

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



# Quiet Quadrant

By Gail Ferrell, President, Snowlands Network

This year, the Lake Tahoe Basin Forest Service will publish their ideas on how the Lake Tahoe Basin will be managed for the **next 20 years!** This is your first opportunity in 22 years to have a voice in how the Lake Tahoe Forest Service manages public lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin. You will have the chance to give constructive comments to the Forest Service on their ideas. These ideas will be published in the Draft Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan, called the *Draft*.

The *Quiet Quadrant Campaign* by Snowlands Network is asking the Forest Service to mitigate some of the problems of winter recreation within the Lake Tahoe

Basin. Currently 53% of the federal lands within the Lake Tahoe Basin are open to snowmobiles. The *Quiet Quadrant* proposal would achieve a balance closer to 50%.

Skiers and snowshoers far outnumber snowmobilers in the Lake Tahoe Basin. In winter, human-powered recreationists outnumber motorized users 10 to 1 in the Lake Tahoe Basin! This data reflects the users of public lands, not at resorts.

Low-impact winter users of public lands need accessible areas off roads and highways that are safe and serene. Wilderness areas are open to human-powered recreation, but wilderness boundaries are away from roads and

*Continued on Page 6*

# Snowmobiles Get A Free Ride

**Petition aims to change lack of snowmobile management**

Ninety recreation and environmental organizations joined in a *Petition To Amend The 2005 Travel Management Rule By Removing The Over-Snow Vehicle Exemption And Remediating The Discretionary Management Of Over-Snow Vehicles On National Forest Lands*. The petition was submitted on August 30, 2010 to US Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Harris Sherman and the Chief of the USDA Forest Service Tom Tidwell by Winter Wildlands Alliance on behalf of all signers.

Millions of Americans turn to our national forests for peace, quiet, and healthy outdoor exercise during winter months. Unfortunately, peace, quiet, and clean winter air are often hard to come by as many of our National Forest lands have become unregulated free-for-all areas where noise, exhaust, and deep ruts rule the day.

Snowlands Network was one of the 90 recreation and conservation organizations who signed the petition; together they

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## Adopt An Area Participate in the Watch a Wilderness Program

You can help Snowlands while you ski or snowshoe this winter! When you visit the backcountry on skis or snowshoes this winter, you can help to protect and preserve Wilderness or other non-motorized area by signing up for Snowlands Network's *Adopt an Area* Program.

Snowlands Network is helping the U.S. Forest Service by visiting ski and snowshoe areas and Wilderness Areas and recording our observations. The U.S. Forest Service cannot be all places at all times, so we, as users of our public lands in winter, can help. This monitoring effort has two parts. One is to observe and record the types and numbers of different users in non-wilderness area. The other is to monitor wilderness areas for motorized vehicle trespass.

Here is what you can do to join the Adopt an Area Team:

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# President's Corner

By Gail Ferrell

Hello Snowlands Members,  
I have been looking forward to writing to you as your new President of Snowlands Network.

Before I share my thoughts with you, I must stop and reflect on the deep appreciation we all have for past President, Marcus Libkind. Marcus served as Snowlands first President in 2001 and has served as Board Chair since. He has put in countless hours to promote the mission of Snowlands. We would not be the organization we are today without him. We cannot thank you enough Marcus!

So now....about Snowlands and my thoughts as the new President.

Snowlands Network promotes sustainable, low-impact winter recreation. I feel we are in another wave, finally, where individuals, companies and governmental entities, are looking at the future health of ourselves and of the planet.

This is not the first time, of course, that public attention has turned to environmental issues in the United States. In the 1960's and 1970's our government took action to clean up our air, waterways and soil. Strong legislation was passed such as the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, and the Clean Air Act.

Prior to passing these measures to clean up the environment, the smog in some urban areas such as Los Angeles hit alert levels regularly, the Great Lakes were so polluted fish could not survive, and chemical contaminants in soil were causing illnesses for nearby residents.

There was a lot of focus on industrial polluters and controlling pollution. Now, again, our consciousness has been raised about some of the profound climate changes that are effecting our globe. However, it looks like we are taking an even more personal look, and the focus has shifted to what each of us can individually do to help reduce greenhouse gasses, lower our consumption of fossil fuel, and use less energy. Each individual is becoming more aware of their own *carbon footprint*.

It is in this context that Snowlands Network is a leader –

providing opportunities for quality human-powered winter recreation on public lands and protecting winter wildlands and wintering wildlife. We promote skiing and snowshoeing on public lands, snowplay and snowboarding; all under one's own power. These are sustainable winter activities that do not pollute the environment.



