from stakeholders to address questions regarding existing recreation facilities. Notes and materials from these meetings are available on SCE's Project website.⁶

SCE filed draft Study Plans with the Pre-Application Document and Notice of Intent on August 12, 2021, to address issues discussed with the TWGs. The stakeholder comment

⁶ www.sce.com/leevining

period for these filings ended on January 18, 2022. SCE reviewed all comments received and drafted revised technical Study Plans, which were distributed to the TWGs on February 18, 2022, for another 30-day review period. Stakeholder comments received on the revised Study Plans were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate in the final Study Plans, which were filed with FERC on April 25, 2022 (SCE, 2022).

SCE hosted Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG Meetings on March 1, March 15, and April 19, 2023, to discuss implementation of the recreation Study Plans. Throughout spring and summer 2023, SCE continued to consult with USFS and CDFW regarding the heavy snowfall which caused a multitude of delays, closures, flooding, and damage in the area. On July 17, 2023, SCE emailed the Recreation and Land Use TWG requesting concurrence to move implementation of Phase 2 of the REC-1 Study to the 2024 season due to the heavy snowfall and wet water year. Concurrence was reached on July 17, 2023.

SCE hosted a Recreation and Land Use TWG meeting on February 28, 2024, to discuss implementation of Phase 2 of the REC-1 Study during the 2024 study season.

Following REC-1 Study implementation, SCE hosted a series of Recreation and Land Use TWG meetings in 2024 and early 2025 to discuss the data collection progress and analysis, as described below.

- October 10, 2024: SCE presented creel survey results and a look-ahead for the rest of the REC-1 reporting process.
- November 21, 2024: SCE presented a summary of initial REC-1 Study findings.
- December 12, 2024: SCE presented complete REC-1 Study data.
- December 23, 2024: SCE distributed REC-1 Study data to the TWG ahead of the draft report.
- January 20, 2025: SCE distributed the Draft REC-1 Technical Report to the TWG for a 60-day comment period.
- March 4, 2025: SCE reviewed the Draft REC-1 Technical Report with the TWG, ahead of the comment period deadline. The comment period ended March 20, 2025. Comments were received from USFS.
- April 11, 2025: SCE reviewed USFS comments and questions with the TWG.

USFS comments received on the draft report were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate in this Final REC-1 Technical Report.

Comments received on the REC-1 Study are included in Table 6.1-1.

Table 6.1-1. Consultation Summary—Response to Comments

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
1	CDFW	1/28/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> The Project creates reservoirs, and our department needs to stock those to maintain the value of them to fishermen. Our stocking plan is based on use data, so we will be asking for a study to quantify fishing pressure on reservoirs to inform mitigation measures for stocking. Currently, we have no idea how many fishermen are using the lakes other than a qualitative guess. To capture the target species, catch rates would be the intent. The study would mainly focus on the reservoirs, though we will want to look at creeks as well.	SCE received your formal study request on 2/8/2021 and incorporated it into the REC-1 Study .
2	Access Fund	1/28/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> There is a substantial amount of ice climbing that happens below Ellery Lake. Where are the flows coming from and will they change? What fact finding do I need to do to figure out what's happening there? Travel to the climbing site would be over snow, not on trails, resulting in less impacts on vegetation and soil. I would be happy to provide this information. It's a unique area for ice climbing.	SCE is not aware that Project operations contribute to the ice climbing environment below Ellery Lake. The integrity of flowlines is inspected regularly as part of the dam safety program. SCE would welcome any information that may inform future inspections. SCE is proposing to characterize winter use as part of its REC-1 Study and will work with the TWG to determine method and sites for analysis.
3	USFS	1/28/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> In the past, there have been conflicts at Saddlebag Lake between the resort's water taxi service and lake levels. Since there are no lake level requirements on Saddlebag Lake, the resort sometimes has issues with lake levels being too low to operate.	SCE reviews instream flows and resulting lake levels at Saddlebag Lake annually in April and August with the USFS. SCE will characterize use at the resort—including its water taxi service as it relates to lake levels—as part of its REC-1 Study, using SCE lake level data and USFS concessionaire data.

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
4	MLC	1/28/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> I'm interested in the pullouts at Ellery and Tioga Lakes. Are those in the Project area? Are there opportunities to organize/clarify traffic there, manage people, and include interpretive displays since the pullouts attract people to observe the scenery? What about adding restrooms?	Pullouts on State Route 120 alongside Ellery and Tioga Lakes are ultimately the responsibility of Caltrans. However, the formal pullout at Ellery Lake will be included in user surveys and spot counts conducted under REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. Informal pullouts surrounding the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes) will be included in the 2022 dispersed use assessment. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season.
5	CDFW	2/8/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	[Formal request for creel survey]	SCE received your formal study request and incorporated it into the REC-1 Study. Creel sampling will follow the standard protocols published in <i>Fisheries Techniques, Third Addition</i> (Zale et al., 2013), and analysis will include review of CDFW's <i>Strategic Trout Management Plan</i> (CDFG, 2003). Methods will include surveys and spot counts at both the Project reservoirs and campgrounds located on creeks within the FERC Project Boundary (Sawmill Walk-in and Junction Campgrounds).
6	CDFW	2/25/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> To summarize the Creel Census study request, we don't have a good estimate of fishing pressure at the Project. The reservoirs/resources are essentially created by the Project. We want to determine what the users would like to see, what fish they want to catch, etc. We want to use professional standards for a good robust creel survey, the industry standard. We also want to include areas around campgrounds, but in general we are more concerned with the lakes. Consider doing a "roving	SCE received your formal study request and incorporated it into the REC-1 Study. Creel sampling will follow the standard protocols published in <i>Fisheries Techniques, Third Addition</i> (Zale et al., 2013), and analysis will include review of CDFW's <i>Strategic Trout Management Plan</i> (CDFG, 2003). Methods will include surveys and spot counts at both the Project reservoirs and campgrounds located on creeks within the FERC Project Boundary (Sawmill Walk-in and Junction Campgrounds).

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
			creel" or "car creel" to estimate differential pressure between lakes and streams. The assumption is that fishermen using campground areas and creeks are also fishing in the lakes. We could get a rough count of creek fishers while doing the lake assessment.	
7	Access Fund	2/25/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> It is already well known, but this year especially this added camping pressure is a product of needing to have permits to enter Yosemite. There is a lot of dispersed camping anywhere you can fit a vehicle. The permit requirement was reinstated for 2021, it was implemented as a response to Covid-19.	Pullouts on State Route 120 alongside Ellery and Tioga Lakes are ultimately the responsibility of Caltrans. However, the formal pullout at Ellery Lake will be included in user surveys and spot counts conducted under REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. Informal pullouts surrounding the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes) will be included in the 2022 dispersed use assessment. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season.
8	MLC	2/25/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> We are putting together our study requests still. Possibility of focused recreation use studies at Saddlebag, Ellery pull out, and at north end of Tioga Lake in regards to vehicle density on dirt areas. There is the possibility of non-point source pollution and run off (dumping of coolers, pet waste, etc.) at these pullouts increasing due to recreation/vehicle use at these pull outs. Pulling off in these areas is due to the scenic views at the reservoirs, so they seem related to the Project. Camping right at the shoreline of Saddlebag and Tioga Lakes is increasing, with no buffer between vehicles. This isn't happening at Ellery Lake because there is no direct driving access to the shoreline.	Pullouts on State Route 120 alongside Ellery and Tioga Lakes are ultimately the responsibility of Caltrans. However, the formal pullout at Ellery Lake will be included in user surveys and spot counts conducted under REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. Informal pullouts surrounding the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes) will be included in the 2022 dispersed use assessment. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. The nexus between water quality impacts from non-Project pullouts is discussed in the <i>WQ-1 Stream and Reservoir Water Quality Technical Study Plan</i> .

