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a publication of Winter Wildlands Alliance

TRAIL BREAK

your report for silent snowsports

Volume 201 I, Spring Issue



President Obama unveiling the report on America's Great Outdoors



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Emily Johnson enjoying some spring conditions in the White Mountains, NH.
Photos by:
Brian Mohr/EmberPhoto

Good News and Bad News from Washington

The Good: Winter Wildlands Goes to the White House

WWA Executive Director Mark Menlove was one of 90 conservation, recreation and political leaders invited to the East Room of the White House for President Obama's unveiling of a special report on America's Great Outdoors, a Presidential initiative aimed at reconnecting Americans to the outdoors.

The report highlights the benefits of active, outdoor lifestyles and, among other directives, calls for the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to engage young people in public lands and water restoration. The President also called for the creation of an interagency America's Great Outdoors Council to enhance collaboration between federal agencies on recreation and conservation initiatives and to support outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands. In addition, the report recommends the formation of Partnership of non-governmental stakeholders to advise federal agencies and to promote innovation and partnership opportunities.

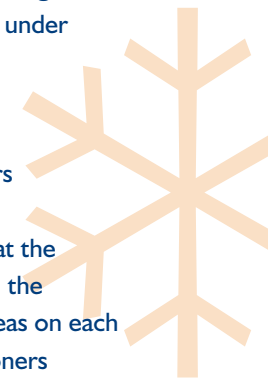
WWA has been actively engaged in the America's Great Outdoors initiative since the concept was first announced a year ago. Last summer WWA hosted two listening sessions, one in Boise and the other in Jackson, Wyoming, to gather

input from the human-powered recreation community for the initial phase of the report. The White House invitation was extended in recognition of WWA's standing in the outdoor recreation community and its leadership role in the Outdoor Alliance, a coalition of national human-powered recreation organizations that WWA helped found.

The Bad: Forest Service Denies Request to Manage Snowmobiles Under Off-Road Vehicle Guidelines

The U.S. Forest Service has denied a request from WWA and 90 recreation and conservation user groups asking that snowmobiles on national forest lands be managed under the same guidelines applied to all other classes of off-road vehicles.

In August 2010, WWA and our supporting partners submitted a petition to the Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture formally requesting that the Agency amend the 2005 Travel Management Rule, the framework used to designate routes, trails and areas on each national forest unit open to motorized use. Petitioners requested the removal of an exemption making management of over-snow vehicles optional while making designations for all other classes of off-road vehicles mandatory.



In denying the request, the Forest Service stated that by including the option for a local forest official to determine whether to manage snowmobile use the 2005 Rule provides an “adequate mechanism for regulating over-snow vehicle use” and that national regulations for over-snow vehicle use are not required by law.

“Quiet recreation and responsible stewardship are getting the short end of the stick,” said WWA Executive Director Mark Menlove. “Our petition provided the legal and ecological rationale for the Agency to restore balance between motorized and non-motorized use in winter and to meet their obligation to protect public lands for future generations. We’re disappointed that the Agency continues to duck their responsibility.”

WWA believes the decision sends mixed signals: The petition response openly acknowledges that snowmobiles can have adverse impacts on air and water quality, native vegetation, fish and wildlife populations and habitat, and on other recreationists, and yet the Agency refuses to include snowmobiles in the framework that has proven successful in managing all other motorized use.

In their response, the Forest Service did agree to develop guide-lines on factors for local officials to consider if they choose to implement winter travel planning but gave no timeline for when those guidelines might be announced. “We appreciate the offer to establish better guidelines,” said Menlove, “but we’d like a directive to actually implement these guidelines.”

While the Forest Service response is a setback, WWA will continue to push for Travel Management reform. “This denial leaves 81 million acres in the Western U.S. as unregulated free-for-all zones in winter where those with the biggest, loudest, most powerful toys get their run of the landscape and the rest of us are pushed aside,” concluded Menlove. This issue is too important to give up on. WWA will continue to work by whatever means available to fix this flawed regulation.