It is the form of winter recreation the Snowlands Network and it's members choose that is a healthy choice for our planet. And yes, we usually drive to where we ski or snowshoe, but statistically speaking, there are 3 persons in the car ready to ski or snowshoe. And the cars we drive to get to the snow are smaller and use less gas. (I just wish I could get Subaru to sponsor Snowlands Network – how many Subarus do you see in the parking area!?).

Compare this to winter motorized recreation, where there are two persons per vehicle (statistically) and the truck and trailer required to transport a snowmobile use more gas, take up far more parking. Add in the gas used for the snowmobile itself, getting about 4 – 6 miles per gallon, and it is clear that that our recreation has a significantly smaller carbon footprint.

As someone dedicated to preserving the natural environment, please help to double our membership by asking one person to join Snowlands Network. My first goal as the new President is to double our membership by my birthday: January 25th. Can you help me with my goal for membership? Please ask one person to join Snowlands Network or GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP FOR YOUR HOLIDAY GIVING. Thank you.



## Snowlands Bulletin

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[www.snowlands.org](http://www.snowlands.org)

## 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.

## Board of Directors

Marcus Libkind, Chairman  
Gail Ferrell, President  
Jim Gibson, Secretary  
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## Coordinators

Gail Ferrell, Lake Tahoe/Reno  
Monte Hendricks, Highway 50  
Jeff Erdoes, Lands Monitoring  
Bob Rowen, VP for Advocacy

## Staff

Annette Glabe, Membership and Administration

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# Gail Ferrell Takes The Helm

Snowlands Network is very happy to announce that Director Gail Ferrell assumed the position of President of Snowlands on July 1. Gail has a long history of taking a leading role in Snowlands' issues. Outgoing President Marcus Libkind will remain Chair of the Board of Directors.

Marcus says of Gail's credentials, "Gail has been a director of the organization for all but one of its years. She was the driving force behind getting the south side of Tahoe Meadows designated non-motorized in winter, and she continues to advocate for non-motorized uses in the area. Gail was also a director of Winter Wildlands Alliance, with whom we work closely on issues."

In addition to her new position as President of Snowlands Network, Gail will retain the position of Coordinator for the Lake

Tahoe and Reno area. Reno area residents will recognize Gail's name because she is the impetus behind the annual Snowlands event in Reno at the Patagonia Outlet. Last year she surprised everyone by having Arlene Blum, explorer of the world's highest and most dangerous mountains, as the guest speaker.

This change at the helm will give Marcus a well-deserved respite from the daily grind of running Snowlands. Aside from taking some extended travel time, Marcus says that he will now be able to spend more time doing advocacy, which is what Snowlands is all about. Of course as a Director and Board Chair, he will still have his hands busy with guiding Snowlands as it takes on major issues like the Lake Tahoe Basin Land Management Plan Revision and challenging the exclusion of snowmobiles from the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule.

The directors, staff and volunteers at Snowlands Network look forward to working with Gail as we strive to make the backcountry a better place to enjoy quiet, pollution-free and safe human-powered winter recreation.

## Meet Bob Rowen

### Snowlands is thrilled to introduce Bob Rowen, our new Vice President of Advocacy

Bob Rowen is an avid backcountry skier who particularly enjoys touring with light gear on waxless skis and rolling terrain, but plays on heavier and lighter gear as well. He has practiced corporate and regulatory law for 30 years and lives in Reno with his wife Elizabeth and their dog, Daisy Mae, both of whom also enjoy the snow.

Bob began volunteering for Snowlands in 2009 and has played a central role in representing Snowlands before the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, as well as doing other advocacy work. He has a B.A. from Stanford University and his law degree from New York University.

Bob has already logged many hours writing supporting documentation for Snowlands and is playing a key role in representing the interests of cross country skiers and snowshoers to U.S. Forest Service and to agency staff in other key positions in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

We are so fortunate to have Bob volunteering his time and talent to Snowlands Network.

Thank you Bob!



## About Annette Glabe

Annette Glabe is our fantastic staff at Snowlands Network. She has a passion for the outdoors, and is an avid skier. She picked up snowshoeing easily after becoming our **Super Staff at Snowlands Network**. Annette has traveled extensively and applied her organizational and administrative skills in many professional settings. We are lucky at Snowlands Network to have Annette in our Nevada City, California office.

Thank you Annette!



**Join  
Snowlands Network  
on  
Facebook and Twitter  
February 1st!**



# Snowlands Volunteer Program

Snowlands Network is a Volunteer-Based Advocacy Organization. Our mission is to protect and preserve the natural environment in winter and to promote low-impact sustainable winter recreation by providing high-quality environments in which to do so.

