

SNOWLANDS

Bulletin

Promoting opportunities for quality, human-powered winter recreation and protecting winter wildlands

Snowlands WINS Again at Tahoe Meadows

A proposal this past winter to build a 12-bedroom bed and breakfast with helicopter pad in the middle of Tahoe Meadows astonished all who have worked so hard to protect the Meadows and provide for non-motorized winter recreation opportunities there. Fortunately quick and coordinated action on the part of Snowlands Network nixed that plan.

Tahoe Meadows is a very popular cross-country ski, snowshoe and snowplay area on the Mt. Rose Highway between Reno and Lake Tahoe. It has beautiful open areas as well as great slopes for turning. It has been in the forefront as an area to gain back for quiet and peaceful non-motorized winter recreation.

In the middle of Tahoe Meadows is a small, 1.8 acre parcel along the Mt. Rose Highway that was purchased in 1999 by a private party. In March of 2003, the owners proposed to build a 12-bedroom bed and breakfast, a helicopter stop, a restaurant and a stable. The developer's representative presented the proposal to the public in March. Marcus Libkind, Presi-

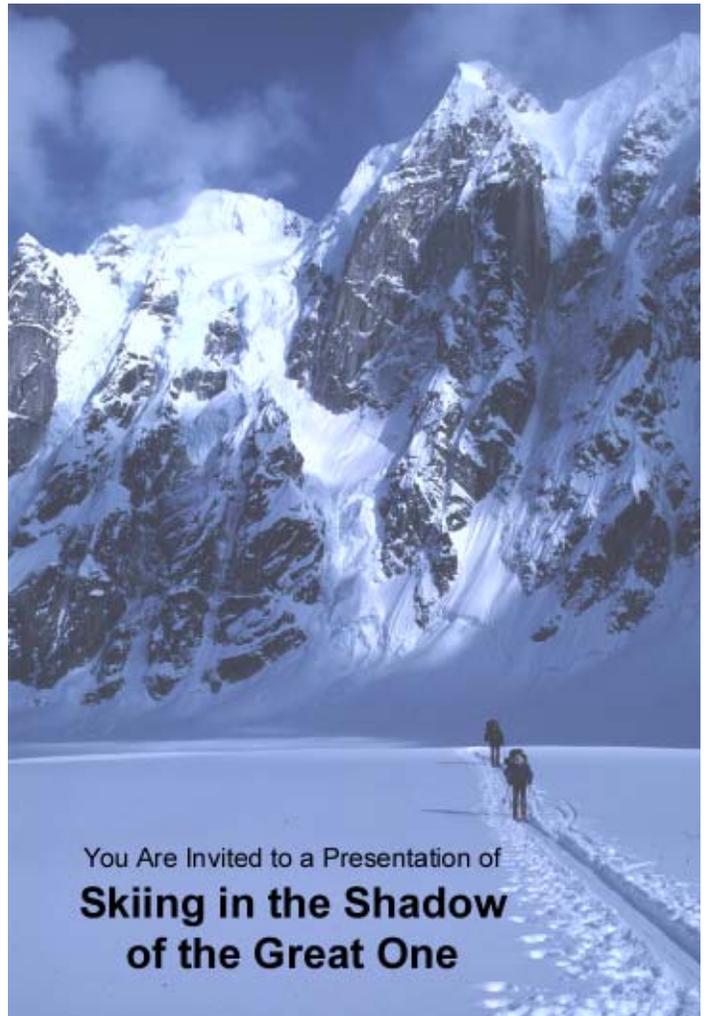
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Jobs Canyon Access Looks Good

An effort supported by Snowlands Network appears to have turned the tables and the developer of Jobs Peak Ranch in Minden, Nevada is now working with Douglas County to make public access to Jobs Canyon a reality. Access through the development to Jobs Canyon is important because without it the public is essentially cutoff from public lands both winter and summer. Although the canyon is steep, skiers and hikers have historically used it.

In 1996 Douglas County required Jobs Peak Ranch to provide a public easement (access route) to Jobs Canyon in return for permission to develop. Unfortunately the wording of the agreement required that certain trail improvements be completed within 10 years before the final easement would be granted the public. Seven of the 10 years had elapsed and the easement had still not been conveyed when Snowlands Network heard about the situation.

