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Sessions planned this year include: collaborative stakeholder efforts, successful culmination of more than a decade of work to protect Yellowstone National Park, a panel on the effective use of social networking in the Stop SkiLink campaign, trends at the intersection of ski areas and backcountry users, and some of WWA's own work including the Winter Wilderness Stewardship project, economic impact studies, and leveraging the Backcountry Film Festival as a fundraising tool.

Andrew McLean, noted ski mountaineer and author of the book "The Chuting Gallery - A Guide to Steep Skiing in the Wasatch Mountains" and straighchuter.com, will give the keynote address Friday night. Andrew will discuss his path to becoming a 'Reluctant Activist' on issues - like SkiLink - that impact the Wasatch backcountry.

The conference runs from noon on Friday, March 8 through the end of the day on Saturday, March 9. An optional backcountry outing is being organized for Sunday, March 10th. Winter Wildlands Alliance members, grassroots advocates, conservation professionals, land managers and the public are all welcome to attend.

Full conference details and an agenda can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/WWAconference

We hope to see you in March!

Cailin O'Brien-Feeney
Policy Director
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TRAIL BREAK
Your report for silent snowsports

Volume 2013, Winter Issue

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Call (208)336-4203 or visit us on the web at www.winterwildlands.org

Get Involved!

Follow Winter Wildlands Alliance on Facebook and Twitter, contact your local group and volunteer, attend a Backcountry Film Festival showing in your community and take a stand for winter - Become a Member today!

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The Backcountry Boom

It seems everywhere I look these days I hear and see a buzz about backcountry and backcountry that. Mainstream ski publications once devoted entirely to resort pursuits now splashed their pages with stories and photos promoting the backcountry experience. Marketers selling everything from soft drinks to software are attempting to cash in on the backcountry cache.

According to a 2011 Snowsports Industries of America (SIA) participation report, human-powered snowsports is the fastest growing segment of winter recreation. This segment includes backcountry skiing, alpine touring (AT), snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. SIA reports on equipment sales show that alpine touring equipment sales are growing by more than 50 percent year to year while other equipment segments are declining or flat.

This all-things-backcountry boom presents both opportunity and challenge for Winter Wildlands Alliance and our grassroots groups. It certainly shines the light on the need for our ongoing advocacy to protect the winter places we play. It makes us stretch beyond our traditional means in order to remain relevant to a new generation of skiers, snowboarders and snowshoers venturing into the backcountry.

The WWA Backcountry Partners Program added six new businesses to the WWA Backcountry Partners Program. These businesses support the backcountry and the needed infrastructure to support it. We welcome these new partners to the backcountry fold.

As we reach out to those new to the backcountry community, we remain focused on our care work to bring balance and responsible winter management to our public lands. This year will bring positive resolution to our decade-long campaign to protect Yellowstone National Park, our most iconic winter sanctuary. We await a ruling on our legal challenge to the regulatory loophole exempting snowmobiles from off-road vehicle management guidelines and I am confident we will prevail. With our local grassroots groups, we are engaged in more than a dozen national forests where a safe, quiet backcountry experience is at risk.

None of this would be possible without our members, supporters and partners. On behalf of all of us at Winter Wildlands Alliance, I offer heartfelt thanks for your support.

Keep the Wild in Winter!

Mark Mclean
Executive Director
mmclean@winterwildlands.org

FY 12 Accomplishments and Highlights

Winter Wildlands Alliance achieved concrete and measurable results during our fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012) toward our mission of promoting and protecting winter wildlands and a quality human-powered snowsports experience on public lands.

National Policy

As the national voice for backcountry and Nordic skiers, snowboarders, snowshoers, winter hikers, mountaineers and conservationists, WWA accomplished the following national policy objectives during FY12:

• Initiated a legal challenge to the over-snow vehicle exemption in the 2005 Travel Management Rule. If successful, this legal challenge will result in snowmobiles being managed under the same guidelines used for all other off-road vehicles in all other seasons on national forest lands.

• Provided extensive comments and marshaled public support through the Yellowstone National Park Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement process in order to ensure protection of Yellowstone’s winter ecosystem. WWA and our coalition partners rallied our constituents to submit more than 66,000 commend letters advocating for a final rule that holds over-snow vehicle numbers at or below the level of the past five years, a period which led to a remarkable recovery for Yellowstone’s winter ecosystems, wildlife and visitor enjoyment.

• Met with U.S. Forest Service officials in Washington, DC to suggest revisions to the Forest Manual in order to better facilitate human-powered recreation on national forest lands.

WWA Ambassador Program

The newly formed Winter Wildlands Alliance Ambassador program is designed to engage like-minded athletes, filmmakers, advocates and industry professionals in sharing WWA’s mission and goals with their audiences.

WWA ambassadors provide a critical link between Winter Wildlands Alliance and the winter backcountry community by participating in WWA events and initiatives. We are proud to introduce our four inaugural ambassadors, and we look forward to introducing you to our new ambassadors in the near future.

