



*We are human power in action.
We promote wilderness values.
We preserve and protect our public lands.*



Protecting Winter Wildlands For Human-Powered Snowsports: Advocacy and Collaboration

By Bob Rowen, Vice President for Advocacy

Snowlands Network works with a number of other organizations with similar interests, helping ensure that the interests of skiers and snowshoers are represented in government planning efforts and that winter recreation issues receive the attention they merit. Such collaboration improves our effectiveness.

For several years, we have teamed with Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation, California Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and the Center for Biological Diversity for greater protection for the lands traversed by the Rubicon Trail, which is very popular and occasionally abused by off-road motorists. These efforts reached fruition this year with a settlement that will require the County to close the Trail when weather conditions are likely to result in runoff of sediment and petroleum products. We will continue to monitor compliance with this settlement, especially during winter conditions.

This summer, we teamed with the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, California Wilderness Coalition and other groups to cause the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (which manages Forest Service lands in the Tahoe basin) to address winter recreation issues in its plan

revision, which was announced in draft this summer. Our objectives are not always wholly in line with each of these groups but it is important that we speak with as loud a voice as possible. Moreover, our participation in coalitions can help shape the dialogue to provide greater attention to winter recreation issues.

For instance, we advocate for lands to be closed to motorized vehicle use, which is not the same as advocating for Wilderness designation. Our primary land management concern is the extremely disproportionate manner in which the Forest Service manages motorized recreation in winter as compared to its summer management, primarily outside of Wilderness. We believe the snowmobile issue needs to be addressed on an administrative basis by the Forest Service. The broad application of Wilderness designation (which requires an Act of Congress) often is not suited to resolution of our winter issues. In any event, many of the lands which should be protected for clean and quiet non-motorized recreation in winter simply are not eligible for Wilderness designation.

We have been extremely active in commenting on the LTBMU plan revision

and, in part through our participation in the coalition, have impacted the shape and focus of the dialogue.

This year, we have also supported the efforts of a coalition of groups to preserve the Royal Gorge lands for non-motorized recreation, participated in the General Sequoia National Monument's plan revision, participated in winter travel planning for the Lake Davis area of Plumas National Forest, commented on a number of smaller Forest Service issues, and participated in planning of national significance (such as the interminable revisions to Yellowstone National Park's snowmobile policy.)

In much of our advocacy, we partner directly with Winter Wildlands Alliance, in essence providing the voice of Winter Wildlands Alliance in the Sierra and southern Cascades. *Continued on page 3*

Do Your Part

Be a steward for your local winter wildlands. Simple:

1. Go play in the snow
2. Submit a Backcountry Experience Report online (good or bad).

www.snowlands.org/report

Snowlands Network Is Set To Do Great Things

By Marcus Libkind, Chair

When I talk with my friends and acquaintances who work for environmental causes I am struck by the bitterness and despair they feel at the continued losses of the battles they fight to save the natural world. They feel they are fighting a losing battle and some don't notice their victories as they slog off to yet another pending disaster.

When I say that there have been successes they counter argue by listing the rate of extinctions and the losses of habitat and global warming. I cannot argue with their statistics. And yes, our planet's losses are staggering and many wonderful things have been flushed away in the crush of humanity.

After a few minutes of this type of conversation I feel so defeated and hopeless that I'm sick to my stomach. I'm at a loss as what to do. I'm struck by a mix of rage and apathy.

After a good night's sleep things look different. I see that simply holding the line against the onslaught on the environment is a win. When we make progress it is euphoric.

Snowlands Network is in a good position to do great things because we have people like Gail Ferrell, Bob Rowen, Jeff Erdoes, and Laurel Harkness on our team. I urge you to support them.

Snow School at Galena Visitor Center, Tahoe

Snow School is an active educational experience for students in the greater Reno/Sparks and Lake Tahoe Area. The goal of the program is to educate 4th – 8th graders in winter ecology. Students participate in active learning sessions indoors, and then snowshoe, applying their winter ecology education while having fun outdoors in winter. Not only do students become engaged and energized through physical activity, they also learn how to safely have fun in the snow, protect the winter environment and learn the skill of snowshoeing.

Snow School is a cooperative effort in Washoe County, Nevada. Snowlands Network has coordinated with the following organizations to make this effort possible: Great Basin Institute, Great Basin Outdoor School, REI Reno, Columbia Sportswear.

The Snow School program is flexible. Participation can be by groups, clubs, entire schools, or classes within a school. The number of lessons in which groups participate is variable, allowing between one and fourteen meetings.

Our first year was a great success serving 232 children with 32 adults participating as well as 10 teachers. We look forward to another successful year. We are looking for two Snowlands Members to help coordinate this year's program in Washoe County, Nevada. If you would like to volunteer, contact Gail Ferrell, Snowlands Network President at gail@snowlands.org.



