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We promote wilderness values.
We preserve and protect our public lands.*



Winter Travel Management Rule

Almost 10 years after the Forest Service mandated summer travel planning, they finally have done the same for winter travel. The final over-snow-vehicle rule has been issued, and it is an improvement over the draft version. We thank everyone who commented on the draft. You made a huge difference.

Unless a forest has previously made OSV decisions through a public NEPA process, all forests with sufficient snow for OSV use must now undertake winter travel management planning. A highlight of the new regulations are that a forest can no longer “allow OSV use unless prohibited.”

As is the case for summer motor vehicle use, the rule is that “OSV use is prohibited unless allowed.” The Forest Service must conduct a NEPA analysis to determine which roads, trails, and areas are open to OSV use and publish these designations on an OSV map.

How well or poorly the rule is actually implemented will depend on how impartially the individual forests analyze winter travel in deciding which lands are open to OSV use. If we have strong local advocacy and decent forest leadership, then we can expect to see positive changes on the winter landscape. On the other hand, it is

entirely possible that a forest that doesn’t want to do winter travel planning and isn’t getting any public pushback to do so will be able to scrape by without really doing anything.

The article on page 3 of this issue titled “Winter Travel Management is Here” describes the first forests in the entire country to undertake this type of planning. California forests are first because a separate lawsuit was settled in favor of Snowlands Network. Please read the article and send a letter to the Forest Service telling them you want to see more areas dedicated to nonmotorized winter recreation.

2015 Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour

Ignite your passion for adventure, action and travel! The Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour will exhilarate you with amazing big-screen stories when it comes to Foothill College in Los Altos Hills on March 6 and 7. Journey to exotic locations, paddle the wildest waters, and climb the highest peaks. Friday and Saturday shows are different, so come both nights.

The Banff Mountain Film Festival is the premiere international film competition featuring the world’s best footage on mountain subjects. The festival began in 1976 and is held annually in Banff, Alberta, Canada. The World Tour offers you the opportunity to see the best of the films entered in the festival.

This event is hosted by REI and is a benefit for Snowlands Network. Come enjoy

a fantastic night (or two) of movies and support Snowlands’ advocacy at the same time.

Date: Friday, March 6 and Saturday, March 7

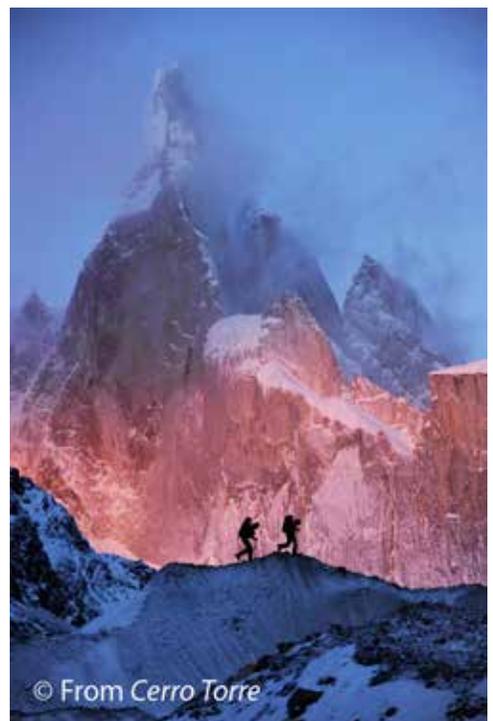
Where: Smithwick Theatre
Foothill College
12345 El Monte Road
Los Altos Hills

Time: 7PM
(Doors open at 6:30 PM)

Tickets: \$20. Available online at:
LosAltosBanff.brownpapertickets.com

More information including film list at:
www.snowlands.org

Please note that this location differs from previous years.



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President's Corner By Marcus Libkind, President

Much is going on at Snowlands Network. Advocacy continues to be center stage, and I urge you to take part in the winter travel planning that is described elsewhere in this bulletin. That process has started and will continue for three or four years. It's huge, and this is the most important advocacy that Snowlands has undertaken to date.

Titles of some directors of Snowlands have changed to align better with the tasks that face us and the work that each director does. I was Chairman and am now the President. The President is the person who oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization, and that is what I spend most of my time on. I also continue to have a sizable commitment in advocacy.

Bob Rowen continues to be Vice President – Advocacy. In this position he leads the day-to-day work on advocacy. Bob was also elected Chairman, replacing me, and in this capacity he is the person with responsibility to “guide” the organization.

Gail Ferrell is now Vice President – Programs and Outreach. Although this is a title change for her, it is what she spent much of her time on in the past.

Jim Gibson remains Secretary and Janet Hoffmann remains Treasurer (not a board position). Janet also replaces Laurel Harkness as Snowlands' administrator.

Colin Woods, our newest director, applies his legal expertise and vast knowledge of the Sierra and skiing to our advocacy work.

Jeff Erdoes continues to work tirelessly on our Backcountry Experience Report project.

A new face around Snowlands is Elizabeth Cattell who is dragging us into the 21st century with social media.

At the end of the day, everyone at Snowlands works on everything. That's what makes us so strong. Please let us know if you want to get involved.

Snowlands Network Lands Monitoring Update

Snowlands Network maintains an online reporting system for reporting conflicts with snowmobile use. It has been in use for the last five snow seasons and has received 130 Backcountry Experience Reports (BCER). Snowlands is grateful to all who have participated in the project and hopes that more people will participate in this project.