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
9	Access Fund	2/25/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Regarding recreation use at Saddlebag Lake, I use that trail a lot. I noticed last year that there is a ferry across Saddlebag Lake that cuts out about two miles of easy walking. There are impacts from people offloading from the ferry on Saddlebag Lake and scattering across the tundra grass there. There is degradation of trails and vegetation there from picnicking and offloading. There is less camping, more backpacking, fishing, and picnicking happening. Wondering if it's worth looking at since there are a lot of people using the area.	A dispersed use assessment will be conducted in 2022 around each of the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes), including the use at the back end of Saddlebag Lake. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. The REC-1 Study will also characterize water taxi use at the lake using USFS concessionaire data.
10	USFS	4/1/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Are recreation studies only proposed in the spring/summer? We may not be capturing all of the Project-induced recreation if we only focus on one time of year.	SCE will work with the TWG to develop an appropriate schedule for REC-1 studies that will capture relevant recreation use throughout the recreation season(s), understanding that the type of use changes depending on time of year (e.g., spring/summer compared to winter).
11	USFS	4/1/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> We are working on additional details for those three studies using your form. There are other things we'd like you to capture. Some of the use is outside of the currently defined Project boundary but has a strong nexus. We want to make sure those things aren't overlooked in analysis, such as Poole Powerhouse access road and access areas to recreation areas along the road. Also include an assessment of use of Project area when people come up from the campgrounds farther downstream on Lee Vining Creek; we would like a better understanding of whether people using these downstream campgrounds are using the Project area for recreation. We are putting these questions/concerns into a format for the relicensing team to use.	SCE proposes to utilize the first field season (2022) for on-site user surveys at each developed Inyo National Forest recreation site mentioned in the USFS's proposed study requests. These initial surveys are intended to collect the primary reason for each recreator's visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project. The collected information will be used in discussions with the TWG to determine which sites warrant broader studies (REC-1 Study, REC-2 Study) in a second field season (2023) but would not imply that they are ultimately related to Project operations.

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
12	MLC	4/1/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Considering road pullouts, whoever is responsible for them, they do cross between both Caltrans and SCE. The pullouts affect the Project area, viewshed and recreation experience, bathrooms, etc. The recreation use study will probably cover it, but existing facilities clearly don't meet the needs of visitors (especially bathrooms). Point source pollution is still an issue. Dispersed camping and overnight parking are also being invited in these areas. The conditions/facilities of pullouts around the Project area are promoting incremental use. I'm thinking specifically of the Ellery and Saddlebag pullout locations. SCE isn't responsible for the increase in travelers, but SCE is the custodian for this part of the forest where their Project is located. The Project encourages visitors to stop along the way. People can't reasonably enjoy the area as they have in the past given the lacking existing facilities. People stop where there are pullouts, or any spaces off the road to park, those are invitations to recreate for dog walking, launching a kayak, taking photos, etc.	Pullouts on State Route 120 alongside Ellery and Tioga Lakes are ultimately the responsibility of Caltrans. However, the formal pullout at Ellery Lake will be included in user surveys and spot counts conducted under REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. Informal pullouts surrounding the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes) will be included in the 2022 dispersed use assessment. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season.
13	USFS	4/1/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> It seems like we are assuming a lot, that people are there not for the Project or are using the pullouts as an invitation. There are a lot of unknowns. We need to think about how to ask these questions. Unless there is a study that defends it, we need to take a deeper look. We can also come up with a recreation plan where we come back together at look at these needs every so often.	SCE proposes to utilize the first field season (2022) for on-site user surveys at each developed Inyo National Forest recreation site mentioned in the USFS's proposed study requests. These initial surveys are intended to collect the primary reason for each recreator's visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project. The collected information will be used in discussions with the TWG to determine which sites warrant broader studies

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				(REC-1 Study, REC-2 Study) in a second field season (2023) but would not imply that they are ultimately related to Project operations.
14	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Evaluate recreation use of Lower Lee Vining Canyon campgrounds (Big Bend, Aspen, Moraine, Lower Lee Vining, Cattleguard) to determine dependence of users on project stream flows and project reservoirs. Evaluate public use of recreation facilities, trails, and dispersed camping surrounding Saddlebag Lake and along the Saddlebag Lake access road including backpacking and camping use at the north end of the lake.	SCE proposes to utilize the first field season (2022) for on-site user surveys at each developed Inyo National Forest recreation site mentioned in the USFS's proposed study requests. These initial surveys are intended to collect the primary reason for each recreator's visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project. The collected information will be used in discussions with the TWG to determine which sites warrant broader studies (REC-1 Study, REC-2 Study) in a second field season (2023) but would not imply that they are ultimately related to Project operations. A dispersed use assessment will be conducted in 2022 around each of the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes), including the use at the back end of Saddlebag Lake. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season. The REC-1 Study will also characterize water taxi use at the lake using USFS concessionaire data.
15	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Evaluate public education needs for areas closed to dispersed camping.	Information collected for dispersed use at the Project reservoirs will be used in post-field-season TWG discussions to determine whether public education or management efforts are needed.
16	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study	Include use of Saddlebag Lake water taxi service in study analysis.	SCE reviews instream flows and resulting lake levels at Saddlebag Lake annually in April and

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		Request (Emailed Document)		August with the USFS. SCE will characterize use at the resort, including its water taxi service as it relates to lake levels, as part of its REC-1 Study using SCE lake level data and USFS concessionaire data.
17	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Include the following site-specific recreation activities in the study design: Ellery Lake access to Ellery Bowl for backcountry skiing and climbing...	SCE will work with the TWG to incorporate Ellery Bowl into winter data collection efforts during REC-1 Study efforts in the 2023 field season.
18	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Include the following site-specific recreation activities in the study design: ... Kayaking at all lakes and the need for put-in development...	REC-1 surveys conducted during the 2023 field season will be designed to collect information regarding current kayaking use or desired use at the Project reservoirs.
19	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Include the following site-specific recreation activities in the study design: ... Dispersed camping around Ellery outlet and waterfall...	A dispersed use assessment will be conducted in 2022 around each of the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes), including use below Rhinedollar Dam/Outlet. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season.
20	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Include the following site-specific recreation activities in the study design: ... Ice climbing use on Poole Power plant Rd which is plowed during winter for plant access.	See response to Comment 2 above.
21	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Include assessment of winter recreation activities.	SCE will work with the TWG to develop an appropriate schedule for REC-1 studies that will capture relevant recreation use throughout the recreation season(s), understanding that the type of use changes depending on time of year (e.g., spring/summer compared to winter).