We have incredible volunteers. We have small projects and large projects. Gail will find a project perfect for your talents. Please contact Gail Ferrell, President, if you would like to volunteer. Email: [gail@snowlands.org](mailto:gail@snowlands.org)

Meet Ed Willis! Ed is an avid, and we mean AVID, backcountry skier. You will probably run into Ed in the backcountry. When you do, Ed will be handing you a card with Snowlands Network information. This card contains handy information on where to find out about U.S. Forest Service actions that impact quiet, pollution-free and safe winter recreation. Ed also keeps abreast of Forest Service actions for Snowlands Network. THANK YOU ED!



Cathy Karr is our Sustainability Liaison. Cathy loves the outdoors, and you will find her skiing with her family, kayaking, or making beautiful crafts. Cathy is particularly interested in sustainability within the Lake Tahoe Basin, and is now our Liaison with Sustainable-Tahoe. Thank you Cathy!

Meet Elias Dechent. Elias is our new Volunteer for Film Festivals. Elias and his wife love to backcountry ski. They also love



independent films. Elias is coordinating our Snowlands Network **Backcountry Film Festival** to be held in the greater Reno and Lake Tahoe area in 2011 (dates to be sent in an online news alerts). He has a lot of experience with showing independent films, and hosted an independent film series last summer in Reno. You can meet Elias at our Backcountry Film Festival on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at UNR.

Find out more at [www.reno-artemis.com](http://www.reno-artemis.com).

# Snowmobiles at Chickadee Ridge

Did you know that snowmobiles can now access the area known as Chickadee Point (or Chickadee Rock) on the south side of the Mt. Rose Highway? Yes! You might have snowmobiles zoom by you while you are watching the chickadees. When Incline Lake became public last year, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit designated a piece of land on the south side of the highway as "mixed use" in winter. That meant that snowmobiles can now go on the south side of the Mt. Rose Highway within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Snowlands Network is opposed to this designation. It is time to write the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the U.S. Forest Service and tell them so!

The Mt. Rose Corridor between Reno and Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, has over 40,000 winter visitor trips each year! Yes, 40,000 visitor trips in winter alone! Over 95% of these visitors are there for low-impact winter recreation. They ski, snowshoe, split board, and snowplay. This entire corridor should be designated for quiet recreation, without the danger, noise, and exhaust from snowmobiles. Allowing snowmobiles on the south side of the Mt. Rose Highway has greatly reduced the area for human-powered recreation in this highly popular, winter, pedestrian area.



This photo taken at Chickadee Ridge looking toward Lake Tahoe. Notice the LEGAL snowmobile tracks! Write to the U.S. Forest Service – information below.

*Note: please do not feed the chickadees.*

Your comments are needed. Send an email to the Forest Service at:

[comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us)

Please send a copy of your comments to Snowlands Network at:

[projects@snowlands.org](mailto:projects@snowlands.org)

# Keep the Lake Tahoe Basin Blue and White

## Two-stroke snowmobiles are not appropriate in the Lake Tahoe Basin

For the protection of the natural environment in the Lake Tahoe Basin, Snowlands Network is asking the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) of the U.S. Forest Service to ban two-stroke snowmobiles from the Lake Tahoe Basin, just as two-stroke jet skis are banned from Lake Tahoe. There is currently a lack of consistency in management practices for recreational motorized use for winter and summer regulations within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Please write to both agencies and tell them to ban two-stroke snowmobiles from the Lake Tahoe Basin to protect the environment! Tell them to adopt and enforce noise limits on snowmobiles within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

- Your comments are needed. Send an email to the Forest Service at: [comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbtmu@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbtmu@fs.fed.us)
- Also, please send a copy of your comments to Snowlands Network at [projects@snowlands.org](mailto:projects@snowlands.org)

### Is Snowlands Opposed To Snowmobile Use?

Snowlands Network is not opposed to snowmobile use where it is appropriate.

There are many areas available for snowmobiling in California and Nevada. Many of those areas are appropriate for snowmobile use. However, there are winter areas that are not appropriate for snowmobile use.

The evaluation of appropriate use by snowmobiles is based on a variety of factors:

- Environmental and wildlife concerns
- Safety for non-motorized users and motorized users
- Designation of neighboring areas
- Safety from avalanche potential
- Displacement of non-motorized users
- Noise and air pollution created by snowmobiles
- Impacts on watersheds by snowmobile use

It is critical to incorporate the environmental effects of snowmobile use when determining where winter motorized use is allowed. The science is clear: snowmobiles pollute the environment. Snowmobiles emit noxious exhaust, create noise pollution for miles from where they operate, disturb wintering wildlife such as hibernating bears, displace non-motorized users because skiers and snowshoers seek a serene environment in which to recreate. Snowmobile use has a similar impact on skiers and snowshoers that a smoker has on non-smokers in the same environment. Snowmobiles have a tremendous impact on other users and create a dangerous environment for skiers. Snowmobile use in areas used heavily by skiers and snowshoers create user conflicts and damages snowscapes for other users.

