



Nordic & Backcountry News

Working to preserve quiet, non-motorized areas for quality Nordic and backcountry skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing

February 2006

Volume 7, Issue 1

Message from the President

As I write this piece snow is falling and powder is building in the Wood River Valley. It has been a phenomenal snow year so far, and lets hope it continues for our sake as backcountry enthusiasts, as well as all who will benefit from a drought-free year. I hope you all have been able to get out and enjoy it!

The Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance of Idaho has not wavered from its original role. We are still here to effectively be the watchdog for the valley and make sure that all winter recreationists are using our public lands responsibly and in accordance with the Snow Pact Agreement of 2000.

To do this we still play a major role in the Winter Recreation Coalition and make our voice heard when any negotiations take place or any conflict arises. As many of our members may know the BLM is in the process of crafting the "Recreation and Travel Plan for the Wood River Valley" and NAB will be a strong player in this process. We will be in attendance at the upcoming focus groups and we encourage all our members to get involved in this process and email or call John Kurtz in the BLM's Shoshone office with any thoughts, ideas or concerns regarding this new initiative—John_Kurtz@blm.gov or 208-732-7296.

Yes, more snow could mean more conflict, or it could mean less – either way it's up to all of us to report any incidents and now it is as easier than ever. NAB has a new website that is a resource for everyone in the valley. You can read about who we are and what we do, you can join and get involved or make a donation, you can check out events and news or report your incident online. Please check us out at www.skiersalliance.net.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance of Idaho that continues to be your self-powered winter recreation advocacy organization in the Wood River Valley.

Sincerely,
Chris Pilaro, President

Update on the Snow Pact Agreement of 2000

Andy Munter

The Winter Recreation Coalition is still meeting three to four times a year to work on projects and to monitor and implement the Snow Pact. Last fall we were finally able to complete the connector high on Easley Creek to allow snowmobiles an easier route from the Baker Creek lot, up Silver Creek and over to Boulder Creek. It is a route the snowmobilers like and it should keep a lot of sleds off of the shared use portion of the Harriman Trail at Baker Creek. Thank you to all the skiers who helped stabilize the short road cut and to the Forest Service for approving the project.

The other project we are working on is a connector bridge across the Big Wood that would connect Baker Creek parking lot to the Boulder Flats just up stream from the highway

bridge. This would create a nice loop on one side of the highway that might eliminate any need for a shared trail along the Harriman. Obviously a bridge is complicated and expensive, but I believe it would be a great long-term solution for reducing conflict.

One of the reasons we are still meeting 5 years after the Snow Pact was hammered out is that we designed our recommendations to the Forest Service so that there would be some areas where we would have to continue working together. These areas are the voluntary snowmobile closures on the East Fork of Baker Creek and the East Fork of Hyndman Creek. Our goal is to create model areas that will show that snowmobiles and skiers can get along without shutting anybody out. The issues around signing, education and handling complaints does take some time but we are fortunate to have created a level of trust and many friendships to have helped the process.

The cooperation between the Blaine County Recreation District, the Forest Service (the SNRA and the Ketchum District), and the skier/snowmobile communities has truly made our upper valley a model for what can be accomplished between user groups willing to cooperate and compromise. I hope everybody in the valley is proud of what we as a community have accomplished.

Blaine County Recreation and Travel Plan

Bob Jonas

The Bureau of Land Management and Blaine County Commission have organized citizen groups to represent year-round recreation interests in the Wood River Valley. Citizens will provide input on needs, values and other concerns for recreation management. The study area is in the southern part of the County from Little Wood River Reservoir in the East (Carey) to Willow Creek in the West (Moonstone), Timmerman Hill in the South and North to Ketchum. The first meeting of the Winter Focus Group is February, the Summer Group will meet in May.

The ultimate goal of these efforts will be to create an updated BLM travel plan that identifies and incorporates the recreation values of Blaine County citizens, communities, and the tourism industry, and that is clear and binding, yet dynamic.

BLM travel and management plans set forth agency directives for recreation access and other activities, including grazing and wildlife management, often for 20 years. The desired outcome is a management document that satisfies all public lands users while protecting the environment and the experience of future generations. A heavy assignment.

NAB's presence in the Winter Focus Group table is imperative. At stake is how and where motorized and nonmotorized winter recreation will be managed in the Mid and Lower Wood

See Blaine County on page 2.

National Focus

*Cathy Baer, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Vice-President*

Now in our sixth year, Winter Wildlands Alliance continues to grow as the only national voice speaking out for muscle-powered winter sports on public lands.