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22	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	The proposed project includes the Poole Power Plant Road which was likely built as part of the creation of the Lee Vining hydropower project. The new road provided additional access to Lee Vining creek and opened a new area of the Inyo NF to recreation development including Big Bend, Aspen, and Moraine campgrounds. The Lower Lee Vining and Cattleguard campgrounds may also have a nexus to the proposed project if this study finds that a significant portion of campground users stay here in order to recreate in the project vicinity, such as fishing at Tioga, Ellery, or Saddlebag Lakes. In addition, there is likely a nexus to recreation facilities on the Saddlebag Lake road which provides easy access to Saddlebag group camp, campground, trailheads, picnic area, boat ramp, Sawmill campground, and Gardisky Lake trailhead. Many of these facilities depend directly on the existing lake and the other facilities depend on the presence of the road. There is also a nexus to recreation facilities in the vicinity of Tioga and Ellery lakes including Ellery Lake Campground, Tioga Lake Campground, and Tioga Lake overlook/Glacier Canyon trailhead. These facilities were built after the proposed project and located in relationship to the project reservoirs in order to provide for their use by the public. The study area should include all campgrounds, day use sites, trailheads, FS system trails, user-created trails, roads, and dispersed campsites adjacent to or in the vicinity of: Lee Vining Creek, Glacier Creek, Ellery Lake, Tioga Lake, or Saddlebag Lake.	SCE proposes to utilize the first field season (2022) for on-site user surveys at each developed Inyo National Forest recreation site mentioned in the USFS's proposed study requests. These initial surveys are intended to collect the primary reason for each recreator's visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project. The collected information will be used in discussions with the TWG to determine which sites warrant broader studies (REC-1 Study, REC-2 Study) in a second field season (2023) but would not imply that they are ultimately related to Project operations. The LAND-1 Study will include consultation with USFS staff to identify roads or access trails that may be used predominantly for Project purposes, such as for operation and maintenance of Project facilities or access to Project-related recreation opportunities. A dispersed use assessment will be conducted in 2022 around each of the Project reservoirs (Saddlebag, Ellery, and Tioga Lakes) but not along the creeks. Based on the information collected from that assessment, SCE will discuss with the TWG whether additional surveys, spot counts, or traffic/trail counters may be needed during REC-1 efforts in the 2023 field season.

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			Rec sites: Include all developed recreation sites in Lee Vining Canyon, along Saddlebag Road, and around Saddlebag Lake. NFS trails: Saddlebag Lk trail, Glacier Canyon trail User-created trails: trails around project lakes and along creeks	
23	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	The study area should include all campgrounds, day use sites, trailheads, FS system trails, user-created trails, roads, and dispersed campsites adjacent to or in the vicinity of: Lee Vining Creek, Glacier Creek, Ellery Lake, Tioga Lake, or Saddlebag Lake. Rec sites: Include all developed recreation sites in Lee Vining Canyon, along Saddlebag Road, and around Saddlebag Lake. NFS trails: Saddlebag Lk trail, Glacier Canyon trail User-created trails: trails around project lakes and along creeks	SCE will include all developed USFS sites listed in this request as part of its Phase 1 user surveys to determine the primary reason for user visits and whether there is a nexus to the Project itself. SCE will include an assessment of Saddlebag Lake Trail in Season 2 use and needs studies but does not propose including Glacier Canyon Trail in any detailed assessments. The trailhead facilities for Glacier Canyon Trail and any informal spurs leading around Tioga Lake will be studied as part of Phase 2 activities, but no assessment of the trail or trail use itself is being proposed as the draw is the wilderness and not Tioga Lake. SCE proposes to conduct a dispersed use assessment around Ellery, Saddlebag, and Tioga Lakes. This will include the dispersed camping and pullout areas previously identified in TWG discussions. This will not include an inventory of use along the creeks.
24	USFS	4/22/2021 Formal Study Request (Emailed Document)	Provide historic context for recreation facility development and hydropower facility development including an analysis of the timeline and location of recreation facilities in relationship to project reservoirs. For example, the construction of Big Bend, Aspen, and Moraine campgrounds after the construction of the Poole Power Plant road.	SCE does not understand how this context would inform discussions of Project nexus since the current baseline is the existing Project facilities. The REC-1 phased approach will assist in determining nexus through user survey implementation.

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25	USFS	5/27/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Usually landscape architects work with the visual study team to figure out how the visual quality impacts visitors' experience. We have done this in other projects.	SCE understands that there is usually a crossover between recreation user surveys and visual surveys and an opportunity to efficiently combine efforts. Visual surveys will be considered in the selection of REC-1 survey and data collection methods and locations for the 2023 field season.
26	USFS	5/27/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> What are the proposed study seasons, how will you determine if you'll do a second season for each Study? Since we had such an abnormal amount of use in 2020 because of COVID-19, I'd like to hear back from our recreation specialists, maybe the first season would have odd results. It could be a high or low use year in 2021/2022. Having both seasons of data would help us get a better understanding of what is going on.	No data will be collected in 2021; study seasons will begin in 2022. SCE understands that we are currently in a unique environment and that atypical recreation use and/or unexpected events that would affect the proposed studies are highly likely in the coming years. SCE will continue to coordinate with the TWG and rely on USFS staff for guidance on whether studies should be altered or rescheduled as we move through the study season.
27	MLC	5/27/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Expressed concerns about a large number of vehicles driving and parking in Saddlebag Lake bottom when water levels are low. The access point observed is near the concessionaire water taxi. Where is this being addressed, is the concessionaire involved, and how does it affect SCE's operations?	Vehicle intrusion at Ellery and Saddlebag Lakes will be generally assessed as part of the REC-2 dispersed use assessment, though there may be crossover during LAND-1 discussions regarding Project roads and road condition. USFS concessionaire data, operations, and special use permits will also be reviewed and characterized as part of REC-1 and REC-2 studies. The nexus between water quality impacts from non-Project pullouts is discussed in the WQ-1 Study Plan.
28	MLC	5/27/2021 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Mono County is pursuing a grant to improve the road and infrastructure up to Saddlebag Lake. This could be a problem if not done with inter-agency collaboration and SCE to help manage some of the issues we are studying here. The road is beyond repair, so they are considering paving it.	SCE will continue to monitor the proposed construction to determine whether improvements contemplated in TWG discussions or following field data collection may be incorporated into the effort. The proposed construction will also be monitored in case construction schedules conflict with proposed user surveys, as construction may result in

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				temporary closure of certain Inyo National Forest sites to the public.
29	USFS	1/14/2022 Comments on Initial Study Requests	4.5.8 Project Recreation Sites Recreational use of the penstock below Ellery Lake, needs to be included in the study. 52 climbing routes are accessed from the penstock - https://www.mountainproject.com/map/109223681/lee-vining-canyon-tioga-road	Informal recreational use around Ellery Lake and Rhinedollar Dam facilities will be assessed as part of the REC-2 Study. This use has been noted, and SCE will continue to consult with the Recreation and Land TWG to determine whether data (surveys or trail data) warrants collection under the REC-1 Study or whether a general characterization of the use is sufficient for later discussions.
30	USFS	1/14/2022 Comments on Initial Study Requests	5.8.5.5. Climbing Recreational use of the penstock below Ellery Lake, needs to be included in the study. 52 climbing routes accessed from the penstock - https://www.mountainproject.com/map/105798288/sierra-eastside	See response to Comment 29 above.
31	USFS	1/14/2022 Comments on Initial Study Requests	Table 6.1-1. Resource Issues, Data Gaps, and Potential Studies/Recreation Use The recreational use of the Penstock below Rhinedollar dam should be evaluated.	See response to Comment 29 above.
32	CDFW	1/14/2022 Comments on Initial Study Requests	CDFW Comment: CDFW is supportive of the recreation creel survey as described. CDFW would like to review the proposed survey dates/schedule prior to implementation.	SCE will continue to consult with the Recreation and Land TWG on proposed survey dates and schedule prior to implementation.
33	CDFW	1/14/2022 Comments on Initial Study Requests	Fisheries monitoring should be focused on documenting the need for stocking and evaluating angler use.	The AQ-1 and AQ-2 Studies will evaluate densities, age-class distributions, and condition of current fish populations in Project reservoirs and affected stream reaches. The REC-1 Study includes a creel survey to evaluate angler use and satisfaction. Additionally, the Licensee releases water that