Even with this information, Snowlands Network is advocating only for a small increase of 1% - 3% of the area in the Lake Tahoe Basin for non-motorized winter use. Currently, 53% of the Lake Tahoe Basin is open to snowmobile use.

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## Snowlands Is Happy To Introduce Our New Members

Karen Theisen

Vi Peevers

Phillip Schlenker

Catherine Schmidt

Russell Sammon

Karen Cox

Mischel and Art Sable

Sue Jacox and John Himmel

Jim Miller

Kay Diederich

Peter Grant

Madonna Dunbar

Judy Lee

Curtis Langdon and Robin

Chaffey



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## Let's Green Up the Snowlands Newsletter

Please let us know if you would like to change from print newsletter to electronic newsletter.

To change from paper newsletter to email newsletter:

1. Go the Snowlands Network website: [www.snowlands.org](http://www.snowlands.org)
2. Click on the Newsletter link under the photo.
3. Change your mailing preference.

Thank you. Sending you our newsletter via email saves trees, and saves Snowlands money.

# Quiet Quadrant

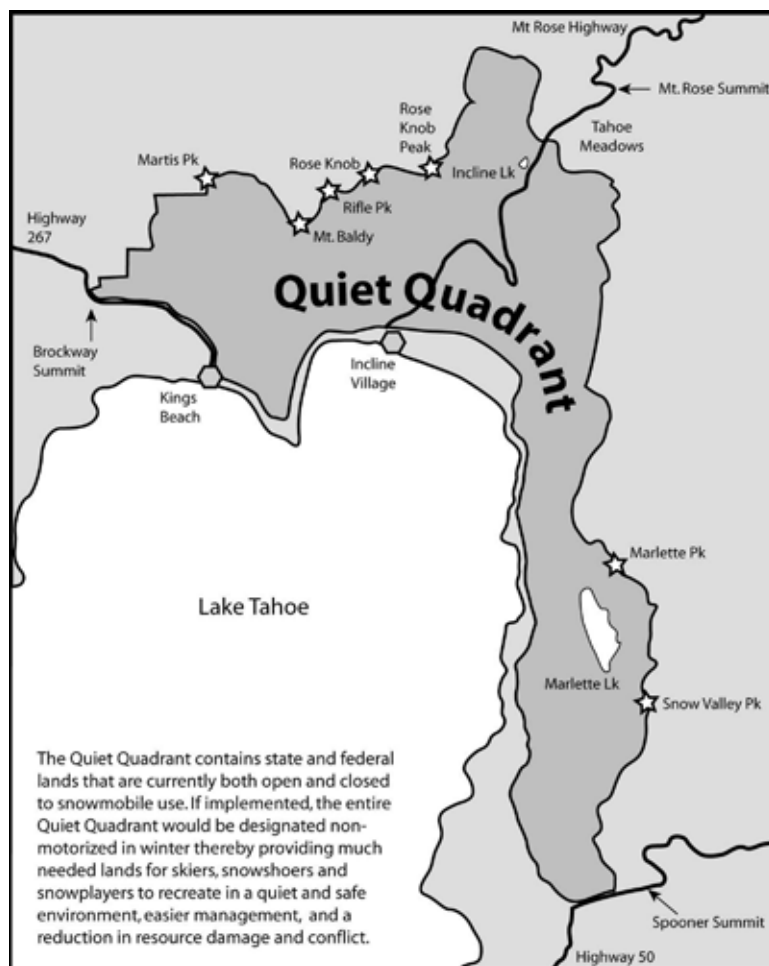
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highways, usually miles away from a motorized access point. In winter, many skiers or snowshoers do not reach Wilderness due the distance and sometimes difficult terrain to access Wilderness. The non-motorized winter areas in the Lake Tahoe Basin should be accessible at a road edge and include far more than Wilderness. The Quiet Quadrant Campaign would create a continuous, non-motorized winter recreation area in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Snowlands Network has already been very busy providing the Forest Service with valuable information on human-powered winter recreation in the Lake Tahoe Basin in anticipation of their published *Draft Plan*. Snowlands Network promotes sustainable, low-impact winter recreation on public lands in California and Nevada. Our comments and efforts are directed towards protecting the environmental health of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Snowlands Network works to mitigate the negative impacts of winter motorized use on our public lands. The science is very clear that snowmobiles pollute the environment, damage natural resources, and disturb wintering wildlife. In areas where skiers and snowshoers dominate, snowmobiles create user conflicts and danger to those on foot. Snowmobiles create noise and air pollution.

