

TRAIL BREAK

your report for silent snowsports

Volume 2013, Winter Issue



Photo by Fredrik Marmsater Photography, LLC

Winter Wildlands Alliance to Host Fifth Grassroots Advocacy Conference

To be held March 8-9 in Salt Lake City, the 2013 Grassroots Advocacy Conference will be a great opportunity for individuals and grassroots groups involved in promoting and protecting human-powered winter recreation to network, hear the latest on policy issues, share successes and meet with their counterparts from land management agencies.

Sessions planned this year include: collaborative stakeholder efforts, successful culmination of more than a decade of work to protect Yellowstone National Park, a panel on the effective use of social networking in the Stop SkiLink campaign, trends at the intersection of ski areas and backcountry users, and some of WWA's own work including the Winter Wilderness Stewardship project, economic impact studies, and leveraging the Backcountry Film Festival as a fundraising tool.

Andrew Mclean, noted ski mountaineer and author of the book "The Chuting Gallery - A Guide to Steep Skiing in the Wasatch Mountains" and straightchuter.com, will give the

keynote address Friday night. Andrew will discuss his path to becoming a 'Reluctant Activist' on issues - like SkiLink - that impact the Wasatch backcountry.

The conference runs from noon on Friday, March 8 through the end of the day on Saturday, March 9. An optional backcountry outing is being organized for Sunday, March 10th. Winter Wildlands Alliance members, grassroots advocates, conservation professionals, land managers and the public are all welcome to attend.

Full conference details and an agenda can be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/WWAconference>

We hope to see you in March!

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WWA Ambassador Program

The newly formed Winter Wildlands Alliance Ambassador program is designed to engage like-minded athletes, filmmakers, advocates and industry professionals in sharing WWA's mission and goals with their audiences.

WWA ambassadors provide a critical link between Winter Wildlands Alliance and the winter backcountry community by participating in WWA events and initiatives. We are proud to introduce our four inaugural ambassadors, and we look forward to introducing you to our new ambassadors in the near future.

Nick Devore

A world class professional skier, Nick hopes to use his skiing talent to bring environmental awareness to the skiing world and beyond. He believes in the Hopi way of life, to blend with the earth and celebrate life.

Eric Larson

Eric Larsen has spent the past 15 years of his life traveling in some of the most remote and wild places left on earth. He is now one of only a few Americans to have skied to both the North and South Poles. Eric is also the founder of Save our Poles. His passion for snow, ice and winter brought him to Winter Wildlands Alliance.

Donny Roth

Donny is a ski guide, sponsored athlete and a free range skier who focuses on human powered skiing. Every year aiming to use less fossil fuels and mechanical assistance while still skiing more vertical feet than ever before. Donny's enthusiasm for the human-powered experience is infectious and we are honored to have him as an ambassador.

Rich Meyer

Rich is a professional mountain guide and shares a love and respect of wild lands and wild places. Whether guiding clients in the backcountry or skiing and climbing on a personal occasions, Rich

strives to find pristine locations whenever possible. He believes wild peaks and passes have a special meaning and that the human powered backcountry experience is like no other. Finding balance between our modern world and our natural world needs to be a priority for all of us.

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WWA Teams with Idaho Businesses to Speak Up for Public Lands

The Idaho Outdoor Business Council, which WWA helped to found, commissioned a statewide poll this fall of Idaho voters on their views concerning the intersection of recreation, conservation, and the economy. The poll found overwhelming support for public lands not just as a quality of life issue, but also as an economic driver in the state.

The need to bring a business voice to conservation issues is one main reasons WWA is a founding member and non-profit advisor to the Idaho Outdoor Business Council, the group responsible for the poll. Now almost 40 members strong, the Idaho Outdoor Business Council (IOBC) is a coalition of businesses and recreation groups dedicated to preserving and promoting Idaho's spectacular wild lands and waters, and to educating public officials as to the importance of conservation measures and public lands funding initiatives as drivers for Idaho's outdoor recreation economy and quality of life.

The poll was one of the more visible projects tackled by the

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

IOBC since its inception and has provided valuable insights to decision-makers.

The beginning of 2013 has brought with it new challenges, including a proposed state takeover of federal lands in Idaho, akin to what has been pushed in Utah and other states. The IOBC will again be reaching out to decision-makers to show that this is not what Idaho stakeholders - citizens, advocates and businesses – want. WWA is proud to be part of that effort and we encourage our members to engage in similar efforts in other states.

Among the poll's key findings:

- 97% of Idaho voters say our public lands are an essential part of Idaho's quality of life
- 73% agree that protecting and preserving our national public lands heritage is something the federal government does well.
- When asked about the role of recreational activities on our public lands – including forests, national parks, monuments and wildlife areas – 92% agree that outdoor recreation is an essential part of Idaho's economy. This echoes a finding from the national Outdoor Industry Association that the active outdoor recreation economy in Idaho supports 37,000 jobs and produces \$2.2 billion annually in services and retail sales
- Four out of five Idahoan's participated in some form of outdoor activity in the last year – with camping, hiking, hunting and fishing being the most popular – and 87% think preserving Idaho's roadless areas is critical to maintaining hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities important to our way of life
- 79% support full funding for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a program that has invested almost \$200 million into the state's public lands and recreation resources since it was enacted in 1965. The LWCF is a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, funded by excise taxes on offshore oil and gas exploration. Three in ten voters are aware of LWCF, with support for full LWCF funding reaching 79% after a brief description.
- The majority of Idaho voters, 52%, agree that preservation of public lands creates jobs. This includes land preserved as national parks, national monuments, wildlife refuges and state or local parks. Only 10% think having these kinds of lands costs jobs.

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SnowSchool and Bay Area Wilderness Training Team Up

WWA is excited to team up with Bay Area Wilderness Training for SnowSchool! In February we will send our on-snow coordinator, Kerry McClay, to Tahoe to offer a course in basic snowshoe training and winter environmental education.

Kerry works as an Environmental Educator with the Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Area and the National SnowSchool Program. His job is not only to teach students about the national environment but to give other adults an opportunity to teach students in the outdoors.

For more information on Bay Area Wilderness Training, or to sign up for a course visit www.bawt.org. For more information on the SnowSchool program, visit www.snowschooll.org

Lana Weber, Program Director
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Backcountry Film Festival Hits the Century Mark

After premiering to a sell-out crowd in Boise, Idaho amidst hoots and high-fives, the Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival hit the road and will make more than 100 stops on four continents this year. The seven unique and diverse films have played to rave reviews in full houses across the country. The Backcountry Film Festival is a celebration of human powered winter recreation that educates and raises funds for like-minded organizations as it travels from town to town. Each tour stop is an opportunity to gather our outdoor community and celebrate winter.

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Call (208)336-4203 or visit us on the web at www.winterwildlands.org

Get Involved!

Follow Winter Wildlands Alliance on Facebook and Twitter, contact your local group and volunteer, attend a Backcountry Film Festival showing in your community and take a stand for winter - Become a Member today!

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