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				enhances angling opportunities throughout the Project Area.
34	CDFW	1/14/2022 Comments on Initial Study Requests	Fisheries monitoring should be focused on documenting the need for stocking and evaluating angler use.	The AQ-1 and AQ-2 Studies will evaluate densities, age-class distributions, and condition of current fish populations in Project reservoirs and affected stream reaches. The REC-1 Study includes a creel survey to evaluate angler use and satisfaction. Additionally, the Licensee releases water that enhances angling opportunities throughout the Project Area.
35	CDFW	3/25/2022 Comments on Revised Study Proposal	Ellery and Tioga day use area should be included as Creel locations.	The Licensee intends to perform creel surveys at all day use areas associated with both Ellery Lake and Tioga Lake campgrounds. The USFS does not have any formal day use areas on the shoreline of either lake outside of these campgrounds.
36	CDFW	3/25/2022 Comments on Revised Study Proposal	Random sampling dates should be stratified into weekend/weekday/holiday blocks. The current proposed sampling effort is too low. A minimum of 10 days/month should be sampled, although this varies based on use.	SCE proposes to conduct creel surveys for approximately 30 percent of the creel survey period (98 days from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend), which will essentially meet the request of at least 10 survey days per month. Survey days will be randomly generated but will include one representative day from each of the three major holiday weekends (Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day weekends) and the remainder of survey days will be split between weekdays and non-peak weekend days.
37	USFS	3/1/2023 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service requested that Lower Lee Vining campground and Moraine campground are included in the REC-1 survey.	Based on meeting discussion, SCE understands the USFS concern was that campground visitors were being displaced from the upper campground areas. Data collected during Phase 1 of the REC-1 Study showed recreationists were happy with their choice of campgrounds and were not being displaced from the upper campground areas.

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38	USFS	3/1/2023 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service requested that over-snow recreation be assessed in the Project Area.	SCE does not see a clear project nexus to these winter activities; however, over-snow recreation activities like snowmobiling and skiing were included on the survey.
39	USFS	3/15/2023 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service asked specific questions about methodology and details of the REC-1 survey, such as how many survey dates there are, confirming wilderness area terminology, inclusion of snow activities, backpacking vs overnight hiking terminology, 1-9 vs 1-5 ranking scales, etc.	The USFS was part of the TWG that reviewed the draft survey, which was modified to address the comments of the TWG members as appropriate. Regarding these specific recommendations, SCE updated the survey to address USFS comments.
40	State Water Resources Control Board	4/19/2023 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Is there a contingency plan if any recreation facilities are damaged and end up closed or are inaccessible for the whole year?	The basic premise of the user survey is to capture a representative sample of the 2023 recreation season, so if there are closed facilities, that is part of the year and it would still be representative. The survey will capture the data as the sites open. **2024 update: The decision was made with the TWG to postpone the REC-1 surveys in 2023 due to the significant delay in opening the majority of sites.
41	USFS	2/28/2024 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service requested a trail counter be added on the west side of Saddlebag Lake Dam.	SCE agreed to add another trail counter at the suggested location.
42	USFS	2/28/2024 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service noted that the 2024 snow year was almost average at the time of the meeting, so SCE should be prepared to shift survey dates later due to potential access issues/restrictions.	SCE agreed that the snow may impact access and agreed that we are prepared to shift the survey as needed and stay in consultation with USFS.
43	USFS	2/28/2024 TWG Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service asked additional specific questions about methodology and details of the REC-1 survey.	The USFS was part of the TWG that reviewed the draft survey, which was modified to address the comments of the TWG members as appropriate. Regarding these specific recommendations, SCE updated the survey to address USFS comments.

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44	USFS	5/14/2024 Tech Report Review Meeting	<i>Paraphrase of comment in meeting:</i> Forest Service asked if the number of available parking spaces were counted in the REC survey(s).	The number of available parking spaces were collected as part of the REC-2 Study.
45	USFS	11/22/2024 DLA Review Comments	The DLA states that there are no Project effects to recreation. SCE reaches this conclusion based upon its determination that no recreation facilities are associated with the Project, and because SCE has not proposed any recreation related measures. The Forest notes that the existing license includes requirements to manage the lake levels to address recreation and visual needs and that SCE provides funding to stock fish at its reservoirs for recreational enjoyment. Regarding the statement that no recreation facilities are associated with the Project, no official determination has been made regarding facility use and recreational needs for his project. The Inyo NF asserts that there is a clear nexus to several recreation facilities immediately adjacent to the Project boundary – including those that provide public facilities at the Project reservoirs. Furthermore, REC-1 has not been completed which will provide additional insight into the recreational use of the Project via the adjacent campgrounds, day use sites, and trails. Therefore, SCE cannot conclude that there are no potential recreation effects and issues associated with the Project and by extension there is no need for recreation PM&E measures.	There are no recreation facilities currently associated with the Project, and discussions are ongoing with the USFS and other agencies. The REC-1 Draft Technical Report will be filed with the Final License Application.
46	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	As an overarching comment regarding the study, we were a bit confused when looking at the various tables as the study uses both numbering schemes to identify sites and names, but there does not appear to be a universal map that has all sites listed with the name or numbers used in the report. Can this be developed for ease of cross referencing?	Figure 2.1-1 <i>Recreation Facilities in the Project Vicinity</i> shows the name of each site and the site number in parentheses at the end of the site name.

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47	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	“Primary reason” is an indirect way of identifying potential participation in certain activities. It does not provide a direct measure of recreation use in relation to project recreation, needs, opportunities, or effects. The study should explain this distinction. Moreover, how would the study come to any conclusion about warranted inclusion of other recreation sites if a participant has no definitive preference, equal reasons, or when one's “primary” reason is not or cannot be addressed at said site? The study should include this explanation.	Phase 1 surveys were not intended to provide a direct measure of recreation use in relation to project recreation, needs, opportunities, or effects. Phase 1 surveys were intended to identify the primary reason for each recreator's visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project and thus may warrant inclusion in Phase 2 of the study. SCE worked with the Recreation and Land Use Resources TWG to develop parameters for determining nexus, including selecting appropriate terminology. Recreation use was looked at as part of the Phase 2 surveys.
48	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	How was “available” parking capacity determined? Not explained what measurements or metrics were utilized. The study should provide the calculations or # of estimated sites/configuration.	In parking areas where spaces were not clearly defined (i.e., gravel parking areas), the average size of a standard car parking space was estimated to be 16 to 18 feet long and 8 to 9 feet wide (~130 to 160 square feet) to determine available parking. For the purpose of this study, the upper range was used to determine total parking availability. At paved parking areas, the number of delineated spaces were counted and documented. These definitions have been added to Section 3.6.
49	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Can we get the estimated numbers for each parking area assessed in a table?	The estimated numbers for each assessed parking area are provided in Table 4.6-2. Using the parking space measurements provided in response to comment 48, the approximate total parking areas for each site are as follows: Saddlebag Lake Day Use: 6,720 square feet Saddlebag Lake Trailhead: 10,080 square feet
50	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	The FS would like to provide updates/comments and clarifications regarding the facility descriptions for Saddlebag Day Use and CG, Tioga Day Use and CG, and Ellery CG.	SCE looks forward to receiving the information as part of the discussion about management of the facilities.

