

LETTERS

Leave Solitude Alone

Dear Editor:

Recently, the Inyo National Forest and the Town of Mammoth Lakes proposed building a new trail through Solitude Canyon. The proposed trail would be about 12 miles long, and would be placed in steep, rugged terrain in an area that currently has very little human traffic. You have likely read that some seem troubled by the expense of building and maintaining this ambitious trail, expenses that would be borne by the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Others seem troubled that the trail will encourage even more people to come to the area, a result that many see as unwelcome given the problems that can occur because of over-visitation.

As a former resident of Inyo County and a frequent visitor to the Mammoth Area, I would like to voice a different concern: this trail would have significant impact to Solitude Canyon's wildlife.

About thirty years ago, a property developer wanted to put a ski area in the Sherwins. That's when we all learned that Solitude Canyon is an important place for Mammoth's wildlife. Indeed we learned Solitude Canyon is especially important to the deer herds that migrate through it twice a year and use it as a safe place for fawning.

If Solitude Canyon was important for wildlife 30 years ago, it is even more

important today because the places wildlife can remain undisturbed by human activity (hikers and their dogs, cyclists, etc.) have dwindled significantly.

There are an abundance of trails currently available for hikers, cyclists, and those on horseback. If you look at a map, Solitude Canyon is one of the only blank spots, one of the few places wildlife can find refuge. We should exercise some foresight and humility and leave Solitude Canyon for them.

Kirk Dixon
Gardnerville, Nev.

The Following letter was sent to the Mono County Board of Supervisors re: non-essential business closure.

Dear Supervisors:

We are reaching out to express our deep concern about the continued closure of what have been deemed "non-essential" businesses in Mono County. We can find no reasonable justification as to why an acupuncturist, physical therapist and chiropractor are considered essential and still able to operate while we have the same protocols and contact with our clients as Massage Therapists [and cannot operate].

We have been operating as a successful business in Mammoth Lakes since 2004. Since then we have grown our staff to over 21 people. On March 15th,

we had to lay off all of our employees. Considering the devastation we were seeing worldwide, this was completely justified. We were mandated by the state to remain completely closed until we were allowed to reopen June 19th.

Our business self certified and on June 19th we reopened with half of our staff ready and excited to work with our Covid-19 safety protocols in place. During the short time we were operational, we followed all guidelines to ensure the safety of our staff and clients. As a business having been closed for three months, we were feeling positive about moving forward and motivated to make revenue to cover our past due rents to our landlord and to see a future in remaining a business in our beloved community of Mammoth Lakes.

Upon Mono County being put on the state watch list July 23rd, once again we were forced to close our doors July 26th at noon. Sadly we laid off our Massage Therapists for a second time.

Currently we see no future in being able to stay in business in Mammoth Lakes moving forward. Our rent in the Village at Mammoth is expensive and we are past due over \$45,000. In speaking with our landlords August 4th, they informed us there will be no forgiveness in past due rent, nor any reductions in rent. All rent past due is owed otherwise we will be threatened with eviction. We have another 3.5 years on our lease to the tune of over \$350,000 which we are 100% responsible for.

There are currently no protections for commercial tenants in Mono County, besides the eviction moratorium that is due to expire the end of September with the state.

The continued closure of our business not only affects us as business owners, it affects all the people no longer employed with us and unable to work in their profession in Mono County. It also affects the people in need of the services we provide. We consider ourselves an "essential" part of this community. We can no longer justify the continued closure of "personal service" businesses in this county when supermarkets, restaurants, liquor stores, retail stores as well as many other businesses remain open.

We in the healing profession, are trained from day one on safety protocols. As business owners, we know best how our business operates, and have put plenty of time and thought in how to navigate and protect our employees, customers and vendors through this pandemic. We are requesting that the town assist us in any way possible so that we can survive this mandatory shutdown. We kindly ask for your consideration in allowing us to reopen with very specific protocols.

Melanie and Jamie
Simply Massage Mammoth