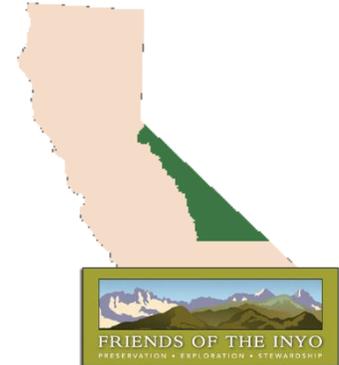


# Shoulder to Shoulder: Effective Partnership Models

## Friends of the Inyo and the Bureau of Land Management

### History

- Friends of the Inyo started as citizen advocacy group in 1980s and evolved into a stewardship group in the early 2000s.
- They are a local organization, working with local field offices and 3 land management agencies.
- Area of care includes 14 Wilderness Study Areas and 2 designated wildernesses.



### Challenges

- The relationship between the local BLM office and Friends of the Inyo was strained:
  - From the BLM's perspective, Friends of the Inyo wanted to do projects that were not priorities to the agency and that the agency didn't have the capacity to do
  - From Friends of the Inyo's perspective, the BLM was blocking important wilderness stewardship work, and grant applications went in from Friends of the Inyo that were critical of the agency and its decisions
- Finally, the BLM and Friends of the Inyo sat down together and asked, "Why isn't this working?"

### Solutions

- Some changes evolved over time, including staff changes on both the agency and NGO side.
- Active changes that were made included Friends of the Inyo and BLM staff having scheduled quarterly meetings, taking the time to build from scratch a system of communication and trust.
  - A Memorandum of Understanding was used to separate the advocacy from the stewardship, and what lines can and cannot be crossed together as partners, and smoothed out the grant application process so it was a team effort.

**"[Meeting regularly] allowed us to understand each other better – what Friends of the Inyo could bring to the table to help the agency and what the agency could bring to the table to help us."**

**–Andrew Schurr, Friends of the Inyo Stewardship Program Manager**

### Outcomes

- Friends of the Inyo became an active BLM partner with a well-defined role, and the BLM began regarding them as a partner with additional "eyes and ears" on the ground.
- The partnership resulted in increased capacity, including a financial assistance agreement with the BLM field office.
- Both the Friends of the Inyo advocacy and stewardship programs improved.

**"Working actively with the agency and public on projects gave us clout in the community – we don't just come in and tell them what to do when we want something."**

**–Andrew Schurr, Friends of the Inyo Stewardship Program Manager**