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			<i>Additional clarification from USFS 4/4/25: Per my understanding, the Forest has developed a narrative analysis for each of these facilities that provides additional history on their construction, operation, and status/use. Staff looked back at the engineering records we had available to come up with approximate age of facilities etc. The thought was to eventually incorporate this information into the description used in the FLA, but its not integral if its not included. We intend to share this information as part of a discussion about the management of those facilities. I will let others correct me because unfortunately we lost the local recreation staff that helped compile it, so I will have to defer to Adam's knowledge.</i>	
51	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	27% decline response rate in survey. What does 155 total surveys represent in terms of time surveyed or people encountered/total visitation? The study should provide context or estimates here for us to approximate representation. Saddlebag Lake - what do the responses state? Where is this information provided? Ellery Lake - what is the response information? Where can this be found? <i>Additional clarification from USFS 4/4/25: Regarding "approximate representation," we are looking to contextualize the survey totals relative to an estimated total recreational use that may be calculated using averages or tools you employed. Basically, we are trying to determine what 155 surveys represents in terms of some sort of total visitation for these sites over the survey period. e.g. 155 surveys is what % of the total estimated recreational use for X sites?</i>	The number of surveys declined is included in the total number of visitors, thereby accounting for actual visitation at that time. Surveys accepted represents the number of surveys that recreationists agreed to take. Surveys declined represents the number of recreationists who refused the survey. An estimation of total number of use and visitors was not conducted as part of the Phase 1 surveys. See response to comment 47 for the objective of the Phase 1 surveys. Survey responses for Saddlebag Lake and Ellery Lake sites are included in Table 4.1-2.

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			<i>(hypothetical example) 155 surveys is representative of 3-5% of the surveyed recreational users estimated to be 3100 over X period of time...</i>	
52	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	“primary purpose” ≠ project recreation nexus or use. The study should explain or provide SCE’s opinion or explanation as to why “primary purpose” should matter for a user that recreates at a project reservoir, adjacent facility, and or for example, within a river reach affected by SCE’s operations, but whose use is discounted because their response is not consistent with a “primary purpose” that the licensee has associated with “project recreation.” Further, the use of this metric assumes that a user knows that their goal is to generally recreate in the upper Lee Vining Canyon or is knowledgeable about what opportunities exist there. Assuming for arguments sake, a person’s primary recreational goal is to visit Yosemite, but they stop off at another site along the way to recreate there, this doesn’t negate the actual use nor count less than those that are using the project without visiting elsewhere. This study assumes that this use (to the point that it exists) is “induced,” and should be discounted. However, a true estimate of the percentage of this “induced” use is never calculated for comparison purposes, so from a data perspective one is left with no clear or reliable number to base this conclusion on. Further, if “induced use” is occurring, and is expected to increase with demographic changes and limitations to other desirable competing facilities this would in effect increase the demand, need, and use of project water based reservoirs and resources, day use trails around facilities, and competition with users recreating at or around project associated recreation sites.	The Phase 1 surveys were intended to identify the primary reason for each recreator’s visit to determine which Inyo National Forest recreation sites or areas may have a potential connection to the Project and thus may warrant inclusion in Phase 2 of the study. Results of Phase 1 determined that 167 of the 330 respondents indicated recreating in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon, thus resulting in moving the Upper Lee Vining sites forward to the Phase 2 surveys as noted in the report. Surveys did not discount the induced need or use that is occurring but rather described the potential need and use induced by the Project.

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53	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	The report should indicate that this use time is indicative of fishing/water use recreation/day hiking at Saddlebag. Average time to loop Lake Trail ~ is 4-5 hours.	The language in the report has been updated to state, "Visitors at the Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area reported longer visits, with a median time of 5 hours, indicating that visitors are participating in fishing, water use, or day hiking."
54	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	In Table 4.2-4, it lists a site 23. Where is site 23 listed or named? Please include the names of the sites in this table and/or provide a list of all sites with their reference #.	Site 23 is the Ellery Lake CALDOT Pullout, as identified in Table 2.1-1 and Figure 2.2-1.
55	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	In Table 4.2-5 Sites 1 = Saddlebag, 12=Tioga; Site 14 = Ellery. For site 12 it is unclear how the max days stayed can = 35? Isn't this inconsistent with max use of 14 days? Please explain how this number was derived. Additional note, longer stays / weeklong seem to be consistent with both Saddlebag and Tioga, and the Ellery appears to be half-week use / shorter.	In the survey, recreationists were asked how long they stayed at sites, including campgrounds. As noted in the text on page 26, one recreationist reported a length of stay of 35 days.
56	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	The study should note that other CGs could provide opportunities to camp near Yosemite (with similar proximity as say Tioga) but are not utilized with the same regularity or pattern. There is no discernable pattern to associate use with "induced demand" from this data set.	The data provided in Table 4.2-5 that this comment is referring to addresses the length of stay at campgrounds in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon. All campgrounds that could provide camping near Yosemite (with similar proximity, Tioga Lake Campground) would include Junction Campground and Sawmill Walk-in Campground. These sites are represented in Table 4.2-5.
57	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	It is unclear and indeterminable whether the "other" camping responses are related to a lack of sufficient facilities at the project or elsewhere to meet interest/demand, desirability / type of facilities offered, or alternative arrangement/use. The study should make this clarification.	Based on data collected, "other" camping refers to the following: Tent (12), Van (6), Aspen Campground (4), Camper (2), backcountry/backpacking (2), Big Bend Campground (1), campground in Yosemite (1), lower Lee Vining (1), car (2), different campground (2), dispersed (4), Moraine Campground (1), truck (2), RV park in Lee Vining (1), campground/campsite (2), housekeeping camp (1).

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				Overall, the respondents who camped outside of the recreation sites included in this study (n=44) did not feel crowded and indicated the area was less crowded than they thought it would be. In general, these respondents thought that the number of campsites in the Lee Vining Canyon was just right to too few, but they were satisfied with the condition of the existing campsites. It appears that "other" camping desire was due to personal choices and not due to lack of sufficient or adequate facilities.
58	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Study should also clarify if "other" signifies or denotes "dispersed use?"	Four of 44 "other" camping responses specifically indicated dispersed use.
59	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Sites 1, 4, 7, 12, and 14 were the listed campgrounds that were surveyed. Unclear what "camping" response denotes for other listed sites here or whether the camping use the respondent includes is dispersed etc. Responses here are indicative again estimates of "primary use" provide no real metric to evaluate actual use of the facilities at the project reservoirs, use at the reservoirs, etc.	Camping was an available choice for primary recreation activity at all sites. Recreationists could have been intercepted at a non-camping site (e.g., a trailhead) but were camping elsewhere and noted during their survey that their primary activity was camping.
60	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Note that for each site the use count # does not provide context for how many people they encountered and attempted to survey but did not provide responses. Therefore it is unclear how representative these counts are in terms of approximate sample size/representation. (e.g. for site 1: 26 out of a potential estimate of ~ 300 individuals, or total use counts over x period.) The study should provide an estimated range with error bars.	A note has been added to Tables 4.2-10, -11, -14, -15, -16, -17, -18, and -19 that indicates how many people declined to provide a response.

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
61	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Further how or why is NA an answer, or included in this graphic, given that it received 0 responses across all surveys? What does this mean if anything?	"N/A" was an available response for recreationists, thus it was reported on, despite receiving 0 responses. In this case, this means 100% of recreationists who accepted a survey chose to answer this question. The N/A column has been moved to the rightmost column in the tables for clarification.
62	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	As per the presentation and this graphic, the study should note that the inclusion and use of generic public perceptions surveys to make conclusions about recreation use can be misleading because the public is either misinformed or not very knowledgeable in certain cases, the question and answers are vague and not directly interpretable to the project, or the survey should caveat or exempt responses where NA accounts for greater than the total count or some reasonable likely >50%. See also fact that there are no boat ramps/public docks. Study should explain how it's determining result significance for this survey if at all.	While SCE agrees that public perception can be misleading in some areas, the qualitative information is important to collect as it provides a nuance to the quantitative data that was gathered. Public perception information has been provided to help guide future discussions regarding the needs in the area and was not used to come to any conclusions about recreation use in the area. In the instances where respondents noted N/A, they are providing information about the relevance of the question to their interest; in that sense, the frequency of N/A provides valuable data.
63	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Does the use patterns or differences between months, weekday vs. weekend/holiday indicate the length of stay and type of use? Is there wilderness permit data the study can pull from to help estimate day use vs overnight/people accessing wilderness/non-project?	Wilderness permit data has been provided by the USFS; however, the data only notes where the permit holders started or ended their trip (Saddlebag Lake) and does not specify where they may have potentially crossed a trail counter. With the number of variables so high, there is not a way to analyze this data with any certainty.
64	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech Report review	Can the study provide any analysis or data to explain why there appears to be greater use during weekdays? As per staff, the study should note the trail here is not long/use is mostly around reservoir/short duration.	There is no data to explain why there appears to be greater use during weekdays from the trail counters. It is worth noting that the data collected during intercept surveys also indicates higher visitor use during weekdays, but it does not provide additional information which could be used to draw an interpretation.
65	USFS	3/21/2025 Draft Tech	Can the study explain why is there a huge/significant jump in use in August as compared to all other	There is no definitive way for the study to explain why there was a "huge/significant jump" in use in

