

## RANGE OF LIGHT GROUP

Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club  
Inyo and Mono Counties  
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## May 2020

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### ***TO RANGE OF LIGHT GROUP MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,***

*You are receiving this message because you are a member of the Range of Light Group, have recently attended one of our activities, or have requested our e-newsletter. If you wish to be removed from the list, click reply, and put "remove me from the ROLG list" in the subject line. Please ignore the spam block message you may receive - your message will get through. Thanks!*

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**\*\*\*\*\*LOCAL UPDATES, ISSUES OF CONCERN, FROM ROLG CHAIR. FOR MORE INFORMATION: Lynn at 760-914-9016, [chairrolg@gmail.com](mailto:chairrolg@gmail.com).**

- ❖ **Is the Proposed Woolly's Adventure Summit Expansion Crossing the Line? Let the USFS Know What You Think.**



In 2011, the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act (HR 765) was passed to allow non-winter activities on public lands within permitted ski areas. It specifically includes ropes courses and zip lines. It specifically excludes amusement parks, water parks, and water slides. Zip coasters and alpine coasters fall somewhere in between and are up to the discretion of the USFS. The additional forms of recreation are to “(A) encourage outdoor recreation and enjoyment of nature; (B) to the extent practicable—harmonize with the natural environment of the National Forest System land on which the

activity or facility is located.” What comes next? Will we slowly convert the ski resorts to outdoor amusement parks bit by bit, bill by bill, to keep ski resorts alive in the wake of climate change?

February 15, the USFS issued a Notice of Proposed Action for the expansion of Woolly’s Adventure Summit within MMSA’s special use permit. Here’s what’s being planned: a longer parking lot, a lodge, a bigger tubing facility for winter and summer, two ropes courses, a zip coaster, and an alpine coaster. These added activities would take up the entire area of the special use permit there. Right now Woolly’s only takes up about a third of the area.

Do we really want to remove a chunk of the natural forest to put in two coasters? A 20-25 foot wide path would need to be cleared of trees and vegetation for each coaster and a lot of infrastructure is needed: wires, rails, overpasses at the loops, protective caging/fencing, wheelhouses, loading dock, and platforms or checkpoint stations. It is the coasters that will have the biggest impact on the forest and wildlife, blocking travel through there for the animals and intensifying human activity and noise. The coasters will run north-south from the top of the dome down to the tubing area cutting off any wildlife that may try to pass through at night. Owls might be injured by the wires. If you haven’t seen a coaster, Google Heavenly Lake Tahoe’s Ridge Rider on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvfbdeLkNm4>. It can run year round. Here's a zip coaster in Florida to see what it's like and how much infrastructure goes with it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLmM4B2jCn4>. These are amusement park rides through the forest, but not an experience of nature. Speeding down the hill, riders won’t notice a chipmunk or hear a bird.

Since many other ski areas have installed coasters already, the path is cleared for our Inyo National Forest Supervisor to approve them at Woolly’s Adventure Summit and only four comments were submitted. The project is on hold at the moment so if this is concerning to you, you could still let the USFS know. Please email [janelle.walker@usda.gov](mailto:janelle.walker@usda.gov) or [tamera.randall-parker@usda.gov](mailto:tamera.randall-parker@usda.gov) and let them know what you think.

**❖ Tioga Inn Project Goes Before the Mono County Board of Supervisors in June. Ask that it be Green.**

The Tioga Inn Project is a housing project that will erect 100 apartments at the corner of Highways 120 and 395. The main controversy is whether or not the hotel and restaurant that was approved back in 1993 will ever be built. If it is built, then this housing project will help, but may not be enough for all the hotel and restaurant employees. If the hotel is never built, then this housing is more than is needed in the Mono Basin and becomes housing for commuters (probably to Mammoth). Commuting increases GHG emissions.