What is the *Quiet Quadrant*? It is the area between Hwy 267 and Hwy 50, including the Mt. Rose Hwy, 431. This area contains both state and federal lands, some of which are open to snowmobiling and some closed. If implemented, all of the federal lands in the *Quiet Quadrant* would be closed



*Over 500 cars are packed along the Mt. Rose Highway on winter days. This area is too crowded for snowmobiles to be used in this congested area of family snowplayers, skiers, snowshoers and split-boarders.*

to snowmobiling. This would result in much needed lands for skiers, snowshoers and snowplayers to recreate in a quiet and safe environment, ease management, and reduce resource damage and user conflict.

Did you know that snowshoeing is the fastest growing winter sport? The Lake Tahoe Basin needs to plan ahead for winter recreation. Skiers, snowshoers, snowplayers and split-boarders will continue to far outnumber snowmobilers in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Since the land-use decisions made now will be in place for 20 years, it is imperative that there be provision for adequate and safe places for low-impact winter recreation.

Your comments are needed. Send an email to the Forest Service at:

[comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us)

Also, please send a copy of your comments to Snowlands Network at:

[projects@snowlands.org](mailto:projects@snowlands.org)



# Adopt-An-Area

Continued from [Page 1](#)

1. Select one of the areas from the list below (or pick an area you love).
2. Visit that area 3 – 5 times this snow season. We always want you to be safe in the backcountry, so please do not ski or snowshoe alone.
3. After your trip, go to our Snowlands Network website.
4. Click on [Programs](#), then on [Adopt an Area](#)
5. Fill out our convenient on-line form

Before you get started, we need to know which area you are adopting. Go to our Snowlands Website and click on [Volunteer](#) and then [Contact Us](#). Contact [Gail Ferrell](#), to let her know what area you are volunteering to adopt.

We monitor areas where skiers and snowshoers enjoy winter. These include Wilderness areas, non-motorized areas and mixed-use areas. Regardless of the designation, natural resources such as plants and wildlife, and people using the area, should be free from the ill-effects of winter motorized use. That is why the Forest Service needs to know if there is observable plant damage, safety concerns or wildlife disruption. Bring your camera and your GPS unit, if you have one. Make some mental notes and take some photos as you are out and about.

Why monitor Wilderness in winter? Motor vehicles are prohibited in any Wilderness. This is because motorized vehicles change the landscape, can pollute the environment and damage natural resources and cut the quiet of the natural environment.

Wilderness is our guaranteed place to be with nature on her

terms. Wilderness is for now and for our future generations to know Mother Earth. Keeping motorized vehicles out of Wilderness is one of the tasks of the U.S. Forest Service. Accurate data on the numbers of snowmobiles trespassing into the Wilderness helps the Forest Service make important decisions that affect Wilderness preservation. A monitoring program provides such data.

Can you help? If you like to get out in winter, you can volunteer to Adopt an Area. For more information email Gail Ferrell at Snowlands Network. These are the areas that we are hoping people will adopt:

Tahoe Meadows north of Hwy 431  
Tahoe Meadows south of Hwy 431  
Chickadee Ridge south of Hwy 431  
Mt. Rose Wilderness off Hwy 431  
Mt. Rose Wilderness from north  
Brockway Summit Hwy 267 Martis Peak side  
Brockway Summit Hwy 267 Lake Tahoe side  
Castle Peak Area  
Forestdale Road, Red Lakes  
Hope Valley south of Hwy 88  
Hope Valley north of Hwy 88  
Mokelumne Wilderness  
Carson Pass  
Sequoia  
Yosemite  
Your favorite area

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# Snowmobiles

Continued from [Page 1](#)

represent 1.3 million members and 174 outdoor industry companies who value clean air and quiet as important – and dwindling – natural resources. The list of organizations is truly impressive.

Winter Wildlands Alliance gets the credit for bringing the petition to fruition. Snowlands is proud that volunteer John Bowers and Chairman Marcus Libkind participated regularly in strategy planning for the petition. Like their 17-year effort that resulted in the prohibition of snowmobiles in the Forestdale Creek drainage east of Carson Pass, both are in it for the long haul to change the 2005 Rule.

Marcus likens the commitment of Snowlands Network to a pit bull that has latched onto its foe. “The problems created by the exemption of snowmobiles from the 2005 Rule critically impact our community [human-powered winter recreationists]. Therefore, we are committed to fight tooth and nail for a change. I’m very proud that Snowlands has taken an active role in this issue, and in particular, John Bowers should be commended for his early review and analysis of the 2005 Rule and its consequences, as well as his ongoing commitment.”