Comment Number	Entity	Date/Forum	Comment	SCE Response
		Report review	months? What accounts for this jump? Study should clarify that this “site” is for dispersed hiking at the Rhinedollar dam and Ellery reservoir, per the associated pullout. Does the study provide an estimate for the number of vehicles that can be parked here?	August as compared to all other months. Any explanation would be conjecture. A clarification statement was added to the trail counter methodology explaining the locations selected per the REC-2 Dispersed Use assessment (Section 3.4, Trail Counters [2024]). The estimated number of vehicles that can be parked there is provided in Table 4.6-2.

Caltrans = California Department of Transportation; CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife; DLA = Draft License Application; FERC = Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Forest Service = U.S. Forest Service; FS = U.S. Forest Service; Inyo NF = Inyo National Forest; MLC = Mono Lake Committee; NFS = National Forest System; PM&E = protection, mitigation, and enhancement; SCE = Southern California Edison; TWG = Technical Working Group; USFS = U.S. Forest Service

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APPENDIX A
PHASE 1 USER SURVEY FORM

[Describe the area and terminology (Lee Vining Canyon [Upper vs Lower], Inyo facilities, etc.). Include orientation map.]

1. What is the primary purpose of your trip to Lee Vining Canyon? (See map for reference)
 - a. Passing through on my way to Yosemite National Park
 - b. Passing through on my way to Eastern Sierras (Mono Lake, June Lake, Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, etc.)
 - c. Recreate in the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Saddlebag Lake, Lee Vining Creek, Tioga Lake, Glacier Creek, Ellery Lake, etc.)
 - d. Recreate in the Lower Lee Vining Canyon (Campgrounds and Lee Vining Creek access below Poole Powerhouse)
2. Other than camping, which of the following developed, Inyo NF recreation sites and informal recreation areas do you plan to visit on this trip to the Lee Vining Canyon? (Select all that apply)

Upper Lee Vining Canyon		Lower Lee Vining Canyon	
☐	Saddlebag Lake Campground	☐	Fishing along Lee Vining Creek below Poole Powerhouse
☐	Saddlebag Lake Day Use Area	☐	Big Bend Campground
☐	Saddlebag Lake Trailhead (Saddlebag Lake Loop Trail)	☐	Aspen Grove Campground
☐	Sawmill Walk-In Campground	☐	Boulder Day Use Area
☐	Fishing along Lee Vining Creek below Saddlebag	☐	Moraine Campground
☐	Fishing along Glacier Creek below Tioga	☐	Lower Lee Vining Campground
☐	Carnegie Station Trailhead	☐	Cattleguard Campground
☐	Gardisky Lake Trailhead		
☐	Junction Campground		
☐	Bennettville Trailhead		
☐	Tioga Lake Overlook Info Site		
☐	Glacier Canyon Trailhead		
☐	Nunatak-Tioga Tarns Trailhead		
☐	Tioga Lake Campground		
☐	Nunatak Nature Trail	☐	Tioga Lodge
☐	Ellery Lake Campground	☐	N/A – I'm just here to camp
☐	Warren Fork Trailhead	☐	Other (Please specify)

3. Which activities have you, or will you participate in during your visit? (Select all that apply)

Participating? (Select all that apply)	Activity	Primary (Select One)
☐	Camping (Developed Campground)	☐
☐	Fishing (creek)	☐
☐	Fishing (reservoir)	☐
☐	Hiking/Trail Use (Day Use)	☐
☐	Hiking/Trail Use/Overnight Camping (Wilderness)	☐
☐	Boating	☐
☐	Biking	☐
☐	Photography	☐
☐	Picnicking	☐
☐	Rock Climbing	☐
☐	Viewing Scenery	☐
☐	Scenic Driving	☐

4. Are you staying overnight in the Lee Vining Canyon?

a. No

i. Why not?

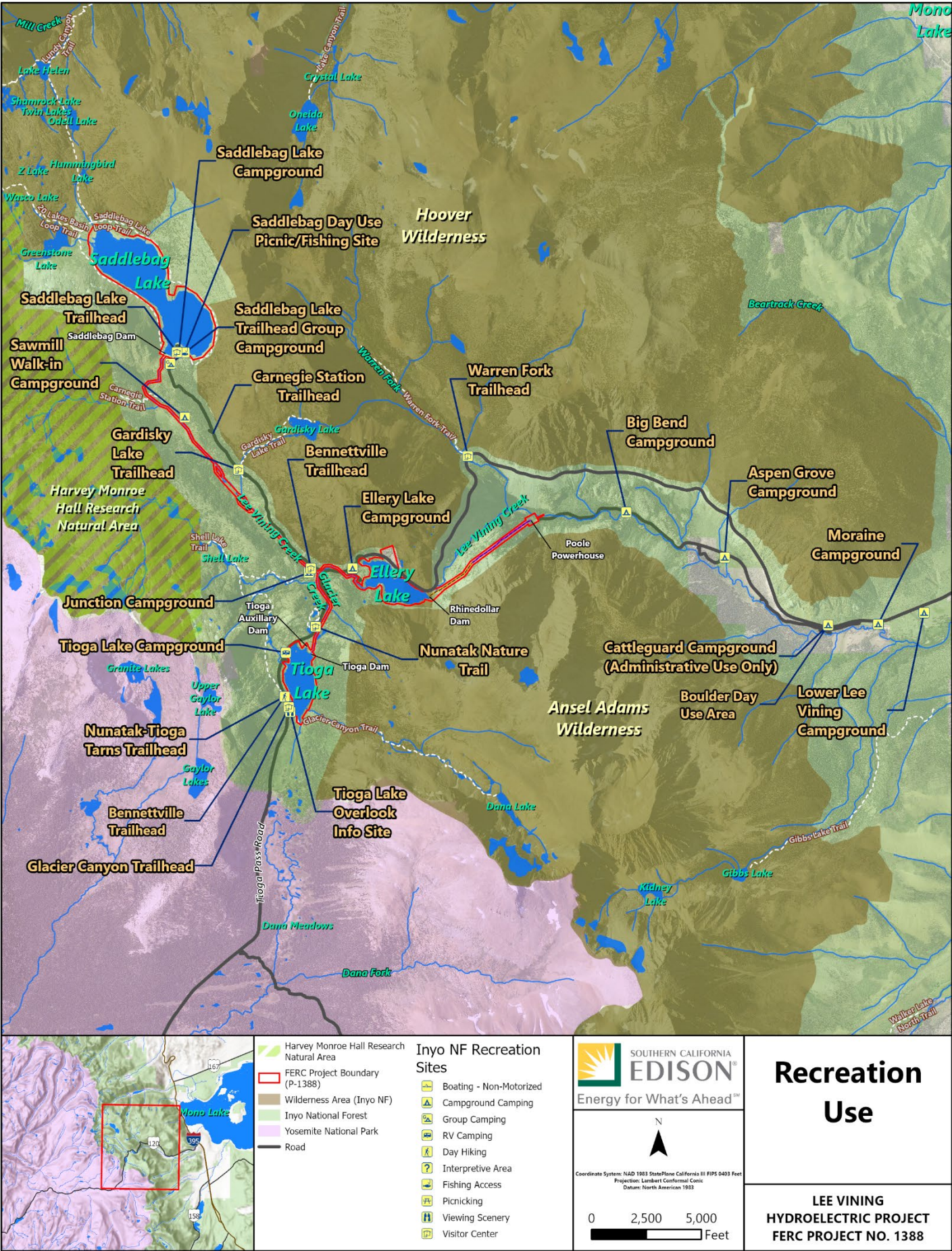
1. Passing through and staying at Yosemite National Park
2. Passing through and staying in the Eastern Sierras
3. Local day trip
4. No reservations/campsites available in Lee Vining Canyon

b. Yes

i. Where are you staying?

