

TRAIL BREAK

your report for silent snowsports

Volume 2013, Summer Issue



Federal Court Issues Historic Ruling on Snowmobile Management

Earlier this year U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald E. Bush issued a historic ruling declaring the exemption of over-snow vehicles in the 2005 Travel Management Rule as unlawful and directing the U.S. Forest Service to issue a new rule to bring management of snowmobiles on all national forest lands under the same criteria used for all other off-road vehicles.

The ruling is in response to a lawsuit brought by WWA challenging the legality of the over-snow vehicle (OSV) exemption in the 2005 Travel Management Rule. This is a huge victory for all of us who value peace and quiet in the winter backcountry. WWA offers huge thanks to attorney Laurie Rule from Advocates for the West who represented us in this case.

Since the 2005 Rule was issued, all national forest units have been required to craft Travel Management Plans to designate which routes, trails and areas on the forest are open to off-road vehicles

and in which areas motorized use is prohibited. However, snowmobiles and other OSVs were exempted from the 2005 Rule. WWA and our constituents have argued since the 2005 Rule came out that snowmobiles should be included in the management designations. With this ruling in place, we look forward to working with the Forest Service and other winter stakeholders to establish management plans for winter motorized use that are consistent with vehicle use in all other seasons.

The Forest Service now has until September 2014 to issue a new rule addressing winter travel management for snowmobiles and other OSVs. Once the rule is in place, individual national forest units will begin work on their respective winter travel management plans. Look for more information from WWA on how to be engaged as the rulemaking process unfolds.

Mark Menlove, Executive Director, mmenlove@winterwildlands.org

WWA Welcomes New Staff Members Brittany Jones & Kerry McClay

Winter Wildlands Alliance is pleased to announce Brittany Jones has joined our staff as Program Administrator and Kerry McClay has come on board as National SnowSchool Director.



Brittany Jones has worked, lived and played in Idaho for the last decade. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast and much of her free time is spent traversing through the backcountry with a backpack. She highly values wild places and the importance of preserving those places for future generations. Prior to joining Winter Wildlands Alliance, Brittany worked as a Park Manager coordinating outdoor

educational programs for students in Canyon County, Idaho. She is grateful for the opportunity to work with the WWA crew as the Program Administrator and has been enjoying her commute on foot. Brittany oversees the WWA Membership Program and also serves as office manager and helps coordinate outreach and events.

Kerry McClay comes to WWA after helping establish the flagship SnowSchool site at Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Area and serving as its first-ever director.

Kerry received his BA from the University of Montana, MA in environmental education from Prescott College and is currently completing a doctorate in educational leadership at Boise State University. A backcountry enthusiast, Kerry focuses on enhancing

the quality and scope of the SnowSchool program nationally, and each winter works to introduce thousands of youth to the magic of on-snow exploration. In his own mind Kerry's claim to winter-fame is that he invented "belly sliding" (ask for a demo the next time you see him).





SnowSchool Program Pilots New High School Snow Science Project

As snowpacks recede across the nation we can look back on the winter of 2012-13 as one filled with successful SnowSchool outings for thousands of children. To add to this success, Winter Wildlands Alliance helped pilot a new high school program geared towards secondary science students and teachers. Working with the Bogus Basin SnowSchool site and Boise State Geosciences over the past year to develop the new program, WWA is now aiming to make this program available nationwide. Like the SnowSchool program for elementary students, the high school SnowSchool program engages students in a snowshoe-enabled exploration of the wild winter landscape. This experience is also connected to classroom environmental science curriculum and the students use modern snow-science equipment to investigate their local snowpack. Thus, through our ever-growing SnowSchool program, WWA is ensuring that future recreationists not only enjoy our winter wildlands but also understand and appreciate their delicate and complex nature.

Kerry McClay, National SnowSchool Director, kmccclay@winterwildlands.org

WWA Continues Effective Advocacy to Protect Utah's Central Wasatch

One of WWA's keystone advocacy efforts over the past year, SkiLink, the proposal to build a gondola traversing the Wasatch Mountains from Canyons Resort in Park City to Solitude Mountain Resort in Big Cottonwood Canyon, is in a bit of an interesting place right now. Legislation forcing the sale of public land needed to build the gondola has not been reintroduced in this Congress, and just last month it was announced that Vail Resorts will be the new operator of Canyons Resort. While all this means an uncertain future for SkiLink, Winter Wildlands Alliance and our citizen



partners, Stop SkiLink Now, are still certain that this project is a bad deal for the Wasatch Mountains, and all who love to recreate there. That is why we are continuing our efforts to keep public awareness high, and are reaching out to Vail Resorts to let them know our concerns. One of the more visible pieces of outreach recently has been the release of a short documentary WWA helped support. By the time you are reading this, you should be able to view the video, and learn more about SkiLink on the Conservation Alliance blog here: <http://www.conservationalliance.com/blog>. For more information, and to stay up-to-date on what is going on with this important campaign, please visit <http://stopskilink.org/>.

Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, Policy Director, cobrienfeeney@winterwildlands.org

New Board Members Help to Guide WWA Efforts

Winter Wildlands Alliance is led by a dynamic Board of Directors who volunteer their time, resources and expertise to ensure WWA achieves its mission of promoting and preserving winter wildlands and a quality snowsports experience on public lands. We are pleased to welcome new board members Lea Colasuonno, Tony Ferlisi, Mike Fiebig and Rich Meyers.



Lea Colasuonno, Jackson, WY – Lea has been active in nonprofit advocacy work on numerous fronts including serving as statewide director for a group in Vermont, working on local sustainability issues in Jackson Hole, statewide predator-species policy in Wyoming, and local government law and policy in Eastern Idaho. She also worked as a professional ski patroller in various resorts in the East and West, and is an avid backcountry skier. She graduated from the George Washington University Law School in Washington DC in May 2013 and returned to Jackson to work as an attorney and to get out into the mountains every chance she gets.



Tony Ferlisi, Lander WY – Tony is a passionate backcountry skier, former USFS Wilderness ranger and BLM campaign outreach director with the Wyoming Wilderness Association. He is actively involved in outdoor recreation outreach and organizing in his community of Lander, Wyoming through extensive work with the Lander Cycling Club, Togwotee Pass Backcountry Alliance and Popo Agie Anglers. He holds a graduate degree in Natural Resource Management from the University of Idaho.



Michael Fiebig, Bozeman, MT – Mike serves as the Montana Conservation Coordinator for American Rivers, melding his love for snow with his love for spring runoff. An avid splitboarder and packrafter, he also splits his volunteer time between the board of

Montana Backcountry Alliance and the American Packrafting Association. Mike taught wilderness education for a number of years, and has worked in the public and non-profit sectors at home and abroad. He has an M.S. in Natural Resources Policy and Conflict Resolution, a B.S. in Neuroscience and a B.A. in Philosophy.



Rich Meyer, Berkeley, CA – As a Mountain Guide leading trips around the world, Rich shares a love and respect of wild lands and wild places. Whether guiding clients in the backcountry or skiing and climbing on 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. Rich believes all of us have the responsibility to protect truly quiet, natural and tranquil wild lands.

As we welcome new board members we also offer heartfelt thanks to retiring board members **Chris Gaughan, David Gottschall, Deb Wechselblatt and Jim Werntz.**

MM

Stewardship Project

Winter Wildlands Alliance Stewardship Project is Coming to your Backyard!

The Winter Wildlands Stewardship Project, now in its third year, has been a high impact partner with the US Forest Service. In the past three seasons we have worked successfully with the Caribou-Targhee National Forest posting boundary markers in the Jedediah Smith Wilderness. This season we will again return to the Jedediah Smith to continue to help mark boundaries in the Indian Meadows and the Phillips Pass area. These boundary markers are aimed at educating all winter users and discouraging motorized trespass into the Wilderness area. The goal is to provide a more enjoyable backcountry experience for all winter travelers

WWA is now working to expand our Stewardship Project to other communities. We are excited to be launching our first annual Bogus Basin Clean Up Day on July 13. Bogus Basin is home to the WWA's flagship SnowSchool site. SnowSchool uses Bogus Basin's Nordic/snowshoe trails to provide a one-day fieldtrip to more than 1500 elementary school kids in the Boise area. The Nordic trails are an opportunity for these kids to learn about snow ecology, winter survival and gain a stewardship and love of winter. It is our goal to celebrate Bogus Basin's efforts and to give back to the places we play.

If you would like to participate in either of these two projects, contact Shelley Pursell at spursell@winterwildlands.org

If you have a stewardship project, idea or land management issues in your backyard please contact us, we would love to hear about it and see if we can lend a hand.

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



ClifBar's Meet the Moment is a Rallying Cry for all Adventurers

Held March 8-10, in Salt Lake City, Utah, Winter Wildlands Alliance is thrilled to announce that we will be joining our friends at CLIF Bar as part of their Meet the Moment campaign! For each photo you upload CLIF Bar will donate \$5 to us!

You create a Moment. We Get \$5 from CLIF Bar!

Meet the Moment is all about supporting athletic adventure and the communities that create it. Whether it's Moments of pushed limits or dumbstruck awe - Get out, way out, where Moments happen. Then come share your photos, stories, and spread the stoke. So, upload your photos and share your Moments at www.meetthemoment.com

Here's How:

1. Go to www.meetthemoment.com
2. Enter your email and upload a photo of your latest and greatest adventure.
3. Choose to dedicate that moment to Winter Wildlands Alliance, WWA will receive a \$5.00 donation from CLIF Bar!
4. REPEAT!! Yes you can continue to upload photos and for each photo WWA will get 5 bucks.



Post this on your facebook page and twitter, tell your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to do the same! So get your most epic pics and start sharing!!

The Meet the Moment campaign and contest runs until October 31st, so post often.

SP

Yogi Berra and Yellowstone – It Ain't Over Yet, But it's Close!

So maybe it was Yogi Berra the baseball player, not Yogi Bear the Jellystone cutup, who famously quipped, "It ain't over 'til it's over," but either way those words never rang truer than with the infamously long-running process to finalize a winter use plan for Yellowstone National Park.