While receiving the desired outcome is still a long ways off, the

submission of the petition is a major milestone in the conservation of winter landscapes and quiet winter recreation.

Although snowmobiles are a popular winter use and have their place on national forest lands, they have gone unregulated or under-regulated for too long in some areas. The Forest Service’s current approach to winter management fails to adequately protect our natural resources and allows one user group, over-the-snow vehicles, to dominate our winter landscapes at the expense of the majority of Americans who venture into the winter backcountry to leave the traffic, noise and exhaust of city life behind.

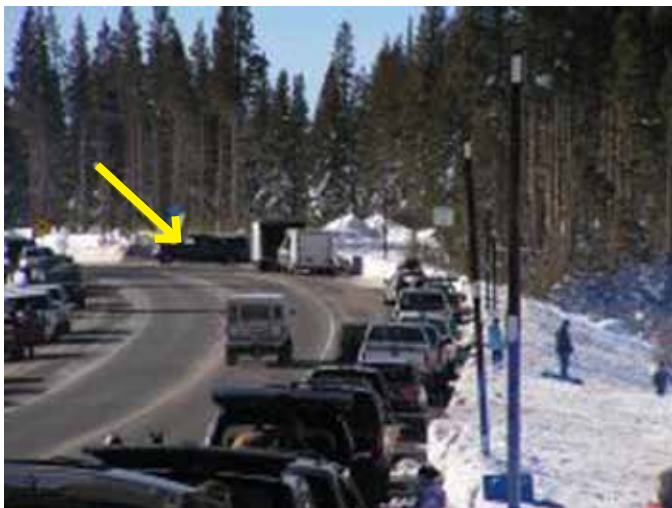
The 2005 Travel Management Rule provides an effective framework for managing motorized use on National Forest System lands. However, the 2005 Rule exempts over-snow vehicles and makes management of snowmobiles and other OSVs entirely contingent upon a discretionary decision of the local responsible official. Due to the OSV exemption and the discretionary management clause, the 2005 Rule fails to protect opportunities for quiet winter recreation, allows significant damage to fragile winter ecosystems, and falls far short of the criteria mandated by the Executive Orders that the Rule is intended to implement.

# Additional Parking for Skiers and Snowshoers on the Mt. Rose Highway

This winter look for safe, off-highway parking on the Mt. Rose side of Highway 431. The parking area for accessing the Incline Lake non-motorized area is now available for low-impact parking. This pull-out on the north side of the Mt. Rose Highway is usually plowed in winter and is a safe access for the now-public Incline Lake area. You can thank Snowlands Network and the Carson Ranger District of the U. S. Forest Service working together for providing a quality area for human-powered winter recreation access. Snowmobiles will not be permitted to park in this area.



*Parking for skiers, snowshoers and families snow-playing is now open at the west end of the Tahoe Meadows in a safe, off-highway, pullout. Snowmobiles will not be permitted to park in this area for safe access to the non-motorized Incline Lake area. (see arrow above)*



*Dangerous parking and pedestrian use on the crowded Mt. Rose Highway will have a little relief with a winter parking area for non-motorized winter users. See area on the right side of the highway (pointed to by arrow above).*