WWA's grassroots network, which includes NAB, has grown to twenty-one groups in eleven states, where our grassroots partners are working hard on silent sports issues on fifteen national forests. Through this network, our victories and challenges are building a body of evidence that we are using to influence land management decisions.

California

On the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Snowlands Network has challenged the October 2005 Forest Service decision to open 7,000 acres to snowmobiles in the proposed West Hoover Wilderness, which will encourage trespass into Yosemite. WWA has partnered with Snowlands Network to appeal this egregious decision.

Utah

Nordic United has been negotiating for two years with the Wasatch-Cache National Forest to uphold its own 2003 Record of Decision, which designated 9000 acres for non-motorized winter recreation in Logan Canyon. The Forest Service caved into motorized pressure and cut the area by half. WWA has maintained pressure on forest managers to reverse this outrageous decision, and joined Nordic United as a plaintiff in a suit filed in December 2005.

Washington, D.C.

WWA has taken the lead role in organizing Outdoor Alliance, a national coalition of human-powered recreation groups that includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, America Hiking Society, American Whitewater and International Mountain Bicycling Association. The alliance brings together the most significant voice speaking out for the rights of quiet recreationists and will maintain a presence in DC.

Yellowstone

WWA continues as the recreation voice advocating for the removal of snowmobiles from Yellowstone National Park. WWA held its January 2006 board meeting in West Yellowstone and in the park at the Snow Lodge. The group found the noise and pollution levels at the entrance to the Park had changed significantly since our 2004 Stand Up For Yellowstone rally. As well, snowcoach business report notable increases while snowmobile numbers inside the Park continue to decline. Inside the Park, the groomed trail leading into Old Faithful now includes a groomed classic ski track. Although the Bush Administration remains deaf to national sentiment, it is clear that gateway communities get it—a diverse winter recreation economy means better business.

Not So Silent After All

Jeremy Fryberger

To say that I am a silent sports enthusiast is somewhat of a misnomer, because all of my activities contain subtle, enriching sounds. The important point, however, is that I can hear them! Some of these sounds are created by me or my fellow "silenteers," while others are a permanent part of the natural landscape. Below are some of the best.

Traveling in the backcountry, especially on skis, creates some very specific sounds. One of these is so unique, in fact, that it only originates from my right telemark binding when I'm climbing a steep, left-running switchback. Although I've tried more than once to eliminate this squeak, it apparently intends to be a permanent player in my backcountry orchestra. Step. Squeak. Step. Squeak....

The plentiful champagne powder we've received in the Wood River Valley this winter is, of course, an opiate to snow-tripping gravity freaks; you've probably heard their incoherent, joyous shrieks. Yet, the same white stuff can cause a well-waxed skate ski to creak like a rusty door hinge. This frictiony whine, in turn, leads to several other common silent sport sounds; heavy breathing and a pounding heartbeat!

The babble of a running stream is dear to the hearts of many who have lived in our high desert climate. Whether wading up-current for native trout in a summer-warmed river, or pausing to rest on some remote nordic trail bridge, I find the sound of running water both calming and inspirational; in spite of cold or drought, a stream on its downhill path sustains life wherever it flows.

Wind, of course, creates quite a symphony of backcountry sounds. From groaning tree trunks to the clacking of frozen branches, the forest is nature's wind-chime. Think also, of traveling up an exposed, snow-blasted ridge, with just enough skin exposed to see and breathe. How a gust can roar past the edge of a jacket hood!

Recently, just before descending from one such blustery peak, I brought from my pocket a crystal not unlike the millions of brilliant snowflakes nearby, and asked my girlfriend if she would weave her life together with mine. The sound that followed, although just a whisper, is my new backcountry favorite.

Blaine County continued from page 1.

River Valley, east to Carey and west to Moonstone. NAB's desire is for BLM and County Travel Plans that complement the Forest Service's 'Snow Pact', which designates motorized and nonmotorized zones for the Upper Valley, Ketchum to Galena. The Snow Pact is an agreement between local skiers and snowmobilers that has been incorporated by the Forest in its winter recreation management for the area.

The BLM and NAB representatives need to know about your favorite mid and lower valley winter recreation areas and why these areas are important to you, your friends and family. Let them know why you feel an area should be nonmotorized, the boundaries, and, if a shared area, the motorized corridor you would define.

Please contact NAB Winter Focus Group members Joe and Francie St. Onge at 788-9809, joest_ong@hotmail.com and Bob Jonas at 726-8579, bobjonas@cox.net. Or submit comments by e-mail for the official record to: John Kurtz, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner, John_Kurtz@blm.gov.