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You Are Invited to a Presentation of
**Skiing in the Shadow
of the Great One**

Join Marcus Libkind as he takes us on a trip to one of the world's most spectacular places, the Ruth Amphitheater in Alaska's Denali National Park. With 20,320-foot Mt. McKinley towering above, we will explore The Great Gorge, ski beneath the vertical granite walls of Mt. Dickey and The Moose's Tooth, ski by gaping crevasses, and witness the power of thundering avalanches. His adventure will conclude with a crossing of a 12,000-foot pass between the Ruth and Kahiltna

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Shadow of the Great One

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glaciers, where his party escaped being trapped clinging to overhanging seracs.

This is a land of contrasts: Huge, almost flat glaciers surrounded by the peaks for which Alaska is famous; bright sun and shirt-sleeve weather where quickly the conditions can change to deadly. However, believe it or not, this unbelievable world of snow, ice and granite is suitable for novice skiers. How can that be? Come spend the evening with Marcus and find out!

Thursday, November 6

San Francisco Bay Area

Mid-peninsula location to be determined

Friday, November 7

Lake Tahoe Community College, South Lake Tahoe

Saturday, November 8

Patagonia Store, Reno

Marcus' slide presentation is part of three Snowlands Network benefit wine*, cheese and desert celebrations. The programs run from 6:30 to 9:45 PM. Most of the \$25 per person admission is tax deductible. Seating is limited. Contact Snowlands to purchase tickets in advance.

Snowlands Network
P.O. Box 230, Livermore, CA 94551
925-455-5816 or info@snowlands.org

* It remains to be determined if wine can be served at the San Francisco Bay Area venue

The mission of Snowlands Network is to promote opportunities for quality human-powered winter recreation and to protect winter wildlands. We will educate the public and government agencies about winter recreation and environmental issues.

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Twists in the Forestdale Lawsuit

On June 13, 2003, the day after Plaintiffs in the Forestdale lawsuit provided depositions to Department of Justice attorney Pamela West in Sacramento, District Ranger Gary Schiff announced his plan to designate the Forestdale Creek area closed to snowmobiles from December 15 through March 30. Whether this proposal will be supported or rejected by the snowmobile community will depend on how they value the proposal's 50 percent increase in parking at the Blue Lakes Sno-Park. Schiff acknowledges that a similar compromise fell apart in December of 2001, but he hopes that increased parking at the snowmobile staging site will make the difference. "I don't know if it will succeed or not," he said, "but we believe it is the right decision. We need to come up with something that hopefully we can get reasonable people to agree on."

Pliny Olivier, president of the Lake Tahoe Snowmobile Association, is among the sharpest critics. "Is it a compromise? Not to any reasonable person," Olivier said.

The Plaintiffs, who include the Friends of Hope Valley and three of Snowlands' Directors, have not yet decided on how to respond to the proposal.

The similar proposal made by the Forest Service in 2001 also failed to garner support from the Alpine County Board of Supervisors. Currently the Forest Service has relinquished jurisdiction of Forestdale Road to the County under what is referred to as RS2477, which was adopted in 1866 by the federal government to promote the construction of the transportation network deemed essential to settlement of the western frontier. The application of this statute has been fraught with multiple interpretations, its repeal in 1976 with the allowing of previous claims to stand, and court rulings that have refined its use.

The Plaintiffs in the pending Forestdale lawsuit claim that the Forest Service was in error in its decision to relinquish jurisdiction of Forestdale Road to the County. They further claim that the Forest Service retains authority to close the road even if the County has jurisdiction. The Forest Service will either have to get support from the Alpine County Board of Supervisors, use the aforementioned authority, or reverse their RS2477 decision. Reversal of the existing RS2477 decision is a desired outcome of the current lawsuit.

The lawsuit challenges the Forest Service's determination that Alpine County has jurisdiction over Forestdale Road per RS2477. No one has yet said whether the Plaintiffs will continue their legal challenge of the RS2477 determination even if the Forest Service's latest proposal succeeds.

How the proposal will affect the legal proceedings is not clear because the process for reviewing the proposal, which includes an environmental assessment, requires more than 60 days, and will not be complete prior to the scheduled July 25 court date when Judge Levy will hear the case. The Forest Service could ask Judge Levy for a postponement.