Upper Lee Vining Canyon		Lower Lee Vining Canyon	
☐	Saddlebag Lake Campground	☐	Big Bend Campground
☐	Sawmill Walk-In Campground	☐	Aspen Grove Campground
☐	Junction Campground	☐	Moraine Campground
☐	Tioga Lake Campground	☐	Lower Lee Vining Campground
☐	Ellery Lake Campground	☐	Cattleguard Campground
☐	Overnight Hiking (Wilderness) (Please indicate which trailhead you will be using)		

5. Please provide more information on why you chose to stay at this location.
 - a. This was my preferred location
 - b. I preferred to stay elsewhere but was unable
 - i. Where did you prefer to stay?
 1. Fill in the blank
 - ii. Why were you unable to stay at your preferred location?
 1. Fill in the blank
6. Anything else you'd like to share about why you're in the area and what your plans are?



APPENDIX B
PHASE 2 USER SURVEY FORM

General Recreation Survey

Clerk: Site: Date: Time: am/pm
Weather: Sunny Partly Cloudy Cloudy Light Rain Heavy Rain

1. What is your home zip code?
2. Including yourself, how many people are in your party today? people in party
3. Please provide the number of people in each age group within your party.
☐ Under 18 ☐ 18–24 ☐ 25–34 ☐ 35–44 ☐ 45–54 ☐ 55–64 ☐ 65+
4. Is this your first visit to the Lee Vining Canyon? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. What day did you arrive at the Lee Vining Canyon?
6. At what time did you arrive at the Lee Vining Canyon? am / pm
7. How much time will you spend on your current trip?
 Number of hours -----OR----- Number of days (If 24 hours or more)
8. If you plan to stay overnight, what type of overnight accommodations did or will you use on your trip (Mark all that apply):
☐ Campground Location:
☐ Rented Location:
cabin/condo/home/motel/hotel
☐ Your own home/property
☐ Other Please Specify:
9. Please indicate which of the following recreational activities you are participating in on this trip (Mark all that apply):
☐ Bicycling ☐ Personal Watercraft Use ☐ Day Hiking ☐ Cross Country Skiing
☐ Camping ☐ Photography ☐ Overnight Backpacking ☐ Snowmobiling
☐ Rock Climbing ☐ Picnicking ☐ Viewing Scenery
☐ Fishing in Creek ☐ Relaxing ☐ Viewing Wildlife
☐ Fishing in Lake ☐ Scenic Driving ☐ OHV Use
☐ Other:
10. Of the activities listed above, please indicate which is the **primary** activity of this trip (Choose only one):
11. Are there types of recreational activities or facilities appropriate for the Lee Vining Canyon that are not currently provided?
☐Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A If yes, please list:
12. Please help us understand capacity issues in the Lee Vining Canyon by answering the following questions (circle one response for each item):
- | | Not at all crowded | | Slightly crowded | | Moderately crowded | | Extremely crowded | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|------------------|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|-----|
| How crowded did you feel today? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | N/A |
| Was it more or less crowded than you thought it would be? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | N/A |
13. Have you ever changed your use of the Lee Vining Canyon due to crowding? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
If yes, how have you changed your use of this area? Not
☐ Visit the area during the off-season ☐ Visit earlier in the morning
☐ Visit the area during weekdays ☐ Visit a different part of the Lee Vining Area
☐ Visit the area on days to avoid holidays

14. We are interested in your opinion about the **number of existing recreation facilities** in the Lee Vining Canyon.
(Please indicate a response for **any** of the following facilities you have used during your visit)

		Too High				About Right				Too Low	Don't Know
Publicly Available Recreation Sites	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Restrooms	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Parking	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Picnic or Day Use Areas	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Boat Launches	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Public Docks	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Hiking Trails	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Swim Areas	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Campsites	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Signage	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Fish Cleaning Stations	Quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A

15. We are interested in your opinion about the **condition of existing recreation facilities** in the Lee Vining Canyon.
(Please indicate a response for **any** of the following facilities you have used during your visit)

		Too High				About Right				Too Low	Don't Know
Publicly Available Recreation Sites	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Restrooms	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Parking	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Picnic or Day Use Areas	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Boat Launches	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Public Docks	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Hiking Trails	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Swim Areas	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Campsites	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Signage	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Fish Cleaning Stations	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A

16. How would you rate the use fees associated with the campgrounds in the Lee Vining Canyon? (Mark one for each item)

	Too High				About Right				Too Low	Don't Know
Boat Rental	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A
Campground Fees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N/A

17. What did you like **most** about your visit to the Lee Vining Canyon?

18. What did you like **least** about your visit to the Lee Vining Canyon?

19. Do you have any additional comments about public recreation opportunities and facilities in the Lee Vining Canyon? (Please be as specific as possible)

APPENDIX C CREEL SURVEY FORM

Angler Survey Data Sheet

GENERAL INFO (will likely be the same for all interviews at the same survey location. Ok to put Ditto)

Date		General Weather Conditions	Sunny	Overcast	Cloudy
Survey Location			Rain	Heavy Rain	Snow/sleet/hail
Arrival Time		Water quality/turbidity observations?	Air Temp: _____°F		
Departure Time					

ANGLER INFO

Interview Time	
Party size	
Number of anglers in party	
ZIP code	
What time did you start fishing?	
How much longer will you fish?	
Target Species (primary)	
2 nd Target Species (If applicable)	
How often (frequency) do you fish in the area?	<u>Examples</u> <i>Just passing through</i> <i># times per year</i>
What other nearby locations do you fish?	
How do you define quality of fishing?	Fish Species/Size Catch Rate Natural Setting Solitude Park Amenities Water Access Proximity <i>Any other potential variables</i>
How does fishing quality compare here to other nearby locations you've fished this trip? (If applicable)	
How does overall fishing quality here compare to past experiences here? (If applicable)	
Is angling the primary purpose of your visit?	