**GIVE A HOLIDAY GIFT THAT  
LASTS ALL YEAR LONG**

**GIVE THE GIFT OF  
SNOWLANDS NETWORK  
MEMBERSHIP  
TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

**GIVE THE GIFT OF  
PROTECTING OUR WINTER  
WONDERLANDS  
NOW  
AND FOR THE FUTURE**

- **THE NEW MEMBER  
WILL RECEIVE A BEAUTI-  
FUL CARD, WITH A HAND  
WRITTEN NOTE NOTI-  
FYING THEM OF THEIR  
GIFT.**

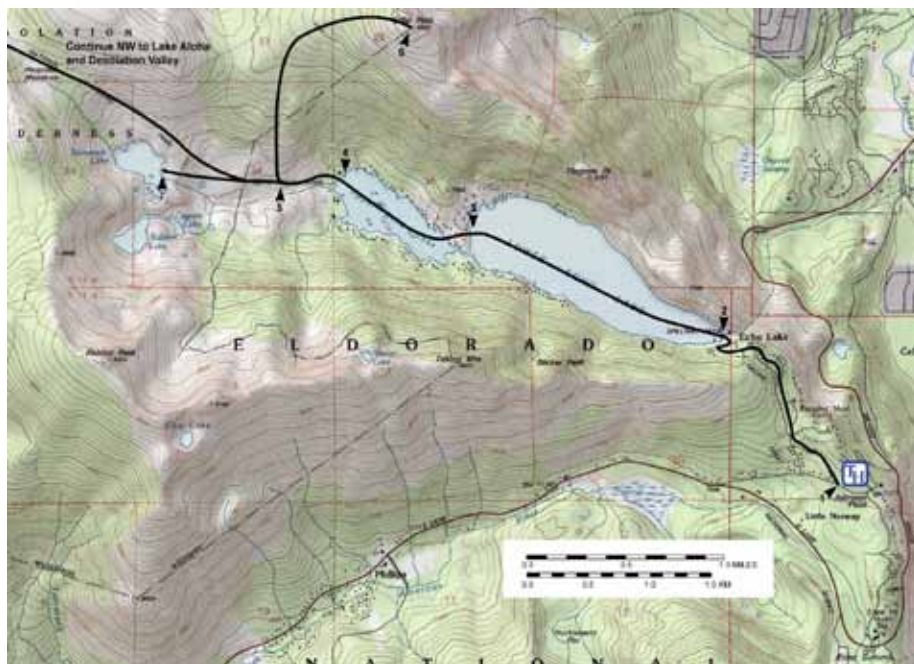
**GO TO [WWW.SNOWLANDS.ORG](http://WWW.SNOWLANDS.ORG)  
DONATE NOW!  
ONLINE**





# Echo Lakes and Beyond

The stark beauty of Echo Lakes, surrounded on all sides by peaks, is worth a winter trip in its own right but is also the jumping off point for places like Echo Peak and Desolation Valley.



## Echo Lakes

Echo Lakes is a very, very popular destination for skiers and snowshoers alike. The lakes are a perfect place for a leisurely day or night tour; by moonlight the skiing seems effortless over the glowing lakes.

The tour to Echo Lakes is rated beginner-intermediate because of the modestly steep, but short, downhill run from the highest point to Lower Echo Lake. Rank beginners may choose this tour knowing that they will have some difficulty with this section.

Echo Lakes is also notorious for windy conditions. When the winds are strong, two people holding a jacket between them, or even better a small tarp, can literally sail across the hard surface at an amazingly high speed. Kite flying can also be great if you have a durable one and strong string.

Echo Lakes are usually solid enough to safely ski on during the mid-winter months. Regardless of the month, you should always assess the conditions before skiing on the lakes. Avoid the inlets and outlets of the lakes where the ice tends to be thinner.

Usually you can ski along the south edge of Echo Lakes when it is

unsafe to ski on the lake itself. Skiing along the summer trail to the north of the lakes is slow, more difficult, and no substitute for the open, hard-packed surface of the lakes.

Please stay away from the many privately owned cabins at Echo Lakes. Also, be aware that overnight camping is not permitted in the basin.

Begin the tour to Echo Lakes by locating the snow-covered road across Johnson Pass Road from the Sno-Park entrance (1) [numbers in parentheses correspond to numbers on map]. Follow this road for 1.2 miles until you reach Lower Echo Lake (2). Once you arrive you can roam the lakes at your leisure and absorb the starkness of the basin that contrasts with the ridges that rise above. From the trailhead it is 2.6 miles to the northeast end of Lower Echo Lake (3) and 3.3 miles to the northeast end of Upper Echo Lake (4). Ski as far as you like.

## Echo Peak

The climb to the rocky summit of Echo Peak is a 100 percent perfect tour for both experienced skiers and skiers desiring to tackle their first ski ascent. Easy access, although more than three miles to the start of the climb, and the easy route-finding

**Difficulty:** Beginner-intermediate to Echo Lakes, intermediate to Tamarack Lake, and intermediate-advanced to Echo Peak or Desolation Valley.

**Length:** 2.4 to 6.6 miles for Echo Lakes, 8.4 miles for Tamarack Lake, 10.2 miles for Echo Peak, and 12.4 miles for Desolation Valley. All mileages are round trip.

**Starting Elevation:** 7350 feet

**Cumulative Elevation Change:** +250, -250 for Echo Lakes, +650, -650 for Tamarack Lake, +1700, -1700 for Echo Peak, and +1400, -1400 for Desolation Valley. All elevation changes are round trip.

**Navigation:** Road for Echo Lake; road, map and compass for Tamarack Lake; road and map for Echo Peak; and road, map and compass for Desolation Valley.

**Time:** Few hours to half day for Echo Lakes, most of a day for Tamarack Lake, full day for Echo Peak, and very long day for Desolation Valley.

**Season:** Mid-December through mid-April (it may not be safe to ski on the lakes early and late in the season).

**Snowmobiles:** Not permitted.

**Maps:** USGS Topo 7.5' series, Echo Lake and Pyramid Peak.

**Start:** Echo Lake Sno-Park. From 1.2 miles west of the Echo Summit Maintenance Station on Highway 50, drive 0.6 mile east on Johnson Pass Road toward Berkeley Camp to the Sno-Park. The actual trailhead is the snow-covered road opposite the entrance to the Sno-Park. Obtain a Sno-Park permit before arriving.

will give newcomers to peak bagging on skis a sense of security. Skiers skilled in the art of telemarking can enjoy 1300 feet of linked turns on the descent.