Mark Menlove, Executive Director
mmenlove@winterwildlands.org

Winter Wildlands Alliance Board of Directors Welcomes John Garder

Winter Wildlands Alliance currently has 11 members on our board, each bringing invaluable experience, contacts and influence to the cause. As our newest board member, we welcome John Garder.



New Winter Wildlands Alliance Board Member, John Garder

Currently, the Budget & Appropriations Legislative Representative for the National Parks Conservation Association in Washington, DC, John received an M.S. in Resource, Policy and Behavior from the University of Michigan’s School of Natural Resources and Environment. He has worked on federal public lands policy in Washington, DC for nearly a decade. Growing up in Vermont, he is a true East Coaster, and gets out to backcountry ski, paddle, climb or recreate in the Appalachians on most weekends. Although he tells us his favorite season – by far – is winter. Welcome, John!

Join us for the Snow Less Traveled – Become a member of Winter Wildlands Alliance

Here at Winter Wildlands Alliance, we are not quite ready to admit that spring is coming. Sure we are enjoying those rays of sunshine, and meanwhile checking the weather reports for any approaching storm systems. As memories of those phenomenal days in the backcountry this season start to fade, we are asking you to keep one thing in mind; Winter Wildlands Alliance is working on protecting those pristine and beautiful backcountry places so that you may enjoy them year after year. We need your support today!

Our annual membership starts at \$35 and includes our newsletter, action alerts and a WWA t-shirt. Or consider becoming a monthly member! For as little as \$10 a month you can still take advantage of our fantastic premium items donated through our corporate partner program, like a subscription to Backcountry Magazine or Cross Country Skier, or a great WWA logo hat from Ibex!

To donate online, visit winterwildlands.org and click JOIN. For more information on our giving program or to sign up for monthly giving, contact Lana Weber at (208)343-1630, email lweber@winterwildlands.org. Let’s keep it wild!

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SnowSchool Spotlight



SnowSchool in New Mexico!

Located in Los Alamos, New Mexico, the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC) opens its doors to local schools with a quality, standards-based outdoor science curriculum, and now, thanks to SnowSchool, the snowshoes to do it with! As a new site for the 2011 winter, PEEC purchased snowshoes through the SnowSchool program and invited local schools to explore with them. With over 5,000 acres of public land threaded through the towns of Los Alamos and White Rock, PEEC is able to offer place-based programs for 5th and 6th grade students in all the area schools. For more information please visit their website at pajaritoeec.org.

The SnowSchool Program is an on snow winter ecology field trip for elementary school students. By providing snowshoes, a curriculum, and a structure to schools, and then linking the schools with a nearby public land manager, nature center or school SnowSchool brings the snow into the classroom and the class into the snow. For more information visit snowschool.org.

We also welcome the following new sites to our SnowSchool network:

Roaring Fork Conservancy in Basalt, Colorado
Belle Island Nature Zoo in Detroit Michigan
Educational Recreational Adventures in Portland, Oregon
The Chatfield School in Lapeer, Michigan
Stokes Nature Center in Logan, Utah

Lana Weber, Program Director
lweber@winterwildlands.org



Racing up the hill during SnowSchool at Pajarito Environmental Education Center

Corporate Partner Spotlight

The North Face Explore Fund Helps SnowSchool Get Kids Outside

With the goal of inspiring and enabling the next generation of explorers, The North Face Explore Fund supports organizations that encourage youth outdoor participation by creating connections of children to nature, increasing access to both front and backcountry recreation and providing education for both personal and environmental health. The Winter Wildlands Alliance SnowSchool is a proud recipient of this fund for the 2010 grant cycle. As a winter educational outreach program, SnowSchool promotes a strong connection between kids and the outdoors. As we lead students through our winter wonderland we hope to create future stewards by instilling a love of nature, winter and our natural landscapes.

We commend The North Face for supporting SnowSchool and other vital outdoor education programs. For more information on The Explore Fund, please visit explorefund.org.



They’re off! Exploring at the Bogus Basin SnowSchool. Photo by Nick Kiriazis.