BIOLOGICAL DATA (Enter total number of harvested (H) and released (R) fish in each size class)

Species	<8 in.	8 in.	9 in.	10 in.	11 in.	12 in.	13 in.	14 in.	15 in.	16 in.	17 in.	18 in.	19+ in.
Rainbow trout													
Brook trout													
Brown trout													
Other													
Notes													

APPENDIX D CALIBRATION COUNT FORM

Site:

Time End:

Additional Field Notes:

APPENDIX E SPOT COUNT FORM

APPENDIX F QUALITATIVE SURVEY RESPONSES

What Respondents Liked the Most About Their Visit to the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q17)

Comment	Comment	Comment
Scenery	Go anywhere and view	Scenery & not too crowded
Beauty	Got lucky and got a site at Big Bend	Scenery Yosemite
Nature	Great camp host; it makes the difference	Scenery and fresh air
Views	Hike	Scenery and lack of crowds post Labor Day
Beautiful	Hiking opportunities	Scenery rock climbing
Landscape	Hiking trails	Scenery and fishing
Mountains	Hiking, view, calmness	Scenery stunning, trails well marked
Quiet	It's cared for	Scenery with the right amount of facilities to emphasize the nature
Solitude	It's beautiful, road is well maintained	Scenery, elevation changes
The view	It's pretty, not many people	Scenery, history, hiking, undeveloped
Hiking	Just arrived	Scenery; available to outdoors
It's pretty	Kids could fish and catch	Scenery
The views	Lake	Seeing animals
View	Lakes	Setting & first come first serve
Weather	Lakes and scenery	Sights
Access to a lot of activities and trails	Lakes, everything	Snowy scenery
All the peaks to climb and on/off trail access	Less people than other areas, high lakes are pretty and accessible	So many options for outdoor activities
Area is beautiful, nice day out, not as many people	Liked the views and the amount of fish	So pretty, big rocks
Area	Magical, lake hikes	Solitude
Be in nature	Mountain views Sierra atmosphere	Solitude and good people around
Beautiful and nice facilities	Not applicable	Solitude, peace, ease of access
Beautiful hiking area	Natural beauty	Solitude; away from noise, pollution, traffic

Comment	Comment	Comment
Beautiful lakes	Neat tidy	Streams and creeks that feed into lake, scenery
Beautiful place great people need more campsites	Nice and quiet	Stunning country
Beautiful	Nice	The beauty
Beauty and quiet	No comment	The beauty and the lake
Being with friends and cooler temperatures	No people	The lake, camp host are good
Cleanliness and the camp host	Options	The mountains and scenery
Climbing	Outdoors	The scenery
Climbing hiking	Peaceful and beautiful	The scenery and the park services are putting responsibility of taking care of land and respecting it on the consumer
Consistency facility and peaceful & accessible	Pristine for location, happy how its set	The views and wildlife
Distance from city, access to lake, availability	Pretty	The view and free camping
Dog friendly; low traffic	Pretty lakes quiet	Trails
Environment	Pristine	Very clean restrooms and nice campsites
Everything is good	Proximity to mountains	View and campsite spacing
Fishing and scenery	Quaintness	View nature
Fishing is best at Tioga Lake	Quiet and solitude	Views
Fishing, no people	Quiet beauty	Views and clear air
Fishing is awesome	Quietness	Views and nature
Friendly stewards, first come serve camping is nice	Relaxing scenery	Views are the best
Location	Remote	Views great
Getting out of the heat	Remote and peaceful	Water features
Hiking good weather	Saddlebag	Weather

What Respondents Liked the Least About Their Visit to the Upper Lee Vining Canyon (Q18)

Comment	Comment	Comment
Nothing	Day users	Odd CG fees losing extra money because no change or cc option
NA	Dirt Roads	Other campers
Bugs	Distance	Overcrowded
None	Dogs not on leash	Overcrowding
Crowding	Dustiness	Overcrowding
Mosquitos	E bikes	Parking
Too many people	Expensive	People stopping in the road
Crowds	Far drive	Permits, overcrowding
Dogs	Fish cleaning stations	Poor road conditions to Saddlebag
Mosquito	Gas price	Reservation in Yosemite
People	Ghetto near the buildings	Road
Rain	Gravel road	Road conditions to Saddlebag
Too crowded	Hard to find camping	Road unpaved
Traffic	Have to go home	Roads closures
395 construction	Hike	Rocks
A lot of extra use trails made by people that should be blocked off to keep people on the trails	Lack of store, no cell	Rocks, information about Tioga gate closure
Accident in parking lot	Lack of toilet paper	Rude visitors
Air quality	Lack of water	Sharing parking
Bad fellow campers	Landscape	Smoky
Bathroom	Leaving	Sound of RV generators

Comment	Comment	Comment
Bathroom smell	Litter	Store is closed
Bathrooms are locked	Loud music	Stores don't give cash back, more ATMs
Bathrooms need maintained	Mosquitos	The dam non-recreation infrastructure is an eyesore
Benches and tables in better care, no vehicles including host	More bear boxes	The noise, large parties
Blind turn when going onto Saddlebag Lake, signage needed	Mosquitos; bugs	The road to Saddlebag needs paved
Bug	Mud	The road
Busy season	N/A	The roads bad
Campgrounds get full	NPS reservation system for Yosemite entrance	Ther people
Campsite not open	NA	The roads
Can be hard to find campsites	No comment	Tioga lodge and Saddlebag lodge closed
Can be very overcrowded	No complaints	Too far from home
Can't think of a thing	No internet	Too few campsites
Cold	No open campsites, need reservations	Too hot
Cost of campsite	Noisy party people	Unpaved road coming
Crowded	Not safe with private animals	Waiting in line and reservations to just drive through Tioga Pass Road
Crowded campsite	Nothing	Water faucet head is hard to use at group site and needs better drainage
Day trippers	Nothing you didn't like	Wind

ATM = automated teller machine; CG = campground; N/A = not applicable; NA = not applicable; NPS = National Park Service; RV = recreational vehicle

Respondents Additional Comments (Q19)

Comment	Comment
A water source	Less scary bathrooms
A yummy restaurant	More campgrounds
Add a shuttle, keep campground fees lows, no more development	More campgrounds
Add historical info	More educational outreach jobs and for them to be more funded
Bear boxes need to be looked at	More fish stockings in the lakes
Bring back the water taxi	More showers
By dam crossing signage not clear	More signage for camper education
CG fees should be free for seniors and cheaper for others	More walk-in campgrounds but if you build them it'll get more crowded, more walk-in campgrounds
Camp hosts good, very helpful; been coming 30 years and happy with hosts	More water facilities
Campground website needs improvement	Not applicable
Climbed Mt. Conness	Need more advanced signage for restrooms while driving
Different lottery for park entrance	Need more maps at trailheads
Do more to lower environmental impact	Need to develop hot springs
Do not develop any more	No advertising
Do not like reservation, first come first serve much better, prices getting too high, camp host sites are best	No new campgrounds but need more campsites in existing campgrounds
Do trail work in meadowy areas for less impact	No reservations
Don't change a thing	Paved gravel road, landing canyon
Don't develop	Preserve with little development, little marketing
Don't like being tasked with additional dumping fees at campgrounds; more trails on the east side	Promotion better via imagery online

Comment	Comment
Drinking water availability	Recreation is inhibited when hydroelectric dams exist because of their impact on the environment; they deter visitors
Existing campgrounds need more campsites, don't add more campgrounds though	Reservation system not working properly and us abused
First come first served campgrounds are better than reservation required CGs	Reservations difficult
Gardisky trail needs more switch backs; very limited number of RV spots in the area for bigger rigs	Rocks on the street
Gen comment- survey respondent ran out of time for remaining questions	Saddlebag group campsite needs better signing
Get senior pass in-person if possible; improve Saddlebag signage at the split off for junction CG; more emphasis on wilderness experience and longer quiet hours (8-8)	Seems like the lakes are stocked much less with fish compared to 3-5 years ago
Good work; keep it this direction	Showers
Hiking trails are not well marked around Saddlebag Lake, too many use trails	Sign at Lee Vining for Yosemite reservations info
Improve roads and signage	Thanks for parks, we love the area
Increase parking	Time entry is bad; timing entry causes crowding
It should be free or less that SCE is using the facilities	Trail maps need updating, and wildflower updating
Keep campgrounds open longer	Wonderful
Keep it the way it is	Would like store open; all season water taxi!
LA should give the area back to the north	Would like to make reservations online

CG = campground; RV = recreational vehicle; SCE = Southern California Edison

Document Content(s)

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