The climbing, through a mixture of open and wooded areas, is steady and the gradient only modestly steep for a peak climb. The view from the summit is a 360-degree panorama — an ideal setting for a well deserved lunch. Directly below the steep cliffs to the north are Angora Lakes and almost at your finger tips are Fallen Leaf Lake and Lake Tahoe. Of course,

# Echo Lakes and Beyond

you will have more than sufficient opportunity to enjoy the Echo Lakes basin and the views to the south.

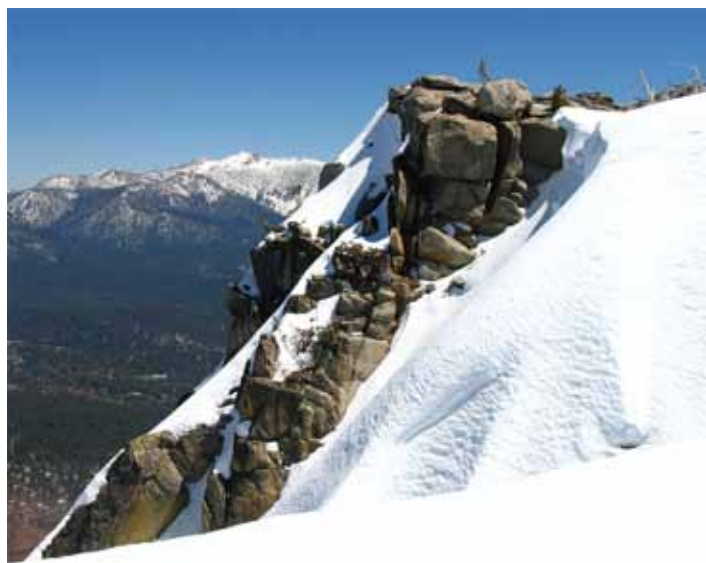
One word of advice for planning a trip to Echo Peak: Because the entire ascent is on a south-facing slope, new fallen snow quickly turns to mush in afternoon sun. Therefore, unless you make your ascent during or immediately after a storm, it is best to plan this tour for a time when the snow is consolidated. There is nothing better than the Sierra's corn-snow! The good news is that the snow consolidates fast due to the southern exposure.

To reach the summit of Echo Peak from the northeast end of Upper Echo Lake, ski west for 0.4 mile until the terrain to the north becomes less steep (5). Then ski in an arc, first north and ending east, for a total of 1.4 miles until you reach the summit (6).

## Tamarack Lake and Desolation Valley

After easy skiing across stark Echo Lakes you may want to venture beyond to explore and enjoy some of the nearby slopes and have the opportunity to look back and down on the lakes. Trekking on to Tamarack Lake (7) is a great way to add a destination to your exploration.

Tamarack Lake is nestled in a little basin of its own



*Echo Peak*

and up against slopes much steeper than the ones you ascend to reach it. These slopes to the south and west of the lake guarantee that the lake will be shrouded in shade the entire winter; don't journey here thinking that you are going to spend a sunny afternoon lunchtime.

From Tamarack Lake it is only a short ski south to Ralston Lake and Cagwin Lake if you have more energy to burn.

Tamarack Lake is also just off the longer route to Desolation Valley. As you make your final descent to Lake Aloha, the heart of Desolation Valley, you are struck by the large, stark valley, the Crystal Range, and the smooth profile of Pyramid Peak. If you are planning a one-day trip to this area, expect to get only a glimpse of its beauty. To fully enjoy the valley's magnificence you must plan a multi-day trip.

The tour to Desolation Valley covers a variety of terrain and is a challenging trip. When you leave Echo Lakes behind, you leave most of the skiers behind. This is in dramatic contrast to Desolation Valley in the summer, when backpackers flock to this mountain haven.

## Permits

You do not need a permit to visit Echo Lakes. However, a permit is required for day use as well as overnight camping in Desolation Wilderness, which begins approximately one-half mile west of Upper Echo Lake. This means that the Tamarack Lake, Desolation Valley and Echo Peak tours require a permit. For more information on permits, visit [www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/recreation/wild/deso/permit/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/recreation/wild/deso/permit/)

## More information

Visit [www.BackcountrySkiTours.com](http://www.BackcountrySkiTours.com) for more details on these and other destinations including mileage logs, elevation profiles and GPS waypoints.



*Lower Echo Lake*








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