It is expected that in the end Levy will make a judgment on whether the Plaintiffs request for remedy that includes remanding the matter to the Forest Service and, in the interim, ordering wintertime closure of the Forestdale Creek area.

Administration Assault on the Environment Intensifies

Reprinted with permission from Earthjustice

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the Bush administration's hostility to the environment and to the laws, regulations, and institutions that exist to protect and preserve it. In fact, it has got to the point where, when *Grist*, the wonderful daily web news service, ran an April 1 story to the effect that the Forest Service had announced a new program to clearcut buffers around towns to eliminate hiding places for terrorists, your correspondent fell for it.

The attack began within days of the president's inauguration and has continued unabated. The most recent outrage came April 11, when the Interior Department announced that, in settling a seven-year-old (and effectively dormant) lawsuit with the state of Utah, it will no longer use its "Wilderness Handbook," which regulates how areas awaiting consideration for wilderness are treated. Until now, such areas had to be protected until Congress could decide their fate. Now, they can be logged, mined, roaded, or otherwise developed and therefore eliminated as possible wilderness areas. The number of pristine acres involved numbers in the millions. It is close to an administrative repeal of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Here, for your reading pleasure, are just a few more of the myriad initiatives the administration has launched while the public and the press were distracted by war and the months that preceded it:

With little fanfare, the administration has moved to strip protection from nearly sixty million acres of pristine national forestlands; walked away from efforts to protect fast-disappearing populations of salmon, spotted owls, and marbled murrelets; begun the process of wrecking the Northwest Forest Plan, adopted in 1994 to bring sense and balance to that region while preserving both the timber industry and

wildlife habitat; wounded the Clean Water Act by rewriting regulations to allow the dumping of industrial waste into our streams and rivers; announced that the number of snowmobiles allowed in Yellowstone National Park will increase, even though a Park Service study found that the best way to treat the park would be to eliminate the infernal machines altogether; revised regulations under the Clean Air Act to allow plants 30 years old and older to expand without installing modern pollution-control equipment; reneged on a campaign pledge to limit carbon dioxide emissions and withdrew the US from the Kyoto global warming protocol, earning us the enmity of scores of countries; blocked consideration of wilderness protection for eligible areas of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska; connived to turn over sections of national parks, forests, and wilderness areas to states and counties for road-building; sought to remove legal protection for wolves; and, most disturbing, launched a broadscale effort to limit, even eliminate, the public's right to participate in decisions affecting the resources that belong to us all.

As a result, many organizations are turning to the courts as the one place where the anti-environmental juggernaut may still be fought successfully. By taking legal action, at least some of the items on the dirty laundry list above have been temporarily stymied.

This is arguably a low point in the environmental history of this country. Virtually all the environmental indicators internationally are in decline, yet our government's policies are clearly aimed at making matters much, much worse. This must not be allowed to go on any longer.

Tom Turner

OHMVR Division Resignations

Dave Widell, Deputy Director of California State Parks and Recreation and head of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, has resigned. Formerly the Deputy Director of Government Affairs for the California Waterfowl Association and the Assistant General Manager of the Grassland Water District, Widell was appointed to the Parks and Recreation post by Governor Davis in 1999. As leader of the OHMVR Program, Widell has overseen a \$30 million annual budget, seven State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs), and the State's grants program to federal and local agencies to support OHV recreation throughout the State of California.

The OHMVR program was created in 1971. It receives a portion of state fuel taxes that are attributable to off-highway recreation, adds OHV registration and SVRA fees, and uses those funds to manage and promote off-highway motor vehicle recreation. About half of the money goes to run the SVRAs, while the other half goes to local and federal agencies such as the Forest Service and sheriffs. For example, much of the snowmobile trail grooming on Forest Service land in California is paid for out of this fund, known as the "Green

Sticker Fund" after the green-colored stickers that non-street-licensed motor vehicles must show to be operated legally on public land in the State. However, the green sticker registration fees (\$21 every two years) only contribute about 10% of the Division's revenue, with the bulk coming from fuel taxes.