Calendar

February 24 – 27, 2006

Level 2 Avalanche Awareness for Backcountry Skiers and Snowboarders
Sun Valley Trekking
208-788-1966 www.svtrek.com

February 24, 2006

Valentine's Day Dinner at Galena
Enjoy a 5-course dinner at the Lodge
6:30 P.M.
www.galenalodge.com

February 28, 2006

Stargazing Dinner at Galena
Enjoy dinner at the lodge, and then enjoy the stars without the Moon
6:30 P.M.
www.galenalodge.com

March 04, 2006

Women's Tour
Sun Valley Nordic

March 04 and 05, 2006

Sawtooth Valley Ski Fest
Park Creek and Alturas Lake Trails
Fun activities and food on Park Creek Trails on Saturday; Club sponsored BBQ at Alturas on Sunday.
11:00 A.M.
FREE
Sawtooth Ski Club 208.774.2264

March 5, 2006

Sun Valley Telemark Race
Dollar Mountain GS
skier@sunvalleytele.org www.sunvalleytele.org

March 12 and 13, 2006

Full Moon Dinner at Galena
Enjoy dinner at the lodge, and then enjoy the outdoors as the moon lights up trails
6:30 P.M.
www.galenalodge.com

March 25, 2006

Spring Loppett
Galena Lodge and Trails
Fun tour with LeMans start off of Lodge deck. Ski 25K perimeter with finish at Lodge. Race day registration at Galena Lodge, 9:30-10:00 A.M. Loud Lycra contest. Bring-a-prize, choose-a-prize, win-a-prize.
10:00 A.M.
\$10 (includes race snacks and post-race soup!)

April 02, 2006

Ride-Stride-Glide Relay Race
Galena Lodge and Trails
Fun team and individuals times event. 10K bike, 5K run, 10K skate ski. Costumes encouraged. Emphasis on fun with lots of prizes. PG-13 event. Race day registration (includes T-shirt and lunch) at Galena Lodge, 7:00-9:30 A.M.
10:00 AM
\$60 Co-ed team, \$30 individual.
www.galenalodge.com, 208.726.4010

April 8, 2006

Sun Valley Telemark Race
Hawaiian Nationals Dual GS
skier@sunvalleytele.org www.sunvalleytele.org

April 14-23, 2006

Sawtooth Haute Route
Sun Valley Trekking
208-788-1966 www.svtrek.com

SAWTOOTH SKI FESTIVAL

Get ready to enjoy a weekend of Cross country Ski fun in the Stanley-Sawtooth Country! On March 4th and 5th the Sawtooth Ski Club will celebrate the Fourth Annual Sawtooth Ski Festival and fundraising event.

The planning process for the Festival is well underway. This fun weekend is a major fundraising event for purchasing equipment and supplies to groom the ski trails we all enjoy so much.

In past years, we have benefited from the tireless efforts of Michelle Shaffer who has coordinated the weekend events and volunteers. Michelle moved to Boise recently and is planning to attend this year's Festival as a dedicated supporter. We are extremely grateful for all of her hard work in pioneering this successful yearly event.

Karen Keiski has volunteered to coordinate the 2006 Festival and she has been hard at work the past few weeks. We would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers who have worked so hard over the years and would like to invite anyone interested in volunteering at any of the three events: Park Creek Ski Day, Saturday Night's Silent Auction and Spaghetti Dinner and Sunday's Alturas Ski Day. Silent auction items would be welcomed as well as bakers, servers and general helpers.....Contact: Karen Keiski at 774-3487 if you wish to participate.

Thanks!!!

DON'T MISS THE MOST FUN SKI FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR!!

BE THERE!! MARCH 4 & 5, 2006

The Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance of Idaho
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Join Us

Be part of the solution! Join the Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance of Idaho and help us preserve and protect our quiet winter landscape and the activities we love. Your membership and donations are important! With your support we will continue to monitor skier and snowmobile conflicts and work together to resolve these issues. Check out our new web site: www.skiersalliance.net.

NAB Board of Directors

Ted Angle
David Harrison
Bob Jonas
Andy Munter
Chris Pilaro

Jeremy Fryberger
Judy Harrison
Sarah Michael
Gayle Nelson
Francie St. Onge

What is the Nordic & Backcountry Skiers Alliance of Idaho?

The Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance (NAB) is an Idaho non-profit corporation working to preserve and to protect a quiet, non-motorized winter recreation experience for nordic and backcountry skiers, and snowshoers, and to find lasting solutions to user conflicts. It is the goal of NAB to preserve portions of our public lands as non-motorized areas where skiers, snowshoers, and snowboarders can enjoy the quiet and solitude of the winter landscape.

Nordic and Backcountry Skiers Alliance of Idaho
P.O. Box 1251, Hailey, ID 83333
www.skiersalliance.net info@skiersalliance.net

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