Backcountry and Media Partners

Our Backcountry Partner Program is a unique partnership program for backcountry-oriented retail stores, guide services, outfitters and other small businesses that support, and want their customers to know they support, Winter Wildlands Alliance’s mission of promoting and preserving winter wildlands and a quality human-powered snowsports experience on public lands. We would like to thank the following businesses for supporting the Backcountry Partner Program.

Our media partners provide ad and article space, photos, web support, and membership support. We would like to thank the following media partners in spreading the word in support of Winter Wildlands Alliance’s mission.

For more information on these Partners and links to their websites, please visit the "about" page on winterwildlands.org.

Backcountry Partners

- Aerial Boundaries
- Alpenglow Sports
- Alpine Ambitions
- The Ascending Path, LLC
- Backpacking Light
- Backwoods Mountain Sports
- Black Diamond Retail Store
- Boise Consumer Co-op
- EcoLounge
- Elephant’s Perch
- Exum Mountain Guides
- Freeheel & Wheel
- Gravity Sports
- Idaho Mountain Touring
- Hellroaring Ski Adventures
- High Camp Hut
- The Mountaineer

- Mountain Outfitters
- Mountain Riders Alliance
- Northern Lights Trading Co.
- Payette Lakes Alpine Yurts
- Payette Powder Guides
- Pine Needle Mountaineering
- Red Mountain Pass Cabins
- Rendezvous Backcountry Tours
- Sawtooth Mountain Guides
- Skiingthebackcountry.com
- Skinny Skis
- Sun Valley Trekking
- Summit Flags
- Teton AT
- Trailspace.com
- Two Knobby Tires
- Wanderlust Tours

Media Partners

- Backcountry Magazine
- Backpacking Light
- Cross Country Skier
- Ember Photo
- Erickson Creative Group
- Indomitus Books
- Off Piste
- Planet Explore
- The Snaz
- Snowshoe Magazine
- The Software Ranch
- Teton AT
- Under Solen Media
- Wend Magazine

Proposed Forest Planning Rule: A New Approach?

The Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service have proposed a new Forest Planning Rule to guide land management plans for all units of the National Forest System. According to Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, "This proposed planning rule seeks to conserve our forests for the benefit of water, wildlife, recreation and the economic vitality of our rural communities."

While WWA has concerns about some aspects of the proposed rule – namely the amount of local discretion and the use of non-binding subjective terms such as “desired conditions,” “taking into account,” and “should consider,” that leave too much to interpretation and may lead to weakened protection for wildlife and resources – we are encouraged by the inclusion a Framework for Sustainable Recreation.

The proposed rule reads, “Through consideration of recreational values in a landscape context, NFS units would be expected to provide a mix of sustainable recreational opportunities that complement those of the surrounding area.” It further defines sustainable recreation as “...the set of recreational opportunities, uses and access that, individually and combined, are ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable, allowing the responsible official to offer recreation opportunities now and into the future.” The inclusion of the Framework for Sustainable Recreation is an important acknowledgment that economically and socially important non-consumptive activities (including human-powered snowsports) need greater consideration in the Forest Planning process.

The proposed rule also includes consideration of climate change and includes requirements to “consider climate change in assessments, revising or amending plans, and in monitoring...” Considering the

current 1982 Rule includes no consideration of climate change the inclusion of “adaptive framework” for climate change is a notable step forward.

Equally important is the proposed rule’s recognition of the important role national forest lands play in supplying America with clean water and the acknowledgement of the role Forest Plans play in protecting the quality and quantity of the nation’s water supply. According to the proposed rule “New or revised plans would consistently include more direction for maintenance and restoration of watersheds composition, structure and function and protection for aquatic resources than existing plans.”

In regard to protecting wildlife, the proposed rule states, “NFS lands would be expected to consistently provide the ecological conditions necessary to maintain the diversity of plant and animal communities.” The proposed rule allows significant discretion within the Forest Service for managing wildlife compared to the existing planning regulations that require the Forest Service to maintain viable populations of all native and desired non-native species. WWA is concerned that wildlife will receive less protection within the new plan.