Widell inherited a Program that was under attack from conservationists and legislators because it was carrying out a program with little regard to state and federal environmental regulations. The State was funding federal motor vehicle recreation programs that were promoting and expanding off-highway recreation without doing required environmental impact analysis. Conservation organizations had sued the State to force compliance with the regulations and were threatening to shut down the entire program. State legislators were threatening to drastically reduce the Division budget because over half of the contributions were coming from unregistered, illegally-operated vehicles.

One of Widell's first major acts was to form the OHV Stakeholders Roundtable in an attempt to achieve a consen-

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Snowlands WINS Again

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dent, Snowlands Network; Gail Ferrell, Director, Snowlands Network and President, Coalition for Safe and Appropriate Winter Sports (CSAWS); and other supporters of Tahoe Meadows presented powerful arguments to oppose the proposal.

The arguments presented against the B&B included concerns about the noise from the generator, the noise and danger to raptors from the windmill, the nitrates generated by the stable into the headwaters of Oprhi Creek, which supplies water to Reno, and the unnecessary and polluting helicopter stop. But the number one issue was simply the visual interference of the facility in an otherwise natural setting. To put this in perspective, a reviewing board had previously rejected a proposal to put in a flashing yellow light to get vehicles on the highway to slow down. That was rejected because of the visual impact. Certainly the B&B could not be allowed for the same reason.

Due in part to the persuasive arguments, the board that was hearing the issue voted to oppose this development. But clearly the final blow to the project came when a review of the supporting documents for the proposal raised a technical flaw in that the county's definition states that a B&B can have no more than five bedrooms. After the county staff pointed this fact out to the developer and property owner, the owner withdrew their proposal for development.

Another bit of good news is that the Forest Service has publicly stated that they are willing buyers of this property.

Jobs Canyon

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Toiyabe National Forest was named in the Conditions of Approval as the agency responsible for taking the lead in establishing the easement with the developer, but they decided that they did not want responsibility for the easement nor trail. Although the Douglas County Manager's Office had made efforts to get the easement process underway, little had been accomplished because there was no official support from the County Commission.

A chance meeting between Marcus Libkind of Snowlands Network and John Cobourn of the Carson Valley Trails Association at Tahoe Meadows this past winter brought the two organizations together. Snowlands' e-mail alert system garnered letters of support for Douglas County to seek the easement as part of their trails plan. A handful of skiers joined members of the Carson Valley Trail Association at the April 3rd Commission meeting to show support for this action.

The Carson Valley Trails Association has since met with the developer and the County. The County has agreed to take the easement and it was agreed by all that the conditions would be rewritten to eliminate the Forest Service and some of the other requirements. It is now up to the County's attorney

to write a new set of conditions that all can live with.

The Carson Valley Trails Association should be given credit for making this happen. They can be contacted at:

CVTA
P.O. Box 961, Minden, NV 89423
775-265-0801

OHMVR Division Resignations

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sus among the affected parties on how best to reform the program and keep it running. In this effort, he was successful, bringing together motor vehicle recreation groups, land managers, law enforcement personnel, conservationists, and non-motorized recreation groups, and motivating them to agree on some badly needed reforms. In the summer of 2000 the OHV Stakeholders Roundtable supported a four-year extension of the OHMVR Division enabling legislation, which was due to expire in January 2003. The following year they agreed to reform measures, including increasing the amount of money allocated to law enforcement, conservation and habitat restoration, lowering the legal sound limits on off-highway motor vehicles, and expanding the safety training and certification program. These changes would most likely not have been possible without Widell's forceful personality and skillful negotiation ability that kept the opposing factions talking to each other and willing to accept compromises.

Currently, the OHV Stakeholders are considering what, if any, further changes should be made to the program. They are also awaiting the results of a new fuel tax study that will determine how much of the State's fuel tax can be attributable to off-highway recreation. The results are not due until 2005, and may affect the Division's budget, which is currently based on the study done in 1989.

A replacement for Widell is not expected anytime soon given the State's current budgetary difficulties and the Governor's recall campaign. In the meantime, the Division and the OHV Stakeholders Roundtable will operate under the leadership of Tony Perez, the Division's newly-appointed Chief, a civil servant position and not a political appointment like Widell.