The effort to permanently protect Yellowstone's magical winter ecosystem ain't over yet, but it's SO close. As most WWA members know, thanks in part to our efforts, Yellowstone has made a remarkable recovery from a decade ago when our nation's first national park looked, sounded and smelled more like a wild west race track than the winter sanctuary it was meant to be.

Fewer vehicles, commercial guiding requirements, and tighter restrictions on noise and emissions have led to a Yellowstone today that is cleaner, quieter, and far better for skiers and snowshoers and for the Park's iconic winter wildlife. However, those gains are only temporary until they are built into a long-term winter use plan. Park officials put forth a draft long-term plan in April and have gathered public comment on the draft. A final plan will be issued this fall and we are hopeful that Park officials will issue a plan that protects Yellowstone's magical winter ecosystem while providing sustainable winter access.

WWA has been engaged in this issue since we were founded in 2000 and all of us look forward to a successful resolution to Yellowstone winter use.

MM

Outdoor Alliance Grass-tops Initiative Coalesces the Human-Powered Community

Nearly one year ago, WWA and our partners at Outdoor Alliance launched the Grass-tops initiative. By coordinating local groups and individual leaders – the “grass-tops” – from the whole range of the human powered outdoor recreation community, the initiative will turbo charge our ability to protect the places and the experiences that matter to all of us. Outdoor Alliance has shown the power backcountry skiers, climbers, paddlers, and mountain bikers can have when we speak together, and through the initiative we are bringing this model to more places.

Outdoor Alliance has helped kick start local cooperation in six different places around the country. Most recently, we gathered leaders in Portland, Seattle and Salt Lake City as well as WWA's hometown, Boise. As you might expect, human powered outdoor recreation faces a broad range of issues at all these different places. In Salt Lake, for example, a huge transportation and land planning project is just getting underway, while in Boise there are threats to federal ownership of public lands in Idaho. Now, thanks to the

Grass-tops initiative, local leaders are better positioned to address issues like these and make sure that their voice is heard.

The Grass-tops initiative is off to a great start, but we are only beginning to tap into its potential. WWA and the whole OA coalition remain dedicated to supporting local networks, so stay tuned for more updates soon.

Tom Flynn, Outdoor Alliance Grass-tops Director, tom@outdooralliance.net

Become a Member and Help Winter Wildlands Alliance Protect the Places You Play

We appreciate your support!

Support Winter Wildlands Alliance and join us as a member. Your contribution will make a difference and help protect the quiet places we play. You may even get a warm fuzzy feeling.

To donate simply visit us online at www.winterwildlands.org and click JOIN or GIVE. Stay updated! Follow Winter Wildlands Alliance on Facebook and Twitter. There's a chance you could win some cool prizes!



Grassroots Advocacy Conference a Resounding Success

Held March 8-10, in Salt Lake City, Utah, Winter Wildlands Alliance's fifth Grassroots Advocacy Conference was a resounding success. Over the course of three days, 50 participants – including representatives from seven grassroots groups – were able to grapple with some of the defining topics and trends relevant to winter recreation. Grassroots advocates were joined by key Forest Service personnel from across the West and D.C., as well as industry insiders and athletes. One of the main goals for the conference is to serve as a forum to engage with issues – with such a diverse group convened, we were able to do exactly that, with excellent discussion continuing all the way through the weekend onto the skin track during our ski tour in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Presentations ranged from fundraising and engaging your grassroots membership, to opportunities for collaboration under the new Forest Service planning rule and winter recreation management at ski areas. Backcountry pioneer Andrew McLean offered the keynote address. A recurring theme from the weekend was the need for better data, and a stronger narrative to support our cause. These, and other takeaways, are already helping define our work. In sum, it was a productive and fun weekend – thank you to everyone who attended and helped make it possible. We're already looking forward to doing it again!

COB

Our Mission

Winter Wildlands Alliance is a national nonprofit organization promoting and preserving winter wildlands and a quality human-powered snowsports experience on public lands.

Grassroots Members

Alaska

Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition
Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Arizona

Prescott College

California

Mammoth Nordic
Snowlands Network

Colorado

Colorado Mountain Club
Friends of Berthoud Pass
Friends of the Routt Backcountry
High Country Citizens Alliance
Summit Winterlands and Trails

Idaho

Central Idaho Recreation Coalition
High Desert Nordic
Idaho Mountain Recreation
Nordic Backcountry Skiers Alliance
Southeast Idaho Recreation Alliance (SIRA)
Teton Valley Trails and Pathways
University of Idaho—Outdoor Program

Minnesota

Backcountry Trail Patrol

Montana

Beartooth Recreational Trails Association
Montana Backcountry Alliance
Montanans for Quiet Recreation

Oregon

Bend Backcountry Alliance

Utah

Nordic United

Washington

El Sendero
Kongsberger Ski Club
Stevens Peak Backcountry Coalition
The Mountaineers

Wyoming

Friends of Pathways
Jackson Hole Ski and Snowboard Club
Togwotee Pass Backcountry Alliance
Wyoming Wilderness Association



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