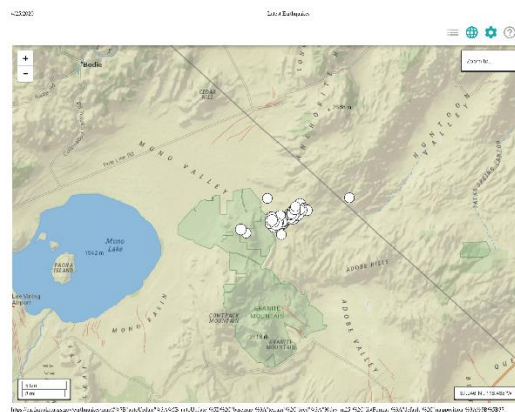
As described in the environmental impact report, the project will be fossil fuel dependent. However, it doesn't have to be. The plan calls for an additional gas station island and propane heating for the housing, building in more dependence upon fossil fuels. Instead, the housing could be all-electric, islanding off the grid with solar and battery storage. Ground heat pumps for heating and hot water would significantly reduce the use of electricity and keep the SCE bills low for the tenants. Instead of installing another gas station island, a fast charger could be installed and financed by a third party vendor or Electrify America. SCE's Charge Ready program would bring the power to the site for free.

Two electric vehicle chargers are planned for the housing area, but more should be installed. The current CalGreen code requires 20 parking spaces out of the 200 planned to be "EV Ready." Why not put in a few more stations? With recent installations of fast chargers in the Eastern Sierra, more EVs will be able to make it here. We will start seeing more this summer and not just Teslas. Many models of EVs are in the \$36,000 price range and affordable to a broader income range.

Don't new residential buildings have to be net zero energy (ZNE) starting this year? --No, not all the way to zero. The 2019 Title 24 Section 6 building code gets projects closer and requires a minimum amount of solar, but not 100% offset. The code also allows mixed fuels (i.e. electric and natural gas). The developer can either put up enough solar to meet the energy usage threshold or can put up less solar and use trade-offs that conserve energy to get there, e.g. installing ground heat pumps, smart lighting and appliances, etc. The EIR for this project doesn't specify if the solar that is planned will be sufficient to pass. We also don't know if the electricity required to pump the additional groundwater uphill 500' to the water storage tank that will supply the domestic water is included in those calculations or not.

How can we transition to renewable energy if we continue to use fossil fuels? We have only ten years if we want a bearable planet and to save our world as we know it.

## ❖ Mono Basin Earthquakes—What's Up With That?



The earthquakes are dying down and getting smaller in magnitude now--under 2.5. But starting on April 11 with a 5.2 magnitude earthquake, the Mono Basin has been shaking every day. Several were stronger than 2.5 in the first week after the 5.2 that woke many of us up. The epicenters are clustered on the east side of Mono Lake at the base of the Excelsior Range. Why here? These earthquakes are in what is called the Mina Deflection. The Mina Deflection zone lies between the White Mountains and the Bodie Hills/Wassuk Range: <https://pubs.geoscienceworld.org/gsa/geosphere/article/9/1/37/132592/Pliocene-sinistral-slip-across-the-Adobe-Hills>. It is where the faults run east-west instead of the usual north-south

faults of the Eastern Sierra. You can see this in the new Stanford Seismic stress map:  
<https://news.stanford.edu/2020/04/23/seismic-map-reveals-geologic-clues-earthquake-hazards/>

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\*\*\*\***YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** – *“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.” John Quincy Adams*

- **Volunteers Needed: *One person can make a big difference!*** The ROLG needs Executive Committee (ExCom) members, an Outings chair, and a Programs chair. The ExCom meets 6 times a year and can conference-in members from remote locations. Requirements? Be a current Sierra Club member, support the group’s activities when possible, and have a good heart for the environment. *If interested in helping out in any of these positions, contact Lynn at 760-914-9016, [chairrolg@gmail.com](mailto:chairrolg@gmail.com).*
- **Next ROLG ExCom/board meeting** is May 15 at 2:30pm via Zoom. If you’d like to join us, contact Lynn at [chairrolg@gmail.com](mailto:chairrolg@gmail.com) and we’ll send you the link.
- **Next deadline** for submissions to the Chapter newsletter, *Toiyabe Trails*, June 1. More: Lynne, [lfoster@schat.net](mailto:lfoster@schat.net).
- **Join Our Conservation Team and help save your favorite Sierra places!** More: Malcolm, [wmalcolm.clark@gmail.com](mailto:wmalcolm.clark@gmail.com), 760-924-5639.
- **ROLG now has a donate button up and running on the website.** *Tax deductible donations go to the ROLG Foundation account, non-deductible donations go directly to the ROLG as unrestricted funds. Check it out!*