In a related development, Daphne Green has resigned from the OHMVR Commission, which oversees Division policy and approves all grants from the Division. As a centrist off-highway vehicle enthusiast, backpacker, rock climber, and 4x4 driving instructor, Green served as the Commission Chair for the past few years and generally voted to fund most OHV programs. Her resignation leaves the Commission with a strong 4-2 conservation-oriented majority that could affect next winter's grants. She was appointed by Governor Davis, as will be her successor. The remaining Commissioners have elected Paul Spittler, former head of the California Wilderness Coalition and current private conservation consultant, as Chair of the Commission.

North Shore Snowmobile Decision

After initial optimism on behalf of Snowlands Network, the Forest Service released a decision in April that allows the status quo to continue for the next five years – commercial snowmobile use will be allowed to inundate the roads between Brockway Summit and Tahoe City.

Snowlands appealed the decision to the Regional Forester and that appeal has been denied. No decision has been made as to what to do next. However, the Forest Service has stated that our concerns should be brought up when the Land and Resource Management Plan is revised. The date for the revision is still not clear given recent changes in Washington.

Stanislaus NF Recreation Workshop

Users, neighbors, and other parties interested in Stanislaus National Forest got together in Sonora on Saturday, June 14, 2003 to discuss motorized and other recreation issues. The goal of the meeting was to see if the various groups with a stake in how Stanislaus NF recreation is managed could work together to create a consensus-based process to advise the Forest Service and help create a “vision” for its evolving recreation program.

Although the Forest Service participated, the event, billed as a “Community Dialogue,” was sponsored and organized by the users themselves with financial support by a grant from the California State Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. The event was organized by a core “Design Team,” consisting of representatives from the California Association of 4-Wheel-Drive Clubs, the MeWuk Tribe, the Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources and the Environment (TuCARE), Alpine County, the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, the California-Nevada Snowmobile Association, the Blue Ribbon Coalition, and the Commitment to our Recreational Environment (CORE). The Forest Service was represented by Tom Quinn, Stanislaus Forest Supervisor, and other members of the USFS staff. The meeting was led and facilitated by Lisa Beutler of the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP), who performs a similar function for the State’s OHV Stakeholders Roundtable.

The meeting was held at the Tuolumne County Fairgrounds and was well attended. Many of the participants seemed to be drawn from the local neighborhood. Jim Gibson and Marcus Libkind represented Snowlands Network and non-motorized winter recreation. Although expecting to be in the minority, they were surprised to encounter a relatively large number of backcountry skiers and snowshoers. In fact, unlike other meetings of this type, it was the snowmobile community representatives who were hard to find.

After an initial introduction and description of the goals of the meeting, morning breakout sessions were held. Most breakout sessions were broken into two groups because of the large number of participants. Jim and Marcus participated in the “Overlapping Issues - Winter” session, which discussed, among other things, the conflict between motorized and non-motorized recreation. The group participants dis-

Summer Help

Finding the right time to put in a concentrated effort to support human-powered winter recreation can be difficult. It’s hard to tear yourself away from skiing in the winter. Upcoming trips call out for available planning time. This year everything (meaning spring skiing!) was on hold as April and May storms pushed trips back and back. And when the passes finally opened at the end of May, there was so much great snow and pent up demand, well, there is still skiing going on in the Sierra eastside, in addition to typical July destinations of Lassen and Shasta. Make a trip to the race camps at Mt. Hood, and all you would have for “the cause” would be August and September before the chill in the air got you focused on skiing again. On top of all this, usually a skier’s fancy rapidly turns away from winter things when it’s hot and the trails are clear.

Snowlands recognizes this off-season and usually has no summer newsletter. But in order to maintain continuity we have published this one. This is also a time when we have to buckle down to do much development work so that fall and winter efforts are prepared for. At the moment, our three November fundraisers are getting a lot of work by a number of volunteers. Please let us know if you too would like to help out on this. You can also help tremendously with a donation between now and the fall! It is not a “high cash-flow” time of year for Snowlands, and any donation you do make is a huge help during the off-season work-blitz.

cussed the opportunities for winter recreation along the Highway 4 and Highway 108 corridors. The breakout sessions then reported back to the full group on the issues that had been discussed.

