

Opinion: Winter recreationists must safely play together

By Lisa Herron



The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit reminds snowmobilers, skiers, and snowshoers to show courtesy when enjoying the outdoors in the winter. Snowmobilers, skiers and snowshoers often share the same areas. The key to sharing them amicably is to be respectful when encountering each other.

The LTBMU permits snowmobiling on many acres of National Forest lands around the Lake Tahoe Basin. Designated wilderness areas are closed to

snowmobiles. Riding there is against federal law and punishable by a fine of \$5,000 for an individual, \$10,000 for an organization, and/or imprisonment of six months.

In order to ensure safe and enjoyable outings for everyone, snowmobile operators should reduce speed and lower rpm when in high-use areas or when encountering skiers or snowshoers until they are well beyond those on foot. Slowing down reduces noise and helps skiers and snowshoers maintain a serene experience.

Skiers and snowshoers should consider that snowmobilers may not be able to hear or see them and take appropriate precautions. Make an effort to be visible to the rider and move a safe distance off the trail until the snowmobile passes. When skiers and snowmobilers are

using the same trail, especially in high-use areas, be mindful that extra caution is required: Slow down, look around and

respect the environment.

In residential areas, snowmobilers should keep "warm-up" time brief, avoid excessive engine revving, refrain from riding too close to homes, ride during reasonable hours, avoiding early morning and late night rides, and be aware of private land and homeowner boundaries.

California and Nevada now require registration of snowmobiles. In Nevada, as of July 1, 2012, new Over the Snow Vehicles (OSVs) must be registered and by July 1, 2013, all OSVs must be registered.

Snowmobiles can be registered online in California.

The 2012-13 LTBMU Snowmobile Guide is available free to the public. The guide includes a map that shows where snowmobiling is permitted, where you can find groomed trails, and other tips for safe and responsible snowmobiling. Copies are available at North and South Shore Forest Service offices.

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