



Promoting opportunities for quality, human-powered winter recreation and protecting winter wildlands

A description of the work done by Snowlands

Snowlands is a non-profit organization, established in 2001, that protects the beautiful and wild mountain recreation areas of California and Nevada. We are a network of men and women who believe that our winter landscapes are in danger of being ruined by motorized uses, restricted access and development. Snowlands provides a voice for all skiers, snowshoers, snowboarders, families engaging in snow play, and anyone else who wants to experience the beauty of winter in its natural state and protect the Sierra and other CA/NV wild places for future generations. Snowlands is the only organization in California and Nevada that stands between solitude and uncontrolled, rampant snowmobile use.

Snowlands works on issues that include:

- Ensuring that winter recreation in the mountains includes adequate acres free of motorized vehicles
- Educating the public about issues that affect winter wildlands
- Challenging government decisions which adversely affect winter recreation in the mountains of CA and NV
- Monitoring new development that interferes with access to public lands for winter recreation

Since we were founded we have been involved in many campaigns. Our victories sometimes come after many years of hard work and many involve partnering with other organizations to achieve our goals.

A brief history of Snowlands Network

Although Snowlands Network was founded in 2001, its history dates back to 1985 and tells a great deal about the dedication and tenacity of the organization.

In 1985 Marcus Libkind quit his job as an engineer and moved to the town of Lee Vining on the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada. He was confronted with the realization that the pressures of commercial development and the use of snowmobiles had and would continue to negatively change the landscape on which human-powered winter sports took place.

Marcus contacted people throughout California during the winter of 1985-1986 in an effort to find support for a voice for the silent community that had so much to lose if they remained silent. His efforts led to the formation of the winter oriented Conservation Committee of the Ski Touring Section of the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club (sometimes referred to as the Nordic Voice) in 1986. He filled the position of Issues Coordinator. Other members of the Conservation Committee included Jim Gibson, Janet Hoffmann and Bill Flower who would later be founding directors of Snowlands Network.

Over the ensuing 16 years the Nordic Voice worked on many issues and forest proposals. Major accomplishments of the group, which focused on California and Nevada, included:

- Halting Sierra Ski Ranch (now Sierra-at-Tahoe) from expanding onto Huckleberry Ridge and closing to backcountry skiers the amazing lands south of Echo Summit on Highway 50.
- Stopping plans to convert the user developed and patrolled backcountry ski trail system at Pinecrest to a commercial, pay-for-use enterprise.
- Challenging multiple attempts to develop the Castle Valley area north of Donner Pass on Interstate 80, which is one of the most popular backcountry ski destinations in California.

In 1998 an acquaintance in the environmental community urged Marcus to move the Nordic Voice toward a stand-alone nonprofit organization outside the umbrella of the Sierra Club where leaders would have autonomy.

In 2001, Marcus Libkind, Jim Gibson, Janet Hoffmann and Bill Flower¹ incorporated Snowlands Network, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization established to fill the need for representation of the backcountry ski and snowshoe community in California and Nevada. The mission of Snowlands Network is to:

- Promote opportunities for quality human-powered winter recreation
- Protect winter wildlands
- Educate the public and government agencies about winter recreation and environmental issues

Over the years Snowlands Network has employed two executive directors and one administrative staff. Currently the organization is run by the Board of Directors with the aide of an administrative staff member.

Snowlands Network continues to be a network of outdoor enthusiasts and professionals who use their breadth of knowledge, connections with other non-profits and agencies, and passion for the mountains to protect the winter wildlands of California and Nevada. The Snowlands Board is a diverse group of leaders who bring a variety of talents, experiences and expertise to the governance of Snowlands. With over 50 years of cumulative experience in winter related environmental issues we are volunteers who work hard to promote the organizational health and strategic direction of Snowlands. Marcus Libkind and Jim Gibson are members of the core founding group and are still members of the current board of Snowlands.

A description of the qualities that are sought in a director

We at Snowlands hold certain values. We are proud of our local knowledge of the terrain and expertise about the issues. To reach our goals we are strategic, pragmatic and willing to work with others and respect all viewpoints. We are results driven, even though victories are sometimes many years in the making. We are passionate about winter recreation and dedicated to our work. We consider ourselves to be protectors of the winter wildlands of California and Nevada and are looking for others with similar values to join us in our work.

¹ Gail Ferrell and Charles White were voted Directors at the first meeting of the Board of Directors.

A description of the responsibilities of a director

Functions:

- Oversee governance of the organization
- Determine and support organizational purpose
- Create administrative, financial, outreach and programmatic policy
- Help develop and approve strategic plan, annual budget, programmatic work plans, etc.
- Evaluate effectiveness of administrative and programmatic operations
- Ensure adequate financial and other resources to support the organization's operation
- Participate in fundraising
- Serve as ambassador for the organization in the wider community
- Provide specific knowledge or expertise to Board and staff
- Attend two board meetings per year, participate in 6 to 10 phone meetings, and respond to email and other work in progress as needed
- Actively participate in at least one area of interest

Basic Prerequisites/Skills Needed:

- Must be a member in good standing of the organization
- Commitment to organization's purpose, goals and objectives
- Strong leadership ability
- Willingness to expand knowledge and experience base through training
- Willingness to aid in fundraising (with training if necessary)
- Willingness to give a gift appropriate to director's ability
- Ability to represent the organization in the community
- Strong communications skills
- Strong interpersonal skills