After lunch Jim and Marcus participated in the snowplay and cross-country ski session, where the opportunities for cross-country skiing and snowplay were discussed. There was some discussion of the plans of Dodge Ridge Resort to build a lift-served tubing area for snowplay and how that might affect the existing nearby commercial snowplay operation. A planned session on “Opportunities for Snowmobiles” was cancelled because of lack of interest.

After the afternoon sessions reported back to the full group, the workshop participants were asked if the day-long meeting had been useful, and if there was interest in creating an ongoing stakeholders group to meet and discuss further the issues raised that day. There was a general consensus among those present that further dialogues would be useful. A call for volunteers to join the stakeholders group was made by the Design Team, and written applications were submitted. The members of the Design Team had already discussed the makeup of the stakeholders group and had a proposed breakdown of representation on that body consisting of motorized and non-motorized recreation interests, county government, land owners, native Americans, and the Forest Service. Several backcountry skiers offered to represent non-

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Volunteer Corner

Snowlands Network continues to rely on volunteers. In the last three months several new and past volunteers have stepped forward. Each task completed improves our effectiveness in promoting opportunities for backcountry skiers, snowshoers and snowboarders and in protecting winter wildlands.

The Board of Directors would like to invite all our readers to become a part of our community. There are things to do whether you have special skills or not. Projects can be as small as a few hours. Please see the list of tasks for which we are seeking help at the end of this article. Or contact us to volunteer for something else.

In November of 2002, Mike Dooley wrote, "Wanted to know if you need help on any Snowlands work this year?" First he volunteered to seek corporate support for our work, but a more urgent need to locate entertainment for this November's benefit events took precedent. His work in this area quickly turned into a project for Snowlands Network to co-sponsor one or two showings of the Banff Film Festival with REI in Marin or elsewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area. REI will remain the principal promoter, but Snowlands will participate and receive a financial contribution from REI.

Mike's business skills have clearly benefited Snowlands and we are sincerely thankful for his continued work on the Banff Film Festival project. You will hear more about this in a future *Bulletin*.

As is so often the case, the March *Bulletin* hit the streets in a timely manner due to the help of volunteers. Bob Bastasz and Kathy Tonnensen helped board members Bill Flower and Marcus Libkind seal and label them. All are long time friends and Kathy was visiting from Missoula, MT when the call for help went out. The evening was spent reminiscing about ski trips gone by and stories of life in Missoula.

Jeff Erdoes remains our eyes and ears as to what is happening in the Tahoe Meadows area. This past winter he also began monitoring the Forestdale Creek area. His photographs have been instrumental in documenting trespass, resource damage and unsafe use of snowmobiles in these areas.

Give Us A Hand

Mark A Ski Trail at Tahoe Meadows September 13

On Saturday, September 13, Snowlands Network will mark a 1.5-mile ski trail along a ridge at the southwest end of Tahoe Meadows. Those who have marked a ski trail in the past know that the work is rewarding, if not, fun. It is an opportunity to show the Forest Service that you value non-motorized winter recreation opportunities enough to volunteer your time.

This short, easy intermediate tour offers magnificent views of emerald blue Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Meadows and the surrounding peaks. The tour ends where enticing slopes beckon skiers to test and practice their turns. When conditions are good, skiers with the necessary skills can descend from the ridge all the way to Incline Village.

No prior experience is necessary to participate. There are things for people of all abilities to do. If you can hike, you can help.

Now is the time to let us know that you are interested. There is no obligation. More details will become available as the date approaches.

We will attempt to arrange camping at nearby Mt. Rose Campground for those interested in spending Friday and/or Saturday nights.

Please contact Gail Ferrell (775-853-2931), Marcus Libkind (925-455-5816, marcus@snowlands.org), or send us the volunteer form if you are interested in joining the fun.

The ski trail marking described here is subject to final approval by the Forest Service. It will be postponed if delays occur in obtaining permission. The crux is the environmental review that is required.

Distribute Posters and Leaflets September 14

On Sunday, September 14, Snowlands Network will be distributing posters and leaflets to stores in the Lake Tahoe area to announce the November 7 and 8 benefit events in South Lake Tahoe and Reno respectively (see article on page 1). We will break into small groups and hit the shops of the lake-side communities.