WWA will voice our concerns in official comments and will at the same time commend the Forest Service and USDA on their good faith effort to promote sustainable recreation such as backcountry skiing, snowshoeing and winter hiking. Winter Wildlands Alliance will continue advocate for a Forest Planning Rule that requires sound science and finds the correct balance between national standards and directives and local discretion. To learn more about the Rule and to comment directly go to <http://fs.usda.gov/planningrule>. Comment period closes May 16, 2011.

Forrest McCarthy, Public Lands Director
fmccarthy@winterwildlands.org

Corporate Partners



Grassroots Members

ALASKA Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition Mountaineering Club of Alaska Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks	IDAHO Central Idaho Recreation Coalition High Desert Nordic in Twin Falls Idaho Mountain Recreation Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance Southeast Idaho Recreation Alliance (SIRA) Teton Valley Trails & Pathways University of Idaho – Outdoor Program	OREGON Bend Backcountry Alliance	CANADA Friends of the Rossland Range
ARIZONA Prescott College	CALIFORNIA Mammoth Nordic Snowlands Network	UTAH Nordic United	For websites & contact information see www.winterwildlands.org
COLORADO Colorado Mountain Club Friends of Berthoud Pass Friends of the Routt Backcountry Friends of Red Mountain Pass Summit Winterlands and Trails	MINNESOTA Backcountry Trail Patrol	WASHINGTON El Sendero Kongsberger Ski Club Steven’s Peak Backcountry Coalition The Mountaineers	WYOMING Friends of Pathways Jackson Hole Ski & Snowboard Club Togwotee Pass Backcountry Alliance Wyoming Wilderness Association



Black Diamond Ski package winner from Sandpoint, ID

2011 Backcountry Film Festival – the Best Fest Ever!

The Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival keeps getting bigger and better and the 2010-11 Tour was the best yet. Celebrating the human-powered experience, the festival promotes the work of grassroots filmmakers who tell entertaining and compelling stories of the winter backcountry and environmental preservation. WWA compiles the films into a 90 minute package and provides the festival to our Grassroots groups and SnowSchool sites as a means to fundraise and raise awareness on local issues.

This year, the 6th annual Backcountry Film Festival toured **53 cities, 4 continents, 5 countries, 16 states** and was enjoyed by more than **5000 outdoor enthusiasts!**

The festival entertained and engaged audiences young and old with fast-paced big mountain powder skiing, humorous and classic backcountry skiing footage and environmental activism through the six unique films chosen for the tour. Information tables and talks at the events further engaged and educated festival goers about issues affecting quiet winter use, the protection of public lands, and current environmental issues impacting our quality of life.

Collectively, this year’s festival **raised more than \$55,000 dollars for our Grassroots member groups and SnowSchool sites**. The dollars raised benefited local communities by funding outdoor education programs, advocacy efforts, avalanche centers and winter equipment purchases.

We are already in the planning stages for the 2012 Backcountry Film Festival and will begin accepting film submissions soon. We look forward to continuing to improve and expand the festival. Thanks to all who attended the 2011 Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival, making it such a success!

Oh Yeah! And who was the big winner of the Black Diamond Grand Prize Giveaway? Drumroll please....Charles Lui from Sandpoint Idaho! Charles was kind enough to then turn around and give those sweet boards and BD gear to his wife. What a lucky gal!

Are you interested in hosting the film festival next year, or hosted this year and want to get on the schedule again? Contact Shelley Pursell at (208) 344-8692 or spursell@winterwildlands.org.

