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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 31, 2023

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County Schedules Public Meetings on Whitney Portal Repairs

Inyo County has scheduled two upcoming public meetings in Lone Pine to keep residents apprised of progress on the massive Whitney Portal Road Repair Project. The road is currently closed between Tuttle Creek and Movie roads as a result of significant destruction caused by Tropical Storm Hilary.

Both meetings will be held on Thursday, November 9 – the first from 5-6 p.m. at the Alabama Hills fire station, 140 Sunset, and the second from 6:30-8 p.m. at Statham Hall, 138 N. Jackson St.

Fifth District Supervisor Matt Kingsley and County staff will be in attendance to provide information on the extent of the damage repeatedly sustained by the road since January, as well as give updates on detours and projected reopening of the heavily traveled road.

Whitney Portal Road is used by residents traveling to and from Lone Pine as well as visitors seeking access to the various recreational opportunities west of the town – not the least of which is Mt. Whitney itself. The route was among the hardest hit this past year by multiple, record-breaking weather, including atmospheric river events in January and March, flooding from unprecedented spring runoff levels, and Tropical Storm Hilary in August. The latter storm dumped more than a year’s worth of precipitation throughout the county over a 12-hour period – causing upwards of \$10 million in damages to Whitney Portal Road alone, with the worst of the damage in the canyon section.

In tandem with in-person public outreach, Inyo County has created and made available to the public an online tool to help show the scope and severity of damages and to provide details and updates on what are sure to be exhaustive repair efforts over the next several months. The online resource also features photos, drone footage, maps, and more.

Environmental and design work related to the extensive repair efforts are expected to start in November. The current target for reopening Whitney Portal Road is June 2024.

The Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands (CFL) Highway Division has taken the lead on the repair project. CFL has the resources that Inyo County does not to help streamline the work and ensure resiliency in the design.

The online Whitney Portal Road tool can also be accessed directly here: <https://t.ly/tNZyS>, as well as on the Inyo Office of Emergency Services’ Ready Inyo site (<https://ready.inyocounty.us/>)

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