

Hwy. 89 project eliminates recreation parking

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Skiers, boarders and snowshoers are hopeful a looming El Nino could give the Sierra Nevada its biggest winter snowpack in years.□

But on the West Shore they're also fretting about how they're going to access all that powder once it lands on popular backcountry peaks in and around places such as Desolation Wilderness.

That's because a Highway 89 improvement project aimed at reducing sediment runoff into the lake gobbled up an untold number of unpaved, roadside parking spots.

The project by Caltrans included landscaping touches that narrowed areas along the road that in previous years served as parking for skiers and others who use the backcountry for winter sports.

"What is happening is some of the pullouts people use to park for backcountry skiing are being eliminated," said Bob Rowen, chairman of the Snowlands Network, which advocates on behalf human powered, winter recreation. "It is the same as if somebody's favorite beach were closed or somebody's favorite hiking trail."

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