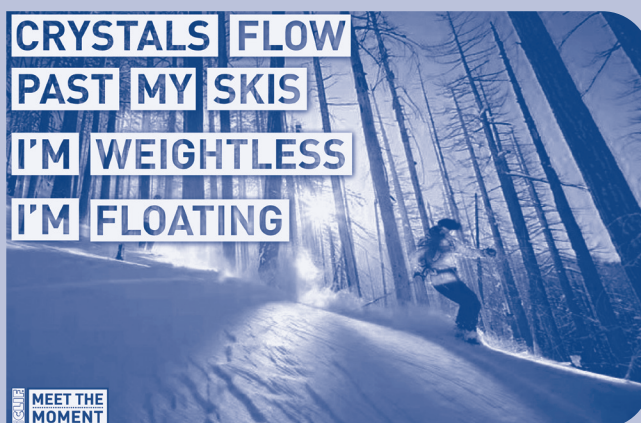
Shelley Pursell, Outreach and Events Coordinator
spursell@winterwildlands.org

CLIF Bar is Supporting WWA – With Your Help!

Long-time WWA partner CLIF Bar has launched a new campaign to harness the collective energy of shared Moments, which will inspire new experiences and adventures. The campaign, Meet the Moment, also highlights CLIF Bar’s commitment to Protecting the Places we Play, the places we have our Moments. WWA has been selected as one of the five beneficiary organizations, which will receive funds allocated by participant submissions.

How can you get involved? Log on to MeettheMoment.com to upload a photo and share your Moment of athletic adventure (like the one above, featuring big mountain backcountry skier Jenn Berg). When you create your first Moment, CLIF Bar will donate \$5 on your behalf to one of the non-profit projects. Remember to select our Winter Wilderness Stewardship Project!

So go check out the website, browse other Moments, share one of your own and support WWA’s Winter Wilderness Stewardship project!



Clif Bar athlete, Jenn Berg “Meets Her Moment”

Hahns Peak and the Columbine Access Project Results in a “Give and Take” Resolution

The controversial Columbine Access Project, which establishes a groomed snowmobile trail through Columbine Meadows, a historic non-motorized backcountry ski area near Hahn’s Peak, is scheduled to move forward with the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest’s decision that the project will not have “a significant effect on the human environment” and will therefore not require an Environmental Impact Statement. The project also establishes a three-acre parking area away from private homes to alleviate conflict between private home owners and snowmobilers.

While Winter Wildlands Alliance along with Friends of the Routt Backcountry and Colorado Mountain Club opposed the proposed motorized route through Columbine Meadows, we are pleased with another outcome of the decision that establishes a voluntary motorized closure area on Hahns Peak. The plan is intended to allow motorized access leading to areas popular with snowmobilers while preserving a traditional skier use area.

Snowmobilers will be instructed to stay on the trail while passing through Columbine Meadows. If snowmobilers do not stay on the trail the plan calls for the Forest Supervisor to consider a mandatory closure to snowmobiles, to move the trail and/or eliminate “groomed” access from the Columbine side of Hahns Peak.

With the establishment and protection of a significant non-motorized area on Hans Peak, Winter Wildlands Alliance, Friends of the Routt Backcountry, and Colorado Mountain Club have decided not to challenge the decision to allow the motorized trail. However we are working with the Forest Service to resolve several other details including insuring access to Hahns Peak for non-motorized recreationists. Winter Wildlands Alliance, Friends of the Routt Backcountry and Colorado Mountain Club anticipate that this access issue will be easily resolved.

Forrest McCarthy, Public Lands Director
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Alpine Ambitions and 1102 in 2011 = \$750 for WWA

This past January, the Winter Wildlands Alliance staff had the opportunity to meet Donny Roth of Alpine Ambitions. In addition to being an all around nice guy, Donny is a professional skier, writer, guide and instructor who has led groups through Chile and Argentina and written articles for numerous blogs and magazines. Donny told us he’s a fan of our work and that he loves to spread the word about Winter Wildlands Alliance. To help do that he came up with a great promotion! For the coming year, Alpine Ambitions has created a social media promo on Facebook. If they get 1102 “likes” on Facebook in the year 2011 (that’s 2011 backwards – get it?) Donny will donate \$750 to WWA. So show Donny some love and check out the Alpine Ambitions page on Facebook. We all win in the end!

LW



Donny Roth at the top of at the top of Lonquimay in Chile