Photo by Peter Sturges

Protecting Winter Wildlands

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We appreciate all members who participated in the above efforts by attending meetings or submitting comments of their own. Your personal comments and perspectives are very important in getting our collective voice heard and appreciated.

In addition to the above advocacy efforts, we have two ongoing lawsuits against the Forest Service and the State of California, respectively, each challenging the State's Over Snow Vehicle (OSV) grooming and trailhead program. We assert (among other things) that such program promotes the sport of snowmobiling without sufficient attention, under the California and National environmental policy laws, to the impacts of the program on skiers and snowshoers desiring a clean and quiet winter recreation environment. In this litigation, we have partnered with Winter Wildlands Alliance and the Center for Biological Diversity.

Snowlands has also assisted Winter Wildlands Alliance in its lawsuit, pending in federal District Court in Idaho, challenging the Forest Service rule that exempts snowmobiles from motorized travel management. This case was recently argued and has received significant press coverage, much of it favorable.

Friend of Snowlands

El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol

Some relationships were just meant to be, and that is the case with Snowlands Network and the El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol. Both organizations are advocates for backcountry skiers and snowshoers, but in complementary ways. Snowlands' focus is on advocacy at government levels. The Ski Patrol's focus is on providing marked backcountry trails, huts, education, and rescue in the Loon Lake area of the Crystal Basin and along Highways 50 and 88. The organizations work together on trail marking projects, with the Orion Trail at Loon Lake being their largest co-project to date.

More information

El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol: www.ednsp.org

Backcountry Film Festival 2013

February 1 – Nevada City, Nevada Theatre

February 6 – San Francisco, Sports Basement Bryant

February 15 – Davis, Davis Senior High School

www.snowlands.org

Mt Rose Winter Collaboration Group

By Gail Ferrell, President

Last year Snowlands Network joined with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the snowmobile group at Lake Tahoe to address issues of winter recreation in the Lake Tahoe Basin. During meetings and on-the-ground discussions, Snowlands Network found some common ground with snowmobilers on the following issues:

- More information on display at the Tahoe Meadows, west of Reno, NV on the Mt. Rose Highway, addressing courtesy by snowmobilers while operating in areas where skiers, snowshoers and snowplayers congregate.
- Noise enforcement – The noise working group agreed to educate and help gain compliance on the federal sound standard of 88 decibels or less for snowmobiles in the Tahoe Meadows area. The noise standard can be met by not installing after-market modifications on snowmobiles and only using the federally approved exhaust system.

A group of those interested in addressing the issue of snowmobile trespass into Wilderness and other closed areas will convene Sunday, February 10, 2013. The meeting will be at the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District Old Station 11, 863 Tanager, Incline Village, 12:00-3:00 pm. Please contact Gail Ferrell, President, at gail@snowlands.org for more information.

Monitoring USFS Projects In California and Nevada

By Jeff Erdoes, Lands Monitoring Coordinator

An important task for Snowlands Network is keeping track of US Forest Service projects which potentially impact opportunities for clean and quiet snow recreation.

Twelve separate national forests cover the Sierra Nevada and the snowy ranges in Nevada. Each national forest periodically proposes specific projects to address forest needs, and informs the public of its plans by publishing on its website, every three months, a Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA).

The various projects on the twelve NFS units we watch may number more than 500 at any given time, but fewer than one in ten will be of concern to Snowlands. So we rely on volunteers every quarter to monitor SOPAs and to follow up on the projects that may impact our membership. Please let us know if you'd like to help with this ongoing task.

Snowlands Network

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Contact us today to find out how you can contribute!
Call (530)265-6424 or visit us on the web at www.snowlands.org.

Winter Appeal 2012

There is still time to make a year-end tax-deductible donation to Snowlands Network. Snowlands Network, a 501(c)(3) founded in 2001, is the only organization working directly in California and Nevada to promote human-powered winter recreation and protect winter wildlands. We are a small organization working hard to create a big impact, preserving winter wildlands for future generations. Every dollar counts. We have earned the donations and trust of thousands of winter wildland lovers over the years, we hope you'll join

them and make a year end tax-deductible donation today.

Your tax-deductible gift to Snowlands Network is important in our work to preserve and protect our treasured winter spaces. In order to take advantage of a tax deduction in 2012, your contribution must be postmarked by December 31, 2012.

To donate online, visit www.snowlands.org and click "DONATE NOW". For more information on giving your support, contact us at (530)265-6424, or info@snowlands.org.

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Mission

We promote opportunities for quality human-powered winter recreation and protect winter wildlands. We educate the public and government agencies about winter recreation and environmental issues.

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