Nick Devore
A world class professional skier, Nick hopes to use his skiing talent to bring environmental awareness to the skiing world and beyond. He believes in the Hopi way of life, to blend with the earth and celebrate life.

Eric Larson
Eric has spent the past 15 years of his life traveling in some of the most remote and wild places left on earth. He is now one of only a few Americans to have skied to both the North and South Poles. Eric is also the founder of Save our Poles. His passion for snow, ice and winter brought him to Winter Wildlands Alliance.

Donny Roth
Donny is a ski guide, sponsored athlete and a free range skier who focuses on human powered skiing. Every year aiming to use less fossil fuels and mechanical assistance while still skiing more vertical feet than ever before. Donny’s enthusiasm for the human-powered experience is infectious and we are honored to have him as an ambassador.

Rich Meyer
Rich is a professional mountain guide and shares a love and respect of wild lands and wild places. Whether guiding clients in the backcountry or skiing and climbing on a 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. Finding balance between our modern world and our natural world needs to be a priority for all of us.

Shelley Furrer, Outreach and Events Coordinator
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WWA Teams with Idaho Businesses to Speak Up for Public Lands

The Idaho Outdoor Business Council, which WWA helped to found, commissioned a statewide poll this fall of Idaho voters on their views concerning the intersection of recreation, conservation, and the economy. The poll found overwhelming support for public lands not just as a quality of life issue, but also as an economic driver in the state.

The need to bring a business voice to conservation issues is one main reasons WWA is a founding member and non-profit advisor to the Idaho Outdoor Business Council, the group responsible for the poll. Now almost 40 members strong, the Idaho Outdoor Business Council (IOBC) is a coalition of businesses and recreation groups dedicated to preserving and promoting Idaho’s spectacular wild lands and waters, and to educating public officials as to the importance of conservation measures and public lands funding initiatives as drivers for Idaho’s outdoor recreation economy and quality of life.

The poll was one of the more visible projects tackled by the IOBC since its inception and has provided valuable insights to elected officials and grassroots activists.

The annual WWA Backcountry Film Festival is one of the most visible projects tackled by the IOBC since its inception and has provided valuable insights to elected officials and grassroots advocates. WWA is working to meet the challenges. WWA’s SnowSchool program will take more than 25,000 kids out for a snowshoe experience and a snow ecology lesson this winter. Our Backcountry Film Festival will show in more than 100 locations and will promote a responsible backcountry ethic to thousands of new backcountry enthusiasts.

As we reach out to those new to the backcountry community, we remain focused on our care work to bring balance and responsible winter management to our public lands. This year will bring positive resolution to our decade-long campaign to protect Yellowstone National Park, our most iconic winter sanctuary. We await a ruling on our legal challenge to the regulatory loophole exempting snowmobiles from off-road vehicle management guidelines and I am confident we will prevail.

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Continued on page 3
Corporate Partners

Dynafit, Optic Nerve, YakTrax, Little Hotties, HighGear, Endurance Conspiracy, Ambler, Rich is a professional mountain guide and shares a love and respect for the trails and peaks he traverses. His enthusiasm for the human-powered backcountry experience is infectious and we are honored to have him as an ambassador for WWA.

Donny Roth

Poles. Eric is also the founder of Save our Poles. His passion for the Wasatch Mountains" and straigtchuter.com, will give the keynote address Friday night. Andrew will discuss his path to becoming a 'Reluctant Activist' on issues - like SkiLink - that impact the Wasatch backcountry.

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The beginning of 2013 has brought with it new challenges, including the proposed state takeover of federal lands in Idaho, akin to what has been pushed in Utah and other states. The IOBC will again be reaching out to decision-makers to show that this is not what Idaho wants. WWA is a founding member and non-profit advisor to the IOBC since its inception and has provided valuable insights to reaching out to decision-makers to show that this is not what Idaho wants.

The poll was one of the more visible projects tackled by the Business to Speak Up for public lands.

• The majority of Idaho voters, 52%, agree that preservation of public lands creates jobs. This includes land preserved as wilderness, national parks, monuments, and farms and forests since it was enacted in 1965. The LWCF is a bipartisan conservation fund (LWCF), a program that has invested almost $200 million into the state’s public lands and recreation
goals.

• Four out of five Idahoans participated in some form of outdoor recreation activity in the last year – with camping, hiking, hunting and fishing essential part of Idaho’s economy. This echoes a finding from a publication of Winter Wildlands Alliance

• 97% of Idaho voters say our public lands are an essential part of our quality of life.

• Idahoans support the idea of public lands as an economic driver in the state. The poll found overwhelming support for public lands not just as a quality of life issue, but also as an economic driver in the state. 

• The poll also found, commissioned a statewide poll this fall of Idaho voters on the same questions.

Water quality is something the federal government does well. Responsible stewardship of public lands - including forests, national parks, monuments and other public lands - is something the federal government needs to gain the support of more Idahoans.

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