This system is for reporting all conflicts, not just illegal behavior. If you experience unreasonable levels of snowmobile noise, toxic emissions, or rutted snow anywhere in California or western Nevada, PLEASE use the form to report your experience. It is up to you to determine what is “unreasonable.” Please report all your experiences of conflict, even if they occur in “the usual areas.”

Snowlands' online system makes it easy to report conflicts. Simply go to www.snowlands.org/conflict and fill out the interactive form.

BCERs help Snowlands Network gauge the impacts of snowmobile recreation on opportunities for quality, quiet and safe backcountry skiing, boarding and snowshoeing, as well as impacts on the environment. They help identify locations that require additional management and enforcement. Most important, they are a primary method by which the Forest Service or other agencies can gauge the need for change because BCERs are forwarded to the appropriate person.

Of the most recent 47 reports, 70% documented trespass, 60% shredded snow conditions, 40% excessive noise or exhaust/odor, 38% intrusion and impact on the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, 36% damage to forest vegetation, 28% shortening their visit or left an area due to excessive snowmobile use, and 6% safety concerns.

Sno-Park Problem Reporting

Have you ever visited one of California's Sno-Park sites and seen a problem with parking, trash, or the facilities? You wanted to report the problem to the agency running the Sno-Park program, but you didn't know how.

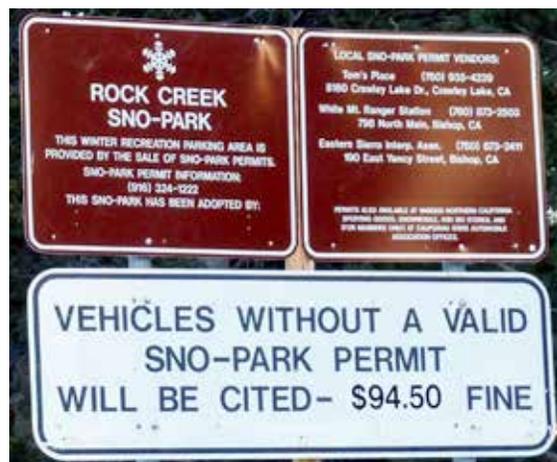
Snowlands has added a report form to it's website at:

www.snowlands.org/sno-park

Using this form you can report a problem with any of the 18 Sno-

Parks, and we will see that the information gets sent to the Sno-Park administrators. There is also a place where you can add suggestions on how to improve the Sno-Park program.

Snowlands has representatives who are members of the citizen's board that advises the Sno-Park program where to locate Sno-Parks, and we can bring your concerns to the attention of the Sno-Park program.



Winter Travel Management is Here

By Bob Rowen, Vice President for Advocacy

As a result of two lawsuits, the Forest Service has begun winter travel management on five forests in the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades: Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado and Stanislaus. In addition, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) is undertaking winter travel management.

This is BIG. This is the time to make your voice heard. Winter travel management is the goal Snowlands has sought for years. The end result will shape backcountry winter recreation for at least the next twenty years. Your participation will be extremely important. We will keep you informed through email alerts and Facebook posts of specific times to submit your comments.

The Snowlands website (<http://www.snowlands.org/wtm>) contains a section devoted to keeping our members and the public informed about the progress of the winter travel management process. There you will find a further explanation of the process and the two lawsuits, a statement of our objectives, a discussion of OSV impacts to non-motorized recreation, and several pages of answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). We will be updating the webpage to include discussions and descriptions of

our proposed alternatives as they are developed.

You can help starting right now by sending a letter telling the Forest Service that preserving more areas for clean and quiet winter recreation is important to you. Tell them what matters to you in your own words. Send your letter to Kathy Mick who has overall management responsibility for this winter travel management process.

Kathy Mick

Region 5, United States Forest Service

1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592

kmick@fs.fed.us

Snowlands Network will be submitting alternative proposals for winter travel management on each of the five forests. As part of the settlement, the Forest Service must analyze these proposals in the planning process. We have been busy developing specific proposals for each forest, plus one for the LTBMU. We have discussed our general approach with both the Forest Service and the State of California, which administers the snowmobile trail grooming program.

Featured Tour: Poison Canyon

Poison Canyon, located in a designated non-motorized area near Bear Valley on Highway 4, offers excellent touring terrain, fantastic opportunities for linking turns, panoramic vistas to the south toward of the red cliffs of the Dardanelles and beyond, and is located in an area closed to snowmobile use. One can make a loop through the canyon, ski directly up to one of the ridges for the panoramic view and return, or simply stop on the expanse of the main slope to spend time perfecting your telemark turn. The main slope in the canyon, which descends south from the ridge formed by Poison Peak and Peak 8605, is almost devoid of trees, consolidates fast and often offers perfect corn-snow conditions.

The terrain in Poison Canyon is steep but suitable for intermediate skiers who can switchback up and do kick-turns to descend where necessary. This area is not a good choice if you are not comfortable with moderately steep terrain.

Poison Canyon can also be the start of longer tours to destinations like Round Valley and Mount Reba, both of which are more

difficult than staying in the canyon.

For information on how to reach Poison Canyon, a map and a detailed route description, see the Backcountry Ski Tours website:

http://www.backcounttryskitours.com/pages/tours_1100/1112_tour.htm



The Dardanelles from the Poison Canyon area

Snowlands Network

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Call (530)265-6424 or visit us on the web at www.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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