Please contact Gail Ferrell (775-853-2931), Marcus Libkind (925-455-5816, marcus@snowlands.org), or send us the volunteer form if you are interested in helping with this project.

Distribute Snowlands Brochures November

Snowlands Network needs volunteers to deliver our brochures to their local mountain shop(s) this coming winter season. It's a very simple way to participate in making Snowlands a better organization. In November volunteers in each area will receive a list of several shops in their area and brochures to deliver. It's that easy.

Volunteer Form

Please fill out and send to Snowlands Network. We will contact you with additional information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ - _____

E-mail _____

- Trail marking (September 13)
- Distribute posters and leaflets (September 14)
- Distribute brochures (November)

Mail to: Snowlands Network, P.O. Box 230, Livermore, CA 94551
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Snowlands Network is very proud to have the following organizations as our affiliates. Through communication and collaboration we all become more informed and more effective.

Backcountry Skiers Alliance, CO
Carson Valley Trails Association
Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation
Coalition for Safe and Appropriate Winter Sports
Friends of Hope Valley
High Sierra Hikers Association
Natural Trails and Waters Coalition
Planning and Conservation League
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Winter Wildlands Alliance

Stanislaus NF Recreation Workshop

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motorized recreation on the stakeholders body.

If you are interested in participating in the Stanislaus recreation stakeholders, you may get more information from the CCP website: <http://www.csus.edu/ccp/jun14.htm> or by contacting Snowlands Network.

Join Snowlands Network Today ... together we will make a difference!

Our success depends on generous individuals like you who care about the future of the winter environment and backcountry winter sports. Through your support Snowlands Network will be effective in representing human-powered winter recreation enthusiasts who seek a wilderness-like experience on our public lands.

Your membership in Snowlands Network will give you:

- The peace-of-mind that someone is representing your interests on winter environmental and recreation issues.
- The benefits of an organization networking with state and national environmental and recreation organizations on winter issues.
- Regular updates on current issues, both through e-mail alerts and a subscription to the *Snowlands Bulletin*.

Please be as generous as you can. Your membership contribution is tax-deductible.* Checks should be made payable to Snowlands Network or pay by credit card.

\$25 Supporter \$50 Contributor \$100 Patron
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President's Corner

How much visiting our wilderness lands has changed over the last 40 years has been driven home several times in recent months. A young Forest Service employee commented that he wished he could have been around to ski when there was little chance of encountering a snowmobile in the Sierra. Our recent family trip to Yosemite National Park reminded me that our most beautiful parks are no place for a wilderness experience unless you have the time and energy to get well off the beaten path – the most notable sights draw hordes of visitors. But the most notable reminder came as I listened to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* while driving to attend a meeting.

Early in Huxley's story written in 1932, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning explains, "But simultaneously we condition them [laboratory raised children] to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport."

That statement did not even raise a single eyebrow hair, let alone a whole eyebrow, when I first read this book 30 or 40 years ago. It was simply a statement in a futuristic story that had no special significance. But today that is far from the case, much of corporate America bombards us with printed, radio and television advertisements aimed at convincing us that enjoyment is to be found in material goods that are necessary to enjoy the great outdoors. Automobile manufac-

urers depict the joy of driving an urban tank through streams, snowmobile manufacturers depict happiness as driving 60 mph through park-like lands, and the RV industry depicts camping as a 43-foot motor home with TV, video game console, microwave, oven, shower, toilet and of course the necessary SUV that is towed behind.

None of this was available when I was growing up. I think that I was fortunate to grow up without them because of the wonderful experiences I had "roughing it" and more importantly because I had an opportunity to experience the Sierra at a time when a trip to the mountains was to immerse oneself in nature, not to bring the urban environment to outdoors.

Through my 10-year-old daughter Sophie I see that the joy that nature has to offer hasn't changed. But where we go to be one with nature has changed and there is less of it. Everyone who values nature and our wildlands must contribute if we are to save that which remains. The prospects seem bleak because much more will be lost before the decline will ever be arrested. But throwing in the towel is not an acceptable answer and with that thought I cannot help but to think, "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed." [Wallace Stegner, 1909-1993